

CROW Case of the Week: **White Ibis**

by Brian Johnson



On January 11 Coby Pawlowski, an 8th grader at Lexington Middle School, came across a White Ibis in trouble in the yard of his San Carlos Park home in Fort Myers. "He acted like he was drunk," said Coby. "He couldn't walk or fly and was trying to get through a fence."

Coby scooped him up and drove to CROW with his mother, Cathy. The bird was quiet on the trip to Sanibel, and they were happy to transport him to the clinic, which undoubtedly saved his life. "It was pretty cool," said Coby. "I learned a lot, it was a neat experience."

"It was an unusual case," said Dr. Amber McNamara. "We don't get many ibis, but the ones that do arrive are most often victims of vehicle collisions or entanglement in fishing line and fishing hooks. We were not sure what happened to this particular bird, probably some type of trauma as he had a little bit of dried blood on his right shoulder." The bird stumbled as staff examined him. He seemed to suffer from ataxia, defined by Wikipedia as a "non-specific clinical manifestation implying dysfunction of parts of the nervous system that coordinate movement, such as the cerebellum." In other words, he may have banged his head and was feeling dizzy. "He was even more wobbly the next day, often falling over" said Dr. Amber.

Staff gave him pain medication, vitamins, and the herbs Body Sore and St. John's Wort. Over the next couple of days they offered him an assortment of kitten chow, scrambled eggs, super worms, crickets and fish. "He nibbled here and there," said Dr. Amber. On Day 4 she put him a tub with two inches of water. "He seemed to enjoy his time in the bathtub, he may have felt more at home," she added.

As he was not eating sufficient amounts on his own, staff began tubing him a fish slurry along with his medications. It concerned Dr. Amber that on Day 8 the ibis was "still quite wobbly." She decided to turn to a potent tool in her medical kit: the Chinese herb Stasis in the Mansion of the Mind. "There was stagnant Qi in his brain, and this herb helps to move the stagnation and restore balance" said Dr. Amber.

Over the next few days the bird finally emerged from his dazed condition. He is now much more stable on his feet, living in a double-wide in ICU, but will soon be ready to go to an outdoor cage.

"He's eating crickets mostly," said Dr. Amber. "I don't know how many bugs he's eaten, probably over 100 per day. I see him looking at his mirror for much of the day, he is anxious to get back with the flock."

The ibis is expected to be returned to the wild sometime in February.

If you would like to contribute to CROW in its extraordinary mission, please send your check to:

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