



California Wildlife Center

Patient of the Week

August 15, 2025

Mourning Dove Musings



Mourning Dove patient recovering well.

Earlier this month we admitted a Mourning Dove, who was the unfortunate victim of a cat attack. This is not uncommon and injuries from cats require immediate treatment and careful ongoing monitoring not only to clean and treat the wounds, but also to treat any underlying or emerging infection. All patients brought in from cat interactions are put on a round of antibiotics, as cat saliva and claws carry a lot of bacteria that can be fatal to wildlife.

The patient presented with two large wounds on their left limb near the knee joint as well as abrasions under the right eye and on the right side of the beak. In addition to antibiotics, the dove was also put on anti-inflammatories. The patient has been carefully monitored, and their wounds have been cleaned and bandaged regularly. Due to the size of the wounds, our veterinarian team decided to repair the lacerations with sutures (stitches). The patient has recovered well.

Mourning Doves are a common and adaptable species that can be found throughout most of North America. They tend to feed mostly on the ground, which can make this species vulnerable to predators. They tend to forage for things like seeds, berries, wild grasses and herbs.

The Mourning Dove in our care serves as a reminder of how important it is to protect local bird populations. Fortunately, there are plenty of safe and enriching ways for cats to enjoy the outdoors. Window perches and enclosed 'catios' are fantastic options that don't pose a danger to neighborhood birds, and they help keep cats safe, too.

The patient recently had their stitches removed and is currently healing indoors. In about a week, the Mourning Dove will be moved to an outdoor enclosure with other birds of the same species. There, they will spend another week reacclimating to the weather and strengthening their flight muscles before being released back into the wild.