

wildcare

Winter 2010

live well
with wildlife



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Dear Friends,

Another season has arrived, and it's the time when we look back at the year's activities while we plan for next year. We are both proud of our many accomplishments and prepared and excited to tackle the many challenges and threats to wildlife and education that we will face in the coming year.

Throughout the year, WildCare has continued to speak as the "voice for wildlife." We have continued

our work to stop the use of poisons, especially rodenticides that end up killing beneficial raptors and mammals that naturally keep rodent populations in check. In the spring we alerted people to the plight of California's tiny endangered Burrowing Owls, whose decreasing habitat was threatened by housing development. In the summer, when it seemed that the *Deepwater Horizon* oil would never stop pouring into Gulf waters, WildCare sent four of our HAZMAT-trained volunteers for 12-hour-day three-week shifts to clean, rehabilitate and release oiled birds. And in the fall, we urged people to support AB 234, a bill intended to prevent oil spills in San Francisco Bay by requiring the use of containment booms in routine oil transfers.

Environmental education, in the broadest sense, happens through all departments at WildCare. While providing humane resolutions to wildlife taking up residence in your residences with our WildCare Solutions service, we continue to answer your questions about wildlife on our 24/7 hotline. Our Education Department has had an amazing year, even with the sharpest school budget cuts yet. Our camps were fully subscribed, and with the help of private donors and foundations, we were able to make scholarships available to children and families in need of them for all of our education programs. We celebrated with 2010 Terwilliger Environmental Award winner Norm Gershenz in September, and each Saturday bilingual Family Adventures nature hike welcomed more people than the last.

I am delighted to have this opportunity to welcome our new Development Director, Sue Childers-Kraft, who comes to us from her most recent position as Leadership Development Officer for Habitat for Humanity International. Sue's experience and leadership will be invaluable as we get closer to launching our campaign to fund a new WildCare facility, no doubt our biggest challenge in 2011!



Sue Childers-Kraft,
Director of Development

And, last – but most important – we look back on 2010 with thanks for your support that has made all of our work possible. All of us at WildCare wish you a warm holiday season and the very best of the new year!

Karen

Karen J. Wilson
Executive Director

wildcare news

Volume 14, Number 3
Winter 2010

Administration and Education

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*WildCare advocates for wildlife
for a sustainable world.*

Cover Photograph: Janet Kessler

Production Editor: JoLynn Taylor

Website Design: Alison Hermance, Convio

WildCare's newsletter is published three times a year (April, August, November). Every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of this publication are accurate. We regret that we cannot be responsible for human error, printing mistakes, or variations in individual workmanship. Printed in USA on Orion Satin Recycled paper by Schumann Printers, Inc., Fall River, Wisconsin.

POSTMASTER send changes of address to WildCare, 76 Albert Park Lane, San Rafael, CA 94901.



Leave a Legacy for Wildlife

Please consider putting WildCare
in your will or estate plan.

Call Jan Armstrong at 415-453-1000 ext. 13.



Photo courtesy of Juan-Carlos Solis

Welcome Nature Guides!

After two months of intensive interpretive training, 12 new Terwilliger Nature Guides graduated this Fall. Soon they'll be leading discovery walks for schoolchildren to help WildCare achieve the goal of connecting children to nature. Learn more about how to become a Terwilliger Nature Guide at the orientation on January 22.

January Volunteer Orientations

The annual orientations for new volunteers will be held on January 29

and 30, 2011, followed by a series of training classes.

Wildlife Hospital volunteers work directly with injured and orphaned wildlife. If you would like to help feed and care for the wild animals in our hospital, this will be your only opportunity to learn how in 2011. You can also learn more about our Nature Guides and their work with kids.

Don't miss this once-a-year chance to learn about these amazing volunteer opportunities and sign up to help!

WildCare Family Adventures

Join WildCare naturalists for Saturday nature hikes the whole family can enjoy. We'll look for butterflies, flowers, birds and much more. All programs are led in both English and Spanish, and are free to the public.

Programs start at 10:00am at the trail head. If you prefer to caravan to park locations, we'll meet at 9:15am

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Newlin Associates was founded and is managed by David Newlin, who brings more than 20 years of executive and management consulting experience to this superior executive search and placement firm. Focused in the wine industry, Newlin Associates work with clients of all types and sizes, ranging from specialized start-up wineries to large, publicly-traded wine companies. For their clients, Newlin Associates works to find senior level talent – exactly the right people for the right jobs.

Newlin Associates is the first recruiting firm in the wine industry to use a behavior-based personality profiling tool that provides higher levels of accuracy in identifying first-rung candidates for positions in management, sales, marketing, finance, production/operations, winemaking and winegrowing, among other areas. Newlin Associates' goal and achievement, for all their clients, is excellence.

David and his wife Colleen also work with nonprofit wildlife rehabilitation and environmental education specialists at WildCare, sponsoring several fundraising events with well-chosen wine throughout the year. Newlin Associates' commitment to living well with wildlife through WildCare is extraordinary, and we are most grateful. Their attention to detail makes each event in which they are involved unforgettably delicious. Their contributions make WildCare's Gala – save the date to celebrate on February 4, 2011 – sparkle!

Newlin Associates' products are remarkable, their pairings unmatched, and our events MUCH better because of their involvement!



✦ | wildcare | 🐾

Gala

February 4, 2011
Mill Valley Community Center

Save the date to join us for our sparkling wildlife event! Come celebrate the wild with good friends, great music, fabulous food and Wildlife Ambassador appearances!

Sponsorship opportunities and tickets:
415.453.1000, ext.13 or
rsvp@wildcarebayarea.org



White-tailed Kites Mating Display by Richard Pavek

2010 photography contest

Breathtaking photographs! This year's spectacular assortment of entries shows glimpses of nature people rarely get to see, and a look into the secret (and not-so-secret) lives of birds, mammals and insects. These photos serve to remind us that we are not alone on this beautiful earth. They inspire us to cherish and protect all of its inhabitants.

More than 250 entries made judging our fourth annual photo contest a real challenge. Each of our four entry categories inspired gorgeous, compelling and striking images that showcased the beauty of the Bay Area's wildlife and wild lands.

The photographs, judged to be the top five in each category, are listed and shown in the gallery at right, and at wildcarebayarea.org/photo-contest.

We extend special thanks to our hard-working professional photographer judges Trish Carney, freelance/*New York Times*; Cindy Chew, *San Francisco Examiner*; Frankie Frost, *Marin Independent Journal*; Tim Porter, *Marin Magazine*; and to WildCare's Director of Animal Care, Melanie Piazza, for contributing their time and expertise.

Best In Show:

White-tailed Kites' Mating Display Richard Pavek

Bay Area Wild Birds in Their Natural Settings:

Male Western Bluebird
Greg Wilson

Bay Area Wild Animals (other) in Their Natural Settings:

Coyotes - Triple Take (on the cover)
Janet Kessler

Living with Wildlife:

Coyote in Side Mirror
Tony Koloski

General Nature:

Cascade Falls
Richard Stern



Male Western Bluebird Greg Wilson



Casacade Falls Richard Stern



Coyote in Side Mirror Tony Koloski



Lisa Woldin



Laura Millholland



Greg Wilson



Elizabeth Rigali



Richard Pavek



Janet Kessler



Greg Wilson



Adrienne Gyurcsik



Laura Millholland



Sabine Stetson



John Wall



Linda Campbell



John Wall



Linda Campbell



Gary Scales

Plan now to enter WildCare's 2011 competition!



Wildlife Ambassador volunteers are specially trained to handle and present our resident Wildlife Ambassador animals to the public. Above, Marianna Riser and Sequoia attend WildCare's Gala. Student volunteers are trained to help feed and care for these educational animals. Photo by Matt Powers

Nature Guide volunteers lead small groups of schoolchildren on field trips through a variety of habitats at Ring Mountain, China Camp, Muir Woods, Muir Beach in Marin, and Spring Lake in Sonoma County. Photo by Wendy Dreskin



Foster care volunteers take special needs animals into their homes for extended care. Photo by Alison Hermance

in their own words

WildCare volunteers participate in the work we do at many different levels and in a wide variety of activities. Volunteers do everything from the most essential daily hospital tasks such as food preparation, laundry and dishes, to the less-usual, such as ambassador presentations at our most elegant events. Here are some "behind-the-scenes" stories from some of our volunteers' own experiences.

Mariana Riser

I've been on the raptor team for a long time, and was caring for two young Barn Owls in foster care at my home, when I got a call from the Marin Humane Society one evening saying they had two tiny Screech Owls that had been found on the ground. They brought them to my house and I set them up in a box in my bathroom. The Barn Owls were in another box in the bathtub. I closed the door for the night and went to bed. When I checked in the morning, the new little Screech Owls were gone. Where were they? Nestled in with the Barn Owls. They had eaten one of the feeder mice in the Barn Owls' tub and then just moved in. My spare bathroom is an interesting place when I have to keep raptors in there. I have to clean all my surfaces of soap, shampoos and lotions, and have to be prepared to see a large owl or hawk perching on the shower rod.

Beth Slye

I'm a Nature Guide, and I was hiking with a group of first graders in

Muir Woods. Our little group of six children had just about finished our time together, and as usual, I like to ask what they got out of the experience, did they come away with anything they didn't know before, something they learned. One little boy, looking up at the redwood trees, remembering that the trees survived by taking water from the fog and the stream to drink, that they created burls to turn into little new trees if the adult tree got struck by lightning, that their tannic acid kept bugs away, etc., said, "I never knew trees didn't need people."

Kay Lovegrove

I fed three different age groups of skunks in the outside pens on my shift in the clinic. The five larger kits raised their tails and presented their butts when I entered the pen. They also do a mini thump on the ground with their front feet to show you that they mean business. This lot were, fortunately, distracted, when I threw a handful of mealworms into the cage. They got

very focused on eating every single worm, and then on dragging their food out of the bowl. The youngest group of skunks was just weaned. They huddled in a corner when I opened the gate but found their courage when the mealworms hit the floor. All of the skunk babies I have seen so far are gorgeous, very active and curious, and I've yet to be sprayed!

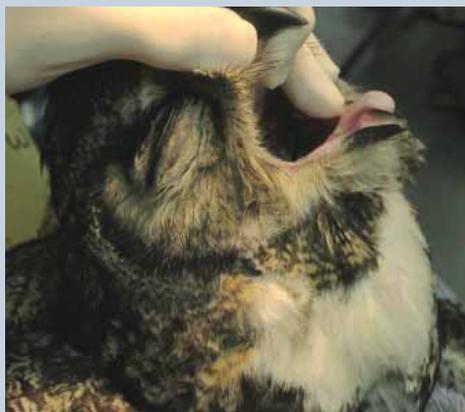
Cassandra Miller

This is my first year working in the clinic. For me one of the most memorable experiences was the day I saw a 12-hour old raccoon being cared for. Her umbilical cord was still wet, her eyes and ears were sealed, and she was just so tiny and alone. I couldn't believe something so tiny could survive, but three months later she was out in the Raccoon Run with all the other raccoons, as wild as the rest of them, and making a huge mess for us to clean up. You all see this all the time, but to me it still is "far out" stuff!

