

## Have you found a duckling in a POOL?

The following are two methods to consider to help the ducklings escape from the pool. When trying to deter ducks from the pool, we suggest loud noises, adding pool floaties to make the environment less hospitable, or adding motion detector lights.

### **Method #1: Ramp Method (Best Method – try first)**

1. First **open the gate** so that when the mom and babies are reunited, they can leave on their own. Don't make noises or sudden movements that might scare the mother away.

**Note:** If the parent is not seen, look around for them thoroughly in nearby trees and on the ground since they may be present but well hidden.

2. **Fashion a ramp** from lighter, floating objects such as a kitchen mat, the lid of a styrofoam cooler, or the floating cushion of a deck chair. Tie the object to the pool ladder or a nearby tree to create a diagonal ramp leading out of the pool. If a heavier material such as wood plank is used, attach an empty 2-liter bottle or foam pool noodle to the underside to make it float.

**Note:** If the babies hesitate to leave the pool, **placing floating objects in the pool** such as beach balls or other toys will make the water less appealing. Windup or remote control toys are more effective. Do not try to feed the ducks to lure them out as this will only encourage them to stay.

3. If the parent is present, **monitor from a distance to ensure that she reunites with them**. If there is no parent, put the babies in a box lined with t-shirt material or a towel and make arrangements to bring them to a wildlife center or rehabber. Give us a call at 713-468-8972 or try using [Animal Help Now](#) to find a center or rehabber near you.

**Note:** Duckling babies have strong little legs and will jump out of hands suddenly. This could result in injury or escape, so be mindful of this and transfer them quickly and carefully while staying low to the ground.

### **Method #2: Remove with Skimmer (last resort)**

If the babies do not use the ramp, try to remove them with a net or a pool skimmer using the following steps:

1. **Find a tall box** or other container (minimum of two feet tall so the babies don't hop out) and place it by the pool. Line the box with folded towels to absorb the water from the babies. If the mother duck is not already watching, poke a hole at the top of one side of the box and thread a piece of string through it that is at least 20 feet long. The string will help you release the babies close to the mother without scaring her away if she returns later.
2. Have one person **herd the babies** to the part of the pool where the box is. Have the second person **scoop the babies out one at a time** with the net or skimmer and place them in the box.

**Note:** Herding can be stressful, and **babies can die from stress**, so if the babies begin to open their beaks to breathe or dive underneath water while in the pool, stop the capture attempt until the babies have calmed down and normal breathing resumes.

3. Once the babies are in the box, **locate the mother**. If the **mother is nearby skip to step 5**. If the mother has flown away, place the open-topped box with the babies inside in a visible area near the pool, but also close to an exit route (such as a gate leading out of the yard). Walk away from the box and monitor from a distance for the next hour.

**Note:** Place floating objects such as beach balls or windup toys in the pool to deter the family from going back into the pool once reunited.

4. If the **mother duck returns within the hour**, pull the previously prepared string from a distance to tip the box over. If she is in proximity, the babies should follow their mother.

**Note:** If the **mother does not return** or the babies cannot be successfully reunited with her, make arrangements to bring them into a wildlife center or rehabber.

5. **(Mother has not left)** With the mother bird watching, walk the box far enough away from the pool that the babies will not be able to run back into the pool when they are released, waiting at each step to ensure the mother is following.

**Note:** Walk outside of the gate if possible. Avoid making noises or sudden movements that will scare the mother into flying away.

6. While the mother bird is watching you, place the box with the babies on the ground and **slowly tip the open top toward her**. When the box is tipped, the babies should run in the direction of their mother. **Never** release babies if a parent bird is not present and attending to them, even in a natural area with other birds around. These babies will die without the mother.
7. **If the mother flies away, recapture the babies and bring them into a wildlife center or rehabber.** Do not handle the babies more than absolutely necessary and keep them away from humans, pets, and noise in a covered container. Wild baby ducklings die very easily from stress. If they cannot be brought to a wildlife facility or rehabber immediately, read the temporary housing requirements (see below).

**Note:** If at any point you must pick up the babies with their hands, be aware that duckling babies have strong little legs and will jump out of your hands/the net suddenly. This could result in injury or escape, so be mindful of this and transfer them quickly and carefully while staying low to the ground

