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Dear Friends,

The biggest and best news I have to share in this issue is that we met the Bently Challenge! For those of you who aren’t familiar with this challenge (and I hope there are only a few of you), the Bently Foundation pledged that WildCare would receive a $1 million grant for our new facility if we were able to raise an additional $2 million by the end of 2015 – in nine months – and we did it!

But there is still a lot to do... we are at 60% of goal, and need to raise another $4 million. The faster we can accomplish this, the faster our move will be. So I encourage you to participate at whatever level works for you. Please check our website for donor recognition opportunities!

Life at our new home presents many opportunities for program expansion and development. How would you like to join a Terwilliger Nature Guide for a paddle through the nearby wetlands? This is just one of the many new program ideas we have. And partnerships – the California Native Plant Society will play a major role in the design, propagation, planting and care for WildCare’s future true native California gardens. The Marin Builders Association is working with us to involve its members in the renovation/construction of the new buildings, and in doing so help to significantly reduce WildCare’s construction costs. Our goal is to involve as many members of the community as possible in this terrific project!

This year WildCare will develop a new strategic plan to guide our first five years at our new home. We plan to involve as many of our donors, friends and partners as possible. Expect to receive a survey later this year; your thoughts and ideas for moving WildCare forward are important to us.

Last but not least, I’d like to extend a warm welcome to our new Development Director, Ellyn Weisel. Ellyn brings great experience, energy and enthusiasm to the WildCare team. And thanks to Mecca Billings Nelson for her three plus years heading development; her achievements were significant.

It’s spring! Spend more time outdoors and join us in May for Dining for Wildlife and the Terwilliger Environmental Award. Many thanks to all of you for your continuing support!

Sincerely,

Karen J. Wilson
Executive Director

one million thanks!

WE MET THE CHALLENGE!

THE BENTLY FOUNDATION CHALLENGED WILDCARE TO RAISE $2 MILLION BEFORE THE END OF 2015 TO RECEIVE A $1 MILLION GRANT.

YOU DID IT!

BUT THERE’S STILL MORE TO DO...

Karen J. Wilson
Executive Director

in memory of
Elizabeth C. Terwilliger
Julie Malet

WildCare advocates for wildlife
for a sustainable world.

Cover Photograph: Baby Striped Skunk on log
Photo: Geoff Kuchera
Editor: Marie-Noelle Marquis
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wildcare’s internship; opening doors

WildCare is very proud to announce that three of our current Wildlife Assistants have been accepted to the U.C. Davis School of Veterinary Medicine!

Galen Groff attended WildCare’s intern program in spring of 2013, during her third year of undergraduate work at UC Davis, where she majored in Wildlife, Fish and Conservation Biology. Her experience also included several internships at local cat and dog hospitals, research work with Wood Ducks, and work on the necropsy floor of the Pathology Department at U.C. Davis.

Kristin Little was also a 2013 WildCare hospital intern – from the University of California, Berkeley, where she was a third year student of Molecular Environmental Biology. In addition to her studies, she volunteered with the Marine Mammal Center, worked in small animal veterinary medicine as an assistant, and participated in research at O’Hara Lab, U.C. Berkeley.

Casie Lee was a member of WildCare’s 2014 internship class while in her third year of study at U.C. Berkeley, majoring in Molecular Environmental Biology. Her experience combined extensive research hours with U.C. Berkeley’s Museum of Vertebrate Zoology and the National Science Foundation. She achieved a leadership position as Student Director in the U.C. Berkeley Public Service Center, escorting students from underserved communities on week-long service-learning trips.

All three young women were exemplary interns, rising to the challenge of working and learning in a fast-paced, high-stress environment. Upon completion of their internships, each was hired onto WildCare’s medical staff as a Wildlife Assistant.

While we are sad to see them go, we are incredibly proud, and wish them all the best in this new, exciting and well deserved opportunity! We hope that in 2020 they will return to WildCare as volunteer veterinarians!

