



**FACILITY UPDATE:
A NEW HOME
FOR WILDCARE**

**PHOTO CONTEST
WINNERS**

FEATURES:

- PELI-CAN YOU TELL THE DIFFERENCE?
- BE BAY AREA BEAR AWARE
- VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
- MEET OUR WILDLIFE PATIENTS

wildcare NEWS

HELPING YOU LIVE WELL WITH WILDLIFE WINTER 2023



DEAR FRIENDS,

It's hard to believe that another year has come and gone at WildCare. Our dedicated staff, volunteers, and interns helped us provide care to over 3,000 animals this year.

Our renowned Terwilliger Nature Education programs served over 10,000 students, participated in many education and outreach events and hosted Family Nature Day. We also brought a new appreciation for nature to families through our successful bilingual Family Adventures / Aventuras Familiares programs that culminated in a beautiful celebration at Samuel P. Taylor Park.

This fall, we celebrated one of the things that makes our WildCare community so unique – our wonderful WildCare volunteers! Over 120 of these dedicated and generous people enjoyed a lovely Sunday afternoon in San Rafael,

and we were so happy to have the opportunity to thank them for their invaluable contributions to WildCare.

In September, we also enjoyed the most successful WildCare Gala ever! This glittering event was celebrated in person, and nearly 250 people dined and celebrated together in support of WildCare's work.

As you will read on pages four and five of this magazine, WildCare is moving forward with our project to build a new facility! However, building a new home for WildCare is a journey that cannot be traveled alone. As we stand on the threshold of change, let us remember that it is not just a building we seek to shape, but a legacy of healing, and a gift of hope. Together, we can build a bridge to a future where wildlife thrives, humanity coexists harmoniously with nature, and every individual – be it a feathered friend or a curious child – is supported by the work we do.

Thank you for being part of this journey!

With gratitude,

Ellyn Weisel
Executive Director



Photo © Nick Fain

WildCare is a 4-star charity with Charity Navigator!

We are proud to
be recognized for our
strong leadership,
accountability, and
financial health.

Charity
Navigator



★ FOUR-STAR ★

WILDCARE NEWS

WINTER 2023

WILDCARE 415.456.7283

WEBSITE discoverwildcare.org

Email info@discoverwildcare.org

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9AM - 5PM, seven days a week

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Elizabeth Terwilliger
& Julie Malet

LIVE WELL WITH WILDLIFE.

Cover photo Short-eared Owl at Sunset by
Lauren Bettino

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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.

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SAVE THE DATE!

WILDCARE'S UPCOMING 2024 EVENTS



FAMILY NATURE DAY

SATURDAY, APRIL 27

Learn about wildlife “Mrs.T style”
at WildCare’s Family Nature Day
on Saturday, April 27, 2024.

Birdwatch, join a naturalist hike, meet our Wildlife Ambassador animals and more at the beautiful Richardson Bay Audubon Center and Sanctuary in Tiburon, CA.

Learn more at discoverwildcare.org/family-nature-day

TALONS & FRIENDS SUMMER TBA

WildCare’s popular Talons & Friends event will take place this summer at the beautiful Cavallo Point Lodge in Sausalito.

This family event will feature wonderful opportunities to learn about wildlife including a meet-and-greet with WildCare’s live educational wild animals, our Wildlife Ambassadors.

The event will also feature a mobile nature exhibit, owl-themed activities with our Hungry Owl Project, and more.

Guests will enjoy live music while gathering for a delicious vegetarian picnic lunch, featuring a menu prepared especially for the event by the chef at Cavallo Point.



Details at discoverwildcare.org/talons



Join us for the WildCare
Gala on **SATURDAY,**
SEPTEMBER 7, 2024!

The WildCare Gala is our most elegant event of the year! Join us for

a spectacular evening of wildlife and wonder in the ballroom at the Marin Osher JCC on Saturday, September 7, 2024. This glamorous event will feature a delicious vegan dinner, live and silent auctions, close-up moments with our Wildlife Ambassador animals and much more!

Sponsorship opportunities and other details at discoverwildcare.org/gala.

A NEW HOME FOR WILDCARE

BRINGING THE ORGANIZATION TO NEW HEIGHTS
WITH THE **ELEVATE WILDCARE** CAMPAIGN



BY ELLYN WEISEL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

WildCare is thrilled to take this opportunity to share the progress of our Elevate WildCare campaign, a visionary initiative that promises a new facility and a new chapter in the WildCare story.

Creating a haven for wildlife is not just about bricks and mortar; it's a testament to our commitment to coexist with, and educate our community about, the extraordinary wildlife that share our world. The new facility project at WildCare stands as a beacon of hope, reminding us that our actions can shape a brighter future for all living beings.

This is a legacy project for WildCare, and we look forward to delivering on our mission for generations to come.

PAGE 4 WILDCARE NEWS WINTER 2023

As we get closer to realizing our dream of a much-needed new facility, we would like to proudly reassure you that WildCare will not pause operations while we rebuild. The work we do daily in our Wildlife Hospital, through our nature education programs, and with our wildlife advocacy will continue - as it must. WildCare fills an urgent and important need in Marin County and beyond.

Approval of our plans this past summer by the Planning Commission for the City of San Rafael was a critical milestone that allowed our project to progress, and signifies the City's resounding support of our plan for a new home for WildCare. The commissioners repeatedly expressed interest in the project and their appreciation of the importance of WildCare's role in our community.

Our architectural design team is moving forward with the detailed project scope and construction documents, allowing us to submit the project for a building permit and ultimately begin



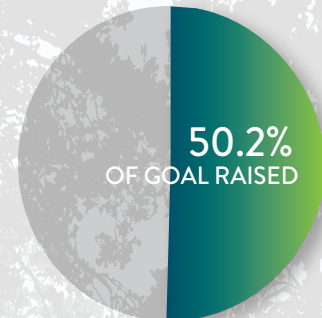
Building rendering © Fairchild Broms
Inset images from top, © Tory Davis,
Nina Zhito, Tory Davis, Tory
Davis, Alison Hermance

Progress on the Elevate campaign has been exciting and promising. The campaign is currently in its quiet phase, which began in September of 2022. We have been buoyed by the support and positivity amongst the WildCare and wider communities.

