



## “BURROWING OWL AT SUNRISE”

BY MELISSA USREY  
WINNER, BEST CALIFORNIA BIRDS  
IN THEIR NATURAL SETTING  
CATEGORY  
WILDCARE 2020 PHOTO CONTEST

SEE THE OTHER WINNERS  
ON PAGES 10-12!

**LOOKING FORWARD  
TO A BRIGHTER 2021...**

### **FEATURES:**

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- HUNGRY OWL PROJECT
- PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS + FINALISTS
- DISTANCE LEARNING
- PATIENT GALLERY

wildcare  
NEWS

HELPING YOU LIVE WELL WITH WILDLIFE WINTER 2020



**DEAR FRIENDS,**

As I write this letter, we have just enjoyed a luncheon for staff hosted by one of our wonderful major donors. This donor wanted to recognize the excellent work done by WildCare over the past seven months, and she wanted to give us this luncheon as a way to help "renew our optimism."

As you read this newsletter, I hope you see the optimism, resilience, and gratitude shared by all of us at WildCare. We are optimistic that our work makes a difference every day in the lives of wildlife, our community, our environment, and our world. Our staff and volunteers have been resilient throughout this pandemic and continue to put WildCare's mission at the center of the work we do. And we are so grateful for our supporters, our volunteers, and our wonderful staff for making this vital work possible.

One of our projects during Covid was to work on our mission, vision and values. Staff and board members came together and we are excited to share with you the results of this work.

**WildCare's new Mission Statement:**

• WildCare delivers world-class medical care in our open admission wildlife hospital, together with exceptional environmental education, community engagement, and effective advocacy for the protection of wildlife and our shared habitat.

**WildCare's new Vision Statement:**

• WildCare envisions a future in which humans are committed stewards of the natural world and transform conflict with wildlife into coexistence.

**WildCare's Core Values**

- Dedication to Wildlife and the Environment
- Care, Compassion and Inclusion
- Pursuit of Learning
- Sustainability

**WildCare's Tagline:** Live Well with Wildlife

Thank you for your support of WildCare throughout 2020 and may the holidays and new year bring you happiness and joy.

With appreciation,

Ellen Weisel  
Executive Director, WildCare

# WILDCARE NEWS

WINTER 2020

**WILDCARE**

415.456.7283 fax 415.456.0594

**WEBSITE** discoverwildcare.org  
**Email** info@discoverwildcare.org

**BUSINESS HOURS**

9AM - 5PM, seven days a week

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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**IN MEMORY OF**

Elizabeth Terwilliger  
& Julie Malet

**WILDCARE ADVOCATES FOR WILDLIFE  
FOR A SUSTAINABLE WORLD**

**Cover photo**

Burrowing Owl

**Photo by** Melissa Usrey

**Editors** Alison Hermance & Marian Eschen

**Graphic Design** Linda Stiles

**Website** Alison Hermance

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 30% recycled paper using soy-based ink.



**OUR WILDLIFE NEEDS YOUR HELP!**

**MAKE A DONATION AND YOUR GIFT WILL BE MATCHED UNTIL DECEMBER 31, 2020.**

**PLEASE VISIT DISCOVERWILDCARE.ORG TO DONATE TODAY!**

**MAKE & MATCH YOUR YEAR-END GIFT TODAY**

# 2020 BY THE NUMBERS...



In 2020, the coronavirus pandemic wrought significant changes for everyone. At WildCare, our wildlife patient intake had to become contactless, and the cancelation of in-person programming meant our renowned Terwilliger Nature Education programs had to become virtual.

In many ways the pandemic has improved WildCare's reach by increasing the number of individuals accessing our programs! This year saw a notable increase in calls to our Living with Wildlife Hotline 415-456-7283 and to Wildlife Hospital patient intake, probably because people were home to find injured and orphaned animals. We also saw an increase in engagement with our environmental

education content due to the accessibility of digital content and our outreach efforts.

The following charts demonstrate some of the ways WildCare's impact has changed, and in many cases, expanded, in 2020 compared to 2019.

As the world continues to face the pandemic, WildCare will be here, providing our invaluable programs to our communities, both human and animal.



## HOSPITAL

HOSPITAL INTAKES **+8%**

2019 2932 INTAKES

2020 3184 INTAKES

HOTLINE CALLS **+15%**

2019 8531 CALLS

2020 9986 CALLS

## SOCIAL MEDIA

FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS **+32%**

2019 14,349 LIKES

2020 20,917 LIKES

INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS **+19%**

2019 4091

2020 5022



## EDUCATION

SCHOOL PROGRAMS (FALL: SEPT-NOV)

**91**  
SCHOOL VISITS

**2019**

**3615**  
PARTICIPANTS

**61**  
CRAFT KITS\*  
SOLD IN  
2020

\*WE DID NOT HAVE CRAFT KITS IN 2019 AS PROGRAMS WERE ALL IN-PERSON

SUMMER CAMP SUCCESS **+356%**

2019 SUMMER CAMP: 148 STUDENTS

2020 VIRTUAL CAMP: 675 STUDENTS

ONSITE COURTYARD PRESENTATIONS

**567**  
PRESENTATIONS  
+  
**4052**  
PARTICIPANTS

**2019**

**73**  
FACEBOOK LIVESTREAMS  
+  
**129575**  
VIEWS

**2020**

FACEBOOK LIVE REPLACED COURTYARD VISITS

DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS (FALL: SEPT-NOV)

**1639**  
PARTICIPANTS

**2020**

**69**  
PROGRAMS



# WILDCARE NEWS & NOTES

## TRIM TREES IN FALL AND WINTER

If you've put off non-emergency tree work to prevent the disruption of wildlife families, thank you! November and December are the best months to prune and remove trees and bushes, and trimming in the colder months is better for the trees too. April is the official beginning of wildlife "baby season", but WildCare has admitted newborn baby squirrels as early as January and February. Even in winter, be sure to check for active nests before having tree work done.



