



# MAKING A SUBSTITUTE NEST

(courtesy of Toronto Wildlife Center, 2010)

If the babies are alert and healthy, nests should be replaced in their original location, or in cases where nests have been removed due to conflict (e.g., noise from the babies, construction, concern about feces from the nest), they can be replaced close to the original location using a false nest. **Parents will accept babies that have been handled by humans**, though handling should be kept to a minimum to avoid frightening the babies.

Use the guidelines below to build a false nest.

Note that although birds sometimes nest in locations inconvenient for people, they typically do not cause damage and remain in the nest for a very short time, usually 2-3 weeks. After this time, the babies leave the nest and do not return, at which point the nesting material can be removed and the entrance hole covered with 1/2 inch wire mesh to prevent future nesting.

**For replacing cup-shaped nests in trees, shrubs, or on eaves troughs or other flat surfaces:**

**Step 1:** Obtain an open plastic container - a large margarine tub usually works well, or a berry basket - to use as the base for the new nest. Poke holes in the bottom if there are none to allow for moisture drainage.

**Step 2:** Pack nesting material into the container; fill to container top. If you have remnants of the original nest, this is ideal. If not, use dry grass (make certain ants are not present), leaves, & twigs packed tightly into the container so that no gaps exist between the container and nesting material. Push the nesting material down in the middle and up around the sides to form a cup shape just large enough to contain the babies snugly.

**Step 3:** Thread several pieces of wire into a hole on the bottom of the container and out through another hole. These will become fasteners that can be used to wire the new nest in the original nest location.

**Step 4:** Attach the new nest to the location of the original nest if you can safely access it, or near it an area sheltered from direct sunlight and rain. It is important that the nest be as close as possible to the original since parent birds identify their babies by location. If you are not sure of the original location, look for signs such as remnants of nesting material or accumulation of feces to make your best guess.

**Step 5:** Once the nest is securely in place, tuck the baby or babies firmly into it. Make sure that the babies are sitting upright with their legs tucked underneath them, and that the sides of the nest support the babies in this position.

**Step 6:** Leave the area and monitor from a distance for 1-2 hours to see if the parents return to care for the babies. If there is no sign of any adults coming to the nest within that time period, contact a wildlife rehabilitator.



Photo by Terry Spivey, USDA Forest Service (forestimages.org)

## MORE INFO ABOUT SUBSTITUTE NESTS

[www.helpbabybirds.ca/s/do/  
FallenNest.html](http://www.helpbabybirds.ca/s/do/FallenNest.html)

[www.allaboutbirds.org/news/  
providing-nest-material-for-  
birds-dos-donts](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/providing-nest-material-for-birds-dos-donts)

*\*LDWF Licensed Wildlife Rehabilitators are NOT employees of the state or the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries and are not on call 24 hours/day. Most licensed individuals work separate jobs and volunteer their time and efforts. Please be respectful of the licensed rehabbers capabilities, as rehabbers often specialize in certain species or establish limits on the quantity they can accept and properly care for.*



Photo by Rocky Grimes, Shutterstock.com

## TO REPORT INJURED/ORPHANED BALD OR GOLDEN EAGLES

contact a LDWF Regional Office:  
[www.wlf.la.gov/page/contact-us](http://www.wlf.la.gov/page/contact-us)

**1-800-442-2511**



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