

What to Do if You Find a Dead Bird

If you find a freshly dead bird in good condition, you can donate it to the Whidbey Audubon Bird Specimen Library Collection. While it is illegal to possess any part of most birds, we hold permits from the federal and state governments to use these for educational purposes. If you are collecting and holding a bird for us, you are acting legally.

You can do two things to ensure a specimen's value:

- Identify when and where the specimen was found
- Package it properly in a freezer bag and freeze it

Protect yourself while handling birds, as they can harbor bacteria and parasites. Wear gloves or place an inverted plastic bag over your hand and pull the bird into the bag so it is contained inside. Then put it in an additional plastic bag - double bag it. To do a better job of protecting the feathers, beak and feet, carefully wrap the bagged bird in newspaper before placing it in a freezer bag.

Please write on a piece of paper with pencil or permanent ink and place in the bag with the bird:

- Date of find
- Location of find
- Your name and contact information (phone or e-mail) in case we have questions
- Helpful notes, such as cause of death, if known

Press the air out of the freezer bag, seal it airtight and keep it in your freezer until you can get it to a Whidbey Audubon representative. Birds kept in a self-defrosting freezer get freezer burn and are less usable if stored very long. Please get them to Whidbey Audubon as promptly as possible by:

- Calling Robin Llewellyn at 360-320-5480.
- Emailing to specimenlibrary@whidbeyaudubon.org
- Bringing the frozen bird to the next Whidbey Audubon Society meeting

Thank you for turning sad events into contributions to scientific knowledge and educational opportunities!