

Baby Owl's Rescue



By Jennifer Keats Curtis
Illustrated by Laura Jacques



Baby Owl's Rescue

What if you found a baby owl in your backyard? Would you know what to do? Where would you go to find help? Join young Maddie and Max as they learn a valuable lesson from a little lost owl in *Baby Owl's Rescue*. The brother and sister pair just wanted to play baseball. They never expected to come face-to-face with a wild animal! This story reminds all of us that we live in a world surrounded by wild animals, and those wild animals deserve our caution and respect!

It's so much more than a picture book . . . this book is specifically designed to be both a fun-to-read story and a launch pad for discussions and learning. Whether read at home or in a classroom, we encourage adults to do the activities with the young children in their lives. Free online resources and support at www.ArbordalePublishing.com include:

- For Creative Minds as seen in the book (English & Spanish):
 - Great Horned Owl Fun Facts
 - Great Horned Owl Adaptation Matching Activity
 - Owl Life Cycle Sequencing Activity
 - What To Do If You Find An Injured Bird
- Teaching Activities:
 - Reading Questions
 - Language Arts
 - Science
 - Math
 - Geography
 - Coloring Pages
- Interactive Quizzes: Reading Comprehension, For Creative Minds, and Math Word Problems
- English and Spanish audiobooks
- Related websites
- Aligned to State Standards (searchable database)
- Accelerated Reader and Reading Counts! Quizzes
- Lexile and Fountas & Pinnell Reading Levels

eBooks with Auto-Flip, Auto-Read, and selectable English and Spanish text and audio available for purchase online.

Thanks to Karla Bloem, Director/Naturalist at Houston Nature Center; Kathleen Woods, Wildlife Rehabilitator/Director of the Phoenix Wildlife Center; Ken Lockwood, Program Director at the Eagle Valley Raptor Center; and Jim Fitzpatrick, Executive Director, Carpenter St. Croix Valley Nature Center, for verifying the accuracy of the information in this book.

Jennifer Keats Curtis wants to help bring children close to the animals in their own backyards. By diligently researching her topic and interviewing experts, including children working to help preserve and protect local wildlife, the journalist has developed a knack for teaching young children about important ecological issues and what they can do to help. In addition to *Baby Owl's Rescue* and *Turtles in my Sandbox* for Arbordale, Jennifer's titles include the award-winning *Oshus and Shelly Save the Bay* and *Osprey Adventure*. Most days, Jennifer can be found among students and teachers, talking about literacy or conservation. She also regularly presents writing workshops to elementary school students. When she's not in schools, Jennifer contributes to several magazines and serves as editor-at-large for Maryland Life Magazine. Jennifer and her family reside in Maryland.

Award-winning illustrator Laura Jacques (pronounced Jakes) has over 25 years of professional experience as an illustrator in the fields of advertising and publishing. She enjoys illustrating children's books that focus on natural history, wildlife, and the environment. In addition to illustrating *Baby Owl's Rescue* and *Whistling Wings* for Arbordale, she has also illustrated *At Home in the Rain Forest*, *Wildlife Refuge: A Classroom Adventure*, and *Sweet Magnolia*. Her books have won several honors and awards, including NSTA-CBC Outstanding Science Trade Books for Children and the KIND Children's Book Award. Laura was chosen by the Rocky Mountain National Park's Superintendent to participate in the 2008 Artist-in-Residence Program in Colorado. Her work will be used by the park's Next Generation Program and Fund to engage children in nature and to interest them in becoming environmental stewards for the future of our National Parks and the communities in which they live. Laura and her husband live in Connecticut.



Jennifer Keats Curtis




Laura Jacques

Baby Owl's Rescue

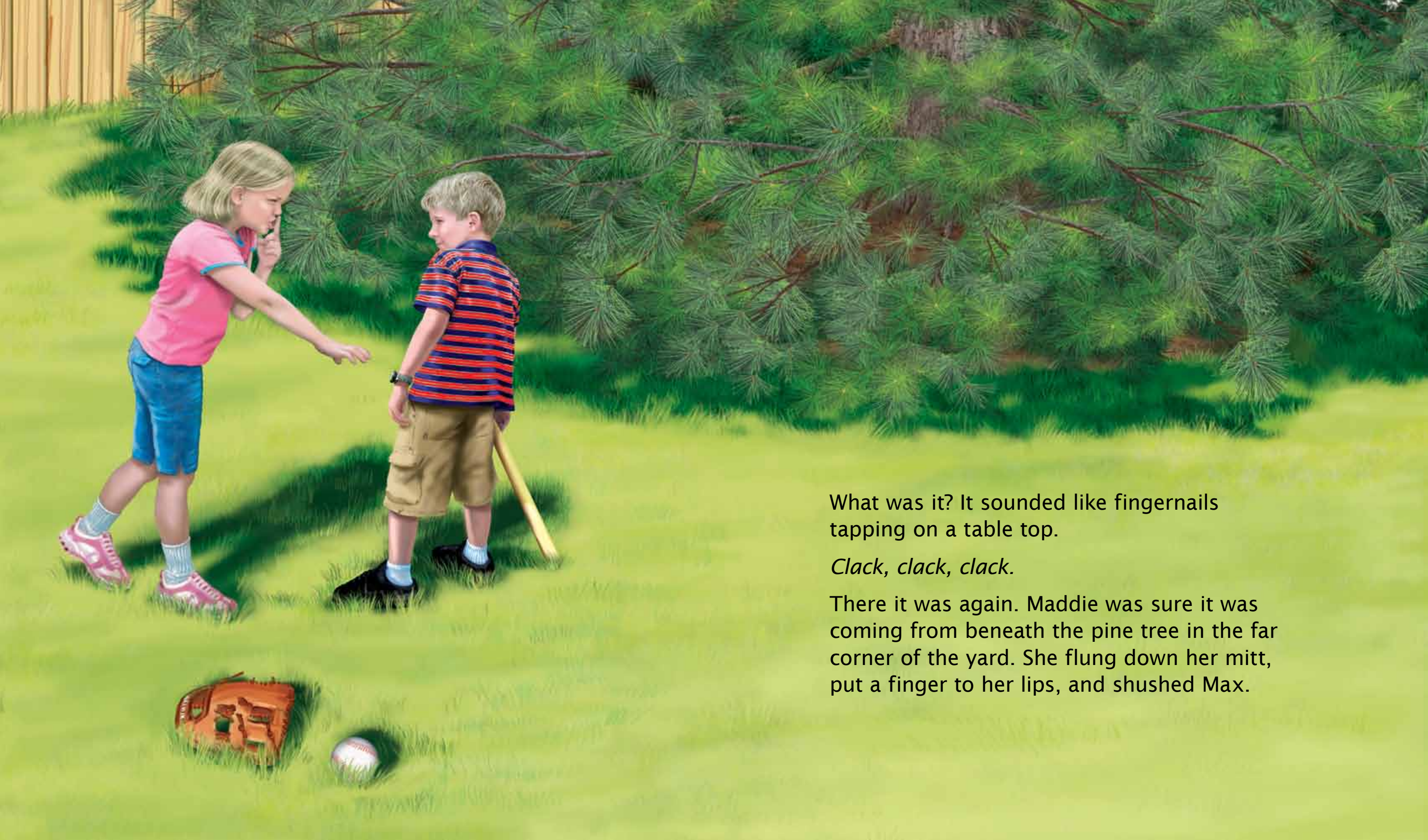


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A young girl and boy are playing baseball in a yard. The girl is wearing a pink shirt and blue shorts, and the boy is wearing a purple and white striped shirt and khaki pants. They are both holding baseball gloves. In the foreground, a large pine tree with green needles and brown branches is visible. A grey squirrel is perched on a wooden fence post in the lower right corner. In the background, there is a house with a balcony, a wooden fence, and a green lawn under a cloudy sky.

One warm April evening, Maddie grabbed a bat, a ball, and two mitts and ventured into the yard to practice catching pop-ups with her little brother, Max. As they trotted toward the back fence, Maddie heard a funny noise.

Clack, clack, clack.



What was it? It sounded like fingernails tapping on a table top.

Clack, clack, clack.

There it was again. Maddie was sure it was coming from beneath the pine tree in the far corner of the yard. She flung down her mitt, put a finger to her lips, and shushed Max.

As she crept closer, she saw something gray and fuzzy. Were those feathers?

Yes! Huge, bright yellow eyes peered up at her from inside a feathery, ruffled, little ball. Maddie could see a sharp beak, furry feet, and big, long talons.

Clack, clack, clack, continued the baby owl, clapping its pointed bill quickly, warning Maddie to go away!





Even though the baby owl was cute and cuddly, Maddie and Max knew that it was important not to treat a wild animal as a pet. Fortunately for Maddie and Max, their mother was a wildlife rehabilitator, trained to care for injured, wild animals.

The children knew that a baby bird on the ground might not need human help. Its parents were probably nearby. Wanting to do what was best for the baby owl, they ran to get their mother.

For Creative Minds

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Great Horned Owl Fun Facts

They weigh between 2.5 and 4 lbs (1-1.8 kg). Find something that weighs about the same to compare.

We think they can live to be about 12 or 13 years old in the wild. Their main predators are other Great Horned Owls.