Interested in interning in our wildlife hospital? Visit www.wildcarebayarea.org/volunteer-opportunities to fill out your application!

remembering Diana Manis

It is with a heavy heart that we say goodbye to our longtime friend, volunteer and staff member, Diana Manis, who passed away on December 21st, 2015.

Diana had been with WildCare since she started volunteering in August of 2001, and officially joined the staff as a Wildlife Assistant in 2007. Like so many of us at WildCare, she wore many hats; Wildlife Ambassador Volunteer, Clinic Volunteer, Birdroom Volunteer, Foster Care Volunteer on many species teams, Intern, Front Desk Staff, Hotline Volunteer, Wildlife Assistant, Volunteer Trainer, animal food prepper extraordinaire, and so much more!

All of us who got to work with Diana on her shifts probably most enjoyed her cooking abilities, which she loved to share with us. She was a retired professional chef and we all benefitted from her generous lunch surprises! What was even more amazing is that she created such tasty food on nothing more than a hot plate in her small in-law unit.

Diana fell ill earlier last year and was fighting numerous health issues; she was on a medical leave of absence from WildCare. She came to visit us at the WildCare Rummage Sale in November and looked fantastic, and the happiest and healthiest we had seen her in months. It was wonderful for all of us who got to see Diana, and we were excited about the possibility of her return to WildCare. The news of her death would never have been easy, but it was especially shocking after seeing her looking so well.

Diana was generous, dedicated, insanely reliable and truly loved the animals in her care as well as the people she worked side-by-side with for 14 years. Her passing is a tremendous loss for the entire WildCare community. Rest in peace. We will miss you deeply.
California is a place of exceptional biological diversity. Many of the species that live here can’t be found anywhere else. These unique plants and animals have evolved together over many millennia and depend on each other, as each provides something the other needs. Trees provide shade, shelter, and food for nourishment. Animals spread the seeds of plants, help with pollination, and provide free pruning services (sometimes a little more than we would like). Each is adapted to the cycles of dry and wet weather, clay and marshy soils, seasons of dormancy and growth.

**a perfect symbiosis**

Groups of plants that are adapted to local conditions establish collaborative habitats, or communities. Natives have evolved to cooperate rather than to compete with each other, making the community self-sustaining. These habitats, in turn, support vibrant insect populations that attract birds and animals that feed on the insects. Plants native to the soil and climate of our specific region provide the best food sources for wildlife.

Native plants in home gardens can restore the vitality of these plant communities, and provide resources missing from green deserts of lawn grass and imported plants like jasmine, roses and hydrangeas. If we take our gardening cues from nature, some of these intricate relationships among plants, insects, birds and other animals can be revitalized.

**urbanization**

California’s massive growth in recent decades has eliminated 90% of the native habitats that once covered the state from north to south. The remaining patches of native plant communities are not sufficient to support the wildlife that depends on them for shelter, food and breeding grounds. In addition, these regions are often widely separated. Many animals aren’t large enough to cross the artificial barriers between resources. Coyotes can traverse the housing developments that have been built in their territory, but they’d prefer to be in wildlands, away from people. Birds and bees may exhaust themselves trying to find food for their young, or flowers with pollen. Monarch Butterflies, once ubiquitous, have declined 95% in the last two decades due to the near eradication of the lowly milkweed plant – the only food their caterpillars eat.

For children, in particular, a habitat garden can be a big, wild world full of delights to be discovered, and a wonderful introduction to the concept of stewardship for nature. At every season, different plants, insects, and animals are helping each other thrive – or consuming each other. When manzanitas start to bloom in late December, solitary Mason Bees emerge from their brood cells to start their yearly life cycle. Manzanitas also provide a valuable source of nectar for Anna’s Hummingbirds, now resident in the Bay Area all year.

**what is a habitat garden?**

Habitat gardening is all about viewing the garden as a living ecosystem rather than merely as outdoor decoration. Habitat gardens embrace biological diversity, ecological design, and environmentally friendly gardening methods. And, perhaps most importantly, they can help re-establish corridors between larger native plant communities to aid wildlife stressed by human encroachment.
Monkey flowers start to bloom in March, in time to provide nutrition for the annual northward migration of Rufous Hummingbirds. Our wild lilacs, the ceanothus species, put on new leafy growth that provides a rich source of calcium just as deer start to grow new antlers. When it sets seed, sparrows and finches come to feast.

building your own habitat garden
To find the best choices for your garden, look to the native plant communities near your home. If you live near open meadows, a mixture of native bunchgrasses like purple needlegrass and California fescue with native wildflowers are likely to do well and will attract Meadowlarks, Western Fence Lizards, Gray Foxes and Red-tailed Hawks. Oak woodlands, meanwhile, support thousands of insect species, more than 160 species of birds, over 150 mammals, amphibians and reptiles, and 2,000 varieties of plants. Companion plants in oak woodlands often include ceanothus, coffeeberry, currants, snowberry and toyon. Under them will grow native bunchgrasses like festuca and melica, and groundcovers like yerba buena and hummingbird sage – a resource-rich community for everything from soil bacteria to Black Bears.

Any native plant added to your garden will help support important insect populations that are the foundation of the food chain. Planting groups of natives found together in the wild will prove even more successful. There’s no need to start from scratch; many drought-tolerant Mediterranean species are compatible with our native plants, and provide enhanced resources for wild creatures throughout the year. However few or many native plants you can find room for in your flowerbeds and under your trees, the wildlife will thank you for it!

To get a list of native plants that will do well in your area, go to http://calscape.cnps.org and type in your zip code.

WildCare is thrilled to announce that the Marin chapter of the California Native Plant Society is working with our Education Team to design native habitat gardens for our new site on Smith Ranch Road.

Stay tuned for more updates soon!

Megan Hui is an English major in her fourth year at San Jose State University. A native of San Francisco, where she has lived all her life. Megan is a long time animal lover, but says “I never found a place I enjoyed working or volunteering until I found WildCare.”

She started volunteering in the Birdroom on Sunday mornings, in the Spring of 2011 when she was a junior at Lowell High School. Five years later, it is still her shift.

When asked to describe her experience at WildCare, Megan answers: “Working with the other volunteers and Victor (her Birdroom supervisor) is really a great experience. I’ve learned so much in the years that I’ve been here. Every shift includes cleaning cages, incubators and aviaries, washing dishes, giving meds, doing patient evaluations, and tube feeding baby pigeons. It is not, however, always glamorous. In the Birdroom, we all do our part to help each other out because we’re a team. We all clean, wash dishes, cut up mice and smelt, and do jobs that are not always the most desirable. The job is always rewarding though. Knowing that I did my part to help the animals is what I look forward to every Sunday.”

Megan also enjoys meeting and training new volunteers. “It’s always good to welcome new faces who are eager to learn. When I first applied to volunteer here, I had no idea I would become so attached. Volunteering at WildCare has been a great experience, and I plan on continuing for as long as I can!”

California poppies and cream cups among the grasses on Mt. Burdell Photo by William Follette
Striped Skunks are primarily known for their signature scent, and few people know much else about these endearing animals. However, there is a lot more to skunks than what meets the nose, even some hidden benefits to having them around that you probably didn’t know. There are five skunk species in North America, but we will focus this discussion on the Striped Skunk, which is the most common in our area.

**love is in the air**

It all begins during mating season. Mating season for Striped Skunks in California typically begins in early January, and continues well past Valentine’s Day (the perfect time for love!) into March or April; but at WildCare we have had many calls in recent years indicating that mating season starts increasingly earlier, sometimes as early as late December. How do we know it’s mating season? The smell! During this time, males seek out females to court, and females who are not “in the mood” often react by spraying their suitor. Skunks are solitary animals, so these encounters are unique to mating season.

**babies!**

Striped Skunks have a gestation period of about 63 days, which means that May and June are when many skunks are born, although our warm and drier climate has brought us baby skunks as early as March. Babies are called kits, and a mother may give birth to between 2 and 10 kits per litter (with an average of 5-6) and cares for the babies alone. Kits are born with their eyes closed and without fur, although their unique black and white patterns are visible on their skin at birth. They develop their signature musk after just a few days, but cannot spray until they are around 3-4 weeks old. They spend their first few weeks of life drinking their mother’s milk in the safety of the den, and at around 6-7 weeks of age, they begin to wean and accompany mom on her nightly rounds, where she introduces them to traveling and foraging. Kits follow in a single file line, primarily using their sense of smell to stay with the family, due to their limited vision.

**learning how to be a skunk**

The next few weeks are a crucial learning period for young skunks. During this time, juveniles play with their siblings to develop defense instincts and other adult behaviors. When skunks sense danger, there are three main observable behaviors that they will exhibit. The Striped Skunk’s first warning is to stomp at the threat with their forelimbs. During this behavior, the skunk will face the threat directly, fluffing up their fur and displaying their intimidating stripes, which serve as a warning to predators, similar to the bright coloration of a poisonous frog. Following the stomp, they will usually scoot backward, increasing the distance between them and the threat. Finally, if an intruder won’t back down after the “stomp and scoot,” skunks will expose their anus, preparing to spray. If you see the little red dots (anal glands) poking out, you are in trouble! Skunks can bend their bodies so that both their face and anus are pointing the same direction, enabling them to keep their eyes on the target. Their impeccable aim is accurate for up to ten feet, or they can opt to spray a cloud as a getaway tactic while running away. When kits are a few weeks to a few months old, they constantly play with...
each other, practicing the “stomp and scoot,” and wrestling at all hours. Juvenile skunks must master these tactics as well as learn to forage and dig by the time autumn arrives, when they must leave their families and start their solitary lives.

the cold winter

When winter comes around, skunks spend most of their time in a den. They are excellent diggers and can excavate their own dens, but when possible, they prefer to appropriate other spaces, including dens abandoned by other species, hollow logs, and man-made structures like backyard decks or crawl spaces. Contrary to their solitary nature, females skunks will often den in groups of up to 12 to help keep warm in colder climates, and sometimes they will even allow a male to share their den. Skunks do not hibernate, but in colder areas they do experience something called torpor, a state of inactivity defined by low body temperature, and metabolism and body mass decrease.

skunks and humans

While skunks do have natural predators, like Great Horned Owls and Bobcats, humans are, by far, their biggest threat. Skunks are not built for speed nor for inflicting injury; they cannot run quickly, their claws work best for digging, and their teeth are not designed for self defense. This leaves them with one primary defense: spraying. This tactic is effective for most animal and human encounters, but is useless when a car approaches. Combined with their poor eyesight and their instinct to stomp and scoot, skunks have very little chance of escaping an oncoming car. Although skunks can live up to 10 years in captivity, few wild skunks live past age 2-3, the most common cause of death being hit by vehicle. Unfortunately, cars are not the only way that humans pose a threat to Striped Skunks. At WildCare, we consistently see skunks who have been caught in fences, rat traps (see article on page 8), have ingested rodent poison, or have been subject to other human-caused dangers.

Skunks can spray with perfect accuracy for up to ten feet. Photo by Karl Umbriaco

avoiding getting sprayed

Anyone experienced in working with skunks will assure you that skunks don’t want to spray – they use it as a last resort when they feel threatened. Skunks are the #1 carrier of rabies -- Fiction. Rabies has not been found in skunks in the Bay Area for over 20 years, and studies show that only 4% of skunks tested positive for rabies in the entire state of California from 2012 to 2014. (California Department of Public Health)

Skunks are great for your garden -- Fact! Insects and grubs are an important part of the skunk’s diet, and many of these bugs are considered garden pests.

Skunks spray all the time -- Fiction. Skunks are non-aggressive animals who use their special weapon as a last resort when they feel threatened.

Skunks are the #1 carrier of rabies -- Fiction.

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Skunks are great for your garden -- Fact! Insects and grubs are an important part of the skunk’s diet, and many of these bugs are considered garden pests.

Skunks are nocturnal -- Fiction. Skunks are crepuscular, meaning that they are most active at dawn and dusk.

Tomato juice is the best way to get rid of skunk smell -- Fiction. A solution of hydrogen peroxide, baking soda and a touch of dish soap is one of the most efficient ways to get rid of skunk scent on fur and hair. Boiling hot water with fresh rosemary will also help dissipate the smell inside your home.

peaceful helpers

Skunks have many more reasons to be afraid of us than we of them. They are peaceful, curious and passive creatures, who will avoid other animals if given the chance. A skunk would much prefer to nap or dig for grubs than to have a confrontation. In fact, since insects are a large part of a skunk’s diet, they are great for the local ecosystem and for your garden! They can’t resist garden pests like beetles, larvae, crickets and snails, and will also eat species that are dangerous to us like Black Widows and scorpions. Who knew they could be such great help!
Every day wild animals are injured by direct or indirect interactions with humans. Thanks to your generous donations, we are able to give these animals a second chance. The following stories highlight just a few of the patients received at WildCare who had been injured by traps.

While not all of our cases have a happy ending, we believe it is imperative to share these stories with our supporters to help spread awareness of the deadly hazards that traps pose not only for wildlife, but also for our domestic pets and children. Many animals caught in traps, including those highlighted in our stories, were not the intended targets.

Patient #1094 – Striped Skunk

Our 49th baby skunk of the 2015 season came to us at six-weeks-old with her paw caught in a T-Rex trap intended for rats. We saw five skunks this last year with paws caught in these traps, all sustaining severe injuries due to the traps’ pressure, causing life and limb-threatening loss of blood flow and infection. Skunks rely on their ability to dig, so the loss of a paw can cause dire consequences. When she arrived, her right paw was already ice cold and severely swollen. Her prognosis was guarded, but we were happy to see improvement in the swelling and in the health of the tissues surrounding her wound. Luckily, she did not suffer any fractures. After two days she began to show a little grip in her injured paw. She was placed in foster care with our skunk expert, who was able to monitor her progress closely. Although she did lose two digits, we were able to save most of her paw – enough for her to be able to dig, hunt and protect her young. She remained in care for two and half months and was successfully released on September 17th.

Patient #1830 – Fox Squirrel

This female Fox Squirrel came to us after getting her left front paw caught in a T-Rex rat trap. She had been stuck in the trap for close to 24 hours when she reached WildCare. Teeth marks on the trap revealed her frantic attempt to escape. In the process her original wound was aggravated, resulting in a compound fracture. She also suffered an extreme amount of stress. She was anesthetized upon intake, her paw freed from the trap, and radiographs were taken. The images revealed her left paw was fractured at the wrist, rendering her non-releasable. Wild animals with fractured joints almost always have to be humanely euthanized, as the chance of regaining mobility in an injured joint is nearly impossible, and compromises their ability to survive in the wild. Snap traps and T-Rex rat traps should always be used indoors only or in locked, tamper-resistant boxes in order to prevent nontarget wildlife injuries and death.

Patient #1481 – Long-Eared Myotis Bat

A single insectivorous bat can ingest more than 1,200 mosquito-sized insects per hour, making it one of our most precious insect controls on earth. This adult male Myotis Bat was looking for a meal when he found himself badly stuck on a hanging glue trap like the one shown in the photo below. Both of his wings and the fur on his belly were completely coated in glue. Luckily, the finder brought him in right away, which helped minimize his injuries. WildCare’s medical staff used a special solution to gently remove the glue from his wings while he was under anesthesia. (photo on the right) While the first treatment removed some of the glue, the process had to be repeated several times. He was sent to foster care with our bat expert, where he remained for eight days before making a full recovery. He was successfully released on September 15th, at the site where he had been found.

Did you know? Placing a bird cage or a 1/2” welded wire mesh cage around hanging glue traps can stop nontarget wildlife injuries.
Patient #5113 – House Sparrow

Glue traps are indiscriminate killers, from birds to bats, rodents to reptiles; the list is long. Even if only used indoors, glue traps are never humane, and even the targeted animals (mice, rats) die a slow, painful and torturous death. This male sparrow came in a few hours after being stuck on such a trap. His skin was raw on the thorax, he had several missing feathers on his body, was highly stressed and covered in glue. WildCare’s medical staff opted to let him rest in an incubator overnight to reduce stress and increase his chance of recovery. The glue contaminant was carefully removed the next morning and within a week, this patient was flying like a champ. He was released on December 21st. If you find an animal in a trap, never attempt to remove the animal from the trap yourself. Bring the animal “as is” to your local wildlife center. When it comes to traps, even the best intentions can turn a manageable situation into life-threatening injuries.

