



**Final Report to the Alameda County Fish and Game Commission
*Resolving Negative Human-Wildlife Interactions
(AKA Human-Wildlife Conflicts) in Alameda County - 2023***

December 8, 2023

Original Funding Request and Project Description

International Bird Rescue was awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Alameda County Fish and Game Commission in March 2023. The goal of the grant was to address known, ongoing human-wildlife conflicts and negative interactions in Alameda County in 2023, 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 November, 2023.

Our San Francisco Bay-Delta Wildlife Center in Cordelia, CA admits more than 2,000 local aquatic birds annually, and releases them back into the wild once they are successfully rehabilitated. We typically received approximately 200 birds annually from Alameda County. As a "referral hospital," we treat the most challenging cases that are beyond the capacity or skills of other 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 requesting \$10,000 was to support the costs of animal nutrition (food, supplements, vitamins), medicine, and medical and surgical supplies; and clean, temperature-controlled water to maintain consistent rehabilitation environments for the wild patients in our care.

Program Results

Grant funds were received in June 2023. In our FY23: 10/1/22-9/30/23, we rescued 140 Alameda County birds. While this is below historical averages (mostly a decrease in ducks and herons), it is worth noting that in the prior two years, we admitted 375 and 209 Alameda patients for care, making our three-year rolling average 241. Patient data from our RaptorMed software (which tracks medical information specific to each patient) shows the following for Alameda County patients we received in FY23:

- 25 – Herons – Green, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Great Blue
- 32 – Ducks – Mallard, Ruddy
- 3 – Double-crested Cormorant
- 13 – Gulls – Western, California, Glaucous-winged, Mew
- 15 – Geese – Canada, Lesser Snow
- 27 – Egrets – Snowy, Great
- 4 – Snowy Plover
- 2 – Tern – Least
- 5 – Pelicans – American White, Brown
- 8 – Bufflehead
- 1 – each: Belted Kingfisher, Red-throated Loon, Red-necked Phalarope, Western Grebe, Virginia Rail, Wilson's Snipe

The average length of stay for these patients was 12.75 days. 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. Each rescued bird is given an improved quality of life. Each released bird is an indicator of progress towards our goals of mitigating human impact on the environment and conserving biological diversity. Studies such as our recently released "[Medical History and Post-Release Survival of Rehabilitated California Brown Pelicans *Pelecanus Occidentalis Californicus*, 2009-2019](#)" indicate that with proper care, birds successfully rehabilitated have life expectancies and outcomes comparable to their non-injured counterparts.

Treated birds are banded so that they can be tracked by scientists, volunteers, and the Federal Bird Banding Lab. Data from the banding effort is analyzed by our veterinary care team as part of ongoing research, and the results shared at professional conferences.

In addition to our core, ongoing wildlife rescue, rehabilitation, and emergency preparedness work, we continue to grapple with increased inflation and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, aka HPAI.

"H5N1 high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) is currently causing unparalleled mortality of wild birds and mammals worldwide with threats to population levels for some species already under multiple anthropogenic [human-caused] pressures. [The current and evolving variants are] expected to continue to spread and cause further negative conservation impacts. Notably, important breeding colonies on oceanic islands are at risk"

- The United Nations-led [Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wild Birds](#), 2023

We have added protocols to protect our current clinic patients and to reduce the likelihood of infected birds entering our facilities, including outdoor screening of new birds, staff wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when screening incoming patients for HPAI symptoms, laboratory testing as needed, and reorganizing interior spaces to minimize cross-contamination. Read [Not All Heroes Wear Capes – Suiting Up To Protect From Bird Flu](#) and [Mallard Ducklings Present Unique Bird Flu Challenges](#) on our Blog to learn more about **our extraordinary efforts to keep our patients and our personnel safe.**



Endangered Western Snowy Plover in care at International Bird Rescue.



Wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect against Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, Bird Rescue staff examines a Brown Pelican patient in a special quarantine area.



Wildlife Technician Kadi Erickson (left) and Wildlife Center Manager Kylie Clatterbuck examine an incoming Western Gull patient in a special HPAI quarantine area.

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All photos: International Bird Rescue