Winnie Kelly

I work on the telephone advice line, and the most memorable call for me came from the woman who called to say her husband had been feeding raccoons for years and it had gotten out of hand. He was feeding more than 50 pounds of dog food a night and she wanted me to make him stop. Her problem was terrible, but I couldn't

Hospital volunteers and student volunteers manage daily maintenance, diets and hygiene in the clinic and birdroom while learning more advanced skills as they progress. Photo by Seth Coad-Douglas



Hospital volunteers take advanced classes to learn about handling and restraint, captive care diets, health and hygiene and zoonotic diseases. Photo by Alison Hermance

WildCare is a member of the Oiled Wildlife Care Network. WildCare's volunteers are eligible to take the OWCN/OSPR training that allows them to assist in the event of an oil spill. Spoonbill photo by Pamela Ball



help but laugh (to myself!): if SHE couldn't get him to stop, how was I going to do it?!!!

I think I was actually able to give her enough information about that situation so she could convince him it was the wrong thing to do. But it took a LOT of talking and problem solving!

Savannah McCoy

I'm a Student Volunteer and work with the Ambassador animals. What surprised me the most when I first began was how different all the animals' personalities are. I had thought they would all be the same, but some are timid, some playful, and some are just characters. Watching the pool birds, for example, it's clear that some are best friends and are not as friendly to the other birds. They seem to have very rich social lives.

Janet Sinnicks

I've been volunteering at WildCare since 2003. I wanted to work in the clinic with all the "interesting" animals, but started off in the bird room where they were most in need of help. I thought I'd transfer to the clinic later. My first assignment was to put some fresh water in the fledgling jays' cage. Before I could pull my arm out, I was being covered in droplets of water from the happy little bathers. I was hooked, and have stayed in the bird room ever since.

Margie Heckelman

I work in the bird room, and I never thought I would find pigeons so interesting. The babies are so prehistoric and odd-looking, but are just so calm because they are too young to fear us yet. It is just so special to feel trust from a wild animal, and a great responsibility to raise our patients to be wild. Even when they learn to fear us later they are still fascinating. Pigeons are a highly social species. They are relatively easy to tell apart because of their many different color variations. This makes it easy to observe how different their personalities become as they get older.

Pamela Ball

WildCare is one of the member organizations that is eligible to send volunteers to work with oiled wildlife in the event of an oil spill. When I started volunteering with Wildcare five years ago, I never thought I would be traveling to Louisiana to help rehabilitate oiled birds. My experience with wildlife and the OSPR/OWCN training opportunities available to volunteers enabled me to join other members of the Oiled Wildlife Care Network at the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill. It was exhausting and gratifying. I think one of the most memorable things for me was to have the chance to work with species we don't see here, like the spoonbills.

Adrienne, BD, Deb, Maureen and Megan, Thursday clinic shift

Orphaned ducklings are some of the most common species we see in the clinic. Weighing them to gauge their progress presents multiple, sometimes hilarious, challenges:

First is simply trying to capture these lively escape artists without slipping (we won't mention on what substance we may be slipping) into the water ourselves. Next we must wrap each duckling in a towel, burrito-style, and try to ID its band, while juggling the recording clipboard in the other hand AND trying to keep the wriggling bird still enough to get an accurate weight. We love the cute baby ducklings, but are always so happy when they have matured and can be released into their natural habitat.

Another challenge is medicating owls, crows, gulls and any sharp-beaked bird. Just being able to open the clenched beak of a Great Horned Owl while being stared at with those HUGE eyes, knowing it might prefer a chunk of finger to bitter medication is quite an experience. But the best experience is watching the same owl improve so much that it no longer needs medication, and knowing that it will soon be released to fly and hunt on its own again.



*"Teach children to love nature; people take care of what they love."
-Elizabeth Terwilliger*

meet the mosses, lichens and liverworts

by Marge Gibbs, Nature Van Naturalist, photos by May Chen

Rainy season is once again upon us. This year, why not check out a few of our less noticeable plants? Mosses, lichens and liverworts tend to be overlooked because we may be unaware of their value. Like every other thing in nature, these unassuming plants all play a vital role in the bigger picture. All of these plants provide food for other species (including people at times) and provide other natural environmental (and even human) services. The ancient liverworts have survived multiple extinction events on this planet. What can we learn from them?

Mosses

There are approximately 12,000 species of mosses. They occupy moist, shaded habitats, and often create soft mats on trees, rocks and on the ground. In northern latitudes, the north sides of trees often have more moss than the other side, although in a very dark forest moss will grow equally well on all sides. South of the equator, just the opposite is true.

Mosses are often used in floral arrangements, and are the main component of peat. In World War II mosses were used as first-aid dressing for soldiers' wounds. Native Americans used moss as diapers due to its high absorbency. In Finland, peat mosses have been used to make bread during famines. In Mexico, mosses are used as Christmas decoration.

