

Adopt a Key Largo Animal Shelter Pet

Meet a few of the animals who are currently available for adoption at the Key Largo Animal Shelter. If you are interested in taking one of these adorable furry friends home stop by or call. The Shelter is located at mile marker 106 Oceanside; phone 305-451-0088.



Sophie



Max



Panda & Phoebe



Charlie



Moo Moo



Felix & Oscar



Patches



Bonnie



Pebbles

Spring has Sprung for Keys Songbirds!

The Ring-Necked Dove pictured here heralds the arrival of baby songbird season in the Florida Keys. Currently being rehabilitated at the Florida Keys Wild Bird Center's Wildlife Hospital with the help of an adult foster mother, the young bird is one of a trio of doves rescued recently in the Upper Keys, each under different circumstances.

"Sometimes youngsters are brought in for good reasons," cautions Lela Larned, FKWBC's director. "But just as often, young birds are 'kidnapped' by well-meaning folks who are trying to help, but don't quite understand how to decide if a young bird truly is in trouble."

Unless a bird is obviously injured, it's best to watch from an indoor vantage point for a while to see what is going on.

What to Watch For:

- Almost all young birds go through a fledgling period, when they have hopped out of the nest but their wings, feathers, and flight skills are not quite developed yet. Though they might appear alone, the patient observer will discover parent birds are close by, swooping down to check on youngsters a few times an hour. This un-flighted period holds true

for birds as small as hummingbirds through birds as large as ospreys. Gradually youngsters begin to gain strength, first perching on branches close to the ground and then taking short flights but the flightless period can last for 10-14 days, leaving the youngsters extremely vulnerable to predators. Some species of songbirds, especially insectivores, need feeding every few minutes from visiting parents. Other species, especially seed-eaters such as doves, are only fed every few hours and are left unattended.

When Baby Birds Need Help:

- Birds that have had direct contact with a pet, obvious injuries such as broken bones or open wounds, have suffered a long fall onto a hard surface, feel cold to the touch, or are un-feathered and found on the ground need help from FKWBC's Hospital immediately. Even the smallest bite puncture from a cat or a dog will spark an infection in young birds that is impossible to survive without oral antibiotics. Every minute counts in saving these babies' lives. Simply place the injured bird in a

covered box with tissues or paper towels and call FKWBC's wildlife help hotline: 852-4486. Food and water should not be offered as they can be very harmful initially; keeping the animal warm, dark, and quiet is most important.



Photo by Nancy Pindru, FKWBC clinic volunteer

How You Can Help:

- If you have a cat-free yard, help host bird families by hanging birdhouses, keeping bird-bathes supplied with fresh clean water, and maintaining shrubs, trees, and ground cover as hiding spots for young families.
- Keep baskets with handles handy. Young birds on the ground or fallen nests can be protected from predators and neighborhood pets if placed inside a shallow basket and hung in a nearby tree. Parents will tend to the youngsters once they adjust to the novelty of the basket. Birds are safest up high.
- FKWBC often is able to reunite healed youngsters with parents and restore makeshift nests. Resist the urge to try and raise young

birds yourself. Lessons including migration, birdsong, nest-building, and foraging are best taught by bird parents.

Common Myth:

- It is not true that a mother bird will reject a youngster if touched by a human. Instead, human touch can mark the bird with a scent that aids bird predators such as raccoons, snakes, and opossums to locate and raid nests and babies.
- Keeping close tabs on pets during nesting season will save lives. Many of our native songbirds are declining at rates of 4% per year due to habitat loss and predation. Please help songbirds in your own backyard!



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