Patient #1276 – Northern Raccoon

On the night of August 4th, the Marin Humane Society (MHS) responded to a call about a raccoon near the dumpsters at an apartment complex in Greenbrae. The young raccoon had an illegal leg-hold trap attached to her paw and due to her decreased mobility the officer was able to capture her for transportation to WildCare’s hospital.

The raccoon was suffering from emaciation, dehydration and infection as a result of the trap having compressed her paw for a prolonged period of time. Under sedation the trap was removed and she was given a full exam and supportive treatments including fluids, antibiotics and anti-inflammatory pain medications. Sadly, in her desperate attempts to free herself, she had chewed off the top portion of her fingers.

Our volunteer veterinarian, Dr. Juliana Sorem, performed a debridement surgery to remove dead, infected bone fragments and tissue. The hope was that if only the tips of the fingers were missing, she could adapt enough to still survive in the wild. Unfortunately after a course of bandage changes and wound treatments it became clear that the infection and tissue damage was too severe. The tissue necrosis continued to spread and enveloped the entire paw.

For humane reasons it is not legal to release wild animals with amputated limbs. While most wildlife, raccoons in particular, can adapt to catastrophic injuries, a first-year female raccoon who would need to be able to climb trees while carrying young would not survive missing her paw and a portion of the front leg. She was humanely euthanized. As leg-hold traps are illegal in California, the Marin Humane Society is currently investigating this case. Because she was only a few months old she would not have been found far from her den site and her usual nightly path with mom and siblings. While we cannot be positive the trap was set in that exact complex, we do know that she did not travel far from wherever it was that she became ensnared in the trap. If you have any information regarding this case, please contact MHS. If you come across illegal traps like these contact your local animal control agency AND the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s 24-hour tip line 1-888-CAL-TIP (1-888-334-2258).

If you find ill, injured or orphaned wildlife, please call our 24-hour Hotline at 415.456-SAVE (7283) for support.
Close up on our local wildlife! Our Ninth Annual Living with Wildlife Photography Contest brought us close to 200 entries from all over California, offering singular glimpses of the wide diversity of California wildlife and the stunning places they call home.

We extend special thanks to our hard-working judges – Erin Lubin, Melanie Piazza and Marian Eschen, for contributing their time and expertise.

The top five photographs in each category are shown in the gallery at right, and online at wildcarebayarea.org/living-with-wildlife-photography-contest.

Best In Show: *Autumn Jackrabbit* — Joyce Bowes

California Wild Animals (Other) in Their Natural Settings: *Garden Snail* — Chris Whittier

California Wild Birds in Their Natural Settings: *Bluebird Bathing* — Mary Sheft

Living with Wildlife: *Egret and Bicyclist* — Mary Sheft

General Nature: *Seafoam Bubbles on Kelp* — Angela Neal Grove

People’s Choice Award: *Four baby skunks in the backyard* — Greg Wilson
A simple change can make a huge difference!

Monthly giving is one of the easiest and most effective ways to support WildCare’s mission. This year we are asking supporters to make a change and share it forward.

- Skip a latte once a week. $20/month
- Carpool with colleagues. > $65/month
- Switch brands, price compare or clip coupons. > $40/month
- What will you change to help wildlife?

www.wildcarebayarea.org/monthly
Every day WildCare’s Hotline receives calls from people looking for humane and do-it-yourself ways to resolve conflicts with wildlife. Callers frequently ask about live trapping and relocating the animal to open space or another non-residential area, thinking that is a humane solution. Most people don’t want the animal(s) to die or be killed, and their intent is almost always good, but what they don’t realize is that relocation often has deadly consequences.

