



# California Wildlife Center

## Patient of the Week

### February 14, 2025

## The Resilient, Red-shouldered Hawk



Red-shouldered Hawk transported to CWC.

We currently have a Red-shouldered Hawk in care that was brought in from the Hidden Hills area. The rescuer thought the raptor might be deceased, but the bird was stunned and quickly perked up upon arrival. Once examined, it was determined that the injuries sustained were consistent with a window collision—there were multiple scabbed abrasions present and pectoral inflammation. The patient was given wound care and anti-inflammatory medications. Fortunately, the hawk seems to have no orthopedic injuries.



Patient in outdoor aviary preparing for release.

Red-shouldered Hawks are one of 11 hawk species that call California home. There are hundreds of hawk species worldwide and they can be found on every continent except for Antarctica. Hawks stand tall, stoic and majestic and have long been symbols of guidance and wisdom across cultures and time. CWC most often rehabilitates Red-shouldered Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks, Cooper's Hawks and, less commonly admitted, Sharp-shinned Hawks.

Red-shouldered Hawks are smaller and slimmer than their similarly named relative, the Red-tailed Hawk. As their name suggests, they have beautiful reddish colored patches in their shoulder regions. This species can be found in forests and prefers to perch more secretly in the cover of trees, unlike other hawk species who may be easier to spot soaring over open space. They are carnivorous and hunt rodents, frogs, snakes and even other birds.

Staff noticed that the patient was not eating well in the hospital, which necessitated hand feeding them. This isn't uncommon for patients entering care. Patients are not used to being around humans or indoors, and despite our efforts to create a stress-free environment, an animal in care can exhibit a range of distress signs from being in an unnatural environment. It is likely that the hawk's disinterest in food was a natural response to the stress of being in a new setting.

Recently, the patient was evaluated and cleared to transition to an outside aviary. Since being moved outdoors, the hawk has been eating regularly and without staff assistance. The outdoor aviaries on-site are spacious and more environmentally like what the patient might experience in the wild. The Red-shouldered Hawk will spend the next 1-2 weeks in the aviary strengthening their flight muscles before they are released.