

Israeli Bird Spies and Other Weird Bird News

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Farmers in Turkey discovered a dead European bee eater with evidence that it came from Israel for nefarious reasons. (Photo: [HaberTurk](#) [1])

In case you missed it, Turkish conspiracy theorists believed a small bird was used as an Israeli spy, killer mice are terrorizing baby petrels, and an abused red macaw was rescued by local police in California.

- **Bird-Spy View:**

Farmers in southeast Turkey were worried their airspace was infiltrated by spies from nearby Israel. But unlike our own drones ([that somehow ended up in Iran](#) [2]), these spies know how to blend in with their natural surroundings. Villagers near the city of Gaziantep found a dead bird with a band labeled "Israel," according to [The Atlantic](#) [3]. The small European bee eater also had an enlarged nostril which could have been implanted with a microchip or other spying device, suggested one local official according to the Turkish daily [HaberTurk](#) [1]. Eventually the

bird was examined by counterterrorism officials who decided the bird wasn't a threat to national security. The bird was banded, according to *The Atlantic*, about four years ago to track the migration patterns of the species. Phew!

- **Weapon of Mouse Destruction:**

On the small Gough Island in the South Atlantic, common house mice are eating millions of endangered baby birds a year, *National Geographic* reports [5]. A new study shows that since house mice were introduced to the island 150 years ago, they have grown to “supersize” proportions on the important seabird colony, which hosts 10 million birds of 20 different species. Specifically in danger of these killer mice are Atlantic petrels, whose only breeding ground is thought to be on Gough Island. Based on their study, researchers estimate that 1.25 million of 1.6 million petrel chicks born each year are eaten by mice. “Mice cannot be ignored as a potential threat to island fauna, and island restoration and management plans should routinely include eradication of introduced mice,” researchers wrote in an abstract of their study, published in *Animal Conservation* [6].



House mice are responsible for declines in Atlantic petrel on Gough Island. (Photo [4]: Copyright Ross Wanless/Image courtesy of BirdLife International)

- **Parrot Patrol**

Local police rescued a red macaw abandoned outside a Trade Joe's last week in Capitola, Calif., according to Patch. Sgt. Cliff Sloma told *Patch* [7]: “Apparently a subject in a brown van — that's the only description we have — drove up, extended his arm with the bird on it, let the bird step out onto the shopping carts and then drove off.” The bird was malnourished and was found with road rash, abrasions, a bruised beak, and gum stuck on its feathers. The bird will be taken from Native Animal Rescue to Mickaboo Companion Bird Rescue where it will be cared for by a foster parent. For information about Mickaboo, and to donate to the organization's angel program, [click here](#) [8].

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var gaJsHost = (("https:" == document.location.protocol) ? "https://ssl." : "http://www.");
document.write(unescape("%3Cscript src=" + gaJsHost + "google-analytics.com/ga.js"
type='text/javascript'%3E%3C/script%3E")); var pageTracker = _gat._getTracker("UA-
6149536-1"); pageTracker._trackPageview();
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[4] <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/12/081228192127.htm>

[5] <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2012/05/120521-killer-mice-birds-gough-island-endangered-animals-science/>

[6] <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1469-1795.2012.00534.x/abstract;jsessionid=0EE45F6B444D23A2CA1913C29EFE66FA.d01t03>

[7] <http://capitola.patch.com/articles/capitola-pd-saves-exotic-bird-thrown-from-van-window>

[8] <http://confluence.mickaboo.org/display/MBPublic/Become+a+Mickaboo+Angel%21>