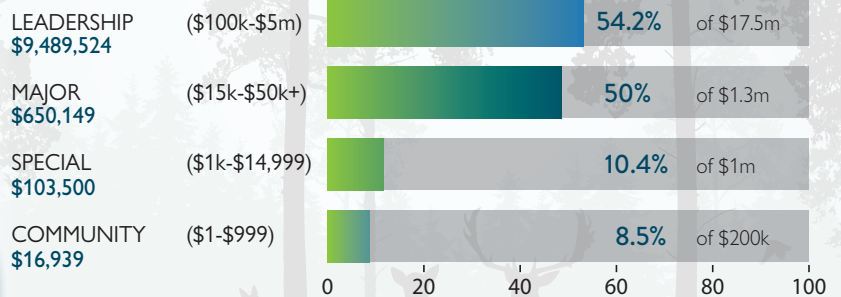
OVERALL CURRENT CAMPAIGN PROGRESS AS OF OCTOBER 9, 2023

CAMPAIGN GOAL
\$20,000,000

COMMITTED GIFTS
\$10,260,112



CAMPAIGN PROGRESS BY GIFT LEVEL



FUNDRAISING TIMELINE



the construction of our new home at our existing location in San Rafael on Albert Park Lane. We plan to move WildCare operations to our transition site before the next wildlife baby season (Spring 2024) begins.

Everyone at WildCare is fully invested in seeing this project through to completion, and we are so excited to be moving to the next phase. Having reached just over 50% of our fundraising goal, our capital campaign's momentum continues. We have much work still ahead and will need the support of our community. But what continues to be clear is that everyone wants WildCare to thrive, and there is no doubt how highly our community values our work.

For more information on the project, scan the QR code or visit discoverwildcare.org/capitalcampaign.



BEST IN SHOW

Long-Eared Owl
at Sunset
LAUREN BETTINO



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2023 Photo Contest Winners

WildCare's 16th annual Living with Wildlife Photography Contest received over 200 entries from throughout California.

Each photo offers glimpses into the wide diversity of California wildlife and the stunning places wild animals call home.

Special thanks to our hard-working judges: Randall Bryett, Dion Campbell, Alan Dep, Evan Jane Kriss, Melanie Piazza, and Kate Van Gytenbeek.

The top five photographs in each category are shown here. View the judged top eight at discoverwildcare.org/photo.



Bobcat Mother and Kitten
RYAN HOPPER



**BEST ANIMAL
(OTHER)
IN THEIR
NATURAL
SETTINGS**

Ground Squirrel - Long Goodbye
SHARON OSBERG



**BEST
GENERAL
NATURE**

Tri-Tones: Poison Oak Leaves
MARK DECKER



**BEST LIVING
WITH
WILDLIFE**

Coyote on the Porch - Caught in the Act
JANET KESSLER



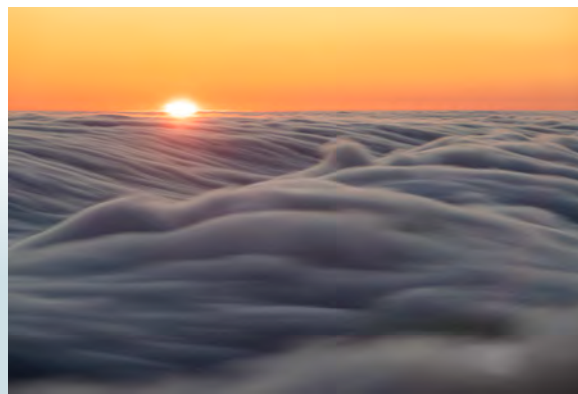
**BEST
CALIFORNIA
WILD BIRDS
IN THEIR
NATURAL
SETTINGS**

Peregrine Falcon Chasing Off Great Blue Heron
SHARON OSBERG

2023 FINALISTS



**Peregrine Falcon and
Ground Squirrel Confrontation**
BRANDON MACDONALD



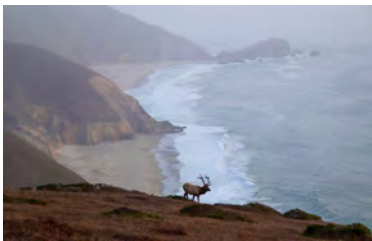
Tam Sunset - Fog with Peak
NICK FAIN



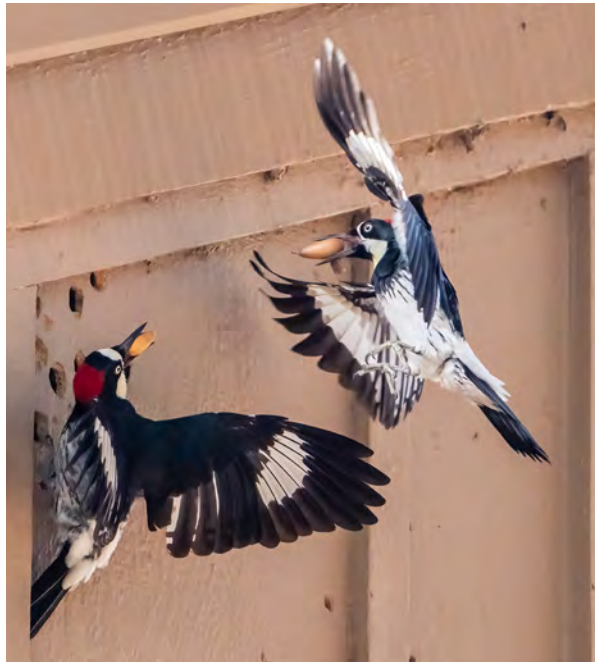
**Juvenile White-tailed Kites -
Prey Exchange**
SUSIE KELLY



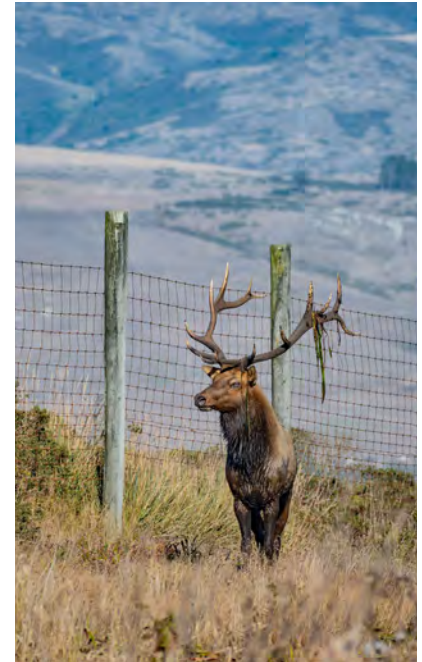
We Share the Sidewalk - Coyote
JANET KESSLER



Elk Above McClure's Beach
CINDY DAVIS



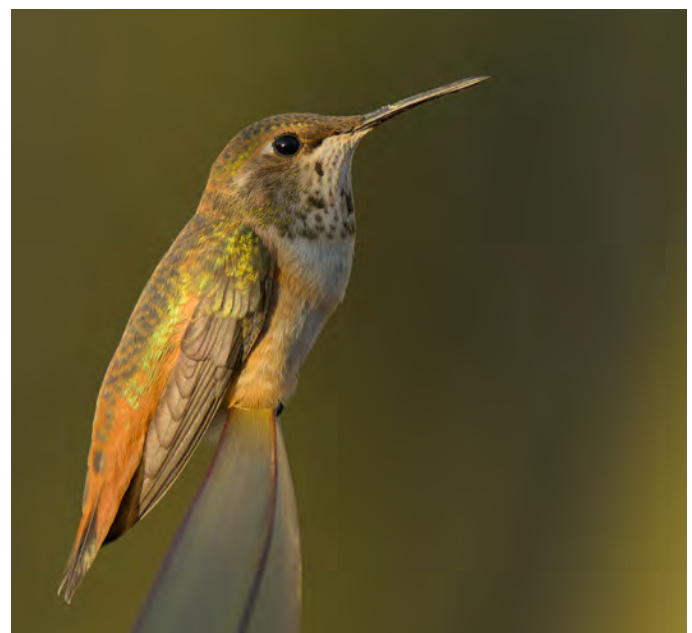
Acorn Woodpeckers Coming in for a Landing
SUSIE KELLY



Tule Elk at the Tomales Elk Fence
PATTY SPINKS



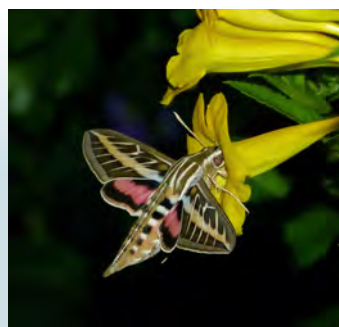
Cooper's Hawk and Ground Squirrel
PARHAM POURAHMAD



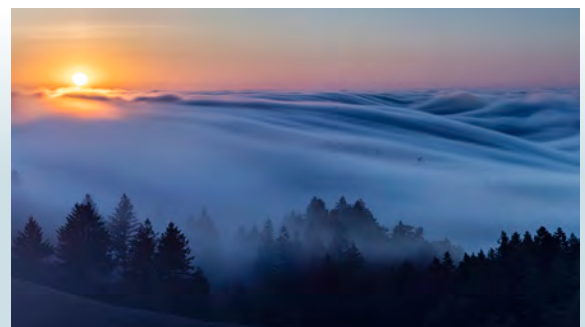
Anna's Hummingbird
DAN PAGANO



Wrecked Boat on Inverness Beach
RYAN HOPPER



White-lined Sphinx Moth
GARY WALTER



Fog Rivers at Sunset
NICK FAIN



Coyote Pups in a Bucket
JANET KESSLER



Elephant Seal and Chimney Rock
CINDY DAVIS



Bobcat Perched on a Fence Post
JOE PUHALSKI



Tamalpais Evening Fog
BRAD RIPPE



WildCare's Family Nature Day *in Honor of Elizabeth Terwilliger*

Saturday, April 27, 2024

10:00 am - 2:00 pm

At WildCare's Family Nature Day, people of all ages learn about wildlife "Mrs. T style!"

Elizabeth Terwilliger, known best as Mrs. T, was an inspiration for generations of Marin County residents. Her multisensory approach to teaching children about nature engendered a lifelong love of the natural world, and a desire to protect it, in the hearts of thousands.

The children that went on outdoor excursions with Mrs. T have grown up to be among the environmental advocates overseeing the protection of Bay Area wildlands today. Mrs. T's legacy and her creative and compelling teaching methods live on at WildCare. WildCare's Family Nature Day was inaugurated in her honor and is held every spring!

At the event, everyone will enjoy meeting and interacting with WildCare's live non-releasable Wildlife Ambassadors. Attendees can walk the shoreline in search of marine life including crabs and snails, use scopes to bird watch from the patio of the historic Lyford House, or join a naturalist-led hike and explore this special sanctuary. Dissect an owl pellet, take on the challenge of an engaging scavenger hunt and receive a reward for completion, or create a nature-themed craft to help wildlife.

Learn more at discoverwildcare.org/family-nature-day.



(Peli)CAN you tell the difference?

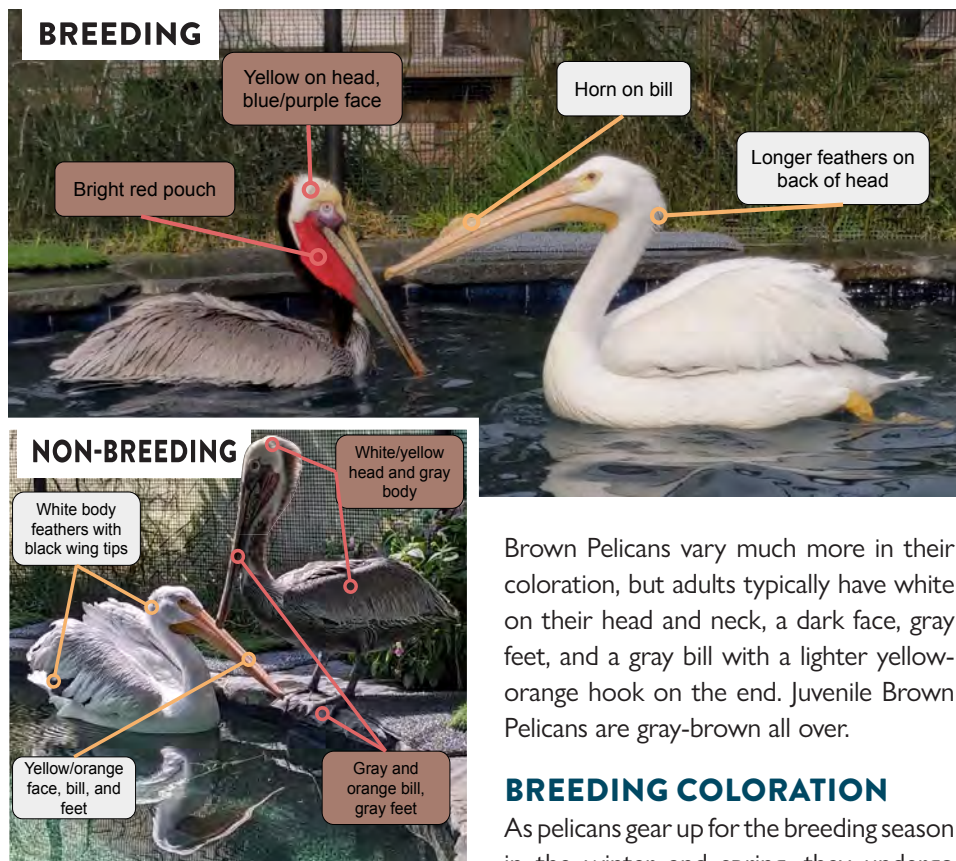
BY RYANE LOGSDON, PHD
AMBASSADOR PROGRAM MANAGER

