

## **WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FIND A WILD BIRD IN TROUBLE?**

Some of the wild birds you encounter may be in need of human care due to injury or parental loss. **However, most are neither orphaned nor injured.** The following guidelines should help you determine if a wild bird needs help.

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**BABY SONGBIRDS:** Usually babies fall right under their nests. If the bird is lying under a tree or shrub try to locate its nest, probably straight above. If the baby bird is naked or has pin-feathers and cannot move around freely, put it back in the nest. It's not true that if a human touches it, its mother will desert it.

If the nest has fallen on the ground, secure it in the tree or shrub. If it is destroyed, make a new one out of a margarine tub lined with grass by poking a couple of holes on the bottom for rain drainage, tying three or four strings around the rim and securing it close to the original nest site. If the baby bird is near a building, its nest may be in the eaves or attic of that building. Watch the nest closely for at least one half hour to see if the parents return. If they don't, call a wildlife rehabilitator.

If the baby bird is well-feathered and hopping around, leave it alone; it is a fledgling. At that age, the young bird is supposed to hop around in the bushes or under them and exercise its wings. A parent is probably close by. If the youngster is in the street, herd it back to the nearest bush.

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**ADULT BIRDS:** Any adult bird which doesn't fly or run away from approaching humans is in need of assistance. After capturing it, put it in a box and place in a quiet, warm, dark spot and call a wildlife rehabilitator. Do not try to feed it or give it water. If you are trying to rescue a bird of prey, be aware that the talons on its feet can inflict serious wounds. Call a rehabber for instructions on how to safely capture such a bird before attempting it. **CAUTION: in spring & summer, be sure the bird is truly a disabled adult rather than a fledgling that doesn't yet fly well.**

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**HUMMINGBIRDS:** These tiny birds eat about every fifteen to twenty minutes in the daytime. Their diet consists of insects and flower nectar-sugar

water is only a supplement. Hummingbirds must be taken to a rehabilitator equipped to care for them immediately because they cannot survive on sugar-water alone for more than a few hours without permanent damage.

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**A BIRD IS LIVING IN MY CHIMNEY:** Chimney swifts often use chimneys for nesting. Swifts are great insect eaters so many people welcome them in their chimneys. Young swifts stay in their nests (flimsy stick and saliva affairs) about four weeks. Sometimes the nests (not fire hazards) which the parents affix on the chimney wall, fall down. If this happens and the babies are naked, contact a wildlife rehabilitator immediately. If the babies are feathered they can be reunited with their parents by reaching above the damper and placing them against the inside of the chimney wall, they will climb up the wall and the parents will continue to care for them. Be sure the damper stays closed. Swifts migrate south in August and September.

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**DUCKS AND GEESE:** Waterfowl lay one egg a day for a total of up to thirteen eggs. They do not sit on their eggs until they have laid the full clutch. Incubation lasts about twenty to thirty days. As soon as the young hatch and all are dry, mother leads them to the nearest pond or stream. If the family needs assistance reaching the water, you can a) walk behind the family and supervise the trip to the water or b) the babies can be placed in an open box and walked to the water-this works most of the time as long as mother is able to keep visual and auditory contact with the young.

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**LAWS:** Native wild birds (including their nests, eggs and feathers) are protected under the federal Migratory Bird Act. This federal law states that it is illegal to possess, even temporarily, any native birds without the proper state and federal permits.

Humans are always a wild animal's last hope for survival, never its best hope. If, after reading these guidelines you believe a wild is in need of human care, contact a wildlife rehabilitator right away. **This website has all licensed Michigan Wildlife Rehabilitator's <**  
**<http://www.michigandnr.com/dlr/> >** Wild animals require specialized care. Keeping a wild bird for even a few hours without the proper care lessens its chances of return to the wild. If you are unable to reach one, put the bird or bat in a box or paper bag, and keep in a warm, quiet, dark place until one contacts you. Do not feed it or give it water.

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**WHEN SHOULD I PUT UP AND TAKE DOWN MY**

**HUMMINGBIRD FEEDER?** Feeders should be put up in mid-April and taken down after all hummingbirds have migrated (usually mid-late October). When the weather is very hot (85°F and above), be sure to thoroughly clean the feeder every two to three days. The mixture to use consists of one part sugar to four parts water. Do not use honey because it ferments quickly and can cause damage to the birds. It is not true that if feeders are up hummingbirds will not migrate.

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**WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FIND A BANDED BIRD?**

Anyone identifying or recovering a bird band can now call a toll-free number to report it. The number, 800-327-BAND, can be called from anywhere in the U.S.A., Canada and most parts of the Caribbean. The number was developed by the National Biological Survey, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Canadian Wildlife Service.

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