

**Springtime is a busy one in the wildlife world, so I wanted to give you some tips about our local creatures.**



**Cap Your Chimneys!** Unless you like squirrels, bats, birds, and owls finding their way into your homes, make sure your chimney has metal mesh firmly affixed to the top of it. This allows smoke to flow and keeps the critters out. A simple square of metal mesh works, or you can have an actual cap. Here is a link to some cap options at Home Depot. <https://www.homedepot.com/p/Shelter-12-in-x-16-in-Mesh-Chimney-Cap-in-Galvanized-Steel-SC1216/206621402>. Amazon has them as well. Or get a handyman to affix mesh across the chimney opening.



**It's Raining Baby Birds!** Baby birds fall out of nests—a lot. So, if you find a nestling, it is OK to pick it up and put it back in the nest. Mama will NOT reject it. Texas Parks and Wildlife baby bird video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YfOY10AXFvU>



**Baby Birds Are Hopping Around but Can't Fly!** If you see a baby bird on the ground with all its feathers but it can't fly, it is a fledgling. This is a normal stage in bird development. Mama is teaching it how to find food and fly. If it is in an unsafe area, pick it up and move it to under a shady shrub near where you found it. Mama will find it and continue her lessons.



**Baby Cottontails Are Everywhere!** Texas native cottontail rabbits are multiplying right now. Their nests are shallow dents in the ground covered by grass and fur (check around before you mow the lawn). Mama comes at night to feed them. Dogs and cats often find these babies and I get a lot of calls about dogs finding the nests. The best thing to do is to put the baby back in the nest (unless it's injured). Take a laundry basket, turn it upside down over the nest. Put a brick on top to hold it in place. That way, predators—like dogs can't get at the babies. They mature quickly so the basket won't be needed for long.