



## SONGBIRDS

### KEY FACTS:

- Newborn Baby birds are called “Hatchlings”. Hatchlings are newborn to 2-3 days old and have little to no feathers and eyes are closed.
- Depending on the species, hatchlings are about the size of a walnut (in shell) when hatched. Some can be as small as a shelled cashew.
- Birds with fluffy down are called “Nestlings”. Nestlings are 3-12 days old and have fluffy down with eyes open-Eyes usually open at 3-5 days.
- A nest usually has 3-7 hatchlings.
- Fledglings are 13-21 days old, learning how to fly and self-feed. They are often found hopping around on the ground.



Wildlife Rehabilitators' Association of Massachusetts

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/find-a-wildlife-rehabilitator>

## NESTS

Nests can be found in trees and bushes and can be dislodged in storms or after an attack by a predator.

### IF YOU SEE A BIRD ON THE GROUND

- If a nest has fallen to the ground and the parents are still nearby, make a nest out of a basket, a plastic bin, tissue box, or other container and place the babies inside. Hang it somewhere near its original site, on a tree or a pole where the parents can see it and continue to feed their young.
- The parents should return about every 20 minutes, and babies should be left there as long as it isn't dark or cold. Babies should not be left overnight if the parents do not come back.
- Fledglings will leave the nest when they are almost ready to fly. This is a critical, but extremely vulnerable time in their development. If you see a bird hopping on the ground with mostly adult feathers and a few fluffy down feathers, it may be learning to fly, and the parents are likely nearby watching. If this is the case, ensure that there are no domestic animals in the area and observe the fledgling from a distance.
- Scent transfer is a myth- but try to handle the babies as little as possible.
- **If no parents are around, call a wildlife rehabilitator.** Place the birds in a felt or small knitted hat or other warm cloth with no big loops that can wrap around limbs or necks.
- Provide a heat source like a heating pad (SET ON LOW) or a hot water bottle wrapped in a towel for AMBIENT heat (not direct).
- **Examples of the Development of Hatchlings, Nestlings and Fledglings:**

