WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND A BABY BIRD

Every spring and summer The Santa Fe Raptor Center receives numerous inquires concerning baby birds that are found on the ground. Here is some helpful information.

Unless it is obviously injured, most baby birds do NOT need to be rescued. Parental care is best. Yet, concern causes people to "kidnap" the babies, greatly reducing their chance of survival.

Baby birds go through 2 stages of growth:

NESTLING STAGE: Born naked, eyes closed, pinfeathers still developing.

1. **IF UNINJURED, PUT IT BACK IN THE NEST.**
   The baby needs to be kept warm and fed frequently, so replace it quickly. The mother will NOT reject the baby because of human handling. Most birds have a poorly developed sense of smell and cannot detect your odor.

2. **CAN'T FIND THE NEST?**
   Birds hide their nest for protection. BUILD A NEST. Put paper towels and soft tissues in a Cool Whip or margarine container that has holes punched in the bottom for drainage. Wire it in a near-by tree close to where you found the baby. Make sure it is in a shaded, protected area. Watch, from a distance, for a parent bird to find the nest and continue to care for it. Monitor the nest for at least 1 hour. If there is no activity at the nest, call The Santa Fe Raptor Center.

3. **IF THE BABY BIRD IS INJURED: Call The Santa Fe Raptor Center at:**
   (505)699-0455 (Santa Fe) or
   (505)662-7418 (Los Alamos)
   (505)662-5096 (Los Alamos)

FLEDGLING STAGE: Fully feathered, but not able to fly.

1. **ON THE GROUND:**
   Many young birds fall to the ground on their maiden flight. This is a critical time in their lives when they are subject to many dangers. But it is natural for them to be on the ground developing their skills. Their parents are feeding them, teaching them survival skills, and showing them where to find their natural food in their quest forindependence.

2. **IF UNINJURED:**
   Unless unsafe, PUT THE BIRD BACK WHERE IT WAS FOUND. For protection, hide it in a bush or surrounding vegetation. The parents will hear the baby calling. Watch the area, from a distance, for about 1 hour. If the baby is still calling and no parent bird comes to feed it, it is time to call The Santa Fe Raptor Center. If the parents come to feed the baby, try to keep pets and small children away from that area for a few days.

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