



Wild Times

Dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation and release of Southern California's sick, injured and orphaned wildlife

Winter Is Coming!

Migrating aquatic birds receive care

By Wildlife Technician Christina Smith

Winter is coming. Our baby care unit is slowing down and the baby birds and mammals we've cared for this spring through fall are all grown up. Now there's a new menagerie of patients we're starting to see in our hospital. California "winters" provide an ideal retreat for migrating aquatic birds. Here are a few of our winter patients.



Earred Grebes, like the one pictured above, spend their entire lives in water including when mating and rearing their chicks, or when receiving care at California Wildlife since their feet are designed to only be in water.

Grebes are common winter patients at CWC. They spend their entire lives in the water and have distinctive lobed toes designed for treading water and legs placed at the back of their body to propel them while diving. They sometimes mistake land for water and accidentally crash land on pavement. Since they can only take flight from water, they get stuck on land. While in our care, we have to place special "booties" on their feet to protect their sensitive skin from getting abrasions,

Northern Fulmars resemble gulls until you see them close up. Their beaks have distinctive tube noses used for salt excretion. Along with their unique beaks, they have a recognizable smell, similar to petrol, which fills the hospital when we have them in our care. As a defense mechanism, they project an oily substance from their stomach that coats the feathers of avian predators but so far, we've been lucky enough to avoid experiencing this first hand.

Brandt's and Double-crested Cormorants have slick black feathering and are often mistaken for oiled birds washed ashore. They have long necks and hook tipped beaks. They are frequently seen swimming around piers where they feed on fishermen's hooked fish. Unfortunately, they often ingest the hooks or are entangled in fishing line while snagging the easy meal*. Surgery is often required to try to remove hooks and repair injuries from the embedded line.

Winter at CWC is when we get the privilege to work with these special patients we rarely get to see during our busy season. Once we stabilize



Photos by Christina Smith

Northern Fulmars look like a gull species until you get a close up of their beak and realize they have a "tube-nose" which is specially designed for salt excretion.

the birds and perform necessary surgeries, they are transferred to International Bird Rescue (IBR) in San Pedro for their continued care. The IBR facility specializes in marine bird rehabilitation and partners with CWC in cases such as these.

*Check out Page 2 for more information on CWC's efforts to rehabilitate animals impacted by fishing gear.

Inside: What is "Imping" and how does it help birds fly?
CWC's annual fundraiser The Wild Brunch: Return to the Wild.

Don't Get Hooked

Fishing line and hooks prove dangerous to wildlife

By Staff Veterinarian Dr. Lorraine Barbosa

While most animals typically arrive at CWC with injuries or illnesses that are relatively obvious, occasionally we get in an animal that appears on the outside to be completely normal. This happened recently with a juvenile Western Gull. His physical exam showed him to be generally ok - no broken bones, good eyesight, no external injuries, and very bright and strong. We knew that if it were healthy, a bird like this should not be able to be so easily caught. So, x-rays were taken to screen for abnormalities, and we discovered that he had a very large hook inside of his ventriculus (stomach).

Fishing line and hooks can be very dangerous to birds and, unfortunately, such injuries are common in seabirds. Birds may become entangled in fishing line, which can prevent them from walking or flying due to the entanglement itself. Or, the line can get caught on vegetation or protruding substrates, ensnaring the bird and causing them a slow death by starvation.

Line embedded in a bird's flesh can act as a tourniquet, preventing blood flow to the affected area, and lead to the loss of a leg or wing, and hooks left in flesh can lead to infection. Birds may also swallow fishing hooks, which can become embedded in the GI (gastrointestinal) tract, and become more acutely life-threatening, while the fishing line remaining on the hook can cut deeply through the flesh and cause a bone infection.

Luckily for this particular bird, the hook was within the ventriculus and not yet embedded. Once he was stabilized with food and fluids, surgery was performed. The hook was removed via a procedure called a ventriculotomy, and the gull recovered smoothly.



X-ray courtesy Dr. Lorraine Barbosa

This Western Gull ingested a fisherman's hook which was removed through surgery.

surgery was performed. The hook was removed via a procedure called a ventriculotomy, and the gull recovered smoothly.

Unfortunately, not all of our entangled patients are so lucky. This year so far, we have seen 23 birds with fishing hook and line injuries. 13 have survived. The saddest part is that these injuries are completely preventable. In order to help save seabirds before they even come in to CWC, we encourage you to do these three simple things: 1. Please proactively spread the word about the importance of collecting all fishing gear and disposing of it properly, 2. Please pick up abandoned fishing gear, and 3. Please help remind people to refrain from feeding seabirds, as it increases their exposure to the inherent dangers of fishing hooks and lines. Who knows? You may end up saving a life!

