

FOUND AN INJURED ANIMAL?

Baby birds/mammals

Young wild birds and mammals are sometimes found alone. Don't panic. It is normal for them to be left alone with their siblings while the parents hunt for food. At this stage, they may be mistaken for injured or abandoned "orphans" and run the risk of being accidentally "rescued." Before you perform a rescue, read the following to make sure you are not creating an "orphan" and that a rescue is really the appropriate action. In most cases, it is best not to intervene. If you feel that help is genuinely needed, you should contact a qualified wildlife center like Pacific Wildlife Project.

Growth Stages and Behavior

NESTS OR DENS: Mother birds build their nests in a secluded or hidden area away from predators, near a water source. Mammals will "den up" in holes or old burrows, in the ground, under or in a building or rubbish pile, just shortly before the birth of their young. Leaves, cloth, feathers and various debris are used for nest building by both mammals and birds. Raccoons may use rags and straw while hummingbirds prefer dryer lint and spider webs. Birds generally lay several eggs on consecutive days and begin brooding upon completion. Both birds and mammals will aggressively protect their nests or den from predators. Damaged or fallen bird nests may be replaced or reconstructed with strawberry baskets lined with facial tissue or dryer lint (NO COTTON OR STRINGY CLOTH) and anchored in place with twist ties. Platforms may be built to secure (or encourage) larger nests. Nests should be replaced in or near their original location and hidden from the overhead view of predators.

NESTLING BIRDS / SUCKLING MAMMALS: (1-5 weeks of age) are downy or incompletely feathered or furred with eyes closed. They belong in the nest or den all the time where they are protected from the elements and predators. Both parents of many bird species feed the young returning at various times of the day or night, depending on the species. Parents may or may not stay with the young through the night. Some hang or stay nearby.

FLEDGLING BIRDS / WEANING MAMMALS: (5-12 weeks of age) are feathered or furred, active and frequently venturing away from the nest or den. They are still dependent on their parents for food. Young birds may hide in shrubs, thick ground cover, low tree branches or on

the ground. They are unable to fly at this age and hop or fly in the short bursts. Mammals are active within or around the den and will accompany their parents on foraging trips. "Predator avoidance response" is not developed at this stage and the young seem "tame."

Nestling birds may be returned to their nests and fledgling birds may be moved to safe spots when in danger. It is not true that birds reject their young when touched by humans. Birds locate their young by sound and will respond instinctively to their cry. Mammals use sight and sound to find their young. Both rarely abandon their young and will accept their return even after a disturbance.

JUVENILES: (12-25 weeks of age) are nearly independent, but still in the company of their parents. Mammals occasionally get lost at this stage while following parents on foraging expeditions or wandering around on their own. Birds follow their parents on flights, sometimes begging for food supplements while they learn to forage on their own. Since their ability to avoid predators is not completely developed, they are still approachable.

ADULTS: (25+ weeks old) Independent, self-feeding, displays fully developed predator avoidance skills. These birds and mammals should be active, secretive, and display a natural fear of humans. They should not appear "friendly." They may be solitary or communal, depending on species behavior.

RESCUE SITUATIONS:

- Rescue is appropriate if you see any of the following conditions:
- There is visible evidence of injury
- Animal has been in the mouth of a dog or cat
- Use of limb(s) impaired, fractured
- Bird or animal appears weak or inactive
- Baby bird not crying for food (inactive)
- Juvenile or adult seems unusually friendly
- Head trauma, head tilts, disorientation, struck window or in convulsions

- Feels "cold" to the touch
- Infested with ants or parasites
- Seabird beached or stranded on land
- Fishing hook injury / line entanglement
- Swallowed fish hook - DON'T CUT THE LINE!

Orphan bird: observe for 1-2 hours to check for presence of feeding parents

Orphan mammal: observe for 2-4 hours to check for presence of feeding or returning parents.

When in doubt - call us for advice.

CAPTURE AND RESCUE

Have a rescue/ transport box ready before capture. For larger birds or mammals, throw a thick towel over the animal and "scoop" into a cardboard box with smooth (no loops) toweling on the floor. Close the box lid immediately or cover the top with a towel to keep the box dark. Small birds may be transported in boxes or grocery bags with paper towels on the bottom. Larger birds or mammals can be carried in boxes, laundry baskets, or pet carriers lined with blankets. Rescued animals need immediate attention and should be transported as soon as possible. Keep the animal warm, dark and quiet. Do not peek into the box. Keep children and pets away.

Do not disturb nests, eggs or families where parents and young are together. Often times, injuries or accidental orphans will be the result! Let parents care for their young and compete without human interference. Remember that animals move their young, and that their survival instincts should protect them from most hazards.

HUMMINGBIRDS require special emergency care. They must have fluid within an hour of rescue. Mix 1 tablespoon granulated white table sugar with ¼ cup warm water until dissolved. Never use honey. Cool the mixture and offer it in a clean eyedropper held at the tip of the bird's beak. Jiggle the dropper slightly to encourage feeding (you will see the throat move). Do not squeeze the dropper, do not offer the

mixture in an open bowl, and do not get on any of the feathers. Feed at 20 minute intervals until bird is transported. Hummingbirds are insect eaters and require a very special diet mixture that only a rehabilitator will have in proper form. Sugar water and commercial Hummingbird Foods are intended to as treat goods (like Twinkles) and are not balanced or healthy diets. Neither will sustain life in a hummingbird for prolonged periods and should not be used as a good source for more than 24 hours.

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