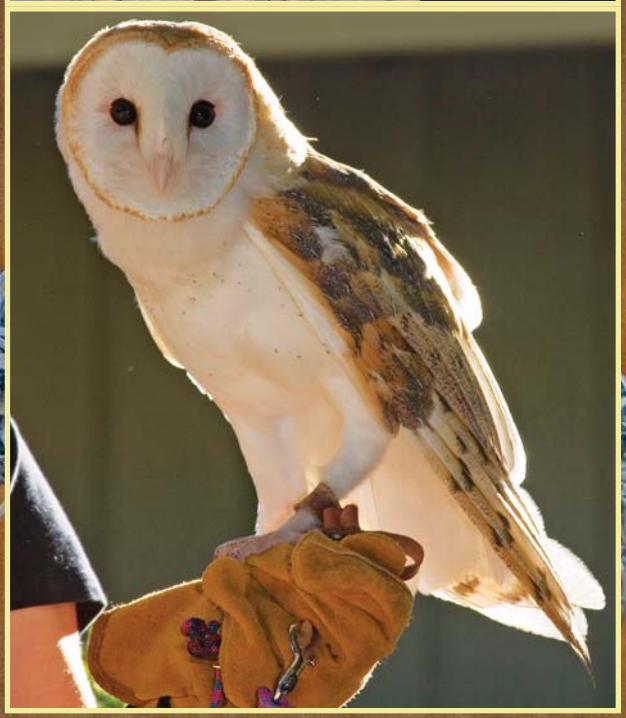
Winter 2005

WildCare

Terwilliger Nature Education and Wildlife Rehabilitation

Whoooo's News



Dear Friends,

The power of nature has been making itself clear this past year. We have been reminded more than once that nature is dominant. But we have also been reminded that people, working in harmony with nature, have the ability to help repair nature's devastation as well as the negative impacts even the most conscientious of us have on the environment.

Nature is powerful, but so is the power of education. At WildCare, we believe our work helps inspire a vital connection to the natural world—a connection that is fundamental to protecting it.

From Louisiana to Iraq to our home here in the Bay Area, WildCare is actively engaged in nature education and hands-on response to animals in need. Staff and volunteers have donated their time and resources to help in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in animal shelters in coastal Mississippi and other areas devastated by the storm. Email has enabled our Director of Animal Care to help American soldiers in Iraq identify and care for an orphaned (temporarily, thanks to Melanie's advice) baby owl.

Here at home on Albert Park Lane, we welcome three new Wildlife Ambassadors. Wookie the Barn Owl and Sequoia the Northern Spotted Owl are introduced in the wonderful article about owls beginning on page four of this newsletter. Our newest educational mammal is the charming Virginia Opossum, "Mussopo" (opossum spelled backwards). Please stop by and meet them! These animals are instrumental in our work to educate over 50,000 people, young and old, through our Terwilliger Nature Education programs, Living with Wildlife Hotline, and medical care and release of thousands of wild patients each and every year.

JoLynn Taylor

Thank you for your commitment to WildCare in 2005. Your care and concern have encouraged us through what has been a year of trial and triumph for us all. The words of Margaret Mead seem especially appropriate…"Never underestimate the power of a small group of committed citizens to change the world. In fact, it is the only thing that ever has."

Never has WildCare's mission been more important than it is today, and never has your support been more critical.

Wishing you all the best during the holiday season.

Sincerely,

Karen J. Wilson
Executive Director

To find out more about our Director of Animal Care's volunteer work in Kartina's aftermath, as well as WildCare's other timely programs, visit our website: www.wildcarebayarea.org.

news and notes...

Need Nature? Call WildCare for a Program Scholarship!

Thanks to several generous foundations, WildCare is pleased to be able to offer scholarships for its Terwilliger Nature Education programs.

Field Trip program scholarships (including transportation) made possible by the Alexander M. and June L. Maisin Foundation are available for schools throughout the Bay Area. Scholarship amounts are calculated on a sliding scale and are available to schools in which 50% or more of the students take advantage of free lunch programs.

to Schloarships, page 3

WildCare News

Volume 8, Number 3
Winter 2004

Administration and Education
415-453-1000 FAX: 415-456-0594

Wildlife Hotline and Hospital
415-456-SAVE (7283)

Website http://www.wildcarebayarea.org

Email info@wildcarebayarea.org

Address 76 Albert Park Lane, San Rafael, CA 94901

Office Hours 9am–5pm M-F

Exhibit Hall, Courtyard and Clinic Hours
9am–5pm seven days a week

WildCare inspires a vital connection among people, wildlife and the natural world.