WildCare's courtyard has been closed to the public since the emergence of HPAI (avian influenza) in California in the summer of 2022, and we know many of you have missed visiting our wonderful Wildlife Ambassadors.

Two of our most popular courtyard residents are our ambassador pelicans, Baja, the California Brown Pelican, and Marshall, the American White Pelican. These guys have always drawn crowds during feeding time. They readily catch fish tossed to them by WildCare volunteers, even though this feeding behavior is very different from that of their wild counterparts. Baja and Marshall are wonderful examples of the two pelican species (out of eight in the world!) that we are lucky enough to have in the Bay Area.

LOOKS

While both birds have famously large bills and pouches to catch fish, one of the easiest ways to distinguish these two pelican species is right in the name. Let's look at the differences between them.



Brown Pelicans vary much more in their coloration, but adults typically have white on their head and neck, a dark face, gray feet, and a gray bill with a lighter yellow-orange hook on the end. Juvenile Brown Pelicans are gray-brown all over.

BREEDING COLORATION

As pelicans gear up for the breeding season in the winter and spring, they undergo some incredible changes. Interestingly, both male and female pelicans go through these seasonal shifts. Check out the breeding plumage displayed by Baja and Marshall in the larger photo above.

BEHAVIORS (HUNTING/ FISHING)

While both species of pelican use their large pouch to gather small schooling fish, the two species hunt very differently.

Brown Pelicans search for fish as they fly above the ocean and dive down from heights as great as 65 feet. The large bird's impact with the water can stun fish up to six feet away, which makes the fish quite easy for the pelican to scoop up! To keep themselves safe during these high-speed crashes, Brown Pelicans have air sacs throughout their body to serve



as cushioning when they hit the water, and they rotate their head and neck to protect their trachea and esophagus. Brown Pelicans are one of only two species of diving pelicans in the world.

American White Pelicans tend to forage in groups in shallow, fresh water. Dipping their beaks in the water and flapping their wings, these groups will drive schools of fish towards the shore, allowing the birds to efficiently scoop them up into their throat pouch.

CONSERVATION

While American White Pelicans dealt with low population numbers in the mid-twentieth century from hunting (due to the incorrect assumption that they competed with humans for fish), their plight was nothing compared to that of Brown Pelicans, which were federally listed as endangered in 1970. Pesticides like DDT entered the food chain and made Brown Pelican egg shells weak. Brown Pelicans stand on their eggs to incubate them, which means pelican parents ended up breaking their own eggs. Once DDT was banned in 1972, the Brown Pelicans started to recover and they were delisted in 2009.

Despite a strong recovery, pelicans of all kinds still face threats from humans. Baja came to WildCare with his wings tangled in fishing line, which caused enough damage that he can no longer reach the heights he needs to plunge-dive for food. Marshall was found under a truck with multiple broken bones, vision loss in one eye, and neurological damage (likely due to being hit by the vehicle). Due to their injuries, neither of these birds would survive in the wild, which is why they now call WildCare home.

Taking simple actions like properly disposing of fishing line and cleaning up trash around wetlands can help keep these magnificent birds safe!



All of WildCare's Nature Education Programs now align with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)

WildCare wants to help students make connections to Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)! Our programming seeks to align with and support NGSS so that we can deliver science education at the highest level.

With this program alignment in mind, our trained educators will focus on the Disciplinary Core Ideas (DCIs) the teacher selects.

To learn more about which standards align with our programming, head to the NGSS page on our website: discoverwildcare.org/NGSS

Nature Van (Pre-K - 8th grade)	Wildlife Ambassadors (1st - 8th grade)	Nature Hikes (K - 6th grade)
<p>AVAILABLE IN SPANISH! Examine and touch fascinating taxidermy and bio-facts.</p> <p>45 min – 1-hour presentations. \$220 for the first presentation and \$160 for each additional presentation.</p> <p>One class per presentation. Up to four classes per date.</p>	<p>Bring three live wild animals into your classroom!</p> <p>1-hour presentations. \$260 for the first presentation and \$200 for a second presentation. One class per presentation. Maximum two per date.</p>	<p>Terwilliger Nature Guides lead nature discovery hikes at Ring Mountain, Muir Woods, or Miwok Meadows.</p> <p>Hikes are 2.5 hours. \$300 per hike. One class per hike. One hike per date.</p> <p>Scholarships available for public schools!</p>



Request your program today at discoverwildcare.org/education

Questions? Email
education@discoverwildcare.org
or call 415-453-1000 x190



Photo © Susie Graven



Photo © Maire Brixie



Photo © Susie Graven



Photo © Susie Graven

Nature Nurtures New Friendships: Zeva Longley Family Adventures

BY EILEEN JONES,
Director of Education

We just wrapped up the second year of WildCare's Zeva Longley Family Adventures Program! The goals of the program are to continue Zeva Longley's legacy of education, to make local nature more accessible to Spanish-speaking families in the San Rafael Canal District, and provide them with memorable outdoor experiences. This summer we held three bilingual hikes at different parks in Marin County and celebrated our connections with and love for the outdoors at an end-of-the-season picnic in the redwoods at Samuel P. Taylor Park.