23

Total number of birds with fishing hook and fishing line injuries brought to CWC so far in 2015.

Helping Birds Get Their "Wings" Back

Through a process called imping, damaged feathers are replaced and birds take flight

By Administrative and Database Assistant Heather Patrice Brown

Birds with damaged feathers sometimes need a little extra help before they can be released back to the wild. Feathers are made of keratin, the same substance as your hair, but once all the way out, feathers stop growing and lose their blood supply. Damage to feathers is permanent until the body replaces them according to a predetermined timetable (molting) which can be as long as a year. Feathers that are molted are regrown right away, but feathers that are broken are not replaced until the broken feather is molted. While molting patterns vary depending on the species, most birds will molt only a few flight feathers at a time in order to retain their ability to fly. Damage or loss of more than a few flight or tail feathers can render a bird flightless.

Thankfully, there is a way these birds can be helped to heal without having to wait through an entire molting cycle. The process is called "Imping." Imping has been compared to getting hair extensions.



Photos by Heather Patrice Brown

The tail feathers of this American Crow are damaged and it is unable to fly.



Donor feathers are prepared and organized to ensure they are placed in the proper order on the American Crow.

Donor feathers are collected from birds of the same species, approximate size, and age of the recipient bird. The donor birds are animals that did not survive their injuries. The feathers are harvested from the same location on the donor as the injured feathers on the recipient bird.

The donor feathers are prepared by removing the tips of the feathers and placing small dowels inside the donor feather shaft which creates a bridge between the new feather and the recipient. A portion of the dowel is left protruding from the donor feather to allow it to attach to the recipient. The feathers are numbered so they will be attached to the recipient bird in the correct order.

Once the donor feathers are prepared, the bird being impinged is anesthetized to reduce the bird's stress and to keep the bird motionless during the process so it doesn't end up with crooked feathers. The broken feathers are cut off with a red-hot scalpel in order to not compress the shaft.

The feather shafts on the recipient are hollowed out and the dowels are whittled down to make sure they fit in the shafts perfectly. The veterinary team is careful to keep the feathers in the correct order.

Once all the dowels are the correct size, they are glued into the donor feathers. Then, one by one, the dowels and the donor feathers are glued into the feather shafts of the recipient. Any excess epoxy is carefully removed so as not to glue the feathers together. The feathers are properly layered and angled before the glue sets.

When the bird comes out of anesthesia, the useless, broken flight feathers are now replaced with complete feathers and like magic, the bird can fly once again. The impinged feathers are only temporary and will molt just like regular feathers in the next molting cycle. By then, the bird will be soaring once again in the wild, and its time at the California Wildlife Center will be just a memory.



A scalpel is heated to cut cleanly through the damaged feathers and remove them. The heated scalpel ensures the shaft of the feather is not crushed.



The donor feathers are attached to the recipient with special care being taken to make sure the donor feathers are layered and the angle adjusted properly.



Once the donor feathers are placed it is almost impossible to tell them apart from the recipient's own feathers.

The Wild Brunch: Return to the Wild Recap

By Administrative and Database Assistant Heather Patrice Brown

The Wild Brunch 2015, Return to the Wild, held on September 13, 2015 at Gull's Way Estate, Malibu, was a day to be remembered. With a record-breaking 700 guests, more than 20 food and beverage tasting booths, and over 200 auction items, there was plenty to do and see.

Guests could have a psychic reading or energy healing session by one of the gifted artists, receive a mini make-over from Sephora Malibu, or just enjoy the gorgeous view. Many guests enjoyed making bids on a wide variety of Silent Auction items and the cuisine was mouth-watering with many vegetarian options from different restaurants to choose from.

The live auction was, as always, an animated affair, with guests able to bid

on an array of exciting items. Guests also raised their paddles to help California Wildlife Center raise \$40,000 for a pick-up truck and horse trailer for animal transport and in the case that the animals at the Center would need to be evacuated.

The highlight of the event was the release of a rehabilitated hawk back into the wild by the Live Auction Winner. Guests watched, as the hawk flew off into the distance. The hawk was given a second chance at life with the help of funds raised every year at The Wild Brunch.



Photo by Heather Patrice Brown

Winning bidder Carol Hernandez releases a rehabilitated Red-tailed Hawk.

Give the Greatest Gift!

This season, give the greatest gift of all, the gift of life.

California Wildlife Center gives injured wildlife a second chance at life. The animals that come to the Center are injured or orphaned or abandoned and would not survive in the wild without help. California Wildlife Center gives animals state-of-the-art medical care, painstakingly rehabilitates them, and then releases them back into the wild.