A few hours after eating, they throw up pellets of fur, feathers, bones, and other undigested parts of their meals. These pellets help us to understand what owls eat.

They are birds of prey. Their food is alive when they catch it. They eat mice, squirrels, rabbits, skunks, crows, herons, other owls, ducks, frogs, some fish, and even some domestic cats. They swallow small prey whole, but will tear larger animals apart using their talons and beaks.

When flying, their wingspan (measured from the tip of one wing to the tip of the other) can be approximately twice their size. Hold out your arms and have someone measure your "armspan." How does it compare to an owl's wingspan?



Like other owls, they are nocturnal. That means they hunt at night and sleep during the day.

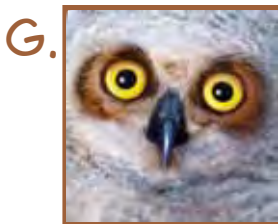
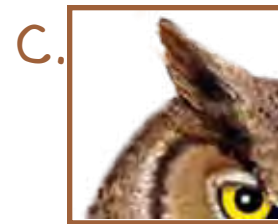
Adults are between 18 and 25 inches or 46 to 63 centimeters.

Great Horned Owls are found in all kinds of habitats: in your backyard, deserts, forests, and even in the Arctic!

Females are a little larger than the males.

The loud *hoo-hoo hoooooo hoo-hoo* can be heard for miles during a still night but they will not call while hunting. They don't want to let their prey know where they are.

Great Horned Owl Adaptation Matching Activity



1. Large, yellow eyes help them to see at night.

2. Sharp beaks help them tear larger prey to eat.

3. The front edge of each wing has comb-like bristles to muffle the wing's flapping noise. This helps owls to silently sneak up on prey.

4. Like most birds, owls have four toes. But one of the toes can swivel forward or backwards with three toes in front, one in back or with two facing forward and backward!

5. Sharp, curved talons (claws) are used to grab prey.

6. The brown, gray colors and designs in the feathers help owls to blend, or to camouflage, themselves into trees.

7. They can't move their eyes but they can turn their heads almost all the way around (270 degrees) to see.

8. Their ears are holes on the side of their heads, right behind their eyes. The ears are off-centered; one is a little higher than the other. The difference in ear height helps the owls to judge the distance of sound. The feather tufts or "horns" are simple decorations to make the birds more fierce looking.



Answers: 1G, 2F, 3D, 4E, 5A, 6H, 7B, 8C



Owl Life Cycle Sequencing Activity

If desired, copy or download the cards, cut out, and put in numerical order for the correct sequence of events.

1 In January or February, the male and female will call to each other as part of their “dating” or courtship.

2 An owl pair will take over other birds’ nests. They are not picky about where the nest is and will use a nest in trees, on the side of cliffs, or even on buildings.

3 The female usually lays two or three white eggs at a time.

4 Females incubate the eggs for 30 to 35 days (about a month, give or take). They will guard the nest and will either kill or drive off any other animal that tries to get to it.

5 When born, the hatchlings are covered with a white down.

6 When they are about 6 or 7 weeks old, young start to walk around on branches near the nest. They are called branchers, like the owl in the story.

7 Both parents continue to feed their young until the young leave the nest and fly off to find their own home. This happens the fall after they are born.

8 The young owls can fly when they are about 9 or 10 weeks old and are then called fledglings.

What to Do if You Find an Injured Bird

Even if you find a baby bird on the ground, it may not need your help.

Most of the time, chicks are being watched by their parents and do not need your help.

Unless you can see that the bird is hurt, or it has been alone for many hours, leave it where it is. Keep your pets away (by keeping them in the house or on a leash) so that the bird’s parents will feed it.

