

If you find a baby that needs help, there are several steps that will ensure it gets the best care.

- Observe the bird. Before touching the bird or stressing it in any way, watch to see if it can care for itself or if the parent birds are tending to it. Many times when a human spots a baby bird, they fail to see the nearby parents that are ready and willing to feed and protect their offspring. It may take up to 2 hours for parent birds to return to their baby, however, so patience is essential.
- Intervene as little as possible. In the case of fledglings (older babies on the ground with parents feeding it), simply moving the bird to a sheltered nearby location out of direct sun is the best choice to give it a helping hand. Younger birds may require more help, but it is always best to interfere with the birds in only minimal ways.
- Return the bird to the nest. The best place for a baby bird to be is in its own nest. If the hatchling is too young to be out of the nest, gently pick it up and place it back in its nest. If you are unable to find the nest or it is unreachable or destroyed, Call a wild bird rehabilitator.
- Keep the bird safe. If the bird is in imminent danger from a damaged nest, predators or other unsafe conditions, or if it is **visibly injured or ill**, it will need immediate help. Gently place the bird in a small box lined with tissues, paper towels or similar material and cover the top of the box loosely with newspaper or a towel. Keep the bird indoors in a quiet, safe location until a wildlife rehabilitator can take the bird for proper care.
- Do not give baby birds food or water. While this may seem counterintuitive to helping baby birds, **young birds have precise dietary needs** that can't be met with **kitchen scraps, birdseed** or other foods. Young birds need live insects for protein to develop properly, and their parents will feed them 3-4 times every hour to meet that need. Offering improper food can cause a young bird to choke or become malnourished. Instead, wait for the parent birds or a wildlife rehabilitator to feed the baby bird a proper diet.