Lichens

Lichens are made up of two organisms living together in a mutually beneficial relationship. Fungus provides shelter for algae, which provide food through photosynthesis. There are three main groups of lichens: fruticose (shrubby lichens), foliose (leafy lichens), and crustose (encrusting lichens). Lichens are a good indicator of air quality, as they are extremely sensitive to air pollution.

Lichens have an interesting chemistry and produce a large number of acids, many of them found only in lichens. They are used as food and medicine, in dye and perfume

manufacture, as decorations and in science. The litmus dye used as an acid/alkaline indicator in chemistry comes from lichens. Some of the lichen acids are utilized in drugs that can be more effective than penicillin.

Lichens are key in the breakdown of rock into soil, and in the tundra, provide as much as half the winter diet of reindeer and caribou. One of the more bizarre uses of lichens from the past is as packing material for ancient Egyptian mummies!

Liverworts

One reason liverworts are fascinating is that evolutionarily speaking they are old, some 400 million years old – a long time before ferns, mosses and flowering plants appeared. Liverworts got their name because people thought that some species looked like livers, and were useful for treating the liver medicinally.

To tell a moss from a liverwort look for a leaf vein. If you see one it's probably a moss. If it has lobes on the edges of the leaves, it is a liverwort.

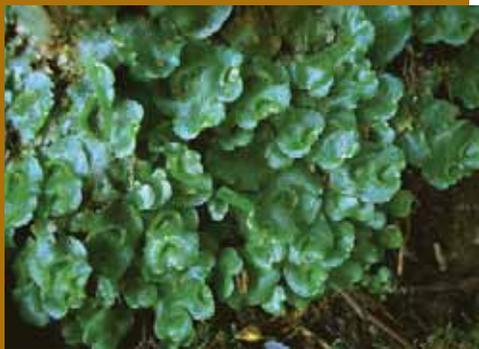
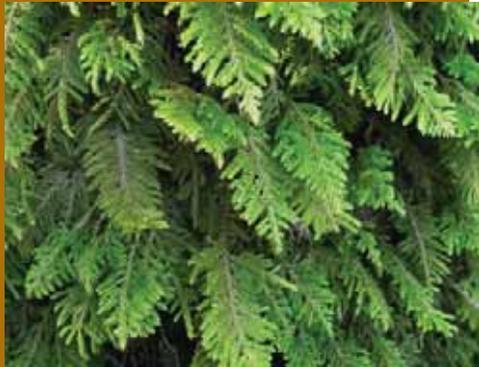
Photos at left, top to bottom:

1. This moss (*Dendroaalsia abietina*) covers many trees in Marin County. Each individual plant resembles a miniature fir tree.

2. Crustose lichens often grow on the top of rocks where they have been enriched by bird droppings.

3. Thalloid or lobed liverwort (*Lunularia cruciata*) Liverworts have a distinctive "shine," making them easy to differentiate from a lichen or moss.

4. This photo includes mosses, lichens and liverworts. Can you find each of them?



patient gallery

Sonoma Chipmunks (#1054-1057) were found by Robert Somerton on his property in Lake County on July 23, out of their den, covered with ants and with two dead litter mates. Robert warmed the survivors and drove them to Napa Wildlife Rescue, where Angela Cistone stabilized them for four days, before transferring them to WildCare.

At WildCare they were put on antibiotics to treat the pneumonia that resulted from hypothermia. Their labored breathing made the tiny ground squirrels even more difficult to feed. Chipmunks are not common in Marin County, and staff consulted with a number of other centers that admit chipmunks more regularly. These tiny animals needed to be syringe-fed every three hours around the clock for about two weeks in foster care, and then gradually weaned over the next four weeks, before they were healthy and old enough to be moved outdoors.

They were released back into their Lake County colony on September 12.

Wild Turkeys (#1044-1047) were rescued on July 26 in San Rafael by Marin Humane Society Officer Stapp when their mother and several siblings were hit and killed by a car. Only 45 grams on intake, they were the same size as newly hatched ducklings. Turkeys, like ducklings, are precocial; that is, they begin to walk and feed themselves shortly after hatching. Needing the protection of an adult bird until old enough to fly, they instinctively follow their mother.

These small game birds were stabilized and treated for shock and exhaustion. They remained in intensive care in an incubator until August 1, when they graduated to a poultry brooder. They were old enough for an outdoor cage on August 15, and a flight aviary on August 24 to build their stamina.

Turkeys are becoming adapted to human environments, but they have little understanding of traffic. They were released in Lucas Valley on September 27. Please drive carefully.

Virginia Opossum (#1153) was rescued from a San Francisco feral cat feeding station, and admitted to WildCare on August 17 with a severely injured eye, probably the result of a fight over food. Opossums are not territorial, but feral cats are. Medical staff quickly determined the eye was not salvageable, but its loss would not seriously impact his chance of survival as long as the injury was treated and healed. Opossums normally have poor vision at best; they rely on their senses of smell and hearing to find food.

Dr. Serena Brenner volunteered her time to perform the enucleation (eye removal). After successful treatment with antibiotics and pain medications, #1153 was returned to San Francisco on August 31, away from the feeding station.

American Crows (#1293-1307) were rushed to WildCare late on September 7 by MHS Officer James Reis. He had found all 15 birds in Marin City, and by the time they arrived only six were still alive. All exhibited signs of some kind of poisoning. Radiographs ruled out gunshot and lead poisoning. Necropsies on the dead birds showed corn and seed in their gizzards and internal hemorrhaging. Medical staff suspected Avitrol, an avicide (bird poison) used on pigeons, and began treatment. The survivors were given fluids, medication to control seizures and pain, and activated charcoal to flush the poisons. Even so, one did not recover. Laboratory tests later confirmed they had been poisoned with strychnine-laced seed. The five surviving birds were released on September 17.