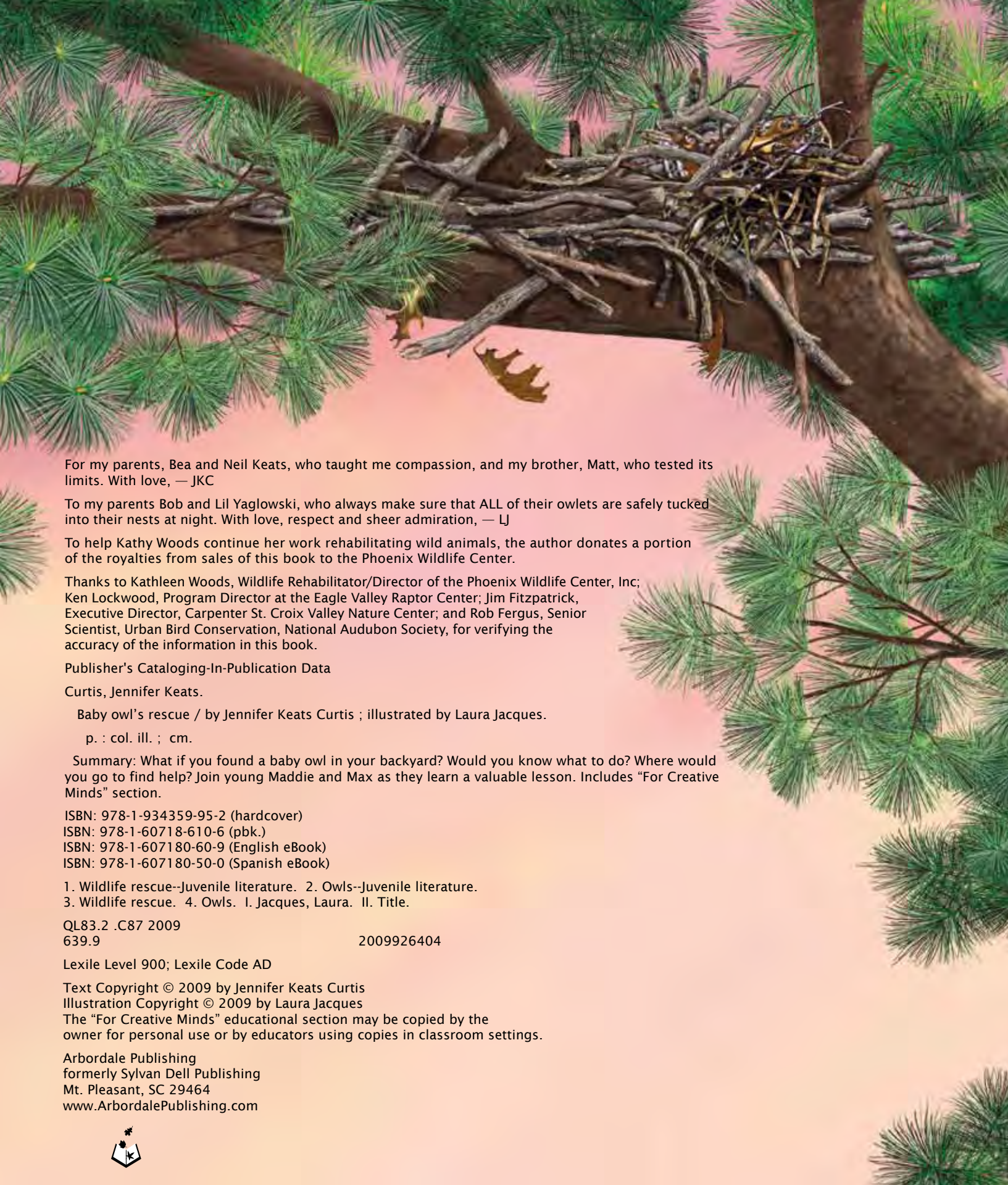
While it is not true that a mother bird will abandon her baby if she smells a human scent, you should not handle the baby unless you are able to put it back in its nest. Most birds do not have a good sense of smell (except vultures). It is your presence, not your scent, that might keep them from coming back for the baby. It is best to keep human activity at a minimum around the chick or the nest, if possible. If you must pick it up, wear gloves and wash your hands afterwards.

If you believe that the baby has been orphaned or is hurt, please contact your state’s Department of Natural Resources or veterinarian to find a licensed rehabilitator near you. Rehabilitators, often called rehabbers, have special permits and training that allow them to take care of animals that are hurt, sick, or orphaned. Rehabbers care for wildlife, sometimes in a home or clinic, but they work to help the animals remain in nature. They release these creatures as soon as they can fend for themselves.

Until you can get the bird to a rehabber, keep it in a small box, lined with a clean, soft cloth in a quiet, dark area. Do not give the baby anything to eat or drink.

It is illegal to possess or capture owls and migratory birds in any state if you are not licensed to do so.





For my parents, Bea and Neil Keats, who taught me compassion, and my brother, Matt, who tested its limits. With love, — JKC

To my parents Bob and Lil Yaglowksi, who always make sure that ALL of their owlets are safely tucked into their nests at night. With love, respect and sheer admiration, — LJ

To help Kathy Woods continue her work rehabilitating wild animals, the author donates a portion of the royalties from sales of this book to the Phoenix Wildlife Center.

Thanks to Kathleen Woods, Wildlife Rehabilitator/Director of the Phoenix Wildlife Center, Inc; Ken Lockwood, Program Director at the Eagle Valley Raptor Center; Jim Fitzpatrick, Executive Director, Carpenter St. Croix Valley Nature Center; and Rob Fergus, Senior Scientist, Urban Bird Conservation, National Audubon Society, for verifying the accuracy of the information in this book.

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