

**CROW Case of the Week: Wilson's Plover**  
**by Brian Johnson**



On August 6 Mark Penney picked up a little Wilson's Plover in trouble in Fort Myers Beach, near Lover's Key. As Penney could not transport the plover, CROW volunteers Walt and Janet Lewis, who are VERT's (Volunteer Emergency Rescue and Transport) on Thursdays, agreed to make the drive to get him. The 59-gram creature was in fairly good body condition, but had recently suffered some type of trauma. "Her left eye was swollen and had no vision, and there was a patch of feathers missing from the left side of her neck," said Dr. Amber McNamara. From the plumage she judged he was a male.

Staff administered Arnica, Body Sore and topical eye medication to try to reduce the swelling and put him in a quiet cage for the rest of the day.

It is not easy to replicate the habitat of a plover: they are used to running along the Gulf of Mexico shoreline, poking their beak in the sand for fiddler crabs and so forth. That's not possible at CROW, of course, so staff try to provide them with the next best thing – a Tupperware container lid full of sand and a wide variety of food.

The plover did not feel like eating the first couple of days so staff tube-fed him a fish slurry three times per day. Staff offered him freeze-dried shrimp, blood worms, meal worms and fish, but nothing sparked his interest. As tube feeding was very stressful for the bird, staff hoped he would soon get an appetite and eat on his own.

"On the fifth day he decided he liked freeze dried shrimp soaking in a bowl of water," said Dr. McNamara.

This marked his turning point. He ate well, and his vision gradually returned. His feathers were starting to grow back in where they were missing.

On August 19 the plover flew out of the back room all the way through the clinic, landing on a table. He looked good enough to release, but as it was stormy that day, CROW decided to wait until the following morning – a Thursday!

Walt and Janet Lewis kindly drove the plover back to Fort Myers Beach.

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

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