Cover Photographs: Northern Spotted Owl and Barn Owl by Bob Bloomberg, Scops Owl by Anonymous Soldier

Editorial and Production: Jan Armstrong, JoLynn Taylor

Website Design: Alison Hermance, Mike Magruder

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

WildCare
Terwilliger Nature Education and Wildlife Rehabilitation

Scholarships from page 2

Of special note, the Marin Community Foundation has funded full scholarships for Marin County schools that have never used WildCare education programs, or have not done so since 2000.

Nature Van and Terwilliger Nature Camp (holiday and summer) scholarships are also available for schools and families in need of them.

Need nature? Please contact Julie Malet at 415.453.1000, ext. 12 for more information.

Susan Larsen

Happy 96th Birthday, Mrs T!

Nearly 200 people gathered at The Redwoods in September to wish Mrs.T a great 96th birthday. Environmentalist L. Martin Griffin and Marin County Supervisor Charles McGlashan gave eloquent tributes. Senator Barbara Boxer sent her warmest regards. Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey sent greetings, as well as a resolution of honor and respect read into the U.S. Congressional Record. Following the party attendees went on an interpretive hike to Terwilliger Marsh for Coastal Clean-up Day.

2005 Italian Bocce Festival

WildCare's 2005 Italian Bocce Festival was *meraviglioso* (marvelous)! Food donated by Marin and San Francisco restaurants and bakeries was *delizioso* (delicious), the tournament's games were *molto competitivo* (closely contested) and the company of friends, neighbors, members and local businesses was *straordinario* (extraordinary).

We thank presenting sponsor *Marin Independent Journal,* court sponsors Marin Sanitary Service, Montecito Market Place Association, ProMotion Video, Seal Rock Inn, Wells Fargo Bank, and hospitality sponsors Pacific Capital Mortgage and Pacific Guarantee Mortgage for making this great fundraising event possible. We also thank An Affair to Remember, Ambrosia Pizza and Pasta, Amici's Pizza, Angelo's Meats, Corsagna Italian French Bakery, Ghiringhelli's Pizza, Golden Boy Pizza, Grove Street Winery, Illy Caffe, Lagunitas Brewing Co., Diana Manis, Milano's, Marin Joe's, Palermo Deli, San Rafael Joe's, Small Shed Flatbreads and Stella Bakery for sumptuous donations of food and beverages. Our special thanks go to all the teams who made the tournament great.

Bocce 2005 Photos by Holly Manley

Mille grazie a tutti (a thousand thanks to all) for this *eccezionale* (exceptional), *luminoso* (bright) and *divertente* (enjoyable) sporting event to support WildCare. This year's Champion team (third year) was Ambrosia Pizza and Pasta. Placing Second, Third and Recreational Champion respectively were Bocce Birds, Gruppo Illy and Bocce Mi Molto. *Ci vediamo alla prossima!* (see you next year)!

Todd Tash

Businesses and organizations that help support WildCare's mission through donations to events such as the Italian Bocce Festival and the Nature Lovers Ball all deserve our gratitude and recognition. But the Stanford Inn by the Sea goes so much further than making donations to good causes like WildCare's. Their entire business is a testament to sustainable environmental values.

"Rather than an inn with gardens," write innkeepers Jeff and Joan Stanford, "ours is a small working certified organic garden and farm with an inn! Stanford Inn is also our family's home." And what an inn!

With panoramic views of the ocean and the village of Mendocino, they offer exquisite pet-friendly guest rooms with wood-burning fireplaces, a swimming pool and hot tub. Llamas, horses, and a host of other gentle creatures grace the peaceful grounds. Yoga and massage are available, as are mountain bikes, kayaks and canoes for guests' use.

An additional satisfaction for guests who care about the environment is the Stanford Inn's approach to the business. Organic cotton towels and sheets are from another environmentally responsible company: Coyuchi—also a WildCare supporter! Bath amenities from Bulgari are all organic and herbal. Best of all is their four-star vegetarian restaurant, Raven, that uses produce grown at their own organic farm.

A stay at the Stanford Inn by the Sea is more than a luxury. It is also proof that good business can be environmentally responsible.

Whoooo's News?

At WildCare this fall, owls are. That's whoooo!

Ali the Iraqi Owl

On Monday, June 13, WildCare received the following email forwarded from the WildCare website:

Help,

I am a soldier in Iraq. We found a baby hawk and have been caring for it. It is a little smaller than a softball, white grey speckled down and big yellow eyes. Please give us all the info you can, we truly want to keep it alive until its strong enough to go to a zoo or maybe even on its own. By the way, his name is Ali since he is Iraqi.

Melanie Piazza, WildCare's Director of Animal Care, responded to the email with questions and suggestions for emergency care.

On Tuesday another email arrived. "OK, guess what? It's an owl. We are ready to gut and feed mice and snakes if that is the diet you suggest."

Ali the owl (top) was a nestling found by American soldiers in Iraq, who contacted WildCare to find out how to care for him. They were later able to reunite him with his family (bottom). Photos by anonymous soldier

From the soldiers' description and photos sent on July 14, Melanie's best guess was that, of the nine species of owls in Iraq, this little one was a Scops Owl. From this, she was able to provide more advice. Her first suggestion was to see if there were a way to get him back to where he came from. "He couldn't have been far from his nest since he can't fly yet". she wrote. "The parents will still take him back even after humans have touched him. That would be his best chance of survival. My biggest question is how you could teach him to hunt."

"On a more personal note," she continued, "everyone here LOVES the photos you sent! You all are already doing such incredible work over there, and now you're also saving baby wildlife in your "spare" time! You're a big hit around here."

"Is there anything that you guys need that we could send you? I would like to organize some care packages to you all.

The soldier replied that little things like M&Ms, Doritos, Kool-aid mix, and newspapers from anywhere are a big hit, as well as body wash and powder to combat the heat. "Don't send any kind of chocolate bar or cookie as it will be a lump once we get it". he added.

Finally, another email update:

Good news, we found Ali's family last night. I took him out to do some bug hunting and another small owl popped up. To my surprise in the tree above us was momma. Well we watched from a distance and the other tried to fly away. His skills were lacking but he managed to work his way back into the tree. That's when we decided to put Ali back in the same tree. It was funny because one guy got swooped twice by momma. We left Ali on a branch and he scooted his way deeper into the tree.

Sequoia

Funny to name an owl after a tree, but our newest Wildlife Ambassador's name, "Sequoia," helps remind us of what makes Northern Spotted Owls so special. In 1990 the Northern Spotted Owl was federally listed as threatened. Its story reflects the fate of many other species that come into conflict with human needs.

Northern Spotted Owls live their entire lives within the last old-growth forests of the Pacific Northwest, where undisturbed trees, often more than 200 years old, offer cool, damp conditions, with plenty of holes and cavities. Muir Woods is one of these ancient groves.

These owls are monogamous. Pairs bond for life and produce just one or two oval white eggs a year.

The small clutch size means a low reproduction rate.

Spotted Owls eat a broad range of mammals, birds, insects, amphibians and reptiles, but squirrels, voles, mice and woodrats are their primary prey—species that also rely on decaying snags and fallen logs for the food and shelter they need. The Spotted Owl hunts at night, and relies heavily on sound to locate prey—a tactic effective only in a quiet environment.

Alex Godbe, Program Director of WildCare's Hungry Owl Project, and Wookie, a Barn Owl Photo by Bob Bloomberg

Left, Sequoia still in nestling down; right, wings outstretched to show the injury that makes her unreleasable. WildCare will obtain a special permit from state and federal wildlife agencies to keep the endangered owl as a Wildlife Ambassador. Photos by Melanie Piazza

Because of this preference for old-growth forests, these birds have been the center of debate regarding forest management on federal lands in the Pacific Northwest. As people move closer to forested areas, there is great pressure to remove the dead and decaying wood so vital to the natural balance. The fibrous, grainy structure of living old growth timber makes it desirable for construction and highly valuable to lumber companies. And people aren't the only ones threatening these birds: when the range of the more aggressive and adaptable Barred Owls overlaps that of the Spotted Owl, the Spotted Owl loses.

Wookie

WildCare's Hungry Owl Project has been working with a more prolific species—the Barn Owl—to educate people about the balance of nature, the role these birds play, and how humans can cooperate and benefit. We have requested a permit from the California Department of Fish & Game to make Wookie a new educational animal.

Unlike Spotted Owls, Barn Owls are prolific breeders, and can have up to 11 chicks in a nest. If food is plentiful, they may also "double clutch," or raise a second family.

Barn owls are exceptional hunters, and will capture thousands of rodents to feed their nestlings. In the past, farmers feared owls might kill their poultry, but today many have come to realize that the owls perform a valuable service by controlling rodent populations. Ranches, farms, vineyards and even golf courses now encourage owls to take up residence by installing owl boxes available through the Hungry Owl Project. This allows them to stop using rodenticides, which cause secondary poisoning to the birds and animals that eat poisoned rodents. To learn more about owls and how to purchase an owl box, visit www.hungryowl.org.

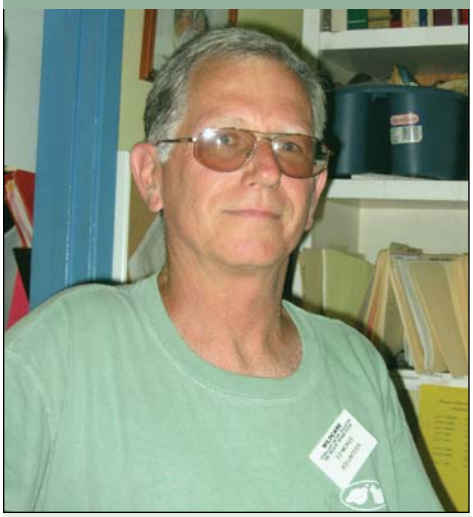
A comparison of the two Long-eared Owls (above) shows normal development on the owl on the right (note the difference in the eyes). The owl on the left suffered a head injury that will make him unreleasable. A Burrowing Owl (below) is receiving treatment in the clinic. Photos by Bob Bloomberg and Janet Sinnicks

Long-eared Owls and Burrowing Owls

Two other unusual species of owl arrived in the clinic this fall. A Burrowing Owl, probably a winter migrant, was found in Novato and brought to WildCare for care. One Long-eared Owl was found stuck in barbed wire in Olema, and Eastern Sierra Wildlife Care transferred two more Long-eared Owls to WildCare for flight exercise in larger aviaries. One has been released, but a head injury makes the other unreleasable. A home is being sought for him at the San Francisco Zoo, among other places.

Like the Spotted Owl, these owls are viewed as species of management concern to the California Department of Fish & Game due to habitat loss from land development and the use of pesticides and rodent poisoning.

volunteer extraordinaire...



Ed McKee has only been with WildCare since May of this year, but he has put in more hours than the average volunteer works in several years.

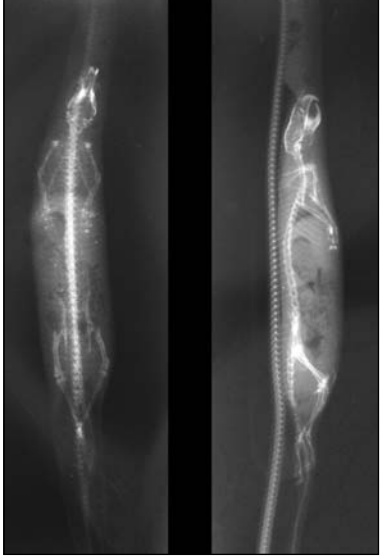
A retired sherriff from Vallejo, Ed came to Marin in the spring, and began to look for a meaningful way to participate in the community. He found it at WildCare. With an adequate pension, Ed didn't need a salary so much as a connection. He began to work Monday through Friday from 9 to 5, and what a difference he has made! In just a few short months, Ed has become the "go-to-guy," with answers for the many volunteers that work the regular four-hour shifts just once a week. On shifts without a regular supervisor, Ed fields the questions about care of the patients that come and go in our clinic.

Ed took his work at WildCare seriously right from the start. The volunteer orientation which is required for people who want to work with animals wasn't available until several weeks after Ed arrived, so he spent his first weeks helping enter data on patients' computer records. After he took the training and began working in the clinic, Ed got his rabies pre-exposure vaccines to be able to help with the rabies-vector species.

Ed works as well with other volunteers as with animals, and in spite of all his experience—or maybe because of it—laundry and dishes are still a part of Ed's daily routine.

patient gallery

Pacific Rattlesnake (#0983), was found lying across a path by a hiker in Woodacre on July 16 with a large swelling in its body, apparently unable to move. The hiker called the Marin Humane Society, and Officer Winnie Kelly brought the lethargic snake to WildCare. An x-ray revealed the source of the swelling; the snake had just finished swallowing a huge rat. Unfortunately, the stress of capture caused the reptile to regurgitate his meal, so the now-empty snake was returned to his territory to try again.



Jeanine Richardson

Melanie Piazza

Two Eastern Gray Squirrels, victims of Hurricane Katrina, were examined and cared for by WildCare's Director of Animal Care, Melanie Piazza in Mississippi when she volunteered with EARS (Emergency Animal Rescue Service) in the aftermath of the storm. Most wild animals were better equipped to escape the violent winds and rain than the domestic animals that had been left behind by owners not allowed to bring them to safety. These squirrels, however, were too young to escape when their tree was blown down, and they were brought to EARS by a road cleaning crew. With spotty phone coverage and no power, it took Melanie two days to locate a veterinary clinic that had just regained power after two weeks. Clinic staff were able to contact local rehabilitators. The volunteers who took the two orphans received more than 80 squirrels injured or orphaned by downed trees.

Western Gull (#1309) was seen on the rocks of Alcatraz Island, entangled in the string of a balloon. Attempts to capture him were initially unsuccessful because the juvenile bird was able to fly just well enough to escape into the water whenever a rescuer approached. Eventually, Christian Hellwig, a biologist for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, managed to capture the bird on September 10, and brought him to WildCare.

Christian Hellwig

Examination showed that the string had become tightly wrapped around his mouth, tongue and wing. There were deep lacerations, but circulation around the wounds appeared normal. The injuries were cleaned and he was put on antibiotics. By September 28 he had healed and was flying well. Chris came back to WildCare to release him back to what he described as a "very large colony of western gulls—a unique assemblage of colonial breeding seabirds very accessible to visitors."

After releasing the bird, Chris emailed Melanie Piazza, Director of Animal Care, to report the gull was circling around his natal territory, easily identified by his missing and damaged secondary feathers.

How can you provide long-term care for nature?

Consider including WildCare in your will or estate plan. Call 415.453.1000, ext. 13.

Bad Rodent Or Small Native Mammal?

We receive hundreds of calls on our Living With Wildlife Hotline from people looking for advice on how to rid themselves of rodents. Our best answer is always the same: exclude them from your home, remove the food source that is attracting them. Using poison or sticky traps can be harmful to more than just the rodents you're hoping to get rid of, but a little added knowledge about what kind of rodent you are dealing with can be useful.

Domestic cat with introduced Black Rat (above) and native Botta's Pocket Gopher (right). Photos by John Nolan

Introduced Species

There are only three species of rodent that could be considered "bad" rodents. They came here with our European ancestors. Like our ancestors, these "introduced" rodents were very successful and have taken over the habitat of many native species. Their common names give clues to what to expect from them. The Norway Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*), also known as the sewer rat, is a large rat that prefers to live near water in underground burrows. The most common rat around Marin homes is the arboreal Black Rat (*Rattus rattus*) aka the Roof Rat. The House Mouse (*Mus musculus*) is the mouse most likely to invade your cupboard. Native rodents are less likely to seek people's homes for food and shelter. Keeping cats indoors is one of the best ways to control these species.

Native Species

The trouble with outdoor domestic cat rodent control is that cats don't discriminate between good and bad rodents. So native rodents—an important food source for wild predators like owls, hawks and bobcats—are being threatened from all corners. If people could recognize them, sighting a native rodent species would be as big a thrill as any sighting of a native bird species.

The Dusky-footed Woodrat, for example, is a truly gorgeous little mammal that builds huge stick nests. Marin is also home to four species of White-footed Mice, also called Deer Mice. And then there is the tiny rodent that might just be the world's cutest mammal: the California Meadow Vole.

Clockwise from upper left: Dusky-footed Woodrat, California Meadow Vole, House Mouse, Deer Mouse. Photos by JoLynn Taylor

What You Can Do for Wildlife in Winter

Do...

- **install an owl box to control rodents. Call WildCare's Hungry Owl Project at 415-454-4587.**
- **keep your cat indoors for indoor rodent control and its own safety.**

Don't...

- **use poisons. They enter the food chain and kill indiscriminately.**
- **use sticky traps. They kill many other species as well as rodents and are inhumane.**

Mrs. T's Corner

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

Unlike most other insects in temperate climates, Monarch Butterflies migrate to spend the winter in communal roosting spots. Monarchs of North America travel up to three thousand miles, flying in masses to the same winter roosts, often to the exact same trees. West of the Rocky Mountains Monarchs travel to small groves of trees along the California coast. Muir Woods has such a roost, as does Stinson Beach and Bolinas. Day length and temperature changes influence the movement of the Monarch. Fat stored in the abdomen not only fuels their flight, but must last until the next spring when they begin the flight back north.

Most predators have learned that the Monarch caterpillar or butterfly makes a bitter and poisonous snack. The toxins from the Monarch's milkweed diet have given the butterfly this defense. Many animals advertise their poisonous nature with bright colors... just like the monarch!

Their migration is more the type we expect from birds or whales. However, unlike birds and whales, individuals only make the trip once. It is their children's grandchildren that return south the following fall.

This is an area of great interest for researchers; there are many unanswered questions about how these small organisms are able to travel so far. No one knows exactly how their homing system works; it is another of the many unanswered questions in the butterfly world.

November, 2005 - February, 2006
Schedule of Events

Museum and Courtyard Programs

Wildlife Ambassadors

Ambassadors in the Courtyard FREE
Pool Bird feeding: daily 12:30 & 4:30pm
Raptors: Tuesdays and Saturdays, 3pm

Nature Camp Programs

Holiday Nature Camps, San Rafael
Nature Activities, ages 5-8
December 19-23; full and half-day sessions
December 27-30; full and half-day sessions

Winter Nature Camp, San Rafael
Helping Hands for Wildlife, ages 8-10
February 20-24; 9am-3pm

Nature Guide Programs

Winter Nature Guide Training **$50**
Rohnert Park, Sonoma County
Selected Saturdays, 9am-2pm
February 11-April 15, 2006

Events

Nature Lovers Ball
Presentation of the 2006 Terwilliger Environmental Award at the Presidio Officers' Club
San Francisco
January 21, 7-11pm

Wildlife Rehabilitation Programs

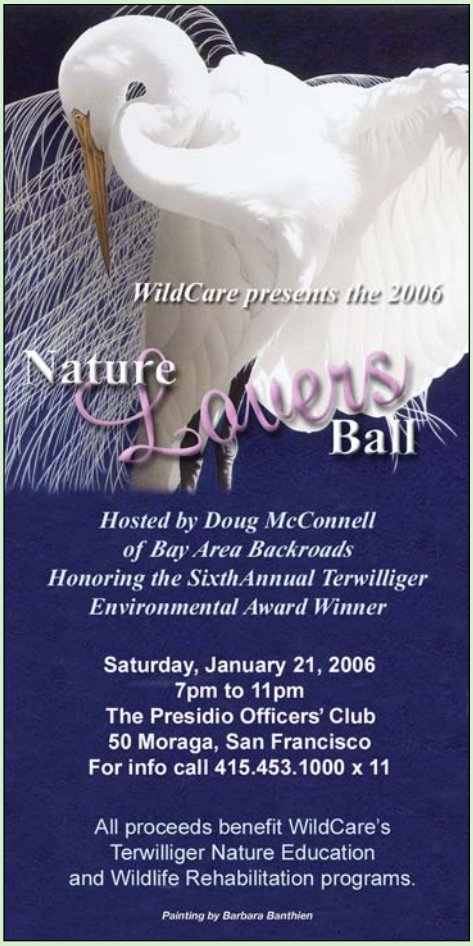
New Volunteer Orientations

Orientation for Adult Volunteers, 1-5pm
One-hour orientation followed by
100–Introduction to Wildlife Rehabilitation **$40**
January 28 February 18 March 11
Call Alison to register 415-453-1000, ext. 21

Joys of Hiking

Thursdays, 9am-2pm **$45/series**
Series III: December 1, 8, 15, 22, 2005
Series IV: January 5, 12, 19, 26, 2006
Series V: February 16, 23, March 2, 9
Series VI: March 30, April 6, 13, 20
Series VII: May 11, 18, 25, June 1

Call 415-454-3250 or 415-883-4182 for Reservations.



Wildlife Conference

NWRA Symposium 2006
Costa Mesa Hilton
Costa Mesa, CA • March 7 - 11
www.nwrawildlife. org 320-230-9920

Happy New Year!

Our environment needs your help more than ever in 2006. Won't YOU join us to help make the world a better place? We need volunteers to work with kids and with animals in the hospital. Call the Volunteer Department at ext. 21 for more information.

★Pre-registration is required for all programs and events except Wildlife Ambassador Programs.
Call 415-453-1000

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