



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Helping Wildlife During Breeding Season

The natural cycle of biological renewal gains momentum in April as plants and animals respond to milder weather and longer days. At this time of year, many species of wild animal are already in the midst of breeding activity, and this is when things start to get really busy at Wildlife Rescue Association's care facility in Burnaby. WRA has been receiving wildlife in need of care and attention for over thirty years, and April is usually when admissions of wild animals begin to increase dramatically. WRA will expect to receive up to 2,000 animals between April and September, many of them youngsters from the current breeding season.

This can be a crucial and dangerous time for nestling and fledgling birds. Increasing loss of habitat in the region makes suitable nesting sites more difficult to find, and many species adapt by choosing nest locations that are not ideal for safely raising a family. By nesting closer to roadways and housing developments, the risk of parents or young being struck by vehicles, attacked by cats, or unnecessarily disturbed by humans, also increases.

But the news is not all grim, and there are many ways that we can help make nesting season just a little bit easier for our feathered friends. First and foremost, it is important to know that not all birds on the ground need help. Young birds can be categorized as either "nestling" or "fledgling" birds. Nestlings are naked or partially feathered (see photo), whereas fledglings are fully feathered but not yet able to fly. Nestlings need assistance and should be put back in the nest, if possible. If you cannot locate the nest or if there is an obvious injury, call WRA for advice.

Depending on species, fledgling birds will spend a number of days on the ground, gaining muscle strength and learning critical foraging skills from their attending parents. This is an incredibly important stage, when birds are exposed to various social and environmental cues needed for survival, which are best taught by wild parents. If you see a healthy fledgling bird with parents around, they should be left alone and cats should be kept indoors. If there are no signs of parents for one hour, call WRA for advice.



A nestling robin being rehydrated at WRA Photo credit: Tracy Riddell/WRA

In addition to knowing when to intervene, we can do many things in our own backyards to help wildlife, such as constructing nest boxes, growing native plants, and supplying a bird bath as a freshwater source.

If you find a wild animal in distress, please call our Care Centre 604.526.7275 or visit us online at www.wildliferescue.ca to find other ways to help wildlife.

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WRA Wildlife Rescue Association of BC is a charitable society that has rehabilitated wildlife on the shore of Burnaby Lake since 1979. Each year, WRA receives around 3,000 injured, orphaned, and pollution-damaged animals, and WRA's education and outreach program annually delivers over 100 invited presentations and displays throughout the Lower Mainland.

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