

Bird shot by pellets, on mend

BY ELLEN YAN

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An “uncommon” heron was recovering yesterday from wounds after being shot at least twice with a pellet gun Sunday in Hewlett Bay Park, said veterinarians and the Nassau SPCA.

Pellets cut into the chest and thigh of a yellow-crowned night heron and broke bones in his left wing, said veterinarian Greg Nelson at Central Veterinary Associates in Valley Stream.

“It’s really upsetting,” said Nelson, holding the waterbird, which is about 1 pound. “This is not one meant to be hunted.”

A walker in Hewlett Bay Park called police after seeing a man in a residential driveway with a gun about 6:20 p.m. Sunday, said Bob Sowers, president of the Nassau County Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.



Veterinarian Greg Nelson says the bird, a yellow-crowned night heron, will need months of rehabilitation. ■ Video: newsday.com/li

The witness heard three or four shots, then saw a bird fall from a tree and the alleged shooter go back in his house, Sowers said. Nassau police said an officer interviewed the witness and alleged shooter, then referred the case to the SPCA.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, state Department of Environmental Conservation and the SPCA will bring an animal cruelty case, Sowers said.

The yellow-crowned night heron is not on the federal endangered list, but only about 50,000 survive nationwide, said

John Charos, president of the Valley Stream practice and its head of avian medicine. Perhaps 200 live by Long Island’s estuaries, he said.

Nelson said he removed a pellet from the bird’s wing in a 15-minute surgery Monday. He said it can take up to eight weeks for the bird to heal, followed by months of rehabilitation before his release.

“He’s allowing us to hand feed him,” Nelson said. “He won’t feed on his own. I guess he doesn’t recognize that fish in a bowl.”