

Drooping/Dragging or Unsymmetrical Wings

Birds with broken wings usually have an obvious injury. One wing will droop much lower than the other. When looking at the bird, the wings are NOT symmetrical. Many times the wing will actually be dragging or twisted. Ask yourself where was the bird found? This can help determine if it is truly a broken wing. Birds found in or close to the street, next to buildings and windows or attacked by a pet are highly suspect for this type of injury. There may or may not be obvious bleeding. It probably will not be able to fly but may be able to flutter and run if a wing is broken.



Many people mistake fledgling birds for those with broken wings. If the bird is hopping about and other birds are feeding it, it is a fledgling bird. Leave it alone. [Fledgling](#) birds will "beg or gape with an open mouth" for food and cannot yet fly.



**FLEDGLING ROBINS...FLEDGLINGS ARE
OFTEN MISTAKEN FOR BIRDS
WITH BROKEN WINGS!**

Head injuries may keep the bird from flying also (See ["I Found A Bird That Struck an Object"](#)). Birds with broken wings need assistance as soon as possible. Bird bones begin to calcify quickly after an injury. If a bird's bone heals incorrectly, it will be unable to fly. This bird needs to be captured and transported to a wildlife rehabilitator for help. Call a wildlife rehabilitator for help and instructions as soon as possible.

I Found A Bird That Struck An Object

Birds that Strike Windows

Many times birds hit windows because they do not see them. This often causes head injury, broken wings and death. Birds of Prey like the Cooper's Hawk will fly straight into picture windows in their attempts to snag an easy meal of songbirds at a nearby bird feeder.

Birds that have head injuries are sometimes mistaken for birds with broken wings because they are dazed and will not fly when approached. Birds that cannot fly due to head trauma, may or may not have to be brought in. Sometimes, placing the bird in a warm, dark box punched with air holes for a couple of hours is sufficient for it to recover and then to be released. If it is a large bird, placing a box with air holes over the top of it will also work. Or if the weather is acceptable (and the bird is not directly in the rain or sun or other elements), leave the area for a little while with children and pets and again wait for the bird to recover on its own. Often the bird has just knocked himself senseless for a short period of time and soon will fly off. If the bird is bleeding from the beak or its pupils are dilated or it has an obvious injury it will, of course, need assistance. Call a wildlife rehabilitator for specific advice and instructions as soon as possible.

For help in identifying birds in need of rescue, please visit the eNature.com website, which provides excellent field guide information.

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Hopping around on ground? It could be a fledgling.



Baby birds that are found on the ground, are already feathered, and are able to hop, but are not yet ready to fly, are called "fledglings". These young birds are sometimes

mistaken for a bird with a broken wing. A bird with a broken wing will hold the injured wing lower than the good wing. Most broken wings will droop very low. Fledglings can be as large as the parents (sometimes appearing even larger), and are fully feathered. [Fledglings](#) are able to hop, but not yet fly. These birds should NOT be put back into the nest. They should be put back where they were found or close to it so their parents can continue to feed them. This is a very important time for the young birds to learn by observing their parents. This learning stage is probably the most dangerous time of a bird's life, but is a very natural step. They will learn about finding food, avoiding predators, and how to fly. Many people who mean well, take these young birds in by mistake. If you want to help, keep people and pets out of the area. It will take about 5-15 days before the baby can actually fly well.



Cat Attacked the Bird

Any bird that has been caught or attacked by a cat must be brought to a Wildlife Rehabilitator. Cats have bacteria (germs) in their mouths that will cause a bird to die, usually within 3 days, if left untreated.



If you find a goose, duck, heron or similar water bird entangled in fishing line or plastic, immediate attention to the animal is required. Unfortunately, many times the birds will still be flighted, so capture may not be possible until the bird is so "down" that the leg cannot be salvaged. The twine acts as a tourniquet cutting off blood supply and debriding skin and bone. Prompt attention from a wildlife rehabilitator is important. Call immediately for help and instruction.





If you intend to capture the bird yourself, use extreme caution! Wearing gloves, a sweatshirt and safety goggles is a must. These birds will bite. If you do have safety glasses, a shielded helmet or, at the bare minimum, a pair of sunglasses, use them. They will help protect your eyes. Wading birds have a very long reach with their beaks and they are deceptive in their striking distance. A sweatshirt will help protect your arms from bites.

When approaching the bird, remain calm. If the bird is still flighted, a quick



capture is necessary. Grab the beak with one hand. The bird will struggle and look like it is going to break its neck, twisting and trying to get away. Do not let go! With your other hand, push the

flapping bird to the ground. Straddle it carefully with your legs and fold in the wings. Having a second person around with a blanket is helpful. You can then either cover the bird with a blanket or towel or you can lift the bird in a football hold under your arm. At no point do you let go of the beak! Place the bird in a large cardboard box or dog carrier. Only at the last minute, can you let go of the beak as you secure the box or carrier.

The best solution is to get an experienced person to perform this type of capture. Call a wildlife rehabilitator as soon as possible!

Bird stuck on a glue trap



If you find a bird stuck in a glue trap, the first thing you need to do is calm the bird by covering its' eyes with a cloth or your hand. Quickly cover the open areas of the glue trap with tissues or a napkin to stop the bird from thrashing and gluing itself down further.

If this is a bat, they are considered rabies vector species in New York State and you should NOT handle under any circumstance. Please contact a rabies vector species rehabilitator as soon as possible for further instruction.

Use cornstarch, flour or baby powder to put around the gluey feathers of the bird. BE VERY CAREFUL to cover the nostrils of the bird lightly with a tissue to act as a mask. Inhaling the floating particles can kill the bird.



Use the powder to free up the feathers and remove the bird from the trap. Be careful to keep feathers intact. Remember flight feathers on a bird which are damaged will render the bird flightless. If you can not remove the bird yourself, at this point, put the bird into a shoebox with air holes and contact a wildlife rehabilitator for help immediately.

Once the bird is removed from the glue trap, still covering the beak, lightly powder any sticky feathers so that they do not stick to any other

feathers. Place the bird into a shoebox with air holes to relieve it from the stress of the ordeal. Contact a wildlife rehabilitator as soon as possible. The rehabilitator will need to use Dawn Dish Detergent to cut through the grease and remove the ruined feathers. This is an even more stressful procedure for the bird. Please get help as soon as possible.





Powder Down the Bird



Starling Freed!



In the event you need to rescue a sick or injured adult bird, please be prepared to take safety measures to ensure the bird does not injure you.

The fastest, safest way to capture a biting bird (the size of a goose, loon, or duck) is to throw a towel or blanket over it. Many times, when a rescue is warranted, the general public does not have the equipment (such as nets, gloves, safety glasses and carriers) needed to take care of the job, but a towel or blanket will serve the purpose of this specialized equipment.

In the event that neither of these items are available, especially with large biting and/or pecking birds, it is necessary to firmly grab the beak of the frightened and

injured party.

The bird will react by twisting and flapping its wings trying to free itself. Immediately restrain the wings, being careful not to let go of the beak under any circumstance, as you could easily get struck in the eye. Quickly place the bird in a football hold until you can place it in a readily available box for transport to a rehabilitator.



The general public should not attempt to perform this technique without detailed instruction from a wildlife rehabber and should not attempt it until they have confidence in their ability to restrain the bird without injury to themselves.

To see how quickly an injured bird can bite, view the short video clip below:

To keep the beak shut, use Vet tape or any easily removable tape such as surgical tape. Do not use other tapes which cannot be easily removed.

Below Dr. Laura Wade restrains the beak of a Great Blue Heron:

