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Dear Friends,

I hope you are having a wonderful summer!

There are many exciting things happening at WildCare right now. As usual, summer is our busiest season. Not only is the hospital extra full of patients with many more arriving daily, camps are in progress, and we are enjoying the children who attend each week-long session. Usually on Fridays (last day of camp), the kids put on a play about what they’ve learned for their parents. It is really a highlight for those of us who can attend.

All this summer activity underscores our critical need for a new facility, and I am happy to report on our progress. As you know, we have secured the site for our future home at Silveira Ranch, and we have two parallel efforts in progress – getting permits and raising funds.

Speaking of fundraising, our Capital Campaign Committee, led by Board President Susanne Lyons, launched its work during a kick-off meeting in May. The committee has three essential duties: contribute to the project, connect us with other prospective donors to the project, and convince their prospects that WildCare and its capital campaign are worthy of their support! We are now in the “quiet” phase of our campaign, which focuses on major donations. We hope to secure approximately half of our estimated budget of $8 million prior to going public. We encourage you to be part of this process. If you would like to participate in this all-important endeavor (or have suggestions for people or organizations that might) please let me know.

We are currently in the process of conducting and compiling myriad studies – biological, archeological, traffic, Phase One Environmental – just to name a few. By the time you receive this newsletter, we will have submitted our full application (complete with studies) to the County of Marin Planning Department. We will also host meetings in September for our future neighbors and others interested in learning more about our plans. Once we receive approval from the Planning Department (the process takes months) we will submit our more detailed building permits. Of course we will be busy fundraising during this entire time.

You may also know of our exciting event on October 15 when we will present Dr. Jane Goodall with our first-ever WildCare Environmental Award! Initially the Terwilliger Environment Award, we decided to change the name to honor Dr. Goodall, since that award is traditionally bestowed on outstanding Bay Area educators, and we plan to continue that proud tradition as well.

I hope you enjoy reading about all of the exciting things going on at WildCare in this newsletter. As always, I am extremely thankful to our wonderful donors, volunteers and staff. We simply could not do the work we do without you!

I am so excited that we are in this period of transformation. Each day I see the vision for our new facility coming closer and closer to fruition!

Sincerely,

Karen Wilson
Executive Director

Catch the Wild Action!

Sign up for WildCare’s FREE weekly eNews updates at www.wildcarebayarea.org.

Follow WildCare on Facebook and Twitter! Visit our Living with Wildlife blog at marinij.com

WildCare advocates for wildlife for a sustainable world.

in memory of
Elizabeth C. Terwilliger
Julie Malet

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.
california kingsnake

Meet our newest Wildlife Ambassador! This baby was found in an aquarium at the side of a road in Martinez, and taken to Lindsay Museum, a wildlife hospital for which WildCare staff member Nat Smith fosters reptiles.

The aquarium gave Nat a clue that the snake had been kept as a pet for some period of time, a circumstance that makes reptiles non-releasable. Captive reptiles may carry diseases to which wild ones have no resistance. We had no way of knowing whether he had had contact with other reptiles or their enclosures. We also had no idea where this little guy came from, and since kingsnakes have a high degree of site fidelity, he would have tried to return to his home range, no matter where he was released.

Nat kept the snake over the winter, and knowing that our kingsnake Rex was retiring, admitted the young snake to WildCare on December 19, 2012 as patient #1830. Plan to come visit him and watch him grow up!

walk with wildcare

The next in our continuing series of walks with WildCare naturalists will take place on Saturday, October 5 at Corte Madera Creek, from 10am to noon. We’ll explore this urban creek and its surrounding habitat, and then enjoy boxed lunches. Visit our website for more information and to purchase tickets.

raccoon glioblastoma

Diagnoses of two more cases of the raccoon tumors that were identified last year by Dr. Patricia Pasavento of UC Davis were confirmed this spring. Sadly, our medical staff is becoming adept at diagnosing the nasal brain tumors. Symptoms include bulging eyes, pupils fixed and dilated, and constant pacing with back weakness.

At the direction of Dr. Pesavento, we took samples from one while the raccoon was under anesthesia before euthanizing her.

Melanie Piazza took video of the raccoon’s behavior that led medical staff to suspect the presence of the tumors. She will use the video and accompanying descriptions to share with other wildlife centers.

Dr. Pesavento wrote, “Thank you so much, Melanie. The serum is like gold on this one, and my oncologist was standing by when we arrived, so we may have a tumor cell line. Wow.”

remembering gaia

We sadly say goodbye to Wildlife Ambassador Gaia, who entertained so many courtyard visitors over the last eight years. Gaia was blind, but had no problem finding her way around her familiar habitat. She died in July of an age-related illness.

nickels for nonprofits

United Markets encourages its customer to reuse their grocery bags when shopping. Two years ago, they

Living with Wildlife Photography Contest

Enter your best California wildlife photo to win our $500 Best in Show Prize

Entry deadline September 13, 2012

Visit wildcarebayarea.org/photocontest or call 415-453-1000 x 24 for rules and entry forms
imprinted, habituated or tamed?

**In rehabilitating wild animals** – preparing them to survive a life in the wild – foster caregivers walk a thin line. While we have to care for baby animals in a way that doesn’t terrify them every time they see a human approach them with food, we are also very concerned about making them too comfortable around people when they are released later.

Many of us use the word “imprinted” to talk about this danger, but actual imprinting is very rare. Habituation is much more common, and taming is actually rather difficult. What’s the difference?

**imprinting**

Imprinting is a term used in both psychology and ethology (the study of animal behavior). It describes the kind of rapid learning that occurs at a particular age or life stage (called phase-dependent learning). Konrad Lorenz studied instinctive behavior in animals, and working with geese, demonstrated the principle of imprinting.

Imprinting is a rapid learning process that takes place very early in the life of a young social animal; it permanently establishes a specific attachment with whatever it has most contact. Imprinting can occur during cross-fostering of newly-hatched birds, and is probably one of the reasons that wildlife rehabilitators in California are not permitted to accept viable eggs and allow them to hatch. Truly imprinted animals cannot be released.

Vladimir, our Wildlife Ambassador Turkey Vulture, is a classic case of an unreleasable, imprinted bird. Vladimir was raised from a hatchling by a man who was later unable to keep him. Vladimir imprinted on the man. He does not understand that he is a vulture and never will. It precludes him from ever mating, because he has attached to humans.

Several years ago we attempted to put a very young vulture in his enclosure, hoping Vladimir would accept the young one and act as a role model. Although the youngster tried to interact normally to what he recognized as an adult vulture, Vladimir would have nothing to do with him. Vladimir seemed terrified, the young vulture seemed confused and stressed, and the attempt was abandoned.

**habituation**

Habituation – in which an animal becomes accustomed to people or situations – is actually our greatest danger in keeping wild animals in captivity while they heal or grow.

Habituation is common in both birds and mammals. It is a short-term learning process that can, in controlled circumstances, be reversed with aversion techniques. As with ducklings, raccoons and other species, it can occur during rehabilitation, but can also occur naturally in areas where people come in contact with social wild animals.

Coyotes, raccoons and other animals have frequently demonstrated this, especially when people feed them. This is the reason WildCare does not recommend that anyone feed wild animals. Like the recent case of the coyote in Golden Gate Park that was approaching people and cars for food, habituation can bring danger to people and untimely death to wild animals.

**Waterbirds hatch on land, and must follow their mother to water. For geese and ducks imprinting is a survival tactic – unless they are caught in traffic on the way. Photo by Ken Benjamin**

**Vladimir, our Ambassador Turkey Vulture, is imprinted. Raised from a hatchling by a person, he loves people, thinks he is a person, and recoils at the idea of another Turkey Vulture near him. Photo by Winnie Kelly**

**American Kestrel Ambassador Kélé, here feeding an orphaned baby kestrel, is tame. He is comfortable with people, but knows he is a kestrel and even what his job is! Photo by Alison Hermance**
In foster care we are careful to raise birds and mammals among others of their own kind, so while they do have contact with a human caregiver (usually only one) they are always in contact with their own species. Once mammals like raccoons, foxes and squirrels no longer require hand-fed milk formulas, they join larger juvenile groups, and people recede from their world well before they are released. This is completely opposite from what has to happen when a wild or feral animal is tamed.

taming

Tameness is a state in which a wild animal can be managed by a human handler, a learning process that involves rewards such as feeding and handling. It encourages a social attachment that changes a wild animal from a wild state of fear, aggression or timidity toward humans, to one in which the animal loses those wild behaviors.

At WildCare we don’t have a lot of experience with taming, except for those few animals that cannot be released, and are being groomed for work as Wildlife Ambassadors. So we went to the best source to learn what is involved in taming.

Danusia Heilemann, the Foster Care Coordinator for the Marin Humane Society, explained the process they use to tame feral kittens so they can be adopted into loving families. Interestingly, it is a mirror (reverse) image of what we do with wild animals that will be released to the wild.

To tame a feral kitten, they begin at 4-5 weeks of age, and separate the kitten from her littermates. After that age it becomes much more difficult to tame the youngster, and the separation will encourage the kitten to bond with the people, not other kittens. The kitten is housed in a crate in an area where she will hear, see and smell all the familiar things in the home, so she first becomes habituated to her surroundings, family and other pets. As she becomes accustomed to the sounds of radios, TVs and vacuum cleaners, her fears diminish, and she becomes more interested in the people.

Foster caregivers handle the kittens as much as possible, touching their paws, clipping their nails, carrying them and petting them. The process is working when they begin to purr and indicate they are enjoying the attention. Each is given a name by their foster caregiver, but the name is more important in socializing puppies than it is for kittens. They are encouraged to play with the family pets and children.

This is not the case for WildCare's foster caregivers. They are trained to seclude the animals in a quiet room and keep the sounds of the home, the family and pets away, only visiting to feed and clean silently, without talking to them. While we might refer to the animal in discussions by a familiar trait or location, such as “the pinkie,” or “whittle,” or “Sonoma,” they are not names given for the animal to respond to.

Young animals are always housed with at least one other member of their species, and allowed to socialize appropriately. At the appropriate age, they are moved outside, where they can hear the sounds of the wind, trees and birds and given appropriate natural foraging, climbing and hiding opportunities.

For a kitten, human companionship in a loving home is the happy ending. For a wild raccoon, fox or skunk, freedom and a second chance at life is the joyful result. In either case, for foster care people, it is hard to nurture a small helpless animal only to say goodbye. But it is always worth it.
WildCare’s new home is only new to us. The earliest inhabitants, of course, weren’t people at all, but the rich variety of wildlife – both plant and animal – that lives on the shoreline marshlands of San Francisco Bay. To our delight, much of that still lives here, and will serve to help us educate a new generation of environmentally responsible citizens.

As we prepare to join the community that inhabits this rich area, we look forward to developing WildCare’s new home, and look back with respect to those who were here before us.

bay marshland

The flat marshlands create an ecologically significant transition between the bay and adjacent upland habitats. This component of the bay ecosystem has been lost throughout much of the San Francisco Bay Region, where levees and urban development most often meet the bay shoreline in an abrupt line, offering no refuge for wildlife during high tides, nor the resources that overlapping habitats typically provide.

The area just north of Lucas Valley Road also shares natural features such as oak savanna and woodland, pasture land, riparian stream habitat, oat-hay fields and hillside hiking areas. Small seasonal wetlands occur throughout the area, and the property is crossed by Miller Creek, a major freshwater creek which is influenced by the tides and provides flood control. A salt marsh has developed outside the levee along the edge of San Pablo Bay.

144 bird and waterfowl species use the lands for all or part of their habitat needs, as do raccoons, foxes, bobcats and a variety of smaller mammals, reptiles and amphibians.

miwok and early inhabitants

The earliest settlers of the land prior to about 1820 were the Native American Miwok people. A large shell mound on the north part of what is now the Silveira Ranch (WildCare will be located south of the ranch), and other evidence of early habitation suggest the early presence of the largest intact Miwok village in Marin County.
In 1844, Timothy Murphy (Don Timoteo) received the 22,000-acre Rancho San Pedro, Santa Margarita and Las Gallinas Mexican land grant, and sold some of the acreage in 1845 to William Miller, whose family had pioneered the wagon trail through Emigrant Gap in the Sierra Nevada.

In 1853 Murphy deeded 317 acres to Archbishop Alemany for education purposes. The eastern portions of the land were fully tidal until the rail line for the Northwestern Pacific and Southern Pacific railroads was constructed. Toward the end of the 1800s, the land east of the railroad was diked off from the bay and drained for farming.

**silveira ranch**

In 1900, 14-year-old Anthony Faustine Silveira, grandfather of the current owner, purchased the Miller Ranch dairy business. He shipped milk on the Northern Pacific Railroad from the Miller Depot Station to San Francisco for processing. He later built the Silveira family home in 1953, and purchased diked former tidelands east of the railroad tracks.

Silveira Ranch currently leases about 11 acres of land to Marin County Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District, also east of the tracks, has provided wastewater treatment for northern San Rafael since 1955. Facilities include 390 acres for plant habitat, storage ponds and agricultural fields.

Because of this long history of mixed use, our environmental impact report found no evidence of potential problems such as endangered species – great news for an environmental organization like WildCare!

“Over the years, the site has served a number of significant needs, and this tradition will continue with the presence of WildCare,” says Lorraine Silveira, owner and operator of Silveira Ranches. “My late husband, Tony, was very fond of wildlife, which makes this partnership so meaningful to our family. We have great regard for WildCare and its mission, and we are honored to be associated with it,” she adds.

**wildcare’s future**

As we look forward to moving to this wonderful location that offers us the room to expand to meet the growing needs of our wild neighbors, we are grateful for the support of the Marin community that has helped us come this far.
getting ready to go

Wildlife rehabilitation encompasses more than treating medical problems and raising orphaned wild animals – although those two aspects are a large part of the work. There are many different ways to get a wild animal ready and able to go back to living a wild life.

rescuers

The people who find a wild animal that seems to need help are our first line of engagement. The phone call alerts us to a situation, and we can determine whether the animal actually needs help. It’s an education process that keeps the caller safe and gives the animal the best chance of survival.

In early April, Elizabeth Lynn called to report a hummingbird nest with two baby hummingbirds in it that seemed to have been abandoned. After much discussion based on Elizabeth’s observations, we agreed that the mother was probably still around and caring for them. Elizabeth emailed back to thank us and to share photos of the healthy little family.

reuniting families

Sometimes all our effort happens in the first few days. This is time-sensitive, because the window of opportunity is narrow, and can’t be postponed, but well worth the time compared to what it takes to raise wild babies.

Reunions can be tricky because the natural behaviors of each species must be carefully considered. Opossums, for example, cannot be reunited because the mother bond in marsupials (pouched mammals) does not require the female to keep track of her young. Reunions can work well with raptors and social mammals like raccoons and foxes, but done badly, just result in injury or death to the babies.

orphaned babies

Orphaned babies take the most amount of time and resources, and of course, they all come at once – in the spring and summer. Orphaned raccoons are probably our most extreme case of this; we care for 40-50 orphans each year. There are a lot of them, and they take a lot of space.

Raccoon babies travel with their mothers during their first year of life, so we can’t release them until they are old enough to have bonded to their sibling group, can recognize and find natural food, and take care of themselves. This usually takes four to five months. During this time, they must be kept clean and housed in an environment with the enrichment to help them learn. Once weaned, they must be given a wide variety of the foods they might encounter. Since they are omnivorous, that includes fruits, grains and vegetables, small mammals, birds, eggs, fish, shellfish, amphibians and invertebrates. They’ll weigh between eight and ten pounds, so you can imagine how much food they eat.

injured animals

Each medical problem brings its own set of challenges. Many are familiar. Fractures and wounds, while dramatic, are the most easily treated – if the prognosis is for a full recovery. If not, and the animal can’t be released to live a normal life, the difficult decision must be the humane one.

Illnesses and diseases may be more difficult to diagnose, but run the gamut from pneumonia to rabies. In any case, recovery must be complete, so even these need physical conditioning after the initial problem is resolved.

We admit over 3,500 animals a year representing 200 different species. It’s a challenge, but we believe they deserve the effort.
Western Screech Owls (#0560-0561) were found on a driveway under a tree in San Anselmo by Michelle Latrala on May 8. Looking like two cotton balls making trilling noises, WildCare confirmed them to be tiny owls, so newly hatched that each one had his “egg tooth” still attached to his beak.

Hungry Owl Project (HOP) volunteers went to the site where the babies were found to see if a reunion with their parents was possible, and enlisted the aid of Merlin Schlumberger of Merlin’s Tree and Farm Care to check out a cavity 18 feet high. He reported that the cavity was too deep to be the nest site. At the base of the tree, however, was a pile of wood debris and an unhatched egg. The entire trunk was hollow. The base of the nest had collapsed, and the owlets had fallen down and out of the hole.

One of the babies did not survive, and HOP volunteers began searching for an active Screech Owl nest into which they could place this baby. As of July 15, the baby remains in foster care.

American Kestrel (#0663) was found in the middle of the road near the reservoir in Nicasio on May 17. The rescuer thought the animal was dead at first, but when she saw movement, she pulled over. The baby was filthy and matted, but very vocal as she gently wrapped him in a towel and brought him to WildCare. Here he was examined and found to be uninjured.

Kestrels are high-strung, but at WildCare the baby had an option. Our Wildlife Ambassador American Kestrel Kele must have been raised as a pet from the time he was a young chick. His obvious comfort with people made him unreleasable, but a perfect Wildlife Ambassador and potential foster parent.

Uncertain how Kele would react, we introduced the chick carefully and hand-fed him until we were certain it was safe to let Kele take over. The baby was weighed regularly, and it was clear he was eating enough to gain weight. A video camera placed in the cage confirmed it, and offered a rare close-up view of this very special foster care experience. The baby is expected to be released by the end of summer. View the video at wildcarebayarea.org/updates

Northern Pacific Rattlesnake (#1043) was found in the backyard of Amanda Montgomery’s home in Novato on June 27. The small snake was just lying in the doorway of a shed, with what looked to be a large swelling in its body, and was not moving away as one would do normally.

Amanda called the Marin Humane Society, and an officer was dispatched to bring the snake to WildCare. Radiographs revealed that this young, uninjured snake had eaten a rat much larger than itself, and it’s only problem was – literally – indigestion. The snake was gently transported back to its territory, so as not to cause him to regurgitate his meal.

Northern Raccoon (#1079) was brought to WildCare on June 30 from Mill Valley at the age of about 10 months. Katherine Fontwit found him with his leg caught in a fence, and had heard his mother calling him in the night. She phoned the Marin Humane Society, and Field Officer O’Brien freed him and brought him to WildCare.

Radiographs indicated that his left leg was badly fractured, and a splint was applied. Young animals heal quickly, but days later, the fracture was still unstable and he was chewing at the wrap. Raccoons suffer anxiety and depression when kept in isolation for long periods of time; he needed to be with others his age to develop the skills he’d need to survive after release.

Dr. Ken Bacon of Central Marin Cat and Exotic agreed to pin the leg on July 10, and patient #1079 healed quickly. On July 21, he was introduced to a group of young raccoons with which he bonded. He will be released with them in late August.
**fox squirrels**

by Lucy Burlingham, WildCare Squirrel Foster Team Leader

**What’s going on?** WildCare has seen a sharp increase in Fox Squirrels in recent years. In the 1990s and early 2000s we admitted an average of 6 individuals a year; in 2008 we admitted 34, and last year, we admitted 53. Fox Squirrels are not native to Marin County, but were introduced here by individuals for the purposes of hunting or populating local parks.

Fur color and size distinguish Fox Squirrels from other tree squirrels. They are the largest North American tree squirrel, and can weigh up to 2.8 pounds. Rusty red underparts make them easy to spot, though there is considerable variation among the ten subspecies. Blond and black phases are seen in some areas. The Fox Squirrel’s brilliant cinnamon-black tail can be spectacular.

Adapted to a wide variety of forest habitats, Fox Squirrels are most abundant in upland forests of mixed trees, but as croplands and forests turned into suburbs, these squirrels adapted well to humans. They readily adapt to unusual food items.

Fox Squirrels prefer to den in hollow trees, but will build outdoor leaf nests or nests of shredded bark in trees when hollow trees are unavailable. They will also use attics and walls of buildings and other man-made structures for nesting.

After their first year, mature healthy female Fox Squirrels are capable of producing two litters annually during plentiful food years, while the Western Gray Squirrel has a single annual breeding season.

**squirrel vs squirrel**

A 2004 masters thesis by Julie L. King examined the distribution of Fox Squirrels in the Greater Los Angeles Metropolitan Area and their behavioral interaction with native Western Gray Squirrels. Some findings included:

- The Fox Squirrel has broad habitat tolerances, a higher reproductive output and greater juvenile dispersal than the native species.
- Fox Squirrels thrive in cities and suburbs, and consume a wider range of foods than Gray Squirrels.
- Western Gray Squirrels constructed nests only in oak and eucalyptus trees, and were unwilling to nest in developed residential areas.

**meet a fox squirrel**

All of this natural history helps to introduce our newest Wildlife Ambassador. Patient #1677 fell from his nest when his tree was cut, and was admitted to WildCare with head injuries on October 30, 2012. Uncertain about his chance of recovery, the little male, only 5-6 weeks old, went to foster care with our Director of Animal Care Melanie Piazza. Melanie observed him over the course of his recovery, hoping his impaired maneuverability would improve as he grew. Unfortunately, that wasn’t the case, and he could never survive in the wild. His head injury, however, made him calm and comfortable with people.

**help us name our fox squirrel**

Now that you know a little about Fox Squirrels and our new Wildlife Ambassador, please help us give him an appropriate name! We’re looking for a name that is reflective of this interesting wild neighbor and respectful of his wild nature.

Register on our website to submit your entry – and then vote online for your favorite one. Contest will end on September 6. The winner will receive two tickets to our WildCare Environmental Award ceremony with Dr. Jane Goodall on October 15, and will be announced in our weekly eNews updates and in the Winter issue of this newsletter.
from page 3

decided to give the 5¢ cost of each bag back to the customers who did so. There is a jar at each store where customers can donate the money if they choose.

In April of this year, they selected WildCare to be the recipient of the nickel program that month. In June, they sent us a check for $516.35. Thank you, United Markets and your customers, for your support!

AB 1213 bobcat protection act of 2013

A bill proposing curbs on the trade in bobcat pelts and bobcat trapping was amended in the California Senate on June 20 with the support and encouragement of many of WildCare’s members.

A rise in the demand for bobcat pelts in China and other foreign markets has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of trappers taking bobcats as well as in the number of bobcats, taken for commercial purposes in California. Reliable statewide population estimates for bobcats do not exist.

Existing law describes the fur-bearing mammals that may be taken, and requires people who trap fur-bearing mammals to procure a trapping license, which specifies where trapping is illegal – such as within national monuments or preserves. A violation of any of the provisions of the Fish and Game Code is illegal.

This bill would enact the Bobcat Protection Act of 2013, which, beginning January 1, 2014, would require the Fish and Game Commission to amend its regulations to specify where such trapping may occur. The bill would prohibit the trapping of any bobcat on private land not belonging to the trapper without the express written consent of the property owner.

Rodenticides and Pacific Fishers

Ecologist Mourad Gabriel, co-founder of the Integral Ecology Research Center in Humboldt County, is a UC Davis doctoral candidate researching Pacific Fishers – a mink-like mammal listed as a candidate for state and federal protection under the Endangered Species Act.

Last year, Gabriel published research that studied the effects of rodenticides on fisher populations.
In the original study, researchers thought the fishers’ exposure to rodenticide would be rare because they are forest-dependent carnivores, and rodenticide is usually used near urban areas.

However, in 2008, law enforcement found thousands of pounds of pesticides at grow sites when officials removed more than 3.6 million outdoor marijuana plants from public lands in California. A 2011 illegal grow eradication operation removed more than 150 pounds of pesticides within fisher habitats in Mendocino County.

Of the 58 dead fishers collected and tested for rodenticide in the study, 79 percent had been exposed.

Gabriel has expanded his research to include soil samples, invertebrates, other species of rodents and birds – specifically the Northern Spotted Owl, but the more common Barred Owls are also being used because of their similar food habits and habitat.

"We have tested around eight to 10 owls so far, and about half of those have come back with exposure to rodenticide," Gabriel said.

**dining for wildlife 2013**

This year well over 500 sponsors, diners and donors helped raise $45,000 to fund our programs in wildlife rehabilitation, nature education and advocacy.

We extend grateful thanks to everyone who participated. Thank you!!!

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Susanne Lyons discovered WildCare in 2008 after retiring as Chief Marketing Officer for Visa. After 30 years in financial services, her work in the wildlife hospital and as a Terwilliger Nature Guide offered a way for her to reconnect with her passion for wildlife and the environment.

In 2011, when WildCare began its first effort to secure a new site for a new facility, Susanne and her husband Jeff stepped forward with a gift of $250,000. When WildCare secured the lease for the Silveira Ranch property, the Lyons made a new pledge of an additional $250,000 for the capital campaign! Susanne and Jeff are the current lead donors to the project.

This $500,000 commitment from Susanne and Jeff is the largest charitable contribution they have ever made to a nonprofit organization. When we asked what motivated them to make this gift, Susanne explained that WildCare has many supporters, but only a few patrons. She wanted to direct their gift where it would have the most impact and also inspire others to increase their support.

Susanne and Jeff have issued a challenge for their new gift; they will fulfill the pledge after WildCare secures an additional $250,000 in gifts and pledges for the capital campaign.

WildCare salutes Susanne and Jeff Lyons for their exceptional generosity and for their unwavering commitment to leading the way to making our new facility possible!
thinking outside the desk

WildCare’s telephone hotline is also the frontline for those people who are experiencing one-on-one interactions with wildlife. In the best cases, the animals involved never get a patient record because of the expert advice and understanding of our 9-5 Service Representatives and after-hours nightline operators. Here are some of their stories.

hooded crow

We got a call in early April from Charlene Gubasha, a woman who had a fledgling hooded crow – in Cairo, Egypt – that seemed in trouble. Charlene called WildCare because there are no wildlife rehabilitation centers there, and her son, a student at UC Berkeley, recommended she call our 24-hour hotline. She spoke to Winnie Kelly at about 9pm PDT, which was early morning in Egypt. Then she spoke with Animal Care Director Melanie Piazza until midnight PDT.

After identifying the species as best she could, Melanie emailed advice, written protocols, and contact with corvid specialist, Elaine Friedman of Corvid Connection.

Human persecution has affected crows, and today only the most fearful and cautious birds have survived. This one did not survive, probably partly because of its stress in captivity.

yes, a marmot!

The call came in as a simple exclusion call asking for help in excluding a groundhog from a Bernal Heights garden shed. Wildlife Solutions Manager Kelle Kacmarcik spoke at length to the caller to determine how a groundhog might have come to a San Francisco garden, and whether the animal really was a groundhog. A photograph convinced her it was actually a Yellow-bellied Marmot. Still not a native, but at least a Western resident.

Because WildCare doesn’t perform rescue services, Kelle called Rebecca Dymytryk of Wildlife Emergency Services in Moss Landing. Rebecca and Kelle went to the location to try to coax the marmot out from under the shed, and finally set a trap. As of July 15, trapping efforts are still under way.

Marmots are not from the Bay Area, and typically live in colder climates at elevations of 5,000 feet or higher.

Rebecca suspected that the marmot traveled from Yosemite National Park to San Jose in the engine compartment of a vehicle owned by William Charlson, who owns a bed-and-breakfast near the park, had stopped in Tuolumne Meadows on Saturday, and had driven to San Francisco the following day.

Wildlife Emergency Services will return the marmot to Yosemite once the animal has been captured.

dead gulls on alcatraz

In early June, National Park Service (NPS) staff members called to ask for help in identifying the cause of death of a number of Canada Geese and California Gulls on Alcatraz Island. The birds had been found dead by NPS staff.

Their concern was that the birds had ingested some kind of poison.

Veterinary Technician Nat Smith worked in partnership with the park officials to secure tests of the bodies they submitted. The National Park Service paid for necropsies which revealed lead in the stomachs of the geese, but not the gulls, which died from other causes.

pigeons, wild and tame

We admitted an injured brown pigeon in mid-February. His band identified him as a racing pigeon from Mexico. Our phone staff followed up with known registries and organizations with no success at finding the owner. We are not licensed to treat domestic animals, so we partner with MickaCoo Pigeon and Dove Rescue and the Marin Humane Society (MHS) to assure these animals get the care they need.

MickaCoo is at capacity with homeless pigeons, and recently set up a pigeon aviary at MHS so that their pigeons could live in a healthy outdoor environment while awaiting adoption.

The Racing Pigeon joined a single lonely king pigeon in the aviary and the two have bonded. They are now awaiting adoption, hopefully together.
prickly hitchhikers

Fall is the time of dispersal for lots of wild things, but plants can’t just get up and walk to new locations, so they have evolved a variety of strategies to get around – including hitchhiking! We can all relate to coming in from outside after a hike to find tiny, sticky seeds stuck to everything.

adaptation or invasive threat?

While being able to move its seeds from one location to another is desirable from a plant’s point of view, it can cause economic and health issues as a result of loss or change in the biodiversity of a region. In the Bay Area, Italian Thistles and Star Thistles have been extremely successful in expanding their range, out-competing native plants. As Star Thistle takes over grasslands, it can inflict injuries to the mouths of grazing cattle.

world travelers

Cockleburs (Xanthium sp.) produce hundreds of little football-shaped burs covered with stiff, hooked spines. The prickly burs hook into your clothing like Velcro and attach tightly. Often the burs become entangled in animals’ fur, and, in the case of pets, must be cut. These remarkable burs have enabled the cocklebur plant to hitchhike all over the world.

Cockleburs belong to the enormous sunflower family, the largest known plant family, that has approximately 24,000 species. Another related hitchhiker in the sunflower family, called burdock (Arctium lappa), is equally adapted for clinging to animals and objects. Like the cocklebur, its hooked prickles are very difficult to remove.

Other hitchhikers include Bur Clover (Medicago hispida) and Fuller’s Teasel (Dipsacus sativa). Teasel bristles are stiff enough to raise and straighten (tease) the nap on woolen cloth. The large, spiny heads of teasel were used to card wool in early days.

the inspiration for velcro

One day in 1948, George de Mestral, an amateur Swiss mountaineer and naturalist, went on a nature walk with his dog through a field of hitchhiking bur plants. They returned home covered with the burs. Curious, Mestral went to his microscope and inspected one of the burs. He saw numerous small hooks that enabled the bur to cling to the tiny loops in the fabric of his pants. George de Mestral raised his head from the microscope and smiled thinking, “I will design a unique, two-sided fastener, one side with stiff hooks like the burs and the other side with soft loops like the fabric of my pants. I will call my invention “velcro,” a combination of the words velour and crochet. It will rival the zipper in its ability to fasten.”

backyard hitchhikers

Whenever your pet goes out in the summer or fall, he or she might come back with unwanted hitchhikers. These can be ticks, burs or grass seeds, but one of the worst is the foxtail. Once the seed gets snagged in fur, it can only move one way, deeper into the fur and skin.

The name “foxtail” is applied to a number of grasses that have bushy spikes that resemble a fox’s tail. Not all of these are hazardous. The hazardous ones are in the genus Hordeum, and are also called “wild barley.”

While hitchhiking plants, much like hitchhiking people, might be considered undesirable, the amazing evolution of plants has allowed them to become mobile and disperse themselves around the world. So the next time you’re picking little seeds from your clothing, take a moment to appreciate these plants’ adaptability.
I just for fun! I

autumn activities

garden detective

Can you find at least nine things in the picture that make wildlife welcome in your garden, and unwelcome in your home?


Unwelcome: 7. Sealed access areas under house

a congregation of critters

Fall is migration time! You might see a group of animals going somewhere! What do you call the group? Connect the animals to the name of their group.

A business of Bees
A flight of Bats
A parliament Crows
A host Flies
A murmuration Foxes
An unkindness Jays
A scold Lapwings
A deceit Larks
An exaltation Owls
A murder Plovers
A scurry Porcupines
A prickle Pigeons
A skulk Ravens
A colony Starlings
A pod Sparrows
A swarm Swallows
A wing Whales

Answers: a swarm of bees; a colony of bats; a murder of crows; a business of flies; a skulk of foxes; a scold of jays; a deceit of lapwings; an exaltation of larks; a parliament of owls; a wing of plovers; a prickle of porcupines; an unkindness of ravens; a host of sparrows; a scurry of squirrels; a murmuration of starlings; a flight of swallows; a pod of whales

Raptor Maze

Help this raptor navigate the thermal air currents and find the migration route to his winter home.

Illustration by David LaTour
I schedule of events I

Wildlife Conferences

**OWCN Annual Rehabilitation Conference – Ollapalooza**
Oiled Wildlife Care Network Members
The Dana on Mission Bay and
Seaworld, San Diego
October 27-28, 2013
www.owcn.org

**The Wildlife Society Conference**
Wisconsin Center, Milwaukee, WI
October 5-10, 2013
301-897-9770 www.wildlifesociety.org

**IWRC Symposium**
Delta Victoria Ocean Pointe Resort,
Victoria, BC Canada
November 4-9, 2013
408-271-2685 www.theiwrc.org

**California Council for Wildlife Rehabilitators Symposium**
Hilton Hotel, Costa Mesa, CA
November 15-17, 2013
415-541-5090 www.ccwr.org

Events

**Photo Contest Deadline**
September 13, 5pm

**Volunteer Appreciation Party**
September 14, 11am-3pm

**Walk with WildCare**
October 5, 10am - noon
Corte Madera Creek

**WildCare Environmental Award Presentation and Reception**
October 15, 6pm

**Wine-ing for Wildlife**
Date TBA Please visit our website

Wildlife Rehabilitation Programs

**New Volunteer Orientations**
Orientation for Adult Volunteers
January 25 or 26, 2014, 1-5pm

Classes for Volunteers

- **2110–Necropsy**
  September 7, 10am-noon
- **2122–Introduction to Radiology**
  September 17, 6:30-8:30pm (lecture)
  September 24, 6:30-8:30pm (lab)
- **2123–Parasitology Basics**
  September 29, 1:30-3:30pm
- **5120–WildCare Interpretation for the Public**
  October 6, 10am-2pm
- **5120–Raptor Identification and Migration**
  October 12, 9-11am/11:30am-2pm
- **2121–Aseptic Technique**
  October 20, 1:30-3:30pm

*Pre-registration is required for all programs and events EXCEPT those noted with an asterisk; call 415-453-1000.