

# I Found a Baby Bird, What Do I Do?

Provided by David Bengston, Peregrine Audubon Board Member



Most of the time, they are fledglings that have just left the nest, cannot fly, and are under the care of the parents, and do not need our help. They are feathered and fluffy, can hop and flit about, and tightly grip your finger, and they're adorable. Leave it alone; do not put it back into the nest. You can watch from a distance to see if the parents return to take care of it. Keep pets indoors.

If it is sparsely feathered; cannot hop or flit about; and cannot grip your finger, it is a nestling. Look for the nest and return it to the nest. If it has been destroyed, make a new one and put it in. Then wait and watch to see if the parents come back.

If you find both parents dead, the bird is injured, you can't find the nest and you are absolutely certain that the bird is orphaned, then you need to find a wildlife rehabilitator. In the Ukiah area, you can call Cathy Ortiz (Mendocino Wildlife Association) at 707 984 6363. There is also Santa Rosa Bird Rescue at (707) 523-2473

If you are unable to reach any bird rescue people and you need to take care of the bird yourself: then get the baby bird contained. Wear gloves and protect yourself from their beaks, their talons and possible parasites.

To keep the baby bird safe while you figure out how to help them, put the bird in a small cardboard box (no cages) with a soft towel. Even when indoors, or on a warm day, babies can get cold and even hypothermic, so give them a heat source:

- a clean sock filled with dry, uncooked rice, and microwaved for one minute
- a plastic bottle from the recycling bin filled with hot tap water and wrapped in a tea towel or face cloth (secured to box so it doesn't squish the baby)
- an electric heating pad set to "LOW" and placed under half of the box
- chemical hand warmers (e.g. Hot Paws) that stay warm for up to 8 hours

Do not give them any food or water – right now keeping them warm in a dark and quiet place is more important.

Cover the box with a lid or towel and put it in a dark, quiet spot, away from people and pets. Contact a rehabilitator as soon as possible. Afterwards, wash your hands and anything that came into contact with the bird really well.

**IT IS AGAINST THE LAW TO KEEP WILD ANIMALS (BIRDS) IF YOU DON'T HAVE A PERMIT.**

## Bat Rescue



While we are on the subject of wildlife rescue, Dave has connected Peregrine Audubon with Anna, who volunteers with NorCal Bats. If you find a bat who may be in need of rescue visit <https://norcalbats.org/emergency-bat-rescue/> or reach out to Anna directly by texting 530-859-1791. If possible, text her a photo of the bat and list the location.

Image by US Fish and Wildlife

## YIKES! Cats Again

Provided by David Bengston, Peregrine Audubon Board Member

Every couple of years I write an article about cats and the damage they do to wildlife, primarily birds. I was asked to do so again and mention the statistics. So, this is about how much wildlife they kill and in particular what they do to birds.

I was a cat person until I read an article in International Wildlife many years ago, and then I began to pay attention to what they killed and how wildlife vanished whenever they were in the area. When cats were introduced to my neighborhood, the birds, especially quail, disappeared as did the lizards, rodents and small mammals. If the cats were removed, many of the wildlife revived; and if the cats were brought back, the wildlife would disappear again.



Each year, cats kill from 1.4 to 3.7 billion birds in the United States and Canada. They kill more birds than buildings, power lines and wind turbines combined. Add to that, they kill an estimated 6.9 to 20.7 billion mammals. They are the single greatest source of human caused mortality in the U.S. for birds and mammals. They have already caused the extinction of 33 bird, mammal and reptile species on islands worldwide. The National Center for Biotechnology Information says that cats have contributed to the total extinction of 63 bird, mammal and reptile species. The Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) lists domestic cats as one of the

world's worst non-native invasive species.

I think that we, humankind, have to weigh carefully what our feline pets are doing in the natural environment. We have been managing cats based on animal welfare issues. We need to change our policies to be based upon ecological impacts if we really care about birds and wildlife. Please realize that we are talking about numbers in the billions and not millions. This is not a mistake. I am not going to do a bibliography, but I will mention the single most important paper done in recent years. It is [The impact of free-ranging domestic cats on wildlife of the United States](#), (29 January 2013 in Nature Communications).

*Dave welcomes emails from anyone who has questions or would like further information:  
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*The cat in the photo is wearing a [BirdsBeSafe](#) collar which may decrease the number of birds that indoor/outdoor cats kill or injure.*

## About Peregrine Audubon Society



Peregrine Audubon Society is based in inland Mendocino County and promotes the conservation of birds, wildlife, and their natural habitats. Peregrine Audubon provides informative and educational public programs and participates actively as an advocate for environmental conservation.

**For more information on a wide variety of topics related to birding in Mendocino County please visit our website: [www.peregrineaudubon.org](http://www.peregrineaudubon.org)**

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