



## The Bird Rescue Center of Sonoma County

*Restoring wings to the wild*

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### Do You Speak Woodpecker?

Rearing babies who have been separated from their parents is no easy task. This season, we've had to become surrogate parents a number of times because of tree cutting and nest destruction - some due to post fire cleanup, but others simply because no one recognized the nests were present until it was too late.

Once the tree is down and the nest destroyed, there's really no way to reunite the babies with their parents.



This wonderful crew brought us a nest with two adorable, young Acorn Woodpeckers. Their nest was found on the ground after fire cleanup downed their tree. They were soon joined by four more from a tree cutting in Mendocino County. They were all going to be in our care for an extended period of time.



### So, how do you go about teaching baby Woodpeckers how to make it on their own?

First, they are placed in small wooden boxes to replicate a natural tree cavity nest. They are fed a strict insectivore diet with added nutrients. When they start becoming more active, they are moved to specially made woodpecker boxes that are fitted with materials they can climb on as well as a lot of dead wood for pecking.

At this time, other foods like fresh fruit, suet and nuts are introduced. Enrichment opportunities to encourage foraging behaviors are also introduced – like painting a log with peanut butter or suet and sticking meal worms in it. When the worms

wriggle, it encourages the birds to dig into the wood's holes to get to their food.



Once everyone passes the foraging test, they are moved outside to a larger aviary with plenty of wood and a variety of greenery. We then start hiding food to make them work to find it, we are fostering a more realistic experience of life in the wild.

The final step is a soft-release here at The Bird Rescue Center. Their aviary hatch is opened so they can come and go as they please with food continuing to be provided to supplement what they begin finding on their own outside.

### Uh, What Did They Say?

One remaining obstacle is language. Believe it or not, Acorn Woodpeckers speak various dialects. Our babies had to learn the dialect spoken in this area or run the risk of being rejected by the colony. This species has a very structured hierarchy, so dialect is essential to successful integration into the group – every bit as important as learning to be self-reliant foragers.



Saying good-bye brings mixed emotions – a sense of accomplishment that we have given them their best chance at life as well as lingering concern whether we did enough to prepare them. It's a joy to hear the calls of Acorn Woodpeckers in the trees around our complex. We hope all 6 of our fosters are healthy, happy and doing well.

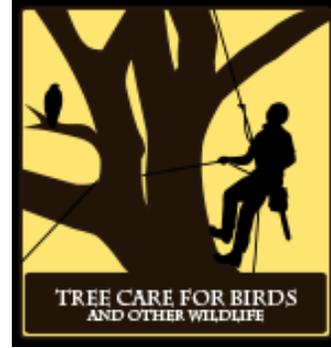
You can help us care for orphans like these. Your generous [donations](#) will help cover the cost of food and medical expenses.

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### Wait – What Are You Doing To My Home?

As you can see from the article above, tree-cutting or even power washing in the Spring can be a BIG problem for our

native wild birds. Postponing your outdoor clean-up until Fall is far less likely to impact baby birds, but remember, even now there may be some active nests where parents are still raising their young. Many of their nests aren't readily visible – unless you know what to look for – and when the nest is gone, so is the opportunity to reunite babies with their parents.



Here's some [helpful information](#) about what to look for, and sound reasons for waiting until fall to do your tree-trimming and power washing. Remember, whenever you to prune, power wash or cut, please be mindful of your avian neighbors. And if the worst happens, and a nest is destroyed, get the babies to us as soon as possible.



## OPEN HOUSE

October 6th, 2018  
from 10am - 1pm

3430 Chanate Road,  
Santa Rosa, Ca, 95404

[More Information](#)

Please note, as of Monday, September 3rd, we will be returning to our normal hours of operations. We will be open from 9am to 5pm, 7 days a week.

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