

PELICAN TALK



*Pelican Harbor Seabird Station
Summer 2014*

Dear Friends of the Pelicans,

Baby bird season has kick started for us here at the Seabird Station! So far we have treated over 726 animals this year and more are coming in every day.

Babies, Babies, Babies!

We are in the middle of baby bird season, which means that everyone is finding nestlings, fledglings, and young birds that have been abandoned or have fallen from the nest. We certainly see a lot of them this time of year. Sometimes we have so many babies that when they are all crying for food you can hardly hear yourself think.



Nestling Boat-tailed Grackles. Photo by Teresa Sepetauc

So far this year we have received tiny hatchlings which are newly hatched babies only a few hours old with no feathers (also known as gummy bears); nestlings, babies with little to no feathers still in the nest that are only a few days old; fledglings, mostly feathered babies that are starting to hop out of nest; and juveniles, teenage birds that have started to fly. Sometimes these birds are injured/sick and/or orphaned, but sometimes they are perfectly healthy and just need a little assistance.

How can you help? If you find a baby bird that has fallen out the nest, it's always best to try to find the nest where it fell from and put the bird back. No one can raise a bird as well as its parents. The parents teach the babies what type of food to eat, where they can find it, what to do when it rains, where to get water when it doesn't rain and generally how to be a bird. Birds that are fledging from the nest will sometimes fall to the ground and the parents still feed them until they are able to fly. If you find a baby that is fully feathered and not injured try to put it back in the tree where the nest is or in the closest bush. There is no truth in the old wives tale that if you touch a baby bird the parents will abandon it. The babies will cry for food and the parents will find them. However, if you find a baby that is injured or if there are pets in the area, like cats, that could attack and injure the baby, please bring the bird to us as soon as you can. First get a box with a lid, put few small holes in the box and place a towel or paper towels in the bottom. Then gently pick up the little bird and put it in the box and place the lid on it. Try to keep it in a warm place and when in the car don't let the AC blow on the box. Most importantly please don't feed the bird or try to give it water - just get it to us as quickly as possible. More babies have been lost because kind people have tried to help by feeding or giving water to a baby only to have the food or water end up in the lungs causing pneumonia.