



BABY BIRDS (thrushes, blackbirds and sparrows) & DUCKLINGS

Housing

- Young birds of all kinds need to be **kept warm** at all times but not too hot!
- The **hot water cupboard** is a great place to put them for sleeping at night and on a dull day. Alternatively use a **hot water bottle** but make sure the temperature does not fluctuate too much. Wrap it in a towel and allow enough room in the container so that the bird can move away from the heat if necessary. A warm lamp can also serve the purpose
- **Bedding** should be supplied for warmth and can be shredded paper or hay or a towel
- Change soiled bedding at every feed. Parent birds would normally keep the nest spotless
- Fledglings (thrushes and sparrows) will need **perches** to stand on and exercise their feet

Feeding

- Feed every 2-3 hours during daylight but they need **not** be fed through the night
- Initially **high quality & preservative free Cat biscuits** which have been soaked in water is an excellent start. Once they are feeding independently the diet can be varied towards a more **natural diet** such as worms, slugs, grains, vege scraps, etc.
- Keep food on the ground, but always clean up left-over food
- Some baby birds may require **hand feeding** which can be a demanding job:
 1. **Open their beak** by using the thumb and index finger of 1 hand to gently apply pressure to the side of the beak and the other hand use your fingers to gently prize their beak open
 2. Then extend their neck slightly, **place food** (ideally a piece of soaked cat biscuit or worm) down their throat with a pair of tweezers or syringe placing the food behind the windpipe which is a little hole visible at the back of their tongue. If you're dripper feeding liquid then do it slowly onto its tongue so the bird can swallow, it is very easy to choke the bird with too much liquid
 3. The birds generally cotton on after a couple of attempts and **the task becomes easier**

General

- Baby birds are best reared in the company of other birds so that they **do not imprint on humans**
- Ducklings do not need to swim. They tend to drown easily and their body temperature drops quickly if they are not dried
- Swimming/bathing can be offered for short periods once they have a few permanent feathers and should be supervised
- The water should be tepid water, making sure that they are able to dry off in the sun once they are out.
- While swimming, place Cat biscuits into the swimming area and allow the ducklings to dive for the food. Provides entertainment for yourself and a small amount of exercise for the ducklings
- Fledglings will need a few weeks in an aviary to strengthen their wings before release