



# California Wildlife Center

## Patient of the Week

### January 26th, 2023

### A release coming up with NO-MO glue!



Northern Mockingbird in outdoor enclosure.

The chorus of songbirds in our area would be incomplete without their most passionate mimic, the Northern Mockingbird. CWC receives an average of 75 Northern Mockingbirds each year, affectionately nicknamed “NOMOs” here in recognition of their bird banding code. These four-letter codes are used by the United States Geological Service Bird Banding Lab to track and label birds for scientific purposes. At CWC, we use these codes as a shorthand to refer to specific species of birds. NOMO rolls off the tongue, and we use the name a lot to describe these frequent patients. Their strong personalities, voracious appetites, and striking appearance make them a favorite of many team members.

On arrival at CWC, Northern Mockingbird #29 was not quite embodying these traits we hold so dear. Like many of our patients, they were experiencing a number of conditions at once which all impacted their health and complicated their care. The most urgent was their low temperature and thin body condition. The extent of their hypothermia had left them unable to stand or eat on their own. Wildlife technicians administered multiple rounds of fluids under the skin until the mockingbird had been warmed enough in an incubator to be fed safely. Songbirds must eat frequently, so the mockingbird was provided liquid feedings by tube every two hours for two days until they had stabilized enough to begin to eat on their own.



Close-up of NOMO.

At the same time as they provided this supportive care, wildlife technicians addressed the other threats to the mockingbird’s health. The bird had been caught by a dog, had diarrhea, and had glue contaminating their wing and tail feathers. They tackled these issues each in turn; most pressing was to begin antibiotics to treat both any unseen puncture wounds from the dog as well as the bird’s diarrhea. Next, once the bird was stable, wildlife technician Camryn Romo carefully washed the glue from the bird’s wings and tail.

Washing is extremely frightening for birds and done incorrectly, the stress of a wash can affect the bird’s outcome. Washing feathers also takes a high level of skill and delicacy to prevent additional damage. For this reason, we never recommend attempting to wash contaminated animals at home. If the animal is covered in an unknown oil, always wear gloves when collecting them to prevent chemical burns. If the animal is stuck to glue trap, tape, or a similar surface, do not attempt to remove them. Instead, place the entire glue trap with the bird attached into a closed container with airholes so that we can apply special solvents to free them once they arrive at CWC.

This Northern Mockingbird’s prognosis is excellent. They completed their wash process, finished their meds, and have moved to an aviary to condition for release. We expect to see them flying free again in about a week.

You can find Northern Mockingbirds like this patient in your backyard, parks, and open natural habitats like chapparal



# **California Wildlife Center**

## **Patient of the Week**

### **January 26th , 2023**

all over the continental US and Mexico. These widespread omnivores eat insects and berries and are known to forage even late into the night in urban areas with bright lights. Many will recognize male mockingbirds during breeding season as “that bird” you hear before dawn, with a loud, diverse vocal repertoire which can include up to 200 unique song types. Those “songs” may even be human sounds; car alarms are often heard included in Northern Mockingbird mimicry.

You can help songbirds like Northern Mockingbirds in your area by planting native species in your garden that offer them food and shelter. Keep them safe by choosing rodent and insect mitigation strategies that don't include poison or glue. If you find an injured bird, call our wildlife hotline at (310) 458-9453.