Highlights from this year's hikes are the impacts the program has on its participants. Friendships formed between families resulted in some families going on outings together – two families got together to take a trip to Yosemite. Participants compared the names of plants and animals in English and Spanish across regional dialects, sparking fond childhood memories.

While bird-watching at Las Gallinas Wildlife Ponds, the kids spotted a Black-crowned Night Heron, showing off their observation and leadership skills. One child expressed her interest in working with marine mammals and discovered that Cecilia, our Bilingual Nature Educator, works at The Marine Mammal Center. Seeing a young girl become interested in pursuing a science career is one of the wonderful outcomes of the program.

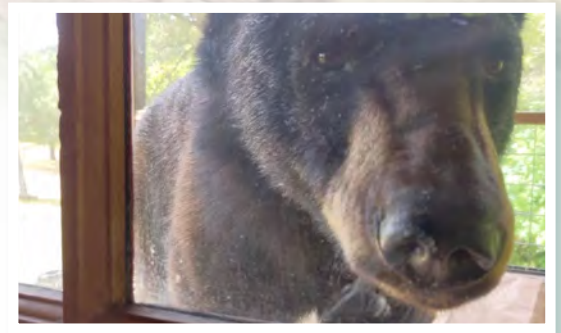
During our final picnic, participants met Rosie, our Rosy Boa and were invited to touch her at the end of the presentation. We noticed that parents became more comfortable touching the snake after watching their children enthusiastically interact with her.

We want to recognize Zeva Longley's family for their generous support of this program. Thanks to them, we have the funding to continue this program for the next four years including providing free transportation to the hike sites along with scholarships for our Wildlife Camps.

Para leer este artículo en español visite: discoverwildcare.org/aventurasfamiliares.



Don't Feed the Bears!



One early morning this past June, security cameras on a house in San Rafael, not far from WildCare, captured images of a Black Bear nosing curiously around a resident's side yard. Additional sightings this summer further reinforced that Marin County residents will likely soon find themselves regularly living with bears.

This summer's bear sightings warrant raised awareness and some common-sense precautions, but WildCare urges residents not to panic. Black Bears are shy animals that prefer to avoid people, and Black Bear attacks are extremely rare.

The best way to prevent bear encounters and encourage bears to move away from populated areas is to remove food sources including accessible garbage, pet food left outside, fallen fruit, and

bird feeders. Barbecue grills also offer a tempting treat to bears, so please thoroughly clean your grill. Pets should never be left alone outside at night.

In the event that you encounter a bear, stay calm, do not run or climb a tree, and back away slowly. You can encourage the bear to move along by making noises like clapping or yelling. A Black Bear will prefer to exit the scene without confronting humans or our pets, but keeping dogs on leash is always a good idea to help both dogs and wildlife stay safe.

Please don't follow the bear for a photo or otherwise intrude into the bear's space. Allowing the bear to become accustomed to humans will reduce his natural wariness of people and lead to conflicts, almost always to the detriment of the bear.

Black Bears are interesting, curious, charismatic animals, and they're part of a healthy ecosystem. Conflicts primarily occur when humans provide easily-accessible food, so removing food sources and staying away from bears will keep them safe and alive.

Photos © Bear in hammock by Cynthia Barnard, Black Bear at window by Anastasia Emmons

Stay tuned to WildCare's social media for updates on bear sightings in our area!

f @wildcarebayarea

X @wildcare

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

EILEEN MUNROE

BY BRIANNA BJARNSON,
Volunteer and Events Manager

Eileen Munroe began volunteering at WildCare in 2021 and quickly became an indispensable part of the Ambassador Program Team.

“On top of being an excellent volunteer on her weekly shift caring for our nonreleasable Wildlife Ambassadors, Eileen regularly steps up to help out with extra cleaning tasks and cover other volunteers’ shifts,” says Dr. Ryane Logsdon, WildCare Ambassador Program Manager.

Ryane continues, “In addition to tasks like grocery runs, Eileen is always willing to lend a hand, and she was one of the first on site to help clean up after WildCare flooded in 2021. Eileen has also volunteered countless additional hours to assist with off-site Educational Programs – she’s attended nearly as many as our staff – and is regularly recruited to help train new volunteers!”

Eileen was born and raised in Los Alamos, New Mexico. She moved to Marin in

2004 and she fell in love with this area. She initially contacted WildCare after spotting her first Wild Turkey wandering the streets of San Rafael. Concerned, she called WildCare to ask if the turkey could be helped and was surprised to learn that wandering turkeys are a common sight in Marin! Later, when she saw an ad for Ambassador Volunteers, she jumped at the opportunity to volunteer.

Recently, Eileen also joined WildCare’s Facilities Program Committee, which focuses on incorporating technology into the educational spaces for WildCare’s new facility. She is conducting research to find technology that will fit the education team’s needs for content creation, ease of editing, and visitor experience.

Eileen lives in Novato with her husband Matt and their tiny dogs, Frank and Peanut. When she’s not volunteering at WildCare, Eileen and her husband – both avid travelers – go as far and as often as they can.

Thank you, Eileen, for everything you do for WildCare!

JOIN THE WILDCARE VOLUNTEER TEAM!

Our Wildlife Hospital cares for over 3,500 wild animals a year, from as many as 200 different species. We provide ongoing care for our patients 365 days a year!

Our goal is to restore our wild patients to full health so that they may be released safely back to their natural habitats.



Scan to learn more and apply now!



Questions?

Contact Brianna Bjarnson,
Volunteer Manager

brianna@discoverwildcare.org

(415) 453-1000 x210

“ I volunteer because I want to make a difference. WildCare makes it possible to both help animals and educate the public about wildlife, and I love that. ”

- Shelly Ross, Wildlife Hospital and Raccoon Foster Care Volunteer

VOLUNTEER AT WILDCARE!

With over 100 onsite volunteers and more than 200 volunteers total, WildCare is able to further our mission and help people live well with wildlife. From our Emergency Line Volunteers taking after-hours calls and our Raptor Reunite Team returning juvenile hawks and owls to their nests, to our Nature Guides leading nature hikes and our Foster Care Volunteers bottle-feeding orphaned skunks, opossums, squirrels and more, our wonderful volunteers fill countless roles that are essential to WildCare's success and impact on the community.