## GIVE WILDLIFE A "BRAKE"

Many wild animals are at their most active at dawn and dusk, times which overlap with humans' busiest commute schedules during the shorter days and longer nights of winter. Until spring "springs" our clocks forward again, keep an eye out for wildlife on the side of the road, watch for eye-shine, drive slowly and give wildlife a "brake" to save lives!

## WELCOME NEW WILDCARE TEAM MEMBERS!

WildCare is thrilled to welcome two new members to our team!

**Brenna Maillet** is our new Volunteer and Social Media Manager. Brenna started her career in volunteer coordinating for state and federal political campaigns but unexpectedly fell in love with working in animal welfare and spent almost three years at the East Bay SPCA in Oakland and Dublin supporting and training volunteers, creating new programs, and lending a helping hand wherever it was needed. Welcome Brenna!

**Beth Slatkin** joins WildCare as our new Grant Writer. Beth has been a fan of WildCare for many years, eagerly awaiting our newsletters containing stories and photos about all our patients. A long-time board member at International Bird Rescue (IBR), Beth also works part-time as Bay Nature's marketing and outreach director and has been a grant writer and manager for IBR, The San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and other Bay Area environmental and educational nonprofits. Welcome Beth!

*Top right: Photo by AdobeStock*

*Left: Photo by AdobeStock*

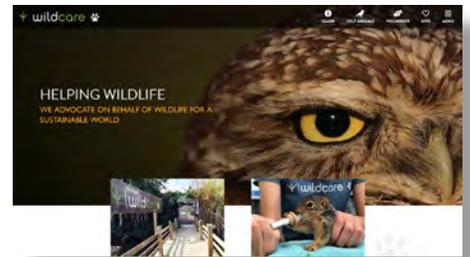
*Right: WildCare's new website page, photo by Alison Hermance*



## LOVE IS IN THE AIR... AND IT SMELLS LIKE SKUNK?

January and February are skunk mating season! Every year in January, WildCare's Hotline (415-456-SAVE) lights up with calls from people panicked at the smell of skunk. Don't worry! The increase in skunk scent is just because the animals are feeling amorous. Males will spray as they fight over a female, and females will spray males they don't like. Be patient and the smell will fade, but check your home for accessible den sites before pregnant female skunks start looking for places to raise their babies. Use our 24-Point Home Inspection PDF to check for potential wildlife entry points.

[Discoverwildcare.org/homeinspection](https://discoverwildcare.org/homeinspection)



## COMING SOON! EXPLORE WILDCARE'S NEW WEBSITE

Our address is still the same [discoverwildcare.org](https://discoverwildcare.org), but WildCare's website has a fabulous new look! A long time in the making, the new website will make exploring the world of WildCare, and finding the resources you need to live well with wildlife, easier and more fun than ever. Visit the new site soon at [discoverwildcare.org](https://discoverwildcare.org)



Left: and above, Rattlesnake being removed from glue trap. Photos by Alison Hermance

# SAY “NO” TO GLUE TRAPS

**WILDCARE’S WILDLIFE HOSPITAL ADMITS OVER 3,500 ILL, INJURED AND ORPHANED WILD ANIMAL PATIENTS EVERY YEAR. OF THESE, A DOZEN OR MORE, INCLUDING THIS RATTLESNAKE, ARE BROUGHT TO OUR SAN RAFAEL CLINIC STUCK TO GLUE TRAPS.**

*Glue traps are one of the most cruel and inhumane pest control products on the market. They should never be used, under any circumstance, for any reason.*

They may be inexpensive, and their cheerful packaging proclaims these traps to be “safe,” “clean” and “non-toxic,” but actually nothing could be further from the truth.

The fact is, when you set a glue trap, the trap itself doesn’t kill the animal. The glue is non-toxic, and it doesn’t end the animal’s life. Instead, animals stuck to glue traps must wait to die, slowly, of dehydration, starvation and exposure.

Many of the glue-trapped patients admitted to WildCare are rodents, the intended targets, but other animals also fall victim. Most people are appalled when they see what happens to an animal stuck to a glue trap, and no matter how much they may despise the animal they intended to trap, many people bring glue-trapped rodents (and other animals) to the Wildlife Hospital expressing deep regret and horror at the realities of how glue traps work. *(continued on next page)*

*Continued from previous page*

This Northern Pacific Rattlesnake was likely pursuing rodent prey when he got stuck on the large glue trap. Soon, due to his struggling and twisting, every inch of this snake's body was firmly stuck to the trap except his rattle. Animals stuck to glue traps will rip out fur and feathers, break bones, dislocate joints and even chew off their own limbs in their desperation to escape the sticky trap.

Our Medical Team could hear the furious rattling coming from the bucket in which the local Humane Society officer had transported the snake, so they approached with great care. A quick look showed, however, that the snake's lower jaw was also painfully stuck to the glue, rendering him unable to strike.

Our veterinarian Dr. Sorem sedated the snake with an injection, and placed him on isofluorine gas to keep him anesthetized during the lengthy process of removing him from the sticky glue. The team halfheartedly joked that glue traps can be dangerous to humans too, when venomous reptiles are involved!