**territory and resources**

Trapping and relocating “nuisance” wildlife is an outdated conflict management technique; it is not humane, is illegal in California (and many other states), and is ineffective. When an animal is removed from his home territory by trapping or killing, an opening is created, and another animal will soon fill that void. Wild animals choose territories based on the availability of resources. As long as the attractant remains (food, shelter and water), other animals will show up. Removing the attractant is the effective and permanent solution.

Animals who are relocated have no idea where to find food and water sources, safe places to hide or shelter. These animals get dumped in the home range of other animals, leading to territory disputes, severe and even fatal injuries, starvation and dehydration. Researchers in Toronto conducted a study on live-trapped, radio-collared raccoons who were relocated was published in a paper titled “Relocation of City Raccoons” by Rosatte and MacInnes in 1989. This research concluded, “Mortality within the first three months of release was at least 50% and may have been as high as 75%,” and 50% of the surviving raccoons who were recaptured several weeks later were found to be in very poor body condition or underweight. Annual mortality of resident raccoons in the same sample area was less than 20%.

Another paper, “Movement and Mortality of Translocated Urban-Suburban Grey Squirrels,” published in 2004 by Adams, Hadidian and Flyger, focused on live-trapped, radio-collared squirrels who were relocated from a suburb of Washington, D.C. to a large wooded area. This study documented that 97% of the relocated squirrels died and disappeared from the release area within three months.

Death by relocation isn’t limited to raccoons and squirrels. In 2000, a paper by Fischer and Lindenmayer titled “An Assessment of the Published Results of Animal Relocations,” reviewed 180 case studies on relocated animals and determined, “Translocations that aimed to solve human-animal conflicts generally failed.”

**orphans**

Whether it’s a bird nest on your front porch, a hole and den dug by a skunk under your shed, a gap a squirrel chewed in your roof, or a vent cover a raccoon pulled back to get under your house, vulnerabilities in homes and other structures open up opportunities for wildlife to get inside.

In our experience, wild animals almost always do this to create a nest and raise their family, and one of the saddest components of relocation has to be the orphans that are too often left behind to die of starvation in the walls, crawl spaces or attics.

Rotting carcasses in a confined or inaccessible area create a much bigger problem. Trapping and relocating the mom along with her babies is not effective either, and is not humane. A void has still opened up, and the stress of being trapped and moved to unfamiliar territory without knowing where to find food, water and shelter can cause a mother to kill her young.
disease & human safety

The spread of infectious disease and potentially human safety, is one of the primary concerns in the relocation of wildlife. Even in a relatively small area like the Bay Area, diseases can vary from region to region. Diseases and illnesses introduced to a new area by translocations of wildlife include: tuberculosis, rabies, parvoviral enteritis, viral pneumonia and brucellosis.

In the 1970s and then again in the 80s, there were outbreaks of raccoon and skunk rabies in Ontario, Canada and in the southeastern U.S., respectively. The spread of this deadly disease was attributed to the relocation of wildlife, and to this day, it is still a huge concern in both regions.

the legalities

Whether you hire a licensed trapper to trap and kill an animal (see alternatives right) who has become a nuisance to you, or if you take matters into your own hands, California law (along with many other states) strictly prohibits the relocation of wildlife by anyone, including licensed trappers. State law specifies that trapped nuisance wildlife, such as raccoons and skunks, must be released on site or killed following American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Guidelines. Anyone trapping nuisance wildlife, licensed or not, must obtain written consent from all neighbors within 150 yards “of any structure used as a permanent or temporary residence” from the location where the trap will be set, and all traps must bear a number issued by and registered with the California Department of Fish & Wildlife.

California Department of Fish & Wildlife Title 14 CCR Sect. 465.5 covers trapping of nuisance wildlife. Migratory birds (almost all birds in Northern California) also benefit from federal protection under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. Federal regulation prohibits the removal, relocation or tampering with migratory birds, their eggs and/or active nests; Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, 21.27.

alternative solutions

Studies on the subject show that the most effective and long-term solutions to resolving conflicts with wildlife are to remove attractants and to prevent and exclude animals from accessing a structure. WildCare encourages taking a look at the bigger picture, at what is happening on the property to explain the presence of unwanted animals; they live within close proximity to us because, whether intentionally or not, we provide them with the things they need to survive. Birdfeeders, pet food left outside, fruit trees, wood and brush piles, as well as open compost piles will draw wildlife in and serve as an open invitation to spend more time in your yard and neighborhood.

