Injured, “Abandoned” or “Orphaned” Wildlife

“If you care, leave it there” is usually the best thing you can do for a bird or animal that appears distressed but shows no visible sign of physical injury, like this young Purple Martin photographed by Stephanie Galea/The Connecticut Audubon Society.

Especially during the spring and summer, parents will often put a young bird or small animal out of the nest or den for it to learn to fend for itself, while remaining concealed. The Connecticut DEEP Wildlife Division advises:

“If you find a young bird on the ground that appears to not have feathers, look for a nest. If a nest is in a nearby tree or shrub and the bird feels warm to the touch, try to place the nestling back into the nest. If the nest has fallen on the ground, make a new nest with a wicker basket and some dry grasses and hang the basket with the nestling in it in a nearby tree or shrub. Most birds have a poorly developed sense of smell and will not be scared away if you touched the young bird. Be sure to watch the nest carefully for at least an hour to see if the adults return to find and feed their nestling.”

An injured bird or animal, on the other hand, may need help, but ONLY from a properly licensed rehabilitator. To find one call the DEEP Wildlife Division at 860-424-3333 for emergency assistance or call your local town animal control office.

Please do not bring any bird or animal to The Connecticut Audubon Centers. We are neither licensed nor equipped to care for them.

Find additional information from your local Animal Control Office, Humane Society or the CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) wildlife division www.ct.gov/deep/injuredwildlife