California Wildlife Center

Patient of the Week

March 28, 2025

Operation Owlet

Each year, CWC responds to tens of thousands of wildlife-related questions and concerns. Every call and text is handled by our highly trained staff, who carefully assess each situation to determine the best possible outcome for the animal. In some cases, after evaluating all the facts, our team finds that the best course of action is to leave the animal in their natural habitat. Well-meaning individuals often intervene when it isn't necessary, especially with young wildlife. The best way to help uninjured young animals is to ensure they remain with their parents in the wild.

We are incredibly grateful for the Specialized Mobile Animal Rescue Team (SMART), a division of Los Angeles Animal Services. SMART conducts on-site assessments and frequently collaborates with CWC to determine the most appropriate response for animals in need. Recently, SMART reached out to us about a precariously placed Great Horned Owl nest built atop metal beams.

SMART arrived on site to assess the situation when one of the older owlets fell from the nest. Fortunately, at this stage, the fledgling was old enough to be out of the nest. However, their younger siblings remained too small to leave safely, and there was a significant risk that they could fall and sustain injuries. To prevent this, CWC and Officer Navarro, a leading member of SMART, worked together to develop a plan to reinforce the nest.

Officer Navarro will install temporary vertical supports around the nest to protect the remaining nestlings and create a padded landing area to cushion any potential falls.

We are so thankful for the opportunity to collaborate with dedicated professionals like Officer Navarro and the SMART team. Their expertise and commitment are invaluable in our shared mission to keep wildlife with their families and ensure their safety in their natural environment.

All photos courtesy of Karen Natividad of Glassell Park. Owlets perched on their nest atop a metal beam.