



Gull Rooftop Nesting Season

Frequently Asked Questions

July 2021

There are Gulls nesting on our rooftop! What should I do?

Leave them alone! It is a federal offense to tamper with a gull nest.

Every July and August, “Gull Season” occurs in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. Gulls like to nest on flat rooftops in Vancouver. To stay close to their main food source of fish, gulls will nest in areas near water. These rooftop sites are typically safe from predators - humans included!

Gull parents will only leave their babies to gather food for them. Gull nestlings are *semi-precocial*, they hatch with downy feathers, eyes open, and can walk around shortly after hatching. However, they do not feed on their own like fully precocial babies (goslings and ducklings), rather they rely on their parents for food and remain in the nest for a number of days.



Ideally, if the nest site is on a rooftop, the young gull only leaves the nest/rooftop once they can fly and find food on their own. Often, the young gulls glide down from their nesting site to ground level where the parents continue to provide food for them until they can fly.

What are some common reasons a young gull would be admitted to Wildlife Rescue?

1. Orphaned

The most common reason juvenile gulls need help is when they are orphaned, which can lead to dehydration and starvation as the parents are not around to provide important nutrients.

2. Hit by Car

Once on the ground, young gulls face urban challenges including busy streets full of people, cars and bikes, all potentially harmful for these animals. If the animal has been hit by a car or bike, they often suffer broken bones and other internal traumas.

3. Nest Disturbance

As gulls often nest in urban areas, they are frequently confronted by humans. This is particularly apparent on construction sites where their nests can be in the way of work, and are unknowingly disturbed.



When is intervention needed?

Intervention is required when:

- If a **nestling** (all downy/fluff/spotted) is found on ground.
- If an **older nestling** (spots on head/fully feathered on body) is found in an unsafe area or shows signs of injury or distress.
- If a **fledgling** (Grey/brown in color, short tail) is found with injuries (blood, bone, drooping wings etc.).
- If a **fledgling** is showing signs of lethargy or dehydration (sunken eyes, slow moving, wobbly, not bright alert and responsive).

Nestling

Covered in fluffy down feathers, spotted all over.



Older Nestling

Fluffy spotted down on head, body is covered with smooth grey feathers.



Fledgling

Fully feathered, smooth grey and brown, shorter tail than adult.



Caution: Gulls are an imprintable species!

Since it is possible for gulls to imprint and habituate on humans, avoiding interacting with the young gulls is necessary. Please **do not** feed, pick up, pet, or interact in any way with young gulls.

In care, highly trained staff and volunteers wear extensive “imprinting gear” to avoid them from associating humans with food or worse, not having a natural fear of “predators” such as humans.

Need more help?

Call your local wildlife rehabilitator for assistance.

Wildlife Rescue Association of British Columbia
5216 Glencarin Drive, Burnaby, BC V5B 3C1
Support Centre: (604) 526-7275
info@wildliferescue.ca

[If you are not located in the Lower Mainland, please contact your nearest wildlife rehabilitator.](#)



Gull in care at Wildlife Rescue.

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