



Media Advisory

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Rescued Oakland Herons to be released on Friday

More than 50 young herons and egrets were rescued from likely death in the streets of downtown Oakland this spring – and a number of them will be released back into the wild this Friday at 10 a.m.

International Bird Rescue, which nursed the young birds back to health at its world-renowned S.F. Bay-Delta Wildlife Center in Fairfield, will release the birds at **10 a.m. on Friday**, together with Golden Gate Audubon Society and local allies.

The birds will be released into a marsh area that was saved from development by Golden Gate Audubon and now provides productive habitat for herons, ducks, shorebirds, and other wildlife.

Media are invited to attend the release, which will take place at 10 a.m. sharp.

To reach the release site: Enter MLK Shoreline from Swan Way, off of Doolittle Drive (near the Oakland Airport). From Swan Way, turn north into the MLK entry road and drive about ½ mile. Just after the entry road curves to the right, there will be another quick curve to the left and you'll see a parking lot on your left. Park in that lot for the release. Google Maps coordinates are [37.737830, -122.209616](#).

The young Black-crowned Night-Herons and Snowy Egrets to be released were hatched in the Bay Area's largest night-heron rookery, with over 150 nests located in the thick canopy of street trees in Oakland's downtown and Chinatown areas.

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But city streets are not an ideal home for young herons. Young birds that had not yet fledged faced injury and death if they fell from their trees onto hard concrete or roamed into traffic. So in 2016, Golden Gate Audubon mobilized a three-way partnership with the Oakland Zoo and International Bird Rescue to monitor the colony, spot and rescue fallen herons, and bring them to Bird Rescue for medical care and longer-term rehabilitation.

That partnership faced a new test this year when the trunk of one of the large nest trees suddenly split, dropping half of the tree across 14th Street. Three birds died in the collapse, but 14 were rescued and 11 ultimately survived, thanks to great care at Bird Rescue.

Then the rest of that tree needed to be taken down for public safety. On July 6, Golden Gate Audubon and Bird Rescue partnered with City of Oakland public works and animal control staff to safely remove the remaining two youngsters and two eggs from that tree, before it was cut down for public safety.

Some of the birds from this tree may be among the Oakland birds that will be released on Friday. (Bird Rescue staff will determine which specific birds are ready for release on Thursday afternoon.)

“We are so fortunate to have the world-class expertise of International Bird Rescue here in our backyard,” said Golden Gate Audubon Society Executive Director Cindy Margulis. “Thanks to Bird Rescue’s skilled and dedicated care, these birds now have a chance be wild, healthy birds.”

“Baby herons and egrets are among our neediest patients,” said JD Bergeron, Executive Director of International Bird Rescue. “They eat expensive feeder fish and require a variety of cages and specialized care over the course of six or seven weeks. At a cost of about \$18 per day for a healthy baby and twice that for an injured one, this can really add up! We wholeheartedly welcome the support of members of the public to be able to properly care for these chicks: www.bird-rescue.org/get-involved/donate.”

Founded in 1917, Golden Gate Audubon Society is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. GGAS mobilizes over 2,500 volunteers each year to restore habitat, advocate for wildlife, and educate youth and adults about Bay Area birds.

International Bird Rescue (“Bird Rescue”) has been helping seabirds and other aquatic birds around the world since 1971. Our team of specialists operates two year-round aquatic bird rehabilitation centers in California, which care for more than 5,000 birds every year, as well as an emergency response center in Alaska. Bird Rescue is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to mitigating human impact on sea and water birds worldwide.

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