



**Final Report to the
Alameda County Fish and Game Commission**

***Resolving Negative Human-Wildlife Interactions
(AKA Urban Wildlife Conflicts) in Alameda County - 2019***

December 11, 2019

Original Funding Request and Project Description

International Bird Rescue was awarded a \$5,000 grant from the Alameda County Fish and Game Commission in March 2019. The goal of the grant was to address known, ongoing Urban Wildlife Conflicts (negative human-wildlife interactions) in Alameda County in 2019, and to benefit Alameda wildlife by giving aquatic birds that have been harmed by human impact a second chance at a normal life. The grant's purpose was to offset nutrition, medicine, and basic veterinary care costs for birds admitted from Alameda County to our San Francisco Bay-Delta Wildlife Center between April and December, 2019.

Our San Francisco Bay-Delta Wildlife Center in Cordelia, CA admits more than 3,000 local aquatic birds annually, and releases them back into the wild once they are successfully rehabilitated. We receive an average of 120+ birds annually from Alameda County. As a "referral hospital," we often treat the most challenging cases that are beyond the capacity or skills of other regional wildlife centers and clinics.

Unlike traditional veterinary clinics, our patients come to us with no funding, no insurance, and no one responsible for paying the bill. Birds injured by human impact (as the majority of our cases are) require capable hands and large volumes of food and vitamins in order to be rehabilitated successfully and returned to the environment. Only with philanthropic support from concerned citizens, foundations, corporations, and municipal agencies are we able to meet the demand for our services.

The original grant proposal was to treat and rehabilitate approximately 33 wild avian patients admitted from Alameda after April 1, 2019. Commission funds were to be used to pay for costs of animal nutrition, medicine, and basic medical supplies:

- \$10.31: average cost per bird for a day's worth of animal nutrition, medicine, vitamins, dietary supplements and veterinary supplies (needles and hematocrit tubes)
- 15: a typical length of days of stay for a bird in care
- 33: # of birds supported by a 2019 Alameda County Fish and Wildlife Commission \$5,000 grant

Program Results

Grant funds were received in late May 2019. In just four months (6/1/19-9/31/19) we admitted 179 Alameda patients for care: well in excess of historical averages. Patient data pulled from our RaptorMed software (which we use to track medical information specific to each patient) shows the following for Alameda County patients between 6/1/19 and 9/30/19:

61 – Egrets – Snowy, Great
47 – Herons – Green, Black-crowned Night-Heron
51 – Ducks – Mallard
8 – Geese – Canada
1 – Brown Pelicans
8 – Gulls – Western, California
2 – Double-crested Cormorant
1 – Least Tern, California

The average length of stay for these patients was 19 days. This number is higher than our historical average, and may be explained by the fact that the majority of patients were involved in the most significant incident our organization responded to all year, which was located in Alameda County: the **Oakland Heronry Rescue**.

On Wednesday, July 10, 2019, our San Francisco Bay-Delta Wildlife Center received a call from a distressed citizen that a rookery tree home to hundreds of nesting herons and egrets had partially collapsed in downtown Oakland. A survey team consisting of Executive Director JD Bergeron (an Oakland resident himself) and Response Services Manager Michele Bellizzi responded immediately and found many birds on the ground, some alive, some not, and hundreds more in nests in the remaining limbs of the tree. They immediately began taking surviving baby birds into care. We activated our local responders Wednesday night and again Thursday and Friday to continue the rescue and collection effort.

On Thursday afternoon, Oakland City Services and the U.S. Postal Service (whose property the tree was on) determined the remaining trunk and limbs of the damaged tree would need to be immediately removed for public safety, despite the tree's remaining population of nesting Black-crowned Night-Herons and Snowy Egrets. This required us to extend our rescue and collection efforts. International Bird Rescue staff and volunteers, along with concerned members of the general public, were able to save 90 orphaned birds and eggs.

Media from the Oakland Heronry Rescue included: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kab9GXmi9_4

Other media covering the event included Bloomberg, SF Chronicle, San Jose Mercury News, KTLA5LosAngeles, ABC7SanFrancisco, FOX40 Sacramento, Q13FOX in Seattle, and our Facebook, web, and Blog pages:

<https://www.facebook.com/intlbirdrescue/videos/897857627244269/>
<https://www.facebook.com/intlbirdrescue/videos/503715797049218/>
<https://www.facebook.com/intlbirdrescue/videos/713082125799811/>
<https://www.facebook.com/intlbirdrescue/videos/336642197240095/>
<https://www.facebook.com/intlbirdrescue/videos/2155669034731232/>
<http://blog.bird-rescue.org/index.php/2019/08/release-of-the-week-snowy-egrets-and-black-crowned-night-herons/>
<http://blog.bird-rescue.org/index.php/2019/08/it-always-starts-with-a-phone-call/>

We were able to efficiently and effectively rescue and rehabilitate so many wild birds because of our well-established response protocols, developed through years of direct, hands-on experience:

1. **Rescue:** Volunteers, citizens, and other rescue agencies transport injured and abandoned birds to our Wildlife Centers.
2. **Triage:** Birds first undergo a triage assessment by our professional veterinary staff where vital signs are taken, the bird's weight and measurements are recorded, and blood work is often done. A medical treatment plan and a nutrition plan are created specific to each bird.
3. **Medical Intervention:** Typically initiated after the first 24-428 hours in care, so that the initial trauma of capture can abate (remaining mindful that these are wild animals), and we can be assured that the animal has the strength to endure the stress of a medical procedure such as washing or surgery.
4. **Recovery:** Treated birds move to a recovery area, just as a patient would be at a human hospital. Here, their progress is closely monitored until they are ready to move to a rehabilitation area.
5. **Rehabilitation:** Birds heal their wounds and gain strength in our predator-proof aviary enclosures.
6. **Release:** When birds have healed and matured to be capable of survival on their own, they are released back into the wild at species-appropriate locations.

Images



A bevy of Snowy Egrets, many from the Oakland Heronry Rescue in July, were released this month at Arrowhead Marsh in Oakland. Photo by Cheryl Reynolds / International Bird Rescue



A pair of Black-crowned Night-Herons saunter out of their cages and back into wild spaces in Oakland. Photo by Cheryl Reynolds / International Bird Rescue



A Snowy Egret gets ready to fly off in Arrowhead Marsh in Oakland. Photo by Cheryl Reynolds / International Bird Rescue

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