Our team used mineral oil to soften and lift the glue from the snake's scales, but oil should never be used to clean a bird stuck to a glue trap. Removal is a painstaking process that must be done with the utmost care to avoid breaking delicate bones and feathers, or ripping out fur or scales. Any animal in this situation needs professional care at a wildlife hospital like WildCare.

After nearly an hour of careful work, the snake was finally free of the sticky trap. Fortunately he was rescued early enough that he suffered no major injuries, and we could improve his level of dehydration with a day of care and recovery. We released the snake back to his territory the day after his admission.

But too many animals are not as fortunate. What can you do?

Most importantly, NEVER use glue or sticky traps under any circumstance. Give friends and family the facts about the



*Above: Hospital staff extricating the rattlesnake from the glue trap. Photos by Alison Hermance*

slow and brutal death glue traps inflict on animals, and ask them to help spread the word. WildCare wants to stop the sale of these brutal and inhumane traps, and we have started a letter-writing campaign to ask retailers to stop selling glue traps. You can also send letters-- our website has a letter you can share with your local retailers at [discoverwildcare.org/gluetrap](https://discoverwildcare.org/gluetrap).

Learn ways to solve a nuisance rodent problem without the use of glue (or other traps) or poison at: [discoverwildcare.org/rodentproblem](https://discoverwildcare.org/rodentproblem).

## ADJUSTING TO THE NEW NORM FOR PATIENT INTAKES AND IN-PERSON DONATIONS

# NEW PATIENT RECEIVING AREA

Like everyone else, when the COVID lockdown forced WildCare closed our courtyard to public access back in March, we never imagined it would be anything but short-term.

As an essential service, we were able to remain open for the intake of injured and orphaned animals but we had to devise a way to safely accept new intakes from the public.

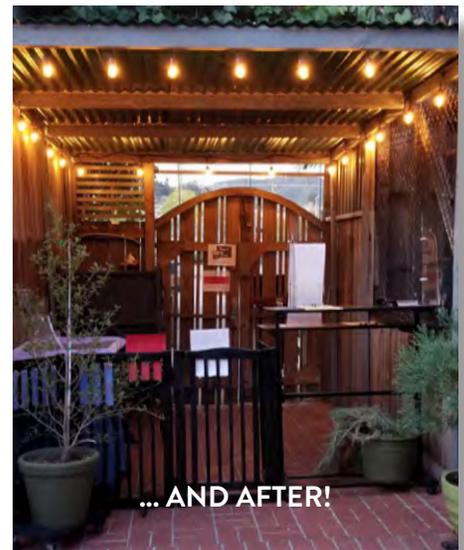
We brought a bank of cages to our footbridge and invested in a remote camera system so that guests could alert us to their presence at our front gate, which had to remain locked

Discussing the injured patient through the wooden gate with rescuers on the bridge was less than welcoming, and even worse, accepting patients on our foot bridge over the canal resulted in four different animals escaping the hands of rescuers, ending up in the waters below! Each time, our dedicated staff members had to literally

jump off the bridge into the mucky tidal creek to re-rescue an already traumatized animal.

With winter's early darkness and rain coming, we knew that we needed to improve our patient intake process not only for the safety of our rescuers and staff, but also that of the animals.

Our Director of Animal Care designed a new receiving area and she, our Wildlife Ambassador Program Manager, and Hospital Volunteer Rachel built out the area together. A new roof with lighting, refurbished intake cages, an area for educational materials to be displayed, a new interior gate to prevent entry into the courtyard, and a kiosk with a protective plastic guard to allow one-on-one conversation with our staff about the animal(s) being rescued completed the new setup. The receiving area is larger and if more than one rescuer arrives at the same time, they can distance themselves safely without having to wait at the street.



As we are optimistic that we will eventually be able to re-open fully to the public again, the new set up is also completely mobile enough to be able to dismantle or rearrange as COVID guidelines change. While we are still not open for visitors, rescuers and those stopping by to drop off donated items can catch a glimpse into the courtyard to see the beloved Ambassador animals that many of our regulars miss so much. We hope that our new receiving area is well received!

*Left: Director of Animal Care Melanie Piazza retrieving an escaped crow from the creek. Photo by Alison Hermance*



## HUNGRY OWL PROJECT JOINS BOMP COALITION

Hungry Owl Project is proud to announce that we have joined the Barn Owl Maintenance Coalition (BOMP). This coalition is a group of like-minded wildlife rehabilitators who have a shared commitment to encouraging the use of Barn Owl boxes, and maintaining those boxes with high standards of care and service.

We work with the highest ethical standards to be sure the owls that use our boxes have a safe and clean environment in which to exist. We also actively educate our communities about the advantages of local owl populations.

## MEET OUR NEW HUNGRY OWL PROGRAM MANAGER

We are happy to introduce our new Hungry Owl Project Manager Jacqueline Lewis!

Jacqueline grew up visiting WildCare after school and attending our summer camps where her passion for wildlife began.

She began volunteering at the ripe age of eighteen and was soon hired on as a Wildlife Assistant in the Wildlife Hospital, where she continued to learn and get

hands-on experience with all of our native wildlife.

Jacqueline has also worked at Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue under Executive Director, Doris Duncan, assisting in their Barn Owl Maintenance Program. In addition to managing Hungry Owl Project, she also works in our Wildlife Hospital as our Senior Technician where she assists our veterinarian with medical care and manages our hospital internship program.