Strychnine is commonly used in gopher bait, and can only be used legally if buried under ground. An investigation of this case by the Marin Humane Society was inconclusive.



Photo by Alison Hermance



Photo by Melanie Piazza



Photo by Melanie Piazza



Photo by Melanie Piazza



Photo by Trish Carney

all-american song-dog

The coyote evolved in North America millions of years ago, but since settlers began raising livestock on the American prairies, a kind of war has been waged against them. All of our lethal attempts to eradicate them have only made these survivors more successful. Luckily, attitudes are changing. As coyotes become more common in cities and suburbs, we can better understand our social, wild neighbor with the help of a little coyote biology.

The coyote is the apex predator throughout much of its range. Studies have shown that coyotes exercise population control on rodents, waterfowl and smaller mesopredators such as raccoons, skunks and foxes, whose populations often increase when larger predators are eliminated.

what doesn't work

Shooting, poisoning, gassing, trapping, recreational tournaments and bounties didn't eradicate coyotes in the past, and these methods won't do so now. In his book, *Coyotes: Predators and Survivors* (1983), Charles Cadieux, a predator control specialist for the U.S. government, describes all the techniques used to kill coyotes, and admits none has worked. In fact, indiscriminate lethal control has an opposite effect on coyote populations because coyotes are considered "responsive breeders" – ones that can

alter their breeding cycles in response to environmental pressures. Under normal circumstances, only the alpha Coyote females breed. If either the alpha male or female of a pack is killed, the result can be ovulation in all breeding-age females, and an increase in pups. Pups born to these inexperienced parents are more likely to exhibit problem behaviors leading to negative interactions with humans.

It is clear, our attempts to control coyotes have simply produced more coyotes and potentially more coyotes with behavioral problems.

coyote biology

Social structure is key to coyote behavior. Coyote specialist Dianne Wittner, Wildlife Biologist of the Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation writes, "Regardless of whether they are part of a family unit,

a mated pair, or solitary, [coyotes] live according to a hierarchical system of dominants and subordinates. The majority belong to a pack, which is led by an alpha male and female that dictate the structure and territory for the whole.... The primary role of non-alpha adults within a pack is for patrol of territorial boundaries and protection of pups."

A pack's defense of its territory begins with communication, both vocal and scent. If increased defense is called for, it escalates to posturing and intimidation, followed by chasing, nipping and feinting. Fighting is rare. Coyotes are not particularly dangerous to people unless they feel threatened. Conflicts with dogs usually occur because the dog has threatened a coyote's den site.

what does work

An established pack manages its own population size, and prevents potential problem coyotes from moving into its territory. The biggest problems occur when people provide a food source. Removing such an attractant will cause the animals to look elsewhere for food.

Coyotes are diurnal (daytime) hunters, but they are adapting to life among people in many ways, including adopting nocturnal habits to avoid contact with us. Because of their social nature, they recognize humans as dominant predators, and if one comes too close, vexing is a good tactic. Vexing – feinting an attack, flapping a jacket, spraying with a hose, shouting and waving your arms – will help convince the animal to leave. Keep your dogs on a leash when walking in what could be coyote territory, and keep your cats indoors, especially at night.

WildCare is working to eliminate the poisoning of wildlife, beginning with rodenticides, (rat poisons) which affect beneficial predators like coyotes, hawks and owls. While rodenticides are the more common poisons in urban and suburban areas, two deadly poisons, Compound 1080 and Sodium Cyanide, are still being used to kill coyotes and other wildlife on America's ranch lands. H.R. 5643 – The Compound 1080 and Sodium Cyanide Elimination Act would ban these two poisons. Please support this bill.

from page 3

at the Canal Alliance at 91 Larkspur Street in San Rafael. For more information call (415) 453-1000x17 or email juancarlos@wildcarebayarea.org.

November 20: Devil's Gulch

Walk through an ancient redwood tree and look for mushrooms, Trap Door Spiders and signs of salmon in the creek as we make our way to Stairstep Waterfalls. Meet at Devil's Gulch parking area in Samuel P. Taylor Park, one mile past the picnic/camping entrance.

December 18: Tennessee Valley

Look for clues that will reveal the identity of some of the animals that call Tennessee Valley home during the winter. Possible species are deer, Coyote, Bobcat, Wild Turkey and Great Horned Owl. Meet at the Tennessee Valley parking lot at the end of the road.

January 29: Wet in the Woods

Explore an Oak Woodland during California's mild wet winter, and look for mushrooms, frogs, salamanders, and more. We'll also look for some of the birds that visit us during the fall and winter like the beautiful Golden-crowned Sparrow. Meet at Miwok Meadows Campground in China Camp.

February 12: Family Love at the Ponds

Take a family stroll around Las Gallinas Wildlife Ponds and learn about the family life of the waterfowl that overwinter here. We'll talk about nesting habits, mating displays, baby bird foods, and what it takes to raise a bird family every year! We'll also look for the River Otters that are often seen swimming in the ponds. Meet at Las Gallinas Ponds trail head.

March 26: Giants, Dragons and Slugs

Meet the tallest species of tree in the world and search for inhabitants of an ancient forest including Banana Slugs, dragon fly larvae, and woodpeckers. Meet at the overflow parking lot at Muir Woods National Monument in Mill Valley.



Photo by Jennifer Zee

Terwilliger Environmental Award

On Friday September 10, WildCare presented 2010 Terwilliger Environmental Award winner Norman Gershenz with a \$2,000 check to use to continue his work. Norm was nominated by several people, including Lola Paladini, above, giving him a hug.

Norm is director, CEO, and co-founder of SaveNature.Org. Through their Center for Ecosystem Survival, he has raised more than \$3.9 million to help preserve thousands of acres of rainforest and coral reef habitat around the world. Under Norm's leadership, SaveNature.Org Insect Discovery Lab education programs (with live bugs) reach thousands of Bay Area children every year, and give kids an opportunity to protect endangered habitats through the Adopt-an-Acre Program.

If you know an environmental educator who has made a real impact on people's lives, please visit our website to nominate next year's recipient.

Roadkill Observation

Last October we told you about the California Roadkill Observation System, where citizens could participate in an ongoing study to understand and try to influence the factors that contribute to road kill. We are proud to

*news and notes
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Photo courtesy of Maggie Rufo

Maggie Rufo has been committed to helping animals, both wild and domestic, for most of her life. She first came to WildCare as a volunteer in 1996. One of her first projects was to develop a website for WildCare – at a time when no one thought a website would be of much use. Maggie maintained the website for WildCare for more than five years. It is a huge job, and after all that time, Maggie was more than ready to move on to other projects.

The number of animal causes that Maggie is involved with as a volunteer is astounding. In addition to WildCare, Maggie has worked tirelessly as part of the The Hungry Owl Project since 2002, and is an active volunteer with Mickaboo Bird Rescue, teaching classes to prospective bird owners looking to adopt a companion bird. She has also served on the board of directors for Marin Audubon, and is one of those selfless souls who gives whatever and whenever she can to WildCare, The Marin Humane Society and Project Coyote. And if that doesn't exhaust you, Maggie has also been a volunteer with Marin County Open Space as a trail watch volunteer, and works tirelessly to educate the public about the dangers of using rodenticides.

Maggie is a passionate birder, and when you least expect it, she'll pull out a pair of binoculars, spotting and calling out various species as they cross her path.

We are very proud to call Maggie Rufo a WildCare star.

advocating for the future

It is heartbreaking to see wild animals accidentally injured because they have become entangled in our busy lives. Even more distressing is it to see animals sickened or killed by things we could prevent – preventive steps that would make our environment better in the process. Wild animals can't imagine future consequences, act to prevent them, influence our behavior, or voice their concerns. WildCare can.

preparation for oil spills

Overseeing major oil companies is a little beyond WildCare's scope of influence, but we can make our members aware of how people's actions affect wildlife. WildCare is part of the Oiled Wildlife Care Network (OWCN), a department of the government Oil Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR). When WildCare joined the OWCN in 1995, we began to encourage our staff and volunteers to take the required Hazardous Material (HAZMAT) training required for people to assist in the event of oil spills.

While other organizations were caught unprepared, WildCare was ready to triage, stabilize and transfer nearly 600 oiled birds after the *Cosco Busan* spill in November, 2007. In the wake of that disaster, generous foundations provided our emergency triage vehicle, the Pitcairn Wildlife Emergency Rescue van.

On October 30, 2009, the *Dubai Star* spilled 400-800 gallons of bunker fuel while refueling for its trip to Mexico, contaminating more than six miles of San Francisco Bay coastline.

State regulations require that refueling barges either pre-boom around the refueling area before the operation begins, or keep 600 feet of boom on deck that can be deployed within 30 minutes. While it had the materials on board, it did not pre-boom, and by the time workers realized there was a leak, it was too late to contain it with booms.

When the *Deepwater Horizon* spill began in June, 2010, we were able to send four volunteers to assist in the wildlife rescue in the Gulf of Mexico. These disasters make it clear that spills will continue to happen. How do we protect wildlife and ourselves?

reducing pesticides

WildCare works to prevent the poisoning of wild animals by unnecessary and ineffective use of pesticides. These toxic chemicals seem to be the easy way to control unwanted species like rodents, but in fact they do much more harm than the deaths of targeted animals. Pesticides kill wild animals, and beyond the immediate deaths they may cause, they have a disastrous lasting effect on the environment. Low levels of toxic substances that enter the ecosystem from homes and gardens can cause a ripple effect in the ecosystem, producing damage that may not be evident for decades to come.

recycling fishing line

Through our Fish Line Recycling program, WildCare initiated the construction of more than 30 bins to place outdoors at fishing areas around each of Marin's reservoirs, as collection points for used line. The Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) monitors and empties the bins regularly. Bins are also installed at tackle, bait and sporting shops, and feature signage in both English and Spanish. This program is modeled on a monofilament recycling program that has been successful in Florida. Ours is successful, too.

banning lead shot

Lead poisoning affects more than 37 non-waterfowl bird species in areas where lead ammunition is not banned by federal law (lead shot is currently banned in wetlands and national parks nationwide). Lead from ammunition used in the 1950s still affects animals in some places. Banning lead shot will help reduce this contaminant in the future.

eliminating sticky traps

Glue traps are marketed to kill rodents. When a small animal sticks to the surface, it attempts to free itself, and becomes completely mired in the adhesive. Many animals tear off fur and skin and break bones in their struggles to escape, before eventually dying of suffocation, starvation or dehydration.

These traps are a cruel way for any animal to die, and should never be set outdoors because they don't discriminate; birds, chipmunks, lizards and baby opossums are frequent victims. WildCare informs people about them so that their choices can be effective and humane.

shopping responsibly

Many species of North American songbirds migrate to follow food sources as seasons change and insect populations dwindle. Wild animals don't recognize political borders, and in other countries, farmers may spray their crops heavily with a chemical cocktail of dangerous pesticides that have been banned in the United States.

Our regulations cannot control what is allowed in other countries, but we don't have to finance them. Buying local organic produce and meats is the best way to assure that we do not support the use of toxic pesticides.

protecting ourselves

When we protect wildlife from oil spills, we also protect the people who depend on a clean environment for food and jobs. When we protect wildlife from pesticides, we also protect people from toxic environmental chemicals that cause allergies and diseases.

It's just one world. We all share it.

a voice for wildlife

When legislative policies or human behaviors threaten the welfare of wildlife in the Bay Area, WildCare takes a stand — and helps you do so, too. WildCare has been involved in several issues that advocate for wildlife, to help prevent injury, and find solutions. Here are some of these issues. You can read more about all of them on our website, www.wildcarebayarea.org. Click on Take Action.

Pre-Boom the Bay

Precautionary booms around all vessels fueling in California's open waters would prevent spilled oil from spreading if it hits the water.



Photo by Arlene Davis

Eliminate Rodenticides

Secondary poisoning kills the predators that eat rodents. The poisons enter the ecosystem, and cause damage that may not be evident for decades.



Photo by Allison Hermance

Ban Lead Shot

Lead ammunition poisons waterbirds and carrion-eaters. Banned in wetlands and national parks, it is still widely used elsewhere.

Recycle Fishing Line

Abandoned fishing line remains dangerous for years, and accounts for a large number of wild animal injuries and deaths. It can be safely recycled.



Photo by Sandy Trapp

Glue and Sticky Traps

Non-target animals like birds, snakes, lizards, chipmunks and baby opossums and are frequently injured and killed by sticky traps. We'd like to see these traps taken off the shelves.



Photo by Rebecca Dymtryk

Prevent Burrowing Owls' Eviction

Ground-dwelling Burrowing Owls are a Species of Special Concern in California because suburban development is rapidly eliminating appropriate habitat for them. The owls use burrows made by Ground Squirrels, rodents that are often poisoned when developers begin work.



Photo by Robert Bloomberg

Shop Responsibly

Pesticides that are illegal in other countries (and even states) are used on agricultural crops to increase yields and profit. These can be 100 times more toxic to migratory birds than they are to mammals. Shopping for local, organic foods supports environmentally healthy options.



Photo by Anna Fodiger

Stay posted on all our current campaigns at wildcarebayarea.org. Action Alerts give you the tools you need to voice your opinion or create a better habitat for wildlife in your backyard.

from page 11

report that one of WildCare's dedicated volunteers, Anne Barker, is among the top respondents, with more than 400 recorded observations in the last year. Interestingly, Anne is one of our experienced raccoon foster care team members, and coincidentally, raccoons are the animals killed in the highest numbers on our roads.



Our Apology

The photographer of the beautiful photo that ran on our Fall Newsletter cover was incorrectly identified. Geraldine GaNun-Owens entered her photo of White Pelicans in our 2009 photo contest, and we thought it was spectacular.



and ways to interpret this topic for the general public.

The Environmental Forum of Marin offers the Sustainable Earth Forum once each year, to focus on sustainability, ecology, human impacts on the environment, resource management and citizen and community action. The goal of SEF is to educate adults who would like to be involved in making decisions that affect our environment. Learn about next year's SEF at marinefm.org.

Thank you, Brenda and Russ

Brenda Sherburn and Russ LaBelle have been WildCare's hummingbird foster care team leads for over ten years. These incredibly dedicated volunteers have announced their retirement. Raising baby hummingbirds requires hand-feeding every 20 minutes from sun-up to sun-down, until the babies are self-feeding, and can graduate into flight cages and natural foods before release. Brenda's knowledge and skill will be hard to match, but she has generously offered to continue to help train new people. We can never thank Brenda and Russ enough for their tireless dedication and their *thousands* of hours of volunteer work to help us give these amazing birds the best possible chance of survival.



Goodbye, Boomer

On October 7, WildCare's educational opossum Boomerang passed away as the result of an infection. Boomerang became a Wildlife Ambassador in July of 2008, and over the past two years she has helped to educate thousands of people about the unique qualities of North America's only native marsupial, the Virginia Opossum.

Environmental Forum

WildCare's Director of Education Juan-Carlos Solis participated in this year's 38th Sustainable Earth Forum (SEF). He spoke on the effects of climate change in Bay Area ecosystems

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the wild year

The rhythms of nature are predictable (except when they're not!), and don't necessarily correspond exactly to our Gregorian calendar. To help us understand our wild neighbors, and to live well with wildlife, we offer this general calendar of what wild animals may be doing, and how you can avoid conflicts with them.

Please remember: wild animals don't use calendars. Call WildCare for FREE advice if you have questions - 415-456-SAVE.

