I Found a Duckling/Gosling. What Should I Do?

**IMPORTANT:**
- It is a myth that if you touch a baby wild animal the parents will reject them – this is simply not true.
- Not all wild babies need help!
  Each year, we receive thousands of baby birds who are mistakenly taken from their parents.

**Before seeking help, ask these questions:**

- Is the baby covered in a fluffy layer of soft, downy feathers?
  - **NO**
  - **YES**

- Is she bright, alert, and mobile?
  - **NO**
  - **YES**

- Try to reunite the baby and parents by placing baby in a box lined with cloth and leaving her near where she was found. The box should be deep enough to offer protection, but not so deep that the parents cannot get to their baby. Parents are usually frightened by humans, so allow time for them to return. Once they come to the box, IF THEY CANNOT REACH THE BABY, you must gently tip the box over so the family can be reunited. Wait an hour and monitor the situation from a distance. **Has the family reunited and stayed together?**
  - **NO**
  - **YES**

- She needs help. Bring her to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. **Do not give food or water.**

- She is a juvenile. She is old enough to take care of herself. **Please leave her where she is.**

- She is bright, alert, and mobile, and are there other members of the same species who are nearby?
  - **YES**
  - **NO**

- **Most healthy babies** can be successfully reunited with their parents.

Ducklings and goslings are precocial, meaning they hatch with a layer of fuzzy down on their bodies and can walk around on their own. They feed themselves from birth and are never fed by their mothers. However, as they are unable to defend themselves, they still depend on parents for warmth and protection.

Ducklings and goslings are rarely orphans. In most species, both parents care for the young. If one dies, the other will continue to care for the babies.

*Note:* It is **illegal** for an unlicensed individual to possess a wild animal for more than 24 hours.

Please call our hotline if you have any questions or find a baby bird.
(830) 336-2725