



Report for 2026 Contra Costa County Fish and Wildlife Committee Grant 5/5/26

Summary

International Bird Rescue was awarded a \$20,719.92 grant in November 2025 from the Contra Costa Fish and Wildlife Committee for "Ethically and Effectively Resolving Human/Wildlife Interaction Issues in Contra Costa County Through Temporary Emergency Treatment and Care of Injured and Orphaned Wildlife." The grant was used to further our mission to inspire people to act toward balance with the natural world by rescuing waterbirds in crisis, and to address known, ongoing, Human-Wildlife Conflicts (negative human-wildlife interactions). This work benefits people and communities by:

- Preventing and addressing cruelty to animals, by giving aquatic birds that have been harmed by human impact a second chance at a normal life
- Protecting environmental resources
- Providing immediate, practical, humane, ethical, and effective means for people to take action

To achieve the proposed goals and provide the proposed benefits, we replaced obsolete and inoperable equipment and materials that had been fully depreciated, and which are necessary to rehabilitate injured and orphaned Contra Costa wildlife, including herons, egrets, and "Birds of Conservation Concern" in our Bird Conservation Region of "Coastal California:" California Gull, Western Gull, Western Grebe, and Brandt's Cormorant.

Invoice Details and receipts are attached and ordered on the County-provided spreadsheet. One item, the Disinfectant Station has back on backorder for months, but we have been assured by our vendor that we should receive the item within the next few weeks. At this time, we respectfully request your acceptance of our final report, and provisional approval of the reimbursement request for your \$20,719.92 grant, pending County staff receipt of our final outstanding receipt.

We request that the County accept, without any change in total funding, minor modifications and price changes to our budgeted expenses as described in the attached forms that occurred between our initial application request and the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisor's approval.

We want to reassure the Committee that:

1. **NO Contra Costa Fish and Wildlife Propagation Fund monies were used for any personnel costs, as per the Committee's previously expressed concerns to multiple grant applicants,**
2. **All purchases were made *after* Board of Supervisors approval, and**
3. **All purchases support the same project, achieve the same overall goals, and provide the same overall benefits listed above**

Our San Francisco Bay-Delta Wildlife Center in Fairfield, CA admits approximately 1,750 local aquatic birds annually. We are a "referral hospital:" the place of last resort, treating the most challenging cases that are beyond the capacity or skills of other regional wildlife centers and clinics, including our partners at Lindsay Wildlife Experience, and others.

Contra Costa County residents and local Animal Control officers typically bring us over 200 wild, injured birds annually (280 three-year average), collected from dense urban areas, and from the local shores and waterways of San Pablo Bay, Alhambra Creek, and others. Our research shows that rehabilitated animals achieve successful,

long-term outcomes, including (but not limited to) completing average life expectancies, producing and rearing offspring, and serving as nutrition for other animals. Each of these outcomes is an important component of a healthy, balanced ecosystem.

Program Results

In our last, complete fiscal year (FY25: 10/1/24-9/30/25), we admitted 2,950 wild, native, aquatic birds for care (1,769 in Northern California, and 1,181 in Southern California), on par with historical averages. The average length of time in care for all patients during this reporting period was 22 days (which is a 10% increase from 19.67 days the prior year). Patients represent 94 unique species, including:

- **Federally and State-listed Endangered species** California Least Tern
- **Federally Threatened species** Western Snowy Plover
- **IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Endangered Species** Ashy Storm-Petrel
- **IUCN Near-Threatened species** Elegant Tern
- **“Birds of Conservation Concern”** in our Bird Conservation Regions of “Coastal California” and “California Current:” Black-vented Shearwater, Brandt's Cormorant, Burrowing Owl, Clark's Grebe, Western Grebe, Guadalupe Murrelet, California Gull, Heermann's Gull, Western Gull, Laysan Albatross, Black-footed Albatross, and Willet

