I Found a Baby Bird
Now What?

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

No

Is bird feathered?

No

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

No

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

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.

Yes

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

No

Leave the area.
Baby is OK.

No

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

Yes

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

No

Call a wildlife rehabilitator.

Yes

Call a wildlife rehabilitator.

Leave the area.
Baby is OK.

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

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

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).

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)

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

Yes

Call a wildlife rehabilitator.

Is bird feathered?

Yes

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

Yes

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

No

Leave the area.
Baby is OK.

No

Leave the area.
Baby is OK.

Leave the area.
Baby is OK.

A baby’s best chance for survival is its mother

From Healers of the Wild: People Who Care for Injured and Orphaned Wildlife
By Shannon K. Jacobs
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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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