California Wildlife Center rescues over 4,000 animals every year. Your support is needed to enable CWC to continue to serve these animals.



Photo by Jeff Hall

This Northern Elephant Seal pup is just one of the thousands of animals rescued each year by California Wildlife Center.

Monetary Donations

The CWC Animal Care Facility and Marine Mammal Rehab Facility is supported entirely by grants and private donations from individuals like yourself. You can help the Center to provide sick and injured wild animals with the caring expertise needed for a complete recovery. The mission of California Wildlife Center is to return animals to their wild home. Further, your support enables California Wildlife Center to educate our community about securing the future of wildlife through the protection of habitat and the wild spaces we share.

There are many ways to support CWC, here are three easy ways to make a monetary donation to California Wildlife Center:

Visit www.cawildlife.org and click on "Support CWC"

Mail a donation to CWC at:
PO Box 2022, Malibu, CA 90265

or donate with a credit card by calling (310)458-9453 option 3.

Amazon Wish List

You can purchase items to support the animal patients at California Wildlife Center at the CWC Amazon Wish List. Please go to Amazon.com and under Wish Lists, search for California Wildlife Center. Gifts purchased here are shipped directly to the Center.

Your contribution will give an animal the gift of life. Give that gift today.

Contributors:

Heather Patrice Brown
Jeff Hall
Christina Smith
Duane Tom, DVM

Board of Directors

Executive Committee:

President: Ken White
Secretary: Debbie Fischer
Treasurer: Aaron Frank
Development Chair:
Victoria Harris

Operations Chair:

Katie Dinneen

Board Members:

Victoria Hand Dr. Lisa Newell, DVM

Staff

Executive Director:

Stacy Applegate

Director of Animal Care:

Duane Tom, DVM

Staff Veterinarian:

Lorraine Barbosa, DVM

Marine Program Manager:

Jeff Hall

Marine Mammal Rehabilitation Manager:

Mike Remski

Marine Mammal Response Coordinator:

Jonsie Ross

Senior Hospital Technician:

Jenn Guess

Facilities Manager:

Denys Hemen

Wildlife Technician:

Christina Smith

Administrative & Database Assistant:

Heather Patrice Brown

Volunteer Coordinator:

Gill Verner

CWC is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.
We do not receive any local, state or federal
funding. Please make a donation today!
Tax ID # 95-4580790



Printed on recycled paper.
Please read, share and recycle.

Contents © 2015
California Wildlife Center
P.O. Box 2022
Malibu, CA 90265
Emergency Hotline: 310-458-WILD
Fax: 818-222-2685
Email: admin@cawildlife.org
www.cawildlife.org



CALIFORNIA
WILDLIFE
CENTER

P.O. Box 2022 Malibu, CA 90265

Star-crossed Ravens

Common Ravens find companionship while receiving rehabilitation

By Director of Animal Care Dr. Duane Tom

From the Westside of Los Angeles came a Common Raven rescued as a nestling after dangling from a billboard sign for 2 days. Cord was wrapped around his left leg for so long that two of his toes died off and had to be amputated. His left wing was damaged from lack of blood supply and deep wounds that resulted in him losing all his primary flight feathers on that wing.

From the east end of the San Fernando Valley came another Common Raven. Rescued after being electrocuted and burning all her feathers severely. Her right her leg was burnt so horribly that the skin sloughed off. She was hardly recognizable as a Common Raven.

Not knowing the other Raven was there, they each underwent separate treatments in California Wildlife Center's Animal Care Hospital for over a month. The Raven from the Westside continued to be cared for his toes and wounds, while the electrocuted bird waited for her wounds to heal so that she could get all 60 of her feathers impeded in order to fly again. About two months in, against what had seemed like unsurmountable odds, both had sufficiently healed so that they could be



Photo by Dr. Duane Tom

Two Common Ravens brought to CWC at different times and for different reasons bond in a flight enclosure.

moved out to a flight enclosure together. Neither could initially fly as their injuries healed. Both Ravens became familiar with each other on the ground of the enclosure.

Over the next few months they slowly regained their ability to fly as their bonding continued. Each bird could be seen always following each other around the enclosure, eating together, and perching together. In early November, before the cold of winter lay its grasp over the City of Angels, the electrocuted Raven received her final medical treatment, having her tail feathers impeded to help her stop and turn during her now vigorous flights.

Less than a week later, these two star-crossed ravens were released together in Wilacre Park, Studio City, with both birds following each other out of the crate for their flights back into the wild.