Found Baby Wildlife

Never feed a wildlife baby, as this can often do more harm than good. If visibly injured or in danger from a predator or neighborhood cat or dog, keep the baby warm and bring it to Project Wildlife.

But don’t assume all babies are injured or in danger! Follow these tips based on what kind of animal you’ve found.

**Birds:**

*Little to no feathers?*
Create a makeshift nest using a berry basket or small box, line with tissue and place securely in a nearby tree with baby inside. Since birds can’t smell, the parents won’t reject the baby.

Watch from afar to see if the parents return; if parents don’t return within an hour, keep the baby warm with a 60-watt light bulb at the top of a tall box or a heating pad set on low, and bring it to Project Wildlife.

*Mostly feathered?*
This bird is a young fledgling that is learning to fly and it’s normal for it to be on the ground. If left alone, the parents will continue to feed the bird and it will graduate to flying within days.

You may also see the parents “attacking” the baby, but don’t worry, this is normal and it’s how the parents teach the baby to hide from predators.

More about [Fledglings](https://resources.sdhumane.org/Programs_and_Services/Found_Wildlife/Found_Baby_Wildlife).

For additional information about baby birds, [click here](https://resources.sdhumane.org/Programs_and_Services/Found_Wildlife/Found_Baby_Wildlife).

**Mammals:**

*Watch and wait:*
The absence of a parent does not necessarily mean a wildlife baby has been abandoned.

To deter predators, some mammals (like deer and rabbits) only visit their young every 12 hours.

If you’ve found a nest, place an “X” of sticks over the entrance and check back later to see if the sticks were disturbed (meaning the parents returned to feed the babies).

*Warmth and isolation:*
For safety, always wear gloves when rescuing a wild mammal.
If the baby is confirmed abandoned or orphaned, place inside a box in a quiet, dark place away from pets and children until you can bring to Project Wildlife for treatment.

Keep the baby warm by placing half of the box on a heating pad set on low.

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**Rescue notes about certain animals:**

**Baby Ducks:** Do not allow to swim. Keep dry, because they can quickly get hypothermic (chilled) and die.

**Baby Hummingbirds:** Baby hummingbirds have a complex diet. It is best to be on nature’s diet provided by their mothers. So please wait at least 2 hours to be sure the mother is not feeding the babies before you move them to a licensed rehabilitation center like [Project Wildlife](https://resources.sdhumane.org/Programs_and_Services/Found_Wildlife/Found_Baby_Wildlife).

If you do see that the mother isn’t present, you can bring the babies into a licensed rehabilitator in their nest or line a plastic margarine cup or egg carton with dry tissue, paper towels, or a tight-knit fabric like a velour towel. Keep the baby warm to an outside temperature of 85 to 90 degrees (this is essential) by placing it under a gooseneck lamp about 5 inches away from the bulb.

Do not overheat the bird. If it starts open-mouth breathing or its neck is outstretched, it is too hot.

Animals should be transferred to a licensed rehabber as soon as possible so that they can be started on a properly balanced diet - and be given medical attention.

*Hummingbird tip:* Do not place hummingbird feeders near a window. The feeder is best placed far enough away from the window that there is not a clear reflection. The best location is at least two feet from the window and at six feet above the ground.

**Baby Opossums:** Give them something to hide under such as a T-shirt.

**Baby Skunks:** Always wear latex or vinyl gloves when handling baby skunks.

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**Coexist with Wildlife**

From the coast to the mountains to the desert to urban neighborhoods, San Diegans share this beautiful landscape with more than 320 animal species. Their role in our ecosystem can't be understated. In this guide, you will find crucial information for coexisting with the diverse wildlife in the San Diego region.

[Coexist with Wildlife Guide](https://resources.sdhumane.org/Programs_and_Services/Found_Wildlife/Found_Baby_Wildlife)