



Baby season has arrived!

Wild Times

Spring/Summer 2002

The Newsletter of The California Wildlife Center

Volume 4, Issue 2

SIGNS OF LIFE

Baby opossums survive deadly accident

On the night of February 28th, a female opossum was struck and killed by a passing car. A common cause of death for local wildlife, car hits are usually treated with disregard as most motorists drive on by, trying to avert their eyes from the scene. Fortunately in this case, someone thought enough to stop and check the animal.

Four baby opossums had survived the accident and were found alive in their dead mother's pouch. Estimated at about 50 days old, these tiny babies were removed, placed in a box, and transferred to the California Wildlife Center, where they were received the next day at 12:30 pm.

Upon intake, the infants were extremely cold after spending the night alone in a box without the vital warmth of their mother's body. With only a thin coat of sparse hair, these vulnerable little creatures cannot thermoregulate their own body tem-

peratures until they have reached the age of 90 days.

The animals were warmed immediately, weighed and color-coded with a small mark on their tails as Red (female weighing 27.8 grams), Blue



Four infant opossums were rescued from the pouch of their dead mother shortly after she was killed by a passing car.

(female weighing 26.5 grams), Green (male weighing 26.2 grams), and Orange (male weighing 28.4 grams). Taking on the parental responsibili-

ties for these tiny orphans, CWC volunteer Debbie Pedrazzoli took the four infants home for professional opossum foster care.

For the first 24 hours, Debbie tube-fed each patient with a progressive regimen of rehydrating solution, preparing them for the gradual introduction of formula. Introducing formula to a baby possum's digestive system is a delicate process that requires the proper balance of timing and calculated measurements. At first, the babies were given regular tube feedings every two hours around the clock, keeping Debbie up at all hours of the night and busy most of the day.

According to Debbie, the amount of formula is meticulously calculated based on body weight, too little or too much can prove to be fatal. The catheter used to feed the animals must also be carefully measured every couple of days to the infant's

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Have A Heart, A Wild Heart

Baby season at the California Wildlife Center exhausts not only the dedicated volunteers who work around the clock to feed hundreds of tiny infants, but also our most vital resources. With the added responsibilities of foster parenting, CWC shifts into high gear every spring to care for Mother Nature's unfortunate orphans.

In celebration of life's most precious gift, CWC offers our friends and supporters a fun way to help raise funds for wildlife -- **hosting baby showers**. Invite your friends, family and neighbors to a baby shower at your home and we will provide the invitations, literature, videos, games and prizes as well as a special gift and chance to win a weekend getaway for the host/hostess. Baby showers increase awareness about our organization and help us provide for all of our babies.

As spring blooms around us, more and more animals are in need of our help, forcing CWC into overload. In addition to baby showers, there are numerous other ways to help CWC in this dire time of need. Become a foster parent by contributing monthly donations, renew your membership, adopt a species, or volunteer and work directly with the animals. Now is the time get involved.

CWC is also currently looking for sponsors and donors for our annual auction gala, **Wild Hearts**. The date is set for November 16, 2002 and CWC has started accepting auction items and bids for the "Headline Sponsor."

If you are interested in hosting a baby shower, learning more about foster care, or would like to help sponsor Wild Hearts 2002, please call 310/457-WILD ext. 3.

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A Personal Introduction from CWC's new DAC

As the new director of animal care, I want to first tell you how thrilled I am to be given the opportunity to be a part of the California Wildlife Center. I have to tell you that while I was growing up in the small town of Havre de Grace, Maryland, I never thought in my wildest dreams that I'd end up in Malibu, CA rehabilitating wildlife.

My early fascination and affinity for animals, particularly wildlife, influenced my decision to become a veterinarