

## BABY BIRD SEASON

Nesting is a time of competition. Birds must find a place to build a nest, which is never easy, as many areas of the lower mainland are unsuitable nesting sites. Within the few areas that do have appropriate habitat, many species of animals compete for the same



food supply and housing locations. As a result, some birds are pushed to the habitat's edge and forced to choose nesting sites that are close to human constructs such as roads, sidewalks or jogging trails. As human traffic increases, so do the risks to the birds and their nesting sites.

Many people come across these nests, eggs and baby birds and are concerned about their plight. Unfortunately, most of these concerns result in actions that are

harmful when their intentions are the opposite. A recent example is that of a Killdeer nestling brought to us. Someone had found an egg on the ground, took it home and hatched it in an incubator. Even with the valiant effort by Wildlife Rescue staff, the nestling died.

Although we don't know all of the particulars of this case, there are some lessons to be learned by this example. First, not all birds nest in trees. Killdeers, as well as some other species, choose nesting sites on the ground and, as a result, can be found in peculiar places. Second, not all baby birds need help. Nestlings, which are naked or partially feathered, should be put back in the nest. If you can't locate the nest, or are unable to put the nestling back, or you see an obvious injury to the bird, then call Wildlife Rescue for advice. Fledglings, which are well feathered and near adult size, are more likely to be found hopping on the ground. This is



natural because birds at this stage must develop the muscles to fly, which entails spending several hours on the ground. There is usually a parent nearby teaching them how to fly and find food. If you see a fledgling with a parent flying close by, leave them

alone and keep the area safe from cats. If you don't see a parent then put the fledgling on a branch and watch again. It may be up to an hour before you see the parent. After careful observation, if there is no sign of the parent or if there is an obvious injury to the fledgling, call Wildlife Rescue.

Summer is a wonderful time to enjoy nature, but along with that comes the responsibility we have to wildlife and their habitat. Be careful where you walk because you never know when a baby bird is close by.