In our last fiscal year, Contra Costa County intakes of 358 patients represent a 34% increase compared to the prior year, as we continue to manage the deadly Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI, aka “Bird Flu”) crisis. Patient data from our RaptorMed software (which we use to track medical information specific to each individual patient) shows the following FY25 results (10/1/24-9/30/25) for 358 Contra Costa patients:

165 – Egrets – Snowy, Great
100 – Ducks – Mallard, Wood
51 – Geese – Canada
8 – Brown Pelican
8 – Gulls – Western, Ring-billed
7 – Herons – Green, Black-crowned Night
3 – Killdeer
1 – each – Sora, Red-throated Loon

Plus “Birds of Conservation Concern:”
2 – Western Grebe
12 – California Gull

Unlike traditional veterinary clinics, our patients come to us with no funding, no insurance, and no one directly responsible for paying the bill. Birds injured by human impact require capable hands and large volumes of food and vitamins to be successfully rehabilitated and returned to the environment. We are able to meet the demand for our services only with philanthropic support from other concerned citizens, foundations, corporations, and municipal agencies who share our values.

We are 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. 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.

Three Notable Challenges We Face

1. Our biggest challenge continues to be **Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI, aka “Bird Flu”)** Eurasian strain H5N1 2.3.4.4.b. What was first hoped to be a temporary or seasonal event is now a permanent, deadly threat to North America’s wild birds. Since we’ve reported on HPAI in the past, we won’t go into detail here, except to say that **as a result of our extraordinary efforts, we have been successful in keeping Bird Flu from infecting our patient populations while they are in care.**
2. Large-scale, unpredictable crisis events like the **2025, 2024, and 2022 Pelican Crises** also prove challenging, as this was the third time in four years that this iconic species faced such a challenge. This year was unique in that not only were the patients arriving showing signs of starvation, but were also presenting with complications from domoic acid and saxitoxin poisoning from harmful algae blooms.
3. A third challenge is the changing philanthropic landscape. Three of our major corporate supporters are either leaving California altogether, or are significantly reorganizing their business operations. Federal reimbursement to compensate us for an oil-spill incident we responded to ten years ago was frozen and delayed by the current administration, further taxing our reserves and our cash flow.

Our Top Priorities And Goals For The Coming Year

Three goals run through everything we do:

- Minimize and mitigate human and industrial impacts on wildlife
- Conserve local, regional, and global biodiversity
- Inspire environmental conservation and stewardship

In addition to these three “evergreen” goals, in 2026 we look to:

1. **Maintain peak readiness** to respond to the unpredictable but sadly-inevitable environmental crises, such as oil spills, chemical contaminations, or species collapses.
2. **Secure sufficient, diversified financial support to keep our essential work sustainable.**
3. **Retain the best, most-qualified personnel.** Our people and their experiences are our most valuable asset. Quite simply, skilled, caring, professionally trained people are key to giving birds what they need to heal. Tangibles like medicine, food, and nutrition are also vital to our work, but it is our people who innovate new solutions to the changing and increasing threats to wildlife. We hope to be able to add a full-time veterinarian to our staff.

Contra Costa County Fish and Wildlife Committee Grant Images



Dr. Rebecca Duerr, Senior Director of Research & Veterinary Science, performs a surgery under the new **Bovie MI-750 LED Surgical Light**, which replaced a fully-non-repairable surgical light in our Surgery Suite to support patient outcomes for birds rescued and/or referred from Contra Costa County.



Raypak 106 105,000 BTU Propane Gas Warm Water Pool Heater, replaces a fully-non-repairable above-ground, warm water pool heater to support aquatic bird patients rescued and/or referred from Contra Costa County, as they re-establish their waterproofing: necessary for release back to the wild at species-appropriate locations.



One of **two OSHA-compliant Fortress Aluminum 4-Riser Stairs Systems** that replace dilapidated, non-OSHA-compliant wooden stairs for rehabilitation pools housing aquatic bird patients rescued and/or referred from Contra Costa County, to improve health, safety, and working conditions.



Dr. Rebecca Duerr, Senior Director of Research & Veterinary Science uses the new **Welch Allyn 3.5V Ophthalmoscope** to conduct a patient intake exam, resulting in improved patient diagnostics.



