

Fact or Myth?

1. Birds can smell the scent of humans on a baby that has been handled.

Myth. Birds' sense of smell is not well understood, but it is clear they show no fear of babies that have been touched by humans.

2. Birds recognize their babies' voices and will come when they call.

Fact. Parent birds respond to the begging calls of their young, and will feed them if they can reach their babies.

3. Birds carry diseases that can be transmitted to people.

Fact. Birds can carry a number of parasites, bacterial, fungal and viral infections that can affect people. If you have handled a wild bird, you should wash your hands and other objects the bird has been in contact with.

4. A bird that has been caught by a cat should be let go if it can still fly.

Myth. Cats' teeth cause nearly invisible puncture wounds on their prey. The bacteria from their saliva in these wounds can cause deadly infections 3-5 days later. Birds caught by a cat should be brought to a rehabilitator.

5. It is illegal to keep a wild animal without a permit, even if you are trying to care for it and plan to release it.

Fact. Wild animal care requires very specific skills and knowledge. Wildlife rehabilitators are licensed by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife to rehabilitate wildlife, and are the only ones permitted to treat wild animals. This ensures the best chance for survival.

6. A licensed veterinarian can rehabilitate an injured wild bird.

Myth. Unless they are also a licensed wildlife rehabilitator or are working with a licensed wildlife rehabilitator, a veterinary license does not permit them to rehabilitate wild animals.

7. Orphaned baby birds like to be cuddled and talked to.

Myth. They are terrified of us and think we are predators. Not being able to see or hear us helps calm them.