

Dear Tweezle ... I found a baby bird on the ground. What should I do?

If you have found a baby bird, you want to be absolutely certain it has in fact been abandoned or injured before you bring it to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

There are essentially two types of young birds:

NESTLINGS are pink and featherless and too young to be out of the nest. They won't look sick or injured, but they can't hop around on their own. It is likely that the baby bird has either been blown out of the nest or that the whole nest has been blown down.

- If the nest is on the ground, collect the nest material and place it in a small plastic container with drainage holes cut in the bottom
- **If the nest has been destroyed (or you can't find it), make a new one!** Use a berry basket, or a large clean margarine tub with a few holes poked in the bottom for drainage, and pack some dry grass or dry clean wash clothes inside to form a cup shape.
- Tuck the babies into the nest so they are sitting upright
- Attach securely as high as possible to the tree you believe the nest had been in (often the closest tree to the young bird).



• **Do not feed the baby anything. Do not give it water.**

• **Parents WILL accept babies that have been handled by humans** because birds have a poor sense of smell but strong protective instincts! However, try to minimize handling anyway.

• Watch from a distance to make sure a parent comes to feed the baby within 1-2 hours.



FLEDGLINGS often leave the nest before they are able to fly. You may see them on the ground hopping around or fluttering their wings. They are fully feathered but will have a short stubby tail, and sometimes have little tufts of down sticking through their feathers. They also often have yellow or white skin along the side of their beaks and will open their mouths for food. The parents feed them frequently and care for them on the ground and in areas surrounding the nest.

• **If you've found a fledgling, don't rush to "rescue" it.**

- Fledglings are vulnerable at this time, but this is an important stage in their development, and they need to stay where they can receive their parents' care.
- You can help them to survive by keeping cats indoors & dogs on a leash.

However, if no parent returns after two hours, if there are visible signs of injury, blood, or if the bird is weak, debilitated or cold, then it is important to contact your local licensed wildlife rehabilitator. You can usually find one by contacting your local provincial wildlife department.

SOURCE: www.cwf-fcf.org



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