

Fledgling birds may be best left

DURING spring and summer, especially after windy weather, the Animal Rescue and Rehabilitation centre is inundated with baby birds.

They are brought in by well-meaning and concerned people but in reality baby birds are better off without our intervention.

Many of these are fledgling birds, usually thrushes and blackbirds, that have just left the nest.

They can often fly, or at least hop around, quite efficiently as they are learning to fly and have their parents in close proximity watching over them.

It is best to observe them from a distance to assess if they have any major injuries, such as a drooping wing or a bleeding area.

This being the case,



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intervention is appropriate and they can be gently caught and brought in for care.

For uninjured fledglings, they are best left to be raised by their parents. Where possible, return these birds to the nearest tree or hedge, difficult for cats to penetrate, or place them in a box at a height.

An ice-cream container can

have drainage holes punctured in the bottom, be lined with wood shavings or leaves, and hung from a branch or even a clothesline.

It is a fallacy that handling baby birds will deter their parents from caring for them but try and keep handling to a minimum.

Watch to see that their parents return, they usually do once they hear their offspring calling, and if they do not, or there is a high risk of cats in the surroundings, then reconsider intervention.

Dr Liza Schneider is founding trustee and veterinarian for the Animal Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre (ARRC). ARRC consists of a team of volunteers who look after injured and orphaned wildlife throughout the Bay of Plenty.