Springtime is baby season for wildlife, and this is the time of year when conflicts with animals increase dramatically. Trapping and relocating wildlife is never the solution when dealing with “nuisance” wildlife. If you experience a problematic situation with a wild animal, please call us or take a look at our website for advice. We are here seven days a week from 9am to 5pm at 415-453-1000 x23, and look forward to helping you find humane and effective solutions to live well with your local wildlife.
wildcare heroes!

Annie/Maya/Harper Gidney

In October of last year we received this note in the mail:

“Dear WildCare,

We went to WildCare today to look at the animals. While we were there, we saw snakes, hawks, tortises [sic] and pelicans. We also saw that you are creating/building a new place. We decided to raise money for WildCare by creating a lemonade stand. We made $56.75 in an hour and a half. We also added photos!

Annie/Maya/Harper”

This note was appropriately decorated with an owl, a flower and a heart. These kids’ intention could not have been clearer or more genuine. They gave their thoughtfully generated gift at a time when WildCare was still working to meet the Challenge proposed to us by the Bently Foundation – they would give WildCare $1 million dollars if WildCare raised $2 million before the end of 2015. This particular gift arrived in time to help us meet the challenge.

This meaningful gift from Annie, Maya and Harper represented the heart of fundraising and the promise of tomorrow.

upcoming events

terwilliger nature camps 2016

Spring Camp 2016
Registration now open

Summer Camp 2016
Registration now open

Age 3½-K: $160 members, $180 non-member
Animal Neighbors, June 6–10, 9am-noon
Growing Up Wild, August 8–12, 9am-noon and 1pm-4pm
Entering grade 1 and up: $310 members, $330 non-members
Wild California, entering 1–2, June 13–17, 9am–3pm
Feathers, Fur, and Scales, entering 2–3, June 20–24, 9am–3pm
Animal Sense-sations, entering 1–2, June 27–July 1, 9am–3pm
Conservation Camp, entering 3–4, July 11–15, 9am–3pm
Conservation Camp, entering 4–6, July 18–22, 9am–3pm
Weird and Wonderful, entering 1–2, July 25–29, 9am–3pm
Watery World of Wildlife, entering 2–3, August 1–5, 9am–3pm
Secrets of Survival, entering 2–3, July 5–8 (4 days*), 9am–3pm,
*$250 members, $265 non-members

$310 members, $330 non-members
Wild about Wildlife
Grades 1-3, April 11-15, 9am-3pm

Join us Saturday, May 7th
for the 2016 Terwilliger Environmental Award
from 9:30am to 1:30pm
at Stafford Lake in Novato.

Dine out. do good!

Tuesday, May 17 and Wednesday, May 18

Join us for WildCare’s fabulous dine around event! Choose from restaurants like The Caprice, Irisata’s, Marche aux Fleurs, Melting Pot, Piazza d’Angelo, and WildFox.

wildcarebayarea.org/dining
(415) 453-1000 ext. 11
1) Six-pack-rings from soda packs can be dangerous to animals who get their necks or legs stuck in them. 2) Cone-shaped yogurt containers present a real danger for wildlife. The sharp ridge allows animals to fit their heads in, but prevents them from getting out. 3) Live cage trap can cause serious injuries; it is illegal to trap and relocate wildlife in California. 4) Cats are one of the main causes of injuries and death to wildlife, even more than cars.
Leave a Legacy for the Wild

Include WildCare in your estate plan

Contact Jan Armstrong at 415-453-1000 ext. 13 for more information or visit wildcarebayarea.org/make-a-gift-thats-right-for-you

Our wild friends need your wheels...
Donate your vehicle!

- Easy Process
- Free Pickup
- Tax Deductible

Call 855-600-ride for more information or visit wildcarebayarea.org/auto