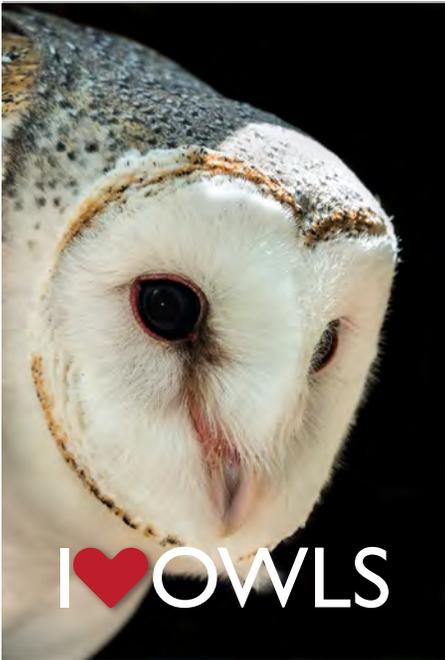


*Top: Jacqueline Lewis. Photo by Alison Hermance*

*Middle: Owl box in a private garden. Photo by Alison Hermance*

*Bottom: Four barn owlets in their nesting box. Photo by Alison Hermance*





# IF YOU LOVE OWLS, GET AN OWL NESTING BOX!

WITH HABITAT LOSS DIMINISHING THE AMOUNT OF SAFE, NATURAL NESTING SITES AVAILABLE, HOSTING OWLS ON YOUR PROPERTY CAN HELP OWLS A LOT!

LEARN MORE AT [HUNGRYOWLS.ORG](http://HUNGRYOWLS.ORG)

Barn owl photo by Unsplash

## HUNGRY OWL PROJECT: WHAT WE DO

Did you know that one family of owls can eat up to 20 rodents a night? Hungry Owl Project offers a natural solution for rodent control.

We primarily install Barn Owl boxes, but we also offer screech owl boxes, bat boxes, and bluebird boxes. We install our Barn Owl boxes ourselves on 10ft poles to be sure that predators are unable to access the box. Our box design is top of the line, offering a spacious and well-ventilated environment for the owls, with an easily accessible door for cleaning.

The Hungry Owl Project also offers yearly box cleaning services. In just one year, a family of Barn Owls in a box can leave up to five inches of waste! Our team will clear out the mess the owls left behind so they can come back and nest in a clean home in spring.

During baby season we offer monitoring services where we will come and check

your box for occupancy. One of the fantastic perks of working with our Wildlife Hospital is that we can even use your boxes to foster orphaned owlets! If your box has babies roughly the same age as one of our orphaned owls, we are able to add them to the clutch of owls living in your box. Who could do a better job raising an owl than owl parents?

Hungry Owl Project is dedicated to the protecting and supporting our local owl populations by providing a safe home for them, educating people of the dangers of toxic rodenticides and providing natural alternatives, and promoting conservation of our owls' habitats.

Above: Owl boxes need to be maintained and cleaned regularly.  
Photo by Alison Hermance  
Below: Barn owlets at WildCare.  
Photo by Alison Hermance



# WILDCARE 2020 PHOTO CONTEST

# WINNERS



# BEST IN SHOW

MELISSA USREY - ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD GETTING TAKEOUT



## BEST CALIFORNIA WILD BIRDS IN THEIR NATURAL SETTING

MELISSA USREY -  
BURROWING OWL AT  
SUNRISE

WILDCARE'S 13TH ANNUAL LIVING WITH WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST RECEIVED OVER 250 ENTRIES FROM THROUGHOUT CALIFORNIA, EACH ONE OFFERING GLIMPSES INTO THE WIDE DIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA WILDLIFE AND THE STUNNING PLACES THEY CALL HOME.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR HARD-WORKING JUDGES, RANDALL BRYETT, EVAN JANE KRISS, MELANIE PIAZZA AND KATE VAN GYTENBEEK.

THE TOP PHOTOGRAPHS IN EACH CATEGORY ARE SHOWN HERE AND ONLINE AT [DISCOVERWILDCARE.ORG/PHOTO](https://www.discoverwildcare.org/photo).



**PEOPLE'S CHOICE & BEST CALIFORNIA WILD ANIMALS (OTHER) IN THEIR NATURAL SETTING**

JANET KESSLER - COYOTE AND RAVEN IN A TERRITORIAL BATTLE



**< BEST GENERAL NATURE**

MARJORIE SCARBOROUGH - POPPY COVERED IN DEW

**BEST LIVING WITH WILDLIFE >**

ROLAND DUMAS - BIRD HIT WINDOW, BIRD SURVIVED



# WILDCARE 2020 PHOTO CONTEST

# FINALISTS



Kirk Foster - Furrow Bees



Judy Kramer - Mallard on Water



Matthew Hamre - Hummingbird Eating Mosquitoes



Mark Decker - Bathtime is Over... Mama & Baby Raccoon



Christine Hansen - Flicker Chick in Nest Box



Martha Ture - Pine Point Reflection



Veronica Gecki - Ground Squirrel on Foggy Coast



Nick Fain - FogWatcher



Janet Kessler - Coyotes in Coronavirus-vacated Dog Run



Michael Schmidt - Raccoon Portrait



Sara Arrigoni - Geese Over China Camp



Susie Kelly - Laughing Weasel



Melissa Usrey - Clark's Grebe with Chick



Craig Lanway - Moss & Water Droplets on a Rock



Sheri Harstein - BuckVoyeur

# WILDLIFE & WILDFIRES

**BY BRITTANY MORSE, CLINIC MANAGER**

On September 27, 2020 a small brush fire that would soon be known as the Glass Fire erupted in the Deer Park community in Napa County. Within 24 hours, this 20-acre fire had exploded in size and merged with two nearby smaller fires, forcing evacuations and leaving approximately 70,000 individuals displaced. The Bird Rescue Center of Santa Rosa, one of our sister wildlife hospitals, was among those who needed to pack up everything and flee to safety with very little warning, with the added complication of finding temporary care for all of their wildlife patients and non-releasable educational animals.

WildCare was ready to help! At midnight that night, medical and ambassador staff headed back to the Wildlife Hospital to admit 21 displaced animals. Over the next few hours, staff worked to provide new enclosures, diets, and medical care for three Acorn Woodpeckers, four Barn Owls, two ravens, two Stellar's Jays, a very critical Red-shouldered Hawk, as well as numerous other birds.

When one center experiences an emergency like The Bird Rescue Center of Santa Rosa did this fall, all the other local wildlife care centers jump in to help ensure the safety of the animals. Thankfully, their center had managed to avoid the destruction of the Glass Fire, and all of the evacuated wildlife were able to return to their facility seven days later.

Although we have not yet been in the direct path of flames, this was not the first time WildCare has been affected by wildfires. WildCare evacuated five ducks, six squirrels, and six raccoons from a foster care volunteer's home in Occidental as the Kincadee fire grew closer in 2019, and 18 raccoons from the same home in 2020 when the Wallbridge fire approached the property. We also took admitted over two dozen animals from our sister centers in 2019 due to fires.

It appears that, for California, wildfires have become the unfortunate and devastating new normal as the climate continues to warm.

Developing emergency evacuation plans is not only essential for families and businesses, but also for our local wildlife hospitals. Many wild animals are able to fly on foot or by air when fire threatens their territory, however 2020's wildfires started earlier than usual, impacting many young and dependent wild animals.

Three one-month old Mountain Lions and a cougar cub were rescued just outside of the ZOGG fire near Redding, CA. All required extensive medical care and, due to their very young age, will not be able to be released back into the wild. Typically these large cats will stay with their mothers until they are more than 2 years old. During this time they will learn to hunt, create a den, evade predators, and have a fear of humans that keeps them and us safe.

Even being an adult animal does not guarantee safety from some of the recent fast-moving fires. During this year's Complex fire, a Black Bear was rescued with severe burns on all four paws, an

*captions for photo*

# WINTER IS COMING...

## NEW VIRTUAL LEARNING PROGRAMS

With most learning happening virtually right now, WildCare is excited to be able to offer our renowned Terwilliger Nature Education programs in a new virtual format!

Our **Distance Learning Programs for K-6th Grades** will bring WildCare directly to your students! Our wildlife educators will lead students through scientific observations and active movements, and will share fascinating adaptations of California wildlife and the unique habitats in which they live.

With a mixture of behind-the-scenes videos featuring our non-releasable wildlife ambassador animals and live interactive sessions with our wildlife educators, this engaging program will delight and inspire students to take action to help wildlife in their neighborhoods. Our Distance

Learning Programs support the Next Generation Science Standards, are \$100 each and are designed for a maximum of 30 students. Request your program online: [discoverwildcare.org/distancelearning](https://discoverwildcare.org/distancelearning)

### We also have available FREE Virtual Nature Hikes!

WildCare's Terwilliger Nature Guides have created three exciting Virtual Nature Hikes for grades 2-4 that will bring the forest and grassland habitats to students during distance learning.

Who lives in the redwood forest? What plants and animals are used by the Coast Miwok? What do Dusky-footed Woodrats store in their stick houses? Why do Western Fence Lizards do push-ups? Students will learn the answers to these questions, as well as what makes each ecosystem special.



Locations for the Virtual Nature Hikes include Miwok Meadows in China Camp State Park, Ring Mountain Preserve and the Redwood Forest.

To view the videos and access the accompanying Teacher Resource Guides visit: [discoverwildcare.org/virtualhikes](https://discoverwildcare.org/virtualhikes)

Top: Ring Mountain  
Bottom: Miwok Meadows entrance

**DEC 28, 2020 - JAN 1, 2021**  
Camp will be in session on January 1st

**MORNING SESSION:**  
10:00am - 12:00pm with 20 campers

**AFTERNOON SESSION:**  
1:00pm - 3:00pm with 20 campers

**FOR KIDS GRADES 2-5**

**COST:**  
**\$250 NON-MEMBER**  
**\$230 MEMBERS**

**REGISTER AT:**  
[DISCOVERWILDCARE.ORG/CAMPS](https://discoverwildcare.org/camps)



## VIRTUAL WINTER WILDLIFE CAMP

**JOIN OUR INTERACTIVE WINTER CAMP OVER ZOOM TO LEARN HOW WILD ANIMALS HAVE ADAPTED TO THE CHANGING SEASONS!**



Register for EITHER the morning or afternoon Zoom session, and pick up a complimentary packet of printed activities from WildCare before the week of camp.

**SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE!**  
Go to [discoverwildcare.org/camps](https://discoverwildcare.org/camps) to apply.

Photo by Walter Gary

### CAMP HIGHLIGHTS:

- Meet a different Wildlife Ambassador animal each day
- Create fun wildlife crafts alongside other campers
- Investigate fascinating taxidermy
- Share stories, play games
- Learn about amazing animal adaptations for winter survival.

**VISIT OUR WINTER CAMP ONLINE PORTAL** after each session for more activities, jokes, puzzles, recipes, and wonderful WildCare videos to enjoy at your own pace!

*“...Early pleasurable experiences for children outdoors are one of the most important ways we can insure the survival of our natural world.”*

Extolling the pleasures of the natural world has until recently been the exclusive domain of poets and writers, painters and composers. But now, science has confirmed what many have known intuitively—that nature can also play an important part in keeping us mentally as well as physically healthy. Even corporations have weighed in, prescribing “forest bathing”, or nature immersion, for their stressed-out employees. And a condition described as “Nature Deficit Disorder,” that affects children is receiving increasing attention, although it is not yet a clinically recognized condition.

Today when many children are confined to home and spending hours engaged in distance learning, nature offers innumerable benefits. Time outdoors can foster intellectual, emotional and physical development. Authentic, hands on learning: examining a leaf and comparing it to another leaf, questioning what may have created the holes in the leaf, listening to a bird call and wondering what the bird is communicating. All these experiences provide endless opportunities to discover new things, fostering creativity, imagination and problem solving.

In addition, children build confidence, resilience and independence by safely taking small risks like crossing a stream on stepping-stones. If they slip and regain their balance, they have gained confidence for their next adventure. They also gain social benefits from collaborating with others—making up games or maybe comparing ideas about why fawns have white spots.

One of the safest places to be these days is outside. Together adults and children can replenish their spirits in nature.

If a child has not spent much time outdoors, here are a few tips to make



# THE BENEFITS OF SHARING NATURE WITH CHILDREN

BY ELLEN SHAHADEH

the first experiences walking or hiking enjoyable and positive.

- Start small- maybe a short excursion in the park.
- Remember that there is also a return trip, so budget the children's energy. Leave them wanting more.
- Include them in the planning process.
- Wander with no firm destination or timeline in mind. Be flexible. Follow the children's interests.
- Meet new discoveries with enthusiasm and respect for living things.
- Bring plenty of snacks and water, and take breaks.

- Make up games as you walk.
- Prepare them for poison oak- point out the plant and educate them about the consequences of coming into contact with it.

Besides the benefits that nature can offer to all of us, early pleasurable experiences for children outdoors are one of the most important ways we can insure the survival of our natural world. Children are the future stewards of the land, and if they learn to care for and appreciate the animals, plants, rivers and oceans on our planet, then we have a fighting chance to preserve our natural environment.

## BABY SKUNK

This eight-week old Striped Skunk was caught by her paw in a snap trap that was set outside. Snap traps should never be set outdoors, only in enclosed interior spaces! During more than six weeks in care, she went through a rigorous treatment plan with twice-a-day medications and one surgery to reverse the damage done. Luckily she made it through with her paw mostly intact and we successfully released her with her adopted group of litter mates.



## LOTS OF BABY SQUIRRELS!

Late summer and early fall brought a veritable deluge of baby squirrels to WildCare! This year we admitted a record 164 squirrels from August 1 – November 9. Compare with 99 squirrels admitted over the same period last year, and you can see why our Squirrel Foster Care Team was overwhelmed! The eyes-closed babies in this photo arrived on Halloween, our latest-ever intake of such young baby squirrels. They will spend approximately 12 weeks in care and, weather permitting, will be released just after the holidays.

## AMERICAN ROBIN

This fledgling American Robin arrived at our hospital after being found alone on the rescuer's porch. The robin appeared to have been attacked by a cat, and he suffered from multiple wounds to his body as well as a wing injury. It is often a challenge to find same-species (conspecific) nestmates for injured young wildlife patients in care, but a call to our sister wildlife care centers hit the jackpot with five other baby robins needing aviary space that fortunately we could provide. This baby and his nestmates (ultimately a group of seven speckled baby robins!) grew up healthy and were released. As you read this, they are probably plucking fresh berries along with other robins in their neighborhood, getting plump for winter.



# PATIENT GALLERY



## BURROWING OWL

This Burrowing Owl was found stunned on the ground in Corte Madera with very bad head trauma, likely from hitting a window or from being hit by a car. After taking x-rays we found no fractures, so we gave him a few days of rest with pain management to recover. Sure enough, after only five days he was flighted and feisty as ever, and ready to return to the wild!

*Opposite page:*

*Top: Baby striped skunk. Photo by Jacqueline Lewis*

*Middle: Baby squirrels. Photo by Melanie Piazza*

*Bottom: Robin and mockingbird fledglings. Photo by Lucy Stevenot*

*This page:*

*Left: Haley Gee with burrowing owl. Photo by Melanie Piazza*

*Right: Burrowing owl on intake. Photo by Jacqueline Lewis*

# EVENT UPDATE

## DINING FOR WILDLIFE

Thank you to our loyal Dining for Wildlife supporters for staying with us through date changes, restaurant closures, and new dining mandates due to the pandemic. Our Dining for Wildlife event, originally scheduled for May, was postponed until the end of September.

We are happy to report that the majority of our wonderful restaurants were still open for business, and could offer take out, dine in or both for the event. We did have donors who were not comfortable eating out, but most generously opted to donate their ticket costs. While the number of people who dined for wildlife this year was down from previous years, we are very happy with how the event went, considering we were holding a restaurant fundraiser during a global pandemic!



### THANK YOU TO ALL OUR DFW RESTAURANT PARTNERS!

- Cafe Arrivederci
- Cucina SA
- Don Antonio Trattoria
- Farmshop
- Fish. Restaurant
- Il Davide Cucina Italiana
- Insalata's
- Jason's Restaurant
- Marche aux Fleurs
- Murray Circle
- Poggio Trattoria
- Rickey's
- Roma Antica
- Saylor's Restaurant and Bar
- Side Street Kitchen
- Station House Cafe
- Valenti & Co. Ristorante & Vinobar
- Vasco
- Wildseed



## 2020 WILDCARE GALA

WildCare's Annual Gala moved to a virtual format in 2020 and was a resounding success! Our night-of-event livestream was viewed in real time by approximately 300 people, which was equal to (or greater than!) the number of people who attended previous in-person events. Since that night the livestream has been viewed over 1,300 times on YouTube. If you haven't yet seen it, you can watch it at [discoverwildcare.org/gala](https://discoverwildcare.org/gala).

Although the 2020 Gala was a virtual event, we also sold tickets that included a fun and festive Gala To-Go box full of tasty bites, our signature cocktail the Quixotic Quail, and more. "Attendees" throughout the Bay Area could pick up or have their Gala To-Go box delivered, and our guests enjoyed them in the safety of their homes. We were delighted that our new "venue" meant that we were also able to include guests from all California and beyond, not just in the Bay Area. Because our silent auction was also online, all of our constituents had the opportunity to bid on some amazing packages.

The 2020 Gala raised over 237K for WildCare, and, due to a significant decrease in expenses, was almost as successful as last year's Gala. A huge thank you to all our sponsors for their continued support of our event!



Above: Gala diners enjoyed delicious appetizers, desserts and gala giveaways while they watched the event at home. Photo: Nicole Trautsch  
Below: Gala auctioneer Devon Bell & host Alison Hermance ham it up at the live event on YouTube  
Left: Barn owl photo by Brad Wilson

## SAVE THE DATES

**DINING FOR WILDLIFE:**  
MAY 25-26, 2021

**WILDCARE GALA**  
AUGUST 21, 2021

The exact nature of what WildCare's events will look like in 2021 is still unknown, but we are tentatively scheduling our 2021 **Dining for Wildlife event for Tuesday, May 25 and Wednesday, May 26, 2021.**

**Our 2021 Gala is scheduled for Saturday, August 21.**

We hope you can join us... we may not be able to celebrate in person, but we still can celebrate together!

# DONOR SPOTLIGHT SAGA PERRY

**S**aga Perry, a longtime WildCare supporter, is a retired Sausalito businesswoman, hailing from Finland. Having grown up on a farm, Saga's love for animals began early.

As a toddler, she developed a close bond with her pet lamb, Ulla. Saga and Ulla were inseparable, with the lamb following young Saga around everywhere. Once Ulla became a full grown sheep, Saga would put her on a leash for outings.

Saga moved to the U.S. sixty seven years ago, and settled right away in Sausalito, which reminded her of the beautiful towns of the Canary Islands. She had left Finland with a business idea that fit perfectly in her new life in Sausalito - a boutique selling wonderful imports from Scandinavia, and later, making made-to-order clothing that was a hit with locals and tourists alike.

Saga first encountered WildCare, then named the California Center for Wildlife, in 1990. Sometimes she would go out to a little park near her boutique, and often there were tourists there who would picnic and feed pigeons. She noticed that many of the pigeons had terrible injuries to their feet and they often had fishing line wrapped around their legs, causing constriction wounds. Despite the difficulty of catching flighted birds outdoors, Saga learned how to do it, sometimes having to persistently return day after day to capture an injured pigeon. She brought the injured birds to our Wildlife Hospital for care.

Over the years, Saga has brought many different wildlife species to WildCare for medical treatment: pigeons, songbirds, skunks and opossums. She is not partial



*Above: Saga Perry in her garden in Sausalito. Photo by Nicole Trautsch*

to any particular species - it is the need for help that draws her in. Saga is moved to do whatever she can to help animals in need, including feral cats, and for which she currently runs a private rescue.

We are very grateful to Saga for her generous support of WildCare throughout the years, including her presenting sponsorship of our 2018, 2019 and 2020 Galas, and we applaud her accomplishments in helping animals of all kinds.

# OUR HEROIC TRANSPORTERS



**W**ildCare's volunteer system has been in a state of constant evolution over the last six months, but the one thing that remains constant is our volunteers' dedication and commitment to WildCare. This is especially true of our Transport Volunteer Team.

While our skeleton crew of on-site volunteers adapts to changing hours, patient loads, and safety guidelines, our Transport Team remains at the ready, allowing us to provide the best of care for our patients. Just this year, we have transported 295 animals to or from other centers and released 990 patients back to their wild homes. That means we have transported a total of 1,285 patients so far this year!

When our Medical Staff decides a patient needs a ride, the front desk sends out an email request to our current Transport Volunteers. Frequently, we only have to wait a few hours until a volunteer calls to let us know they can do the transport. We set a time, and Med Staff places the animal in a secure carrier in the night shed for contactless pickup. After this point, every transport is different!

One day a volunteer might be releasing a small flock of robins in a Mill Valley park;

next week they might drive a storm-petrel with a broken wing to International Bird Rescue for surgery. Another day, they might receive a request for an evening release of orphaned juvenile opossums to Novato. Sometimes, we need to transport an animal a long distance, and our amazing volunteers step up to the plate. On one occasion our volunteer Teri Rockas transported a non-releasable Northern Spotted Owl up to Portland Audubon in Oregon to be an educational animal!

In addition to releasing animals, the Transport Team plays an important role in the rearing of orphaned birds and mammals during our "baby season". When we admit a lone orphan, we work closely with other local centers to find same-species companions for the baby animal. This frequently culminates in a volunteer transporting babies between centers.

Conspecific companionship is absolutely essential to the care of orphaned wildlife, and allows us to release healthy, happy, wild animals at the end of their stay at WildCare.

We want to spotlight our Transport Volunteers for the important role they play at WildCare. Each car ride provided for an animal in need is a significant step in that animal's rehabilitation to a healthy, wild life. By allowing our patients to reach their next step, our Transport Volunteers allow animals to receive excellent care in the form of company, expert medical treatment, and ultimately freedom.

*Top left: Dedicated transport volunteer Ralph Jacobson transporting doves to release. Photo by Haley Gee  
Top right: Spotted owl to Portland Audubon. Photo by Teri Rockas*

## 2021 VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

WildCare is waiting to determine our volunteer opportunities in 2021 until we have more information on COVID-related guidelines and restrictions.

If you are interested in volunteering with WildCare, please sign up for our regular

emails at [discoverwildcare.org](https://discoverwildcare.org) and visit our volunteer page at [discoverwildcare.org/volunteer](https://discoverwildcare.org/volunteer) for updates, and opportunities in our Wildlife Hospital, our Nature Education programs and with our Hungry Owl Project.

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### LOOKING FOR A CREATIVE, OUT-OF-THE-BOX BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION FOR A LOVED ONE?

#### INVITE WILDCARE'S WILDLIFE AMBASSADORS TO YOUR VIRTUAL PARTY!

Two of our non-releasable wildlife residents will make a guest appearance for 30 minutes via Zoom at your gathering. Our educator will showcase their amazing adaptations, share what they eat, threats they face in the wild and their rescue stories. We will leave a couple of minutes at the end for any questions your party guests may have.

Ambassador animal species that may be at the celebration include Northern Spotted Owl, Western Screech Owl, Red-tailed Hawk, Virginia Opossum, Desert Tortoise, Western Pond Turtle, California King Snake or Rosy Boa!

# NEW

## VIRTUAL BIRTHDAY PARTIES!

PROGRAM LENGTH:

30 MINUTES

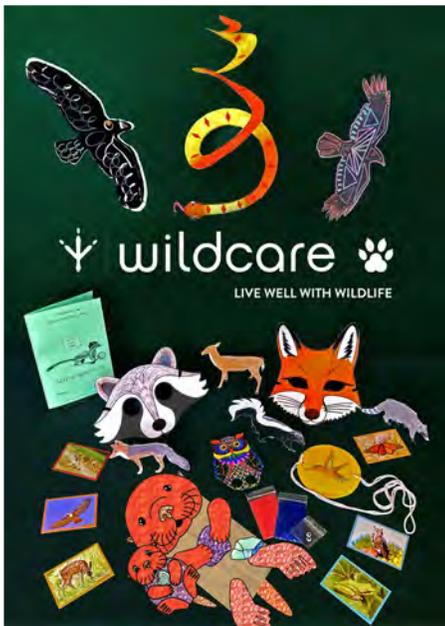
FOR AGES: 4-104!

COST: \$150

NO OF GUESTS:

MAXIMUM OF 30

This program is available  
Tuesdays - Saturdays between  
the hours of 10am and 6pm



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**WILDLIFE & WILDFIRES (CONTINUED FROM P13)**

eye injury, and signs of smoke inhalation. This animal was lucky enough to receive extensive medical care, including tilapia skin sutured to his burned paws, at the Wildlife Investigations Laboratory in Rancho Cordova, CA. On October 5th, the bear's injuries had healed and he was released back into the wild in an unburned area near where he had been found.

WildCare receives many questions from the public about how to help wildlife affected by the wildfires, with one of the most common being "should I leave a bucket of water out for animals that may be fleeing from the fire?"

The somewhat surprising answer is usually no, you should not leave water out for wildlife.

A container of stagnant water can quickly become a transfer site for parasites, diseases, and bacteria, which can spread through a local population of animals. This small and limited water supply will typically bring a large number of competing animals into a small area, which can lead to deadly disputes. Human-wildlife conflict can also be a problem when additional animals are coming into neighborhoods and more densely populated areas. Some

may see these animals as a nuisance and hire trappers or "pest" control agencies to trap or poison local wildlife populations.

Although leaving out water is a well intentioned act of kindness, it can have serious and negative impacts on wildlife.

**FOLLOW US & MEET OUR SPRING 2021 BABY PATIENTS!**

GET VIDEOS, PATIENT UPDATES AND TIPS ON LIVING WELL WITH WILDLIFE!

**@WILDCARE  
@WILDCAREBAYAREA**

# Awesome Opossum Mad Lib: Not Just for Kids!

Opossums are amazing. They eat ticks, are immune to rabies and pit viper venom, and give birth to up to 13 jellybean sized babies! To celebrate North America's only native marsupial, let's make up a funny story! Here's how it works: Play with a partner. Don't let them see the paragraph until you've filled in all the blank spaces. Ask them to provide the type of word described. Once complete, read it back to them. How silly is your story?!

## Awesome Opossum!

You are a \_\_\_\_\_ opossum. You are \_\_\_\_\_. You \_\_\_\_\_.

**adjective**

**emotion**

decide to look for some \_\_\_\_\_.

**adjective**

**fruit**

\_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ that looks like it might have something \_\_\_\_\_

**plant**

**place**

\_\_\_\_\_ to eat. You \_\_\_\_\_ over \_\_\_\_\_ and look \_\_\_\_\_

**adjective**

**verb**

**adverb**

around. \_\_\_\_\_! There are \_\_\_\_\_ under

**exclamation**

**number**

**color**

**animals**

a \_\_\_\_\_. You \_\_\_\_\_ eat them up. Yummy! Now you

**plant**

**adverb**

are \_\_\_\_\_. Better find a \_\_\_\_\_ place to nap. You

**emotion**

**adjective**

\_\_\_\_\_ to the nearest \_\_\_\_\_.

**verb**

**plant**

a \_\_\_\_\_. Perfect! You lie down \_\_\_\_\_.

**adjective**

**thing**

**adverb**

close your two \_\_\_\_\_ eyes and fall asleep.

**adjective**

Goodnight!!!





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*Photo by Christopher Windus, Unsplash*