

CROW Case of the Week: **Great Blue Heron**

by Brian Johnson



Realtor Chris Smith was doing an open house on Captiva Island on January 29 when he spotted a Great Blue Heron floundering in a fence enclosure. A CROW volunteer came quickly to pick up the bird, and at the clinic Nikki Talianko admitted and examined the creature.

“There were abrasions in front of his right eye and around his beak, perhaps as a result of scraping against the fence,” said Dr. Amber McNamara. “The tissue along his left wing was really swollen, and the area was cold. There were also some wounds on his wing that were older and mostly healed. “These symptoms were similar to those that follow an electrocution, so we monitored him for this for the next few days. He could stand, but his left wing drooped to the floor.”

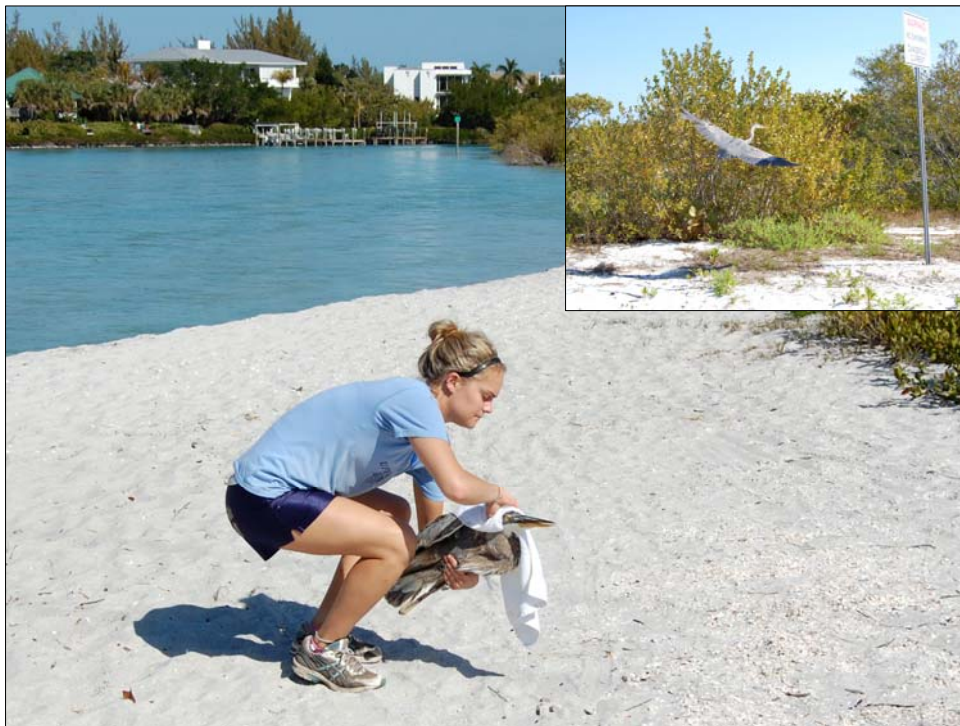
Staff gave the bird Yunan Paiyo, fluids, pain medication, and taped up his wing. The following day the edema had dispersed a bit and the wing looked red, bruised. They added the Chinese herb Body Sore and anti-inflammatories to his regimen. At the end of 72 hours the swelling had vanished and they could confidently declare that electrocution was no longer a possible cause of his injuries.

“He may have had some compromised blood supply for a short period, but it came back quickly,” said Dr. Amber. “His wing warmed up, and within 10 days the bruising resolved. This was also a very cooperative bird -- he ate right from the beginning.”

On February 6 the Great Blue transferred to the Burrowing Owl Cage, where he recuperated for a further five days. He walked around the cage, enjoying the sunshine and looking for things to eat on the ground in addition to his diet of fish.

On February 11 he graduated to the Large-Flight Cage and was soon doing short flights. “The droop was gone, and his wounds really looked good,” said Dr. Amber. “This bird came in with a list of negatives, but he was an excellent patient, and with supportive care we were able to release him within one month.”

CROW sent the Great Blue back to Captiva on February 18.



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