



# California Wildlife Center

## Patient of the Week

April 24, 2026

### Patient of the Week - The Long Road to Recovery: Patient Update

In October 2025, our volunteer transported an injured Great Horned Owl to our facility from a local animal control agency. Her case was featured in our Patient of the Week: Keeping an Eye on Recovery. She arrived with a corneal ulcer in her right eye, along with an injury to her foot.

Our Director of Animal Care, Dr. Michaels, consulted with Veterinary Eye Care in Calabasas, and it was recommended that the patient undergo a diamond burr debridement and temporary tarsorrhaphy. This procedure smooths and cleans the corneal surface, stimulating tissue growth and healing. After months of treatment, and several setbacks, her eye finally reached a resolved state. However, staff had noticed damage to her outer tail feathers, affecting her ability to steer and stabilize during flight.

Our team determined that the best chance for a successful return to the wild was to perform imping surgery. Imping is a technique in which a damaged or broken feather is repaired by inserting a small internal "splint" into the shaft and attaching a donor feather, restoring the bird's ability to fly while the original feather regrows.

The procedure was a success, and after a period of recovery and several flight tests, the owl was cleared for release.

This patient's nearly six-month recovery was far from straightforward, but we are grateful to our dedicated medical staff for believing in her resilience and giving her a second chance to fly free.



Dr. Michaels imping feathers



Patient released back into the wild