

## WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU FIND AN ORPHANED DUCKLING NEAR A LAKE

Sometimes a duckling will stray from the group and get lost. When finding a lone duckling(s) that you are able to catch, walk around the lake with him cupped securely in your hands. Let him peep loudly. Only his mother will respond to his cries...and she should respond in a frantic, angry manner. **Never put lost ducklings back into the lake as they are not likely to survive without their mother. Never put a lost duckling back with a mother duck unless you're certain it's the right mother.** Another mother duck will reject and drive off the intruder, or possibly even try to kill it. They know their own offspring and do not accept other babies.

## IF THE MOTHER DUCK CANNOT BE LOCATED

*The first priority when rescuing an orphaned duckling is to make sure it's warm.* Ducklings, especially newly hatched ones, should NOT be kept in water. They need to be on a heating pad the same as any other orphaned bird. Call a waterfowl rehabber and get the duckling to them.



## NEWLY HATCHED DUCKLINGS



Newly hatched ducklings should be kept in a covered aquarium or plastic tub with a heating pad (low setting) underneath half the aquarium. Use old towels and paper towels in the bottom of the aquarium. Ducklings defecate often and are extremely messy. Changing the aquarium often is necessary both for their sake and yours. Make a little house out of a cardboard box as ducklings usually like a place to hide.

Shredded newspaper can be used but do NOT use flat sheets of newspapers in any baby bird or duckling's cage. The surface is too slippery and they can develop "splayed legs" (a condition where the legs go out to either side and cannot support their weight).

Place a small, shallow container of water in the aquarium along with a small, shallow dish of Turkey or Game Bird 'starter' or developer. The 'starter' is similar to chicken

mash but has more protein. Developer (or crumbles) resembles gray Grape Nuts Cereal. For newly hatched ducklings, mix the water and starter (or crumbles) together so it is easier to eat. Use a shallow saucer (flower pot saucers work best) and put pebbles in the dish. Check it every few hours as the wet starter will turn sour. As the ducklings get a little older, the starter is offered dry with water nearby.

***Ducklings can drown!*** Always put rocks or ramps in any container of water and don't leave them alone in water when they are very little. Without their mother's warmth, little ones can get cold and ill, even in a saucer of water. If this happens, place the duckling on a heating pad or other heat source **immediately**. The duckling will be running around and peeping like crazy within a half hour.



In the Spring, duckling rehabbers can be quickly overwhelmed. Groups of 12 or 14 orphaned ducklings can arrive at one time. We can ALWAYS use more help, even if you can take just one group of ducklings to raise. A big plus is that **ducklings can eat on their own** and do not have to be hand fed!

Grown ducks need a specific environment to survive. Also, some ducks are migratory and should not be kept as domestic pets. Contact East Valley Wildlife and we will help you find the best possible home for your "foundling". Never release a domesticated animal into the wild. The chances are very slim that it will be able to fend for itself and survive because it has not learned the necessary skills. Our rehabbers know what to do, so give us a call when you need help.

