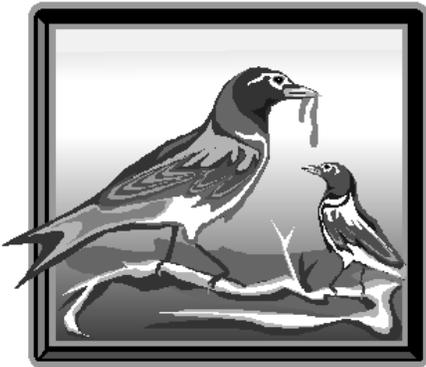


The baby birds we are likely to encounter are usually species that are highly adaptable and prolific. Casualties are normal. We tend to be quite sheltered from the realities of nature, and it can be difficult not to interfere. It's best to leave bird rearing to the birds!

Loss of eggs, nestlings, or fledglings is normal for all bird species and built into "the system." It is not easy for many people to "let nature take its course," but it is nearly always the right thing to do.



A version of this information was published in *Birder's World* magazine in the reader's questions column by Julie Craves.

So remember:

- ❖ It's normal for baby bird to leave the nest before they are able to fly or have all of their feathers fully grown.
- ❖ It's normal for the parents to leave the babies alone, even for hours at a time.
- ❖ Trying to catch a baby bird, feed it, or give it water is more likely to kill it than save it.
- ❖ Most baby birds taken in by ordinary people die, either because it was already too late to save, or from improper care.
- ❖ Birds raised by people are often at a disadvantage when released back into the wild because of poor nutrition or behavior problems.
- ❖ It is illegal to possess a migratory bird in the United States without a special license.

If you would like to learn more about the Rouge River Bird Observatory, call (313) 593-5338, or visit our web site at: www.rrbo.org

What to do if
you find a

Baby Bird



Rouge River Bird Observatory
University of Michigan-Dearborn
Dearborn, MI 48128
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Rescuing” baby birds



During the nesting season there is a substantial outbreak of kidnapping: well-meaning people “rescuing” newly-fledged birds. Not only are the vast majority of these birds not orphans, but most people who “adopt” a fledgling – like the proverbial dog who finally catches the car bumper – have no idea what to do with it once they have it.

Baby birds grow rapidly, and leave their crowded nests while they are still not fully feathered and are unable or barely able to fly or take care of themselves. They are gawky and clumsy and appear pretty helpless, and are often on the ground. **This is normal!** Their parents are tending them, but are much more wary of you than the youngsters might be.

If you see a young bird, PLEASE resist the temptation to pick it up and take it home!

DOs and DON'Ts

- ❖ **DO** move the bird to a nearby safe place if the bird is in immediate danger of being stepped on, run over, or is being stalked by a cat. It is not true that if you touch a baby bird the parents will reject it.
- ❖ **DO NOT** try to catch the bird. You may find that the youngster is klutzy but fast and evades capture. Don't chase it all over the place, just let it go. The **stress can be fatal** to the bird.
- ❖ **DO**, if you want, retreat to a distance so that you can make sure the parents return to the baby. However, this might take a couple of hours!

Nest destroyed?



Sometimes nests are damaged by storms. If you encounter this situation you can fashion a new nest with straw or grass (using a berry basket or other small container with drainage works well), put the nestlings in it, and place it securely near the original spot.



If you find truly orphaned or injured birds, you need to **contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator in your area immediately.**

Young birds take a tremendous amount of specialized care. To raise a healthy bird takes more time, energy, patience, money, and expertise than most people can afford. Further, **it is illegal** for anyone without a permit to possess any migratory bird (including feathers or nests).

It is quite possible that, if a baby bird is injured or been truly abandoned that when you found it, it is too late to save it. If you absolutely have to hold on to a young bird while awaiting transport to a rehabilitator, keep it in a dark, covered (but ventilated) box in a warm, quiet place. **Do not try to feed it or give it water. Improper food or administration of water can kill it.**