

What to Do If You Find a Baby Rabbit or Bird

There is nothing cuter than baby animals and, with spring here and summer on the way, this is the season for babies.

Each year as the weather warms, animal services agencies and animal shelters get many calls from people concerned about a baby bird or bunnies they have found.



By Bonney Brown

Being animal lovers, when we see an animal in distress, we want to help. But sometimes the best help may be no help. How do you know when it's best to rescue a baby and when it's best to leave them where they are?

Here are some tips that will help you do what's best for them:

If you find a baby bird or baby bunny, the very first thing to determine is if the animal is sick or injured. Is the baby animal bleeding, shivering, vomiting, or was it attacked by another animal? If no, try to locate the nest and place the baby back inside and check occasionally for the mother to see if she returns. Stay completely out of sight and be patient; mothers won't return if any people or pets are present.

A baby bunny who is about four to five inches long, able to hop, with eyes open and ears up, does not need help. They are able to survive on their own and should be left alone. If you uncover a den of baby bunnies, simply cover them lightly with grasses or leaves; the mother can be away for hours and will likely return at dusk or dawn – she can repair the nest.

If you find a baby bird, look to see if the bird is feathered. If he is, then it's a fledgling and it is normal behavior to be hopping on the ground with the parents still feeding them. If he is not feathered yet, or has only pin feathers, it is most likely a nestling and will require some help. If you cannot locate the nest, make a substitute one by poking holes in the bottom of a margarine tub, or using a berry basket. Line it with dry grass or pine needles, and hang it from the tree where the original nest was or from a nearby tree. The parents will hear their young, find them and provide the necessary care. It's a myth that the mother will reject the baby if you've touched it.

In most cases, a baby bird's or rabbit's best chance for survival is its parents.

You can click to download a brief handout about baby birds [here](#) and mammals [here](#) that will help you make good decisions for them.

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