



# California Wildlife Center

## Patient of the Week

June 12, 2026

### Patient of the Week - For the Love of Crows

Every spring, our wildlife hospital welcomes a new generation of curious, clever young crows. From nestlings affected by nest failures to fledglings taking their first steps out into the world, some inevitably find their way into our NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit).

Young crows are admitted for a variety of reasons, including injury, separation from their parents, illness, and developmental concerns. So far this season, we have admitted 42 young crows.

American Crows are among the most intelligent birds in North America, known for their problem-solving abilities and adaptability. Their success is due in part to a remarkably diverse natural diet that includes insects, small animals, fruits, seeds, nuts, and carrion.

Because crows are so adaptable, it is easy to assume that any food is good food. Unfortunately, that is not always the case, especially for growing birds.

Over the past few years, we have seen an increase in young crows admitted with Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD), a condition linked to nutritional imbalances that can leave developing birds with weak or malformed bones. MBD is just one of several conditions we see in young crows, but it highlights how critical nutrition is during early development.

When young crows are offered human-provided foods or are separated from their parents too soon, they may miss out on key nutrients needed for healthy growth. In some cases, nutritional deficiencies in adult birds can even affect developing chicks before they hatch.

Fortunately, crows are expert foragers and learn important feeding behaviors from their parents and family groups. One of the most effective ways we can support them is by allowing them to forage naturally, helping ensure young birds receive the balanced diet they need as they grow.

We are grateful for a community that cares deeply about wildlife. With continued awareness and appreciation, we can help these remarkable birds continue to thrive in the wild.



American Crow moved into outdoor aviary.