Wildlife Rehabilitation Technician Sierra Koop examines a Common Murre under one of two **Bovie MI-550 Exam Station Lights**, which replaces fully-non-repairable lights to support patient outcomes for birds rescued and/or referred from Contra Costa County.

Contact:

International Bird Rescue
4369 Cordelia Rd.
Fairfield, CA 94534

Phil Kohlmetz, Grants Coordinator
E: grants@birdrescue.org
C: 707-704-0350 P: 707-207-0380 x100



INTERNATIONAL
BIRD RESCUE



DID YOU KNOW?

Wildlife rehabilitators aren't the only ones who can protect birds from bird flu, **YOU** can make a difference too!



DISINFECT YOUR SHOES

Be sure to disinfect the bottom of your shoes as bird flu can be spread through bird droppings. Use diluted bleach and leave shoes in the sun to dry.



MANAGE BIRDFEEDERS RESPONSIBLY

Although songbirds and hummingbirds have a lower risk, birdfeeders and bird baths should be cleaned and disinfected at least weekly.



REPORT SICK OR DECEASED BIRDS

For birds experiencing symptoms like tremors, bluish eyes, head-twisting, seizures, or respiratory problems, alert your state's wildlife agency. Otherwise, contact your local wildlife rehabilitator before intervening.



BE AWARE OF ASYMPTOMATIC SPECIES

Mallards, ducklings, and others may be infected but not show symptoms of the disease.



TAKE SPECIAL CARE AROUND DOMESTIC BIRDS

If you are around chickens, ducks, and turkeys—use gloves, change clothing and shoes to avoid cross-contamination.



SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL WILDLIFE REHABILITATOR

Wildlife organizations cannot do it alone. Support your local group with time and resources to help stop the spread of this virus.

This table MUST be completed with your grant reimbursement request. Please submit as an Excel spreadsheet.
Tape receipts to paper and number each page in the upper right hand corner.

Grantee Name: **International Bird Rescue**

Name of Project: **Ethically and Effectively Resolving Human/Wildlife Interaction Issues in Contra Costa County Through Temporary Emergency Treatment and Care of Injured and Orphaned Wildlife**

Contact Name Phone and Email if there are questions about this: **Phil Kohlmetz, Grants Coordinator, 707-704-0350, grants@birdrescue.org**

Page number that receipt is on.	Description of service/item and amount allowable from grant award	Vendor	Date on Receipt/ Invoice number	Description of service/item on receipt (highlight item(s) on receipt)	Total Amount of Receipt/Invoice	Total Amount of Receipt/Invoice for reimbursement from the Grant
2	Bovie MI-750 LED Sugrical Light	MFI Medical	1/21/26	Surgical Light	\$10,305.30	\$5,104.00
2	2 Bovie MI-550 Exam Station Lights	MFI Medical	1/21/26	Exam lights x 2	\$10,305.30	\$5,201.30
3	Raypak 106 Propane Gas Heater	Doheny's	12/22/26	Warm Water Pool Heater	\$2,112.23	\$2,112.23
	Rescue Mixing Disinfectant Station	Midwest Veterinary		Disinfectant Station		\$931.69
4	Two OSHA-Compliant Stairs	Home Depot	12/24/25	Pool stairs	\$2,573.60	\$2,573.60
5, 6, 7	Two Brinsea TLC-50 Incubators	Chewy	2/4/26	Incubator x 2	\$2,384.23	\$2,384.23
8, 9, 10	Two Vitamix Commercial Grade Blenders	KaTom	2/4/26	Blender x 2	\$1,138.40	\$1,138.40
11, 12, 13, 19	Welch Allyn Veterinary Ophthalmoscope	MFI Medical	2/19/26	Ophthalmoscope	\$858.31	\$858.31
14, 15, 16, 17, 18	Frigidaire Freezer Refrigerator	Home Depot	12/24/25	Refrigerator	\$416.16	\$416.16
TOTAL					\$19,788.23	\$20,719.92