SPRING

MAY APRIL MARCH FEBRUARY

- Spring migrants arrive from wintering grounds.
- Nest building begins.
- Baby birds and mammals are being born.
- Watch out for tree squirrels chasing each other during mating. They are distracted and often run into the street. Please drive carefully.
- It is safe to exclude bats from buildings from March through May.
- Insect populations are increasing; remove standing water.
- Baby birds eat insects; please do not use pesticides in your garden.
- Deer and rabbit mothers leave their babies hidden in the grass during the day, and return to feed them at dusk. The babies are not orphaned unless they are cold, crying or covered in insects.
- Postpone tree trimming.
- Call WildCare if you find a baby animal.



Photo by Margaret Elliott

SUMMER

AUGUST JULY JUNE MAY

- Baby raccoons in crawl spaces make noises as they get older. The family will leave in about six weeks.
- Songbirds are fledging now. Parent birds will feed their fledgelings on the ground until they can be encouraged to fly to safety.
- Don't disturb bat colonies now; they are raising their young.
- Ducklings and goslings found without a parent should be brought to WildCare.
- Swallows and their mud nests are protected by law.
- Opossum babies are separating from their mothers now; if the baby is over 10" long (excluding tail) it is old enough to be on its own.
- If you provide summer water for birds, change it daily to prevent disease and kill mosquito larva.
- Baby raccoons are learning to eat insects, grubs and worms. Call WildCare if you see lawn damage.



Photo by Laura Millholland

WINTER

FEBRUARY JANUARY DECEMBER NOVEMBER

- Many mammals and birds are mating.
- Exclude birds that nest around structures in February; remove wreaths and hanging baskets.
- Mating skunks will be fragrant starting in January.
- Trim trees now before squirrels and birds begin to nest.
- Schedule home inspections before animals look for den sites.
- If you have bird feeders, clean them every two weeks.
- Leave your garden a little untidy in winter. Brush piles, dead leaves, seed heads and stalks can provide cover and food for wild animals.
- Mating for raccoons and bobcats can sound like fighting. It is natural behavior.
- Food is scarce and animals may be crossing roads at night. Please drive carefully and give wildlife a brake.



Photo by Frank Pettit

AUTUMN

NOVEMBER OCTOBER SEPTEMBER AUGUST

- Inspect your attic or crawlspace now, and seal any entrances.
- Clean owl boxes in October.
- It is safe to exclude bats from buildings from September through November.
- Many animals will be fattening for winter or preparing to migrate to wintering grounds.
- Plan your garden updates now.
- Fallen fruit is an attractive food source. Pick it up to prevent accidentally feeding wildlife.
- Second litters of squirrels are being born now. Please wait until winter to trim your trees.
- If you water a lawn, raccoons and skunks will be attracted to the grubs and slugs that thrive in it. Please do not use slug or snail baits that are poisonous to dogs and wild mammals.
- Deer are beginning the rut now. Watch for them on the roads.



Photo by Lisa Woldin

I schedule of events I

Winter 2010

Museum and Courtyard Programs

Wildlife Ambassadors*

Ambassadors in the Courtyard Interpretive Pool Bird feeding daily at 12:30 & 4:30pm FREE
Meet a Tortoise
Mondays at 2pm
Meet a Pelican
Wednesdays at 11am
Meet a Raptor
Saturdays at 3pm
Meet a Vulture
Sundays at 11:30am



Photo by Anya Pamplona

Nature Education Programs

Call 415-453-1000 ext. 12 to register.

Winter Nature Camps

December 20-23, 9am-3pm
Nature Detectives, grades K-1
December 27-30, 9am-3pm
The Big Chill, grades 1-2

WildCare Baja Adventure

wildcarebayarea.org
March 11-22, 2011

Terwilliger Nature Guide Orientation

January 22, 2011, 11am-12:30pm

Family Adventures*

Saturday mornings, 10am-noon, FREE
November 20
Devil's Gulch, Samuel P. Taylor Park
December 18
Tennessee Valley
January 29
Miwok Meadows, China Camp
February 12
Las Gallinas Wildlife Ponds
March 27
Muir Woods



Photo by Matt Powers

Events

WildCare Gala

Mill Valley Community Center
Friday, February 4, 2011, 6:30-11pm
Call 415-453-1000 ext. 13

Wildlife Conferences

California Council for Wildlife Rehabilitators Symposium 2010

Tenaya Lodge at Yosemite, CA
November 19-21, 2010
415-541-5090 www.ccwr.org

National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association Symposium 2010

Desmond Hotel, Albany, NY
February 22-26, 2011
320-230-9920 www.nrawildlife.org



Photo by Greg Wilson

Wildlife Rehabilitation Programs

New Volunteer Orientations

Orientation for Adult Volunteers FREE
January 29 or 30, 1-5pm
Call 415-453-1000 ext. 21 to register.

Training Classes for Volunteers

Series of four classes \$40
Class fee includes one-year WildCare membership

101-Basic Clinic Skills
Saturday, February 5, 1-5pm
Sunday, February 6, 10am-2pm
Tuesdays, February 8 and 15, 6-8pm

102-Birds
Saturday, February 19, 1-5pm
Sunday, February 20, 10am-2pm
Tuesdays, March 8 and 15, 6-8pm

103-Mammals and Reptiles
Saturday, February 12, 1-5pm
Sunday, February 13, 10am-2pm
Tuesdays, February 22 and March 1, 6-8pm

104-Captive Care for Wildlife
Saturday, March 5, 1-5pm
Sunday, March 6, 10am-2pm
Tuesdays, March 22 and 29, 6-8pm