



California Wildlife Center

Patient of the Week

December 5, 2025

Rooting for the Oak Titmouse



Oak Titmouse patient perching in enclosure.

The Oak Titmouse is an unassuming, small bird, with mostly grey feathers and a distinctive tuft on top of their head. They are often seen hopping and foraging on the ground and among tree branches (mostly oak trees) for nuts, seeds and insects. In early November, one of these little birds came to CWC for treatment after being injured by a cat.

Upon arrival, it was noted that the patient was missing all their tail feathers, likely a result of the attack. There was also noticeable swelling and drooping in the right wing. During the exam, staff discovered a large scab that, once cleaned, revealed a significant wound exposing muscle and tendon. The patient was promptly placed on antibiotics and anti-inflammatories, and the wound was thoroughly disinfected before a thin layer of antibiotic cream was applied. Several days later, the patient was anesthetized so the wound could be sutured.

The Oak Titmouse is a monogamous species that mates for life. The pair remains together throughout the year, vigorously defending their territories, preparing their nests, and tending to their young. They usually nest in cavities found in trees, sometimes even taking residence in old woodpecker holes. After a few weeks of enclosure rest, the patient is eating and gaining weight, their injuries are healing, and their tail feathers are in the early stages of regrowth. The titmouse was recently moved to an outdoor aviary, where they will stay for the remainder of their journey– strengthening their flight muscles and fully recovering before release.