I found a baby bird -- now what?

Is the baby bird sick or injured?

- **No**
  - Does the baby have feathers and can it hop or walk?
    - **Yes**
      - Call the Division of Wildlife Resources or a wildlife rehabilitator.
    - **No**

- **Yes**
  - Call the Division of Wildlife Resources or a wildlife rehabilitator.
  - Can’t find a wildlife rehabilitator? Call the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources at 476-2740.

The baby is a fledgling. Fledglings have stumpy tails, are fully feathered or are fuzzy, but cannot fly. Put the bird back where you found it. (Birds do not have a keen sense of smell and will not reject their young if touched by humans). If the baby is in danger, you can place it in a nearby bush where it will be safe. Do not put the baby back in the nest, it may jump out again and could injure itself. It is natural for them to be out facing risks and developing new skills. Keep dogs, cats and children away for a few days.

The baby is a hatchling or a nestling.

- **Hatchlings**
  - Are very young, their eyes are closed and they have no feathers.
  - Can you find the nest and is it intact?
    - **Yes**
      - Put the baby back into the nest. Observe from a distance (for the duration of 2-3 hours).
    - **No**
  - Are the parents visiting the nest?
    - **Yes**
      - Leave the area. Baby is okay.
    - **No**

- **Nestlings**
  - Eyes will be partially open and their bodies will be covered with down, prickly looking “quills” or some feathers.

Don’t always look up. Look down and around too. Some birds are creative when choosing a place to build their nest. Some build their nests on the ground, inside trees, under eaves, and among or under rocks. Still can’t find the nest?

Can’t find a nest?

Build a nest! Use a margarine container or an ice-cream container. Punch holes in the bottom for drainage and put the remains of the nest or other materials (clean dry grass or small dry leaves) into the container. Securely attach the container to the original nest tree or one nearby.

A baby bird’s best chance for survival is with its parents. It is against the law to keep wild birds, even temporarily, without a permit.

If you find an injured adult bird, contact the Division of Wildlife Resources. Be careful when handling, because birds will defend themselves. Use a sheet or towel to cover large birds (if you have found a raptor, use leather gloves to protect yourself from the bird’s talons and beak). To transport a bird, place the bird in a cardboard box, that can be sealed and that has airholes cut into the top or side. Uncover the bird from the sheet or towel and seal the box. Keep the bird in a warm, dark, quiet place and take it to a rehabilitation facility as soon as possible.