



A City Wildlife Factsheet

Please don't put ducklings in a pool or fountain!

During the summer, people find orphaned ducklings throughout DC. Some well-meaning people put them in a pool or fountain, trying to help.

This is deadly: Please don't do it!

Here's why:

The ducklings need their mom.

A lone duckling cannot survive without its mother. She protects her ducklings and brings them to a food source. She also tells them when to get in and out of the water. This is important because they are not yet waterproof and can get waterlogged and drown if they are in the water too long.

The ducklings can't get out of the pool.

Young ducklings can jump up only about 4 inches. Most pool rims are higher than this -- too high for them to jump out. If they can't get out of the water on their own, they will drown because their mother can't help them out.



Jim Rider / South Bend Tribune

This curb is about 6 inches high – too high for these ducklings, even on land.

There is no food for them.

Man-made pools and fountains provide no food. Ducklings eat aquatic vegetation and insects that skim along the water. Man made pools and fountains do not supply these nutrients, so ducklings in a pool can starve. Pools are often chlorinated too, and chlorine is a poison.

The ducklings are not protected.

At night, the mother duck takes her ducklings onto land and “broods” or shelters them with her wings. This keeps them warm and safe from predators. If the ducklings don’t have mom, they can be attacked by crows, gulls, or hawks -- or die from exposure to harsh weather.

There is no shade.

Washington’s summers can be brutal, and few man-made fountains or pools provide any shade. Mother ducks will take their ducklings out of water and into the shade under plantings to keep them from the direct sun. Without shade, the ducklings can overheat or get dehydrated.

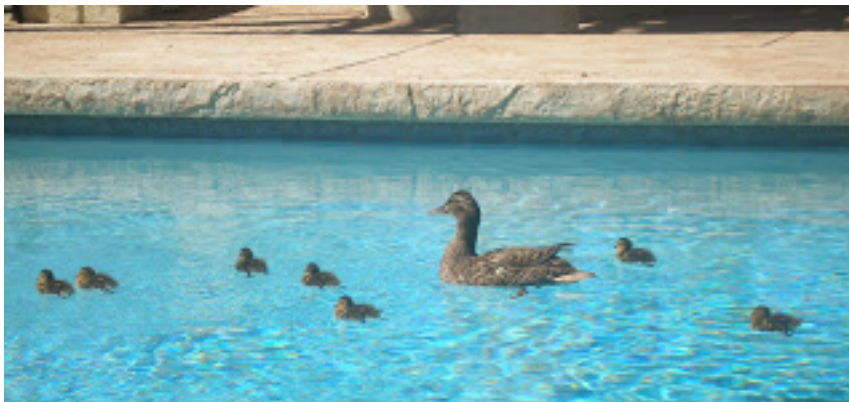
What if the ducklings are with their mother?

Don’t try to “help” by putting the ducklings in a pool, even if their mother is with them. Just leave the family alone and the mother should take them to suitable water source. If the ducklings are trapped in a pool but mom is there, provide a ramp with a shallow slope and a non-slip surface so the ducklings can get out of the pool, onto dry land. (A wet towel works well as a non-slip surface.)

What should you do if you find a duckling in need of help?

Call City Wildlife at (202) 882-1000 or DC Animal Care and Control at (202) 576-6664 as soon as you see orphaned or trapped ducklings in DC. We can help you!

Please do not put ducklings in a pool or fountain!



These ducklings would have starved or drowned if people hadn’t helped. They are trapped in a pool with too high a rim and no nutrients. People provided ramps and they were able to get out.