

They're nothing but big babies

Burnaby Now

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They may look like they know what they're doing - but they're just big babies.

The Wildlife Rescue Association, which has its headquarters in Burnaby, released 10 baby gulls last week.

Jane Thomsing, care centre liaison, says the birds are often brought into the centre by mistake. People see them on the ground and presume that they are injured. In fact, they are usually in the fledgling state and need to be left alone. It's an understandable mistake given that the gulls are so big and are often unafraid of humans. But if the bird is all gray-brown, it is a juvenile.

However, if the bird is injured - dragging a wing, a limp or showing signs of bleeding - then Thomsing suggests bringing it in to the centre.

For those who believe there are too many gulls around and question the need to save them, wildlife rehabilitator Linda Bakker has an answer. She says most gulls need rescuing because of human interference.

"It's our duty to nurse them back to health," Bakker says. "It's not our duty to determine the size of the population."



CREDIT: Larry Wright/BURNABY NOW

Spreading their wings: Jane Thomsing, care centre liaison at the Wildlife Rescue Association, tends to some of the juvenile gulls in the centre's care. The centre gets 3,000 animals a year, 80 per cent of which are birds.

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