



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Leave Fledglings Something To Crow About!

At this time of year, Wildlife Rescue Association's Care Centre is very busy with young birds, which made up most of the over 500 patients that were admitted in May alone. By June, the majority of these young birds come into care as fledglings that have left the nest and are learning survival skills from their parents. Current patients include finches, flickers, bushtits, blackbirds, chickadees and crows.

The well-known "caw-caw" of the Northwestern Crow is a prevalent sound at WRA, and in the last two weeks WRA has been inundated with phone calls and visits from well-intentioned rescuers, who have discovered fledgling crows in their backyards, local parks, or even in the busy streets of downtown Vancouver. Unable to fly, these birds have appeared to be injured or ill, and have often been mistakenly captured and brought into care.

Fledgling crows are a similar size to their adult counterparts, but can be easily identified by pale blue eyes and a large pink mouth (see picture below). Like many species, fledgling crows spend 7-10 days on the ground after leaving the nest, where they are unable to fly. Although they are vulnerable during this period, it is also an extremely crucial time for birds to practice flapping, develop flight muscles and stamina, learn social and warning calls from their parents, and be taught foraging behavior in the urban environment. Crows are very intelligent, and research has demonstrated that aspects of "culture" are also passed between generations during development.

WRA is a poor substitute for good parents, so it is imperative that these birds remain with their family, if possible. Parents and siblings from the previous year's nest are extremely protective, often "dive-bombing" those who attempt to get close. This behaviour is only temporary though, and subsides once the fledglings gain flight.

So, if you spot a fledgling crow, please monitor it for as long as possible – ideally up to a few hours – for signs of adult birds in the vicinity; often they are simply off foraging and will return promptly. In this way, we can prevent youngsters from being removed from their parents unnecessarily, and give nature its best chance at survival!



Fledgling crows at WRA Photo credit: Paul Steeves

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 and support WRA.

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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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