The WildCare Volunteer department is pleased to announce that we have started our 2024 volunteer recruitment of both youth and adults for our Wildlife Hospital program. ***Come join our team of volunteers and learn to provide proper nutrition and enrichment, safely handle and restrain, and even release over 200 species of sick, injured, and orphaned wild animals.*** All training will be provided, and applicants

must be able to commit to one 4-hour shift per week for at least nine months, plus ongoing dedicated Wildlife Hospital training.

Interested adult applicants must be able to attend one of our mandatory orientations: held on Zoom on either Wednesday, January 24, 2024, 6-8pm or Saturday, January 27, 2024, 1-3pm. Scan below to complete an application. Your application will serve as your RSVP to our live Zoom orientation.

Youth volunteers must be in high school, under 18, and able to attend the

mandatory in-person youth orientation on Sunday, January 28, 2024, from 11am - 2pm. Your completed application serves as your RSVP to the in-person orientation. Scan below to complete an application.

We anticipate a waitlist of volunteers: Don't miss your chance to get your foot in the door before our new facility is built! If you care deeply about our community and its connection with local wildlife and would like to be part of helping sick, injured, and orphaned animals recover and return to their natural habitat, please apply to be a Wildlife Hospital volunteer!

UPCOMING APPLICATIONS AND MANDATORY ORIENTATIONS



ADULT VOLUNTEERS (18+) WILDLIFE HOSPITAL ORIENTATIONS

Applicants MUST attend one of these dates!

Wed., January 24, 2024, 6pm – 8pm
OR Sat., January 27, 2024, 1pm – 3pm
Virtual orientations via Zoom

APPLICATIONS OPEN NOW



ADULT VOLUNTEERS (18+) WILDLIFE AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Apply at discoverwildcare.org/ambassadorvolunteer

ONGOING APPLICATIONS



YOUTH VOLUNTEERS (HIGH SCHOOL) WILDLIFE HOSPITAL

Orientation
Sunday, January 28, 2024
11am – 1pm

APPLICATIONS OPEN NOW

BY BETH SLATKIN,
Grants Program Manager

A lifelong Bay Area resident, retired attorney and civic leader, Steger Johnson has been a staunch supporter of WildCare since 1993, when he first brought in an injured bird he'd found in his front yard. "Somehow I was able to get the bird into a shoebox. A friend said, 'Call WildCare', so I did!"

Since that time, Steger—a former mayor and city councilmember of Belvedere, and its 2011 Citizen of the Year—has called on WildCare whenever he's found other animals in need, like a very young deer he once found huddled and defenseless outside his home after being hit by a car.

"From my first encounter with WildCare, I've been a supporter. WildCare is unique: I'm not aware of any other organizations that care for such a broad range of animals—and do such a good job of it."

Steger also supports WildCare in his capacity as president of a local family foundation started by his aunt, the artist Winifred Johnson Clive, to help the causes closest to her heart. These include helping women who are victims of domestic violence



Photo © Astrid Johnson

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

STEGER JOHNSON

building plans] look fantastic, and will expand WildCare's ability to help animals in the future," he says.

Thank you, Steger for being a champion of WildCare's work for the last two decades!

and abuse, children's education and welfare, and wildlife in need. For Steger and the other Clive Foundation trustees, WildCare occupies a special place.

"Throughout her life, [Aunt Winnie] was a huge supporter of wildlife. Not only does WildCare care for injured and displaced animals, it also educates children about the importance of wildlife and ecology. As the population grows, the greater the likelihood of interaction between humans and animals. WildCare provides a place to care for these animals and release them back into the wild."

Steger's own favorite animal is his dog Heidi, whom he rescued as a puppy from Muttville Senior Dog Rescue. Heidi is a spirited companion on Steger's daily walks through his neighborhood, which is rich with wildlife.

Steger encourages readers to support WildCare any way they can, especially through our Elevate WildCare capital campaign to fund our new center for wildlife care and nature education. "[The

MAKE YOUR PLEDGE TODAY TO PROTECT WILDLIFE TOMORROW.

Including WildCare in your will is a powerful way to ensure our work is able to carry on for generations to come. Donors who have included WildCare in their estate plans are valued members of our Tomorrow Fund.

**Please let us know if you have included
WildCare in your estate plans!**

We would love the opportunity to welcome you to the Tomorrow Fund Community and include you in special annual events, like our Speaker Series featuring notable presenters on topics at the heart of WildCare's vital work.

[DISCOVERWILDCARE.ORG/TOMORROWFUND](https://discoverwildcare.org/tomorrowfund)



Gala

WildCare's 2023 Gala was a brilliant success, thanks to the event's generous sponsors and donors, and everyone who attended this elegant event on Saturday, September 9, 2023.

Held in the beautiful Hoytt Theater at the Marin Osher Jewish Community Center in San Rafael, it truly was a glamorous evening! The wine, donated by Eden Rift Vineyards, was excellent, and the Gala's three-course, plant-based gourmet dinner, catered by McCall's, was a completely vegan culinary experience, underwritten by a generous WildCare supporter.

As only happens at a WildCare Gala, guests met and mingled with Sequoia the Northern Spotted Owl, Mohave the Desert Tortoise, and Milo the Virginia Opossum among other Wildlife Ambassadors. At the event, WildCare honored former Board Member and longtime WildCare supporter, Steve Kimball, for his incredible dedication to WildCare's mission. This Gala was also enhanced by the inclusion of exciting news about the Elevate WildCare campaign.

The evening, of course, was a fundraiser for WildCare, and the event raised nearly \$500,000 to help WildCare treat and release thousands of injured and orphaned wild animals in the year to come. These funds will also help WildCare continue to advocate for wildlife and teach thousands of adults and children to love and appreciate nature.

To see more photos visit discoverwildcare.org/gala



1. Linda Stiles, Nicole Trautsch, Elyn Weisel, Steve Kimball; **2.** Luke Masefield, Magda Sarkissian, Rob Stiles, Helen Fung, Kuosen Fung; **3.** Alison Hermance; **4.** Sylvia Singh, Charan Singh; **5.** Ryane Logsdon, PhD and Sequoia the Northern Spotted Owl; **6.** Amy Tan, Glenda Coming; **7.** Guests at the Gala. Photos ©Drew Altizer Photography

MEET OUR PATIENTS!

EVERY YEAR, WILDCARE'S WILDLIFE HOSPITAL ADMITS APPROXIMATELY 3,500 ILL, INJURED, AND ORPHANED WILD ANIMALS, FROM OVER 200 SPECIES.

MEET SOME OF OUR RECENT WILDLIFE PATIENTS!



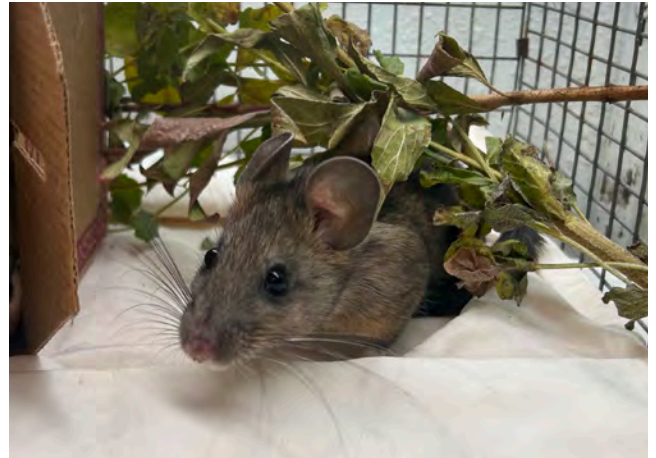
WHITE-THROATED SWIFT

PATIENT #23-1754

This young White-throated Swift came in after falling from her nest. She was dehydrated, thin, and quiet, but luckily had no major injuries. However, on her second day in care, a WildCare Medical Staff member noticed the fledgling had maggots in her ears! Egg-laying flies take advantage of helpless young animals that have fallen from the nest, laying their eggs on them, which then hatch as maggots. Our team removed the maggots and treated the baby swift with dewormers. She suffered no ill effects from the maggots.

Swifts are not common patients at WildCare but this year we had 10 over the summer. Each young bird requires feeding and care from sunrise to sunset. Swifts are a challenging species to care for in captivity and they require specialized care, so all of our swifts go into home-care with an experienced volunteer who raises them to release.

White-throated Swifts often nest in freeway overpasses and are aerial insectivores that you can spot at dawn and dusk, flying alongside Cliff Swallows to capture their dinner. This patient was released in late August to a nearby colony, along with another White-throated Swift companion with whom she had been raised.



BUSHY-TAILED WOODRAT

PATIENT # 23-2800

We admitted this charming Bushy-tailed Woodrat in early October after he accidentally stowed away in a recreational vehicle in Modoc County, California. When the owners of the RV realized they had an additional passenger, they contacted WildCare for advice.

Many species of wildlife develop a territory, and woodrats take it to the extreme! These native woodland rodents create elaborate nest sites and have a very small range. They are highly territorial, and they rarely venture more than 65 yards from their nest. Because of this, a hitchhiker like this little rat must be released exactly where he was picked up, or he won't survive. This rat's concerned rescuers contained the rat for the duration of the drive and then dropped him off at WildCare.

Luckily, one of our Medical Staff had plans to drive up to Oregon to view the eclipse a few days later, so she volunteered to bring this beautiful rat right back to his home on the northern edge of the state. The rat was only away from home for a total of six days, thanks to the quick thinking of the finders and WildCare's devoted Medical Staff.



WESTERN BLUEBIRDS
PATIENT # 23-1290, 23-1278 AND 23-1266

The trio of baby bluebirds in this photo arrived at WildCare over the span of a week. All were nestlings and two were from the same clutch. Each had fallen from the nest and, due to the difficulty in accessing the nest locations, our team was unable to reunite them with their families even though they were in fine health.

Western Bluebirds are a curious species, and these three were well-known in the clinic for attempting escapes and playing with their food in their dirt pan while also enjoying splashy baths. In our outdoor aviaries we provided a bucket with rotting fruit to attract fruit flies so the bluebirds would have live prey on which to practice their aerial hunting skills. This group was released back to their wild home in mid-July.



**RED-SHOULDERED
HAWK**
PATIENT # 23-1564

In mid-June this nestling Red-shouldered Hawk fell from the top of a tall palm tree. We tested the young hawk for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), and placed him into one of the Wildlife Hospital's quarantine tents while we awaited the test results. On intake, Medical Staff also palpated a fracture of the left tarsometatarsus (lower leg). Healing this injury required extensive care, including X-rays, splinting, and pain medication. His HPAI test was negative.

Avian fractures heal surprisingly quickly, so after only two weeks in care, the young hawk's leg had completely healed and we were able to remove the splint. However, this young raptor's care was not yet done. Because we couldn't reunite this bird with his parents, he required extensive time in a large aviary for flight therapy. He was released after more than two months in care.



GRAY FOX
PATIENT # 23-1386

On June 16, 2023, a concerned citizen noticed a Gray Fox kit with a rat trap caught over his front left foot. Snap traps like this that are set outdoors pose a huge risk to local wildlife. The young fox was in pain and clearly in need of help. Fortunately, the finder was able to contact Marin Humane, who transported the kit to WildCare.

Medical Staff was able to remove the trap, and provide pain medication and antibiotics. They also provided special medications to help promote blood flow to try to return circulation to the tips of the fox's toes.

After two weeks of intensive medical treatment, the fox's use of his front foot had begun to improve and the fox was able to be combined with other young foxes in care at WildCare. After four weeks in care, the fox had regained full use of the impacted foot, and we released him back into the wild with two other orphaned foxes in August.

Rodenticide Advocacy Update and Unintended Consequences

In California, we're fortunate that many people now recognize the risks to nontarget wildlife from anticoagulant rodenticides (rat poisons) that travel up the food chain and kill the animals that eat rats and mice, like hawks, owls, raccoons, and foxes.

We're also fortunate that the law reinforces the dangers of these poisons. In 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law AB 1788, which put a moratorium on second generation anticoagulant use (with a few exemptions) until the California Department of Pesticide Regulation finishes reevaluating them. WildCare supported AB 1788, and also AB 1322, which Governor Newsom just signed in October 2023. AB 1322 adds diphacinone, a deadly first-generation anticoagulant, to the moratorium.

Legal work against the use of poisons that travel up the food chain has undoubtedly saved uncountable numbers of animals, and that is a wonderful thing, but at WildCare, we have also seen some unexpected consequences from the restrictions on the availability of those most commonly-used rat poisons.

Specifically, in our Wildlife Hospital, we have seen a frightening increase in the number of animals coming in stuck to glue traps, or with paws and noses stuck in snap traps. We have also seen a significant rise in the number of patients suffering from the neurotoxic effects of the poison bromethalin, which is now used in place of the anticoagulant rodenticides, and has no antidote.

The increase in wildlife patients admitted with bromethalin poisoning and



injuries from glue and snap traps may well be an unintended consequence of the moratorium on anticoagulant rodenticides. People interested in ridding their yards of perceived nuisance rodents use bromethalin or set traps outdoors without thinking of the consequences of those methods, either.

Glue traps are indiscriminate killers, and they are unbearably cruel to any animal that gets stuck to them. The glue trap doesn't kill the animal immediately; it traps the animal in place, where death comes from dehydration, starvation, and exposure. This incredibly cruel death is the fate for the target rodents, and for uncountable numbers of nontarget

animals like songbirds, lizards, and even domestic cats.

Snap traps can kill quickly, and can be used successfully indoors, but placing them outdoors is unfair to any animal moving through your yard who might end up agonizingly trapped in the trap's jaws.

Please NEVER use glue or sticky traps of any kind, and never use snap traps outdoors.

But what can you do if you're concerned about rodents in your yard?

The only way to eliminate a rodent problem is to remove what is attracting them – food, water, or shelter. If you wish to deter rodents, take a close look around your yard, and remove food sources such as fallen birdseed, fallen fruit, and pet food outside. Check your buildings for rodent entry points and seal them shut with ¼-inch wire hardware cloth. Water sources should also be removed, along with groundcover like ivy which provides cover and safety for rats and mice. Woodpiles can also harbor rodents.

We also want to remind people that rats and mice do have a place in the ecosystem outdoors. If you are seeing rodents just in your yard, that's not necessarily a problem. If you like to see hawks, owls, and other predators, you must understand that rodents are a necessary food source for them.

What people shouldn't have, of course, is rodents inside any buildings. But the good news is that safer rodent control is possible inside. Close up entry points, remove food and water sources, and, once entry points are closed up, then the use of humane traps or snap traps (in a secure box to protect pets and children) is acceptable, safe and successful.

Photos from upper left:

Oak Titmice caught on a glue trap, photo © Lucy Stevenot; Skunk with her nose clamped in a rat trap, photo © Jacqueline Lewis; Western Fence Lizard stuck to a glue trap, photo © Dion Campbell; Opossum with her paw in a rat trap, photo © Jacqueline Lewis; Western Scrub Jay stuck to a glue trap, photo © Alison Hermance



Dos and Don'ts for Humane Rodent Control

DO

- Clean up food attractants like fallen birdseed, fruit on the ground, pet food outdoors
- Remove ivy and other ground cover
- Relocate wood piles away from buildings
- Seal vent covers, cracks and any other potential entry points
- Consider humane traps for indoor rodents after ALL entry points have been sealed

DON'T

- Use glue traps EVER
- Use snap traps outdoors
- Use poison
- Worry if you see an occasional rodent in your yard... they're food for many animals!
- Expect a rodent problem to go away until all attractants have been removed

KEEP YOUR OWL BOX CLEAN

BY JACQUELINE LEWIS

Assistant Director of Hospital Programs

Owl nesting boxes are a beneficial addition to many properties. They support Barn Owl populations, control rodents, and allow us to witness the natural behavior of owls firsthand. However, if they're not cared for correctly, owl boxes can do much more harm than good.

Owl boxes are an artificial home that we create to supplement the loss of natural nesting sites in tree cavities. But with the purchase of these boxes comes a responsibility to maintain that artificial environment to best keep our owl residents healthy and safe.

The number one rule of having an owl box is making sure it stays clean!

Barn Owls are not great housekeepers. In a natural nest, there is natural decomposition of the owls' pellets and droppings that keeps the nest tidy, but man-made owl boxes lack that natural decomposition. Because of this, if a box isn't cleaned often enough, the pellets and waste build up inside the box. Parasites and bacterial infections thrive, and the owls get severe sores on their feet from standing in the accumulated waste. Owlets can even get trapped in over-full boxes.

WildCare's Wildlife Hospital admits juvenile and adult owls every year due to issues caused by neglected nesting boxes. The photos in this article show a recent patient admitted to the Wildlife Hospital for exactly this reason. In this and most cases, the property owners simply weren't aware of the needs of the box. A Barn Owl box is ideally cleaned every fall once the juveniles have fledged.

The design and materials of your owl box can also affect the wellbeing of the owl residents. Boxes that are too small will have poor drainage and ventilation, which can lead to bacterial disease outbreaks in the owls. Boxes made from plastic trap heat, causing overheated owlets to jump out of the nest prematurely. If the box opening is too large it can allow predators like Great Horned Owls and Red-tailed Hawks to prey on the nest.

There are many people who sell owl boxes, and many people who build their own without educating themselves about the dangers that boxes can bring to owls. If you are looking into getting an owl box it is of the utmost importance to understand what makes a good owl box and how to properly maintain it annually for the safety of our feathered friends.



**HUNGRY
OWL** PROJECT



For more information on what makes a good owl box visit the Hungry Owl Project website at hungryowls.org.

Who's watching?



Use our hints to guess whose eyes these are.



Hint #1: These animals dive into the ocean to hunt for their favorite food.



Hint #2: These animals have a protein in their blood that kills disease in ticks.



Hint #3: This animal is California's state amphibian.



Hint #4: These animals used to help us send messages long distances.



Hint #5: These animals warn other creatures of their venomous bite.



Hint #6: These animals have excellent camouflage and can leap 15 feet to catch their prey.



Hint #7: These animals' spots are similar to a big cat's and help them blend in on the ocean floor.



Hint #8: These animals use their eyes to hunt and have eight eyes in total!

Answers: 1. Double-crested Cormorant, 2. Western Fence Lizard, 3. Red-legged Frog, 4. Pigeon, 5. Western Diamondback Rattlesnake, 6. Bobcat, 7. Leopard Shark, 8. Bold Jumping Spider.



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