

# I Found a Baby Bird

## Now What?



**To Find a wildlife rehabilitator in your area, contact**

- Your state wildlife agency
- Humane Society
- Audubon Society
- Wild bird stores
- City Animal control officer
- Veterinarian (wildlife/exotic)
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- Wildlife Rehab Info Directory: (wildliferehab.virtualave.net)

**Is bird hurt or sick** (unable to flutter wings; bleeding, wings drooping unevenly; weak or shivering; attacked by cat/dog?)

No

Yes

**Is bird feathered?**

No

Yes

**Call a wildlife rehabilitator.**

**It's a nestling.**  
(needs help!)  
Can you find the nest?  
Is it intact?

**It's a fledgling.**  
(Normal behavior to be hopping on ground; parents are still feeding it.)  
Is bird safe from cats, dogs and people?

**Unable to reach a wildlife rehabilitator?**  
Call your state wildlife agency or a wildlife Veterinarian.

If you are unable to reach any of the above, see instructions on back of this page: **"How to rescue Baby Birds"**

No

Yes

No

Yes

**Make a substitute nest.**  
Poke holes in bottom of berry basket/margarine tub; line with dry grass, the old nest, or pine needles; hang from original or nearby tree.

**Put baby back in nest.**  
Observe from a distance.  
Are parents visiting nest?

**Put bird in bushes or on a tree limb nearby.**  
Watch from a distance.  
Are parents nearby?

**Leave the area.**  
Baby is OK.

Yes

No

No

Yes

**Leave the area.**  
Baby is OK.

**Leave the area.**  
Baby is OK.

**Put baby in nest.**  
Observe from a distance.  
Are parents visiting nest?

Yes

No

**Leave the area.**  
Baby is OK.

**Call a wildlife rehabilitator.**

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**If you find a baby duck, goose, quail or killdeer:**

- If you know the mother is dead, or if baby is injured, call a wildlife rehabilitator right away.
- If baby is separated from the mother and you know where she is, place baby close by so she can hear it. Watch from a distance.
- If the mother is not found or does not claim the baby within an hour, call a wildlife rehabilitator. If you cannot reach one, rescue the baby (see instructions on back).

**A baby's best chance for survival is its mother**



**iowabirdrehab**



**Iowa Bird Rehabilitation**

# How to Rescue Baby Birds

(Only adults should rescue baby birds. Before rescuing adult birds, seek guidance from a wildlife rehabilitator.)

1. **Prepare a container.** Place a clean, soft cloth with no strings or loops on the bottom of a cardboard box or cat/dog carrier with a lid. If it doesn't have air holes, make some. For smaller birds, you can use a paper sack with air holes..
2. **Protect yourself.** Wear gloves, if possible. Some birds may stab with their beaks, slice with their *talons* (claws) and slap with their wings, to protect themselves, even if sick; birds commonly have parasites (fleas, lice, ticks) and carry diseases.
3. **Cover the bird with a light sheet or towel.**
4. **Gently pick up the bird and put it in the prepared container.**
5. **Warm the animal if it's cold out or if the animal is chilled.** Put one end of the container on a heating pad set on low. Or fill a zip-top plastic bag, plastic soft drink container with a screw lid, or a rubber glove with hot water; wrap warm container with cloth, and put it next to the animal. Make sure the container doesn't leak, or the animal will get wet and chilled.
6. **Tape the box shut or roll the top of the paper bag closed.**
7. **Note exactly where you found the bird.** This will be very important for release.
8. **Keep the bird in a warm, dark, quiet place.**  
Don't give it food or water.  
Leave the bird alone; don't handle or bother it.  
Keep children and pets away.
9. **Contact a wildlife rehabilitator, state wildlife agency, or wildlife veterinarian as soon as possible.**  
Don't keep the bird at your home longer than necessary.  
Keep the bird in a container; don't let it loose in your house or car.
10. **Wash your hands after contact with the bird.**  
Wash anything the bird was in contact with — towel, jacket, blanket, pet carrier — to prevent the spread of diseases and/or parasites to you or your pets.
11. **Get the bird to a wildlife rehabilitator as soon as possible.**

**It's against the law in most states to keep wild animals if you don't have permits, even if you plan to release them.**



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