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## Injured golden eagle slowly nursing broken wing back to health in San Luis Obispo

**Pacific Wildlife Care workers hope the bird of prey will one day return to the wild and soar again after surgery to repair double break**

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A golden eagle found by the side of the road in Santa Margarita with a broken wing is recovering at a wildlife center near San Luis Obispo.

The male eagle was discovered Sept. 2. Rescuers with Pacific Wildlife Care say he was likely chasing prey when he was hit by a car.

“Ninety percent of the time, when they are found by the side of the road, it’s a car,” said rehabilitator Jeri Roberts, who specializes in birds of prey.

The eagle has two pins in its wing, shown in an X-ray. If all goes according to plan, the bone should heal in about a month to the point the pins can be removed.

After being rescued, the eagle was taken to Atascadero Pet Center where it was diagnosed with a serious wing break in two places. The raptor was operated on at an Arroyo Grande animal hospital and two pins were installed.

On Sept. 7, the eagle arrived at Roberts’ rural San Luis Obispo rehabilitation center for a convalescence that could last as long as four months. A recent X-ray showed that the wing is healing nicely, Roberts said.

“Everything is stable, and that was very nice to see,” she said.

The eagle is in a flight cage where it eats two large rats a day.

“Diet is very important,” Roberts said. “You don’t want them to lose muscle mass.”

The challenge is to immobilize the eagle so its wing can heal without letting it slip into depression, a common ailment among wild birds of prey in captivity.



*The Golden Eagle is recovering at Jeri Roberts rehabilitation facility in rural SLO.*

To complicate matters, the bird has started to molt, an event that can double a bird’s food intake

“I have collected enough feathers in the last couple of days to make a headdress that an Indian might wear,” she said.

The veterinarian will examine the bird again in a month and hopefully remove the pins in its wing. Then, the process of reconditioning the eagle begins so that it can return to the wild.

Earlier this year, Roberts and several wildlife hospitals tried to rehabilitate a bald eagle found with a broken wing at Fort Hunter Liggett. That bird’s injuries were so serious it had to be euthanized.

Roberts is more optimistic about the golden eagle’s prognosis. “There’s no sign of infection, and the bone is healing well,” she said.

Anyone interested in helping Pacific Wildlife Care defray the cost of feeding and caring for the eagle can visit the Web site [www.pacificwildlifecare.org](http://www.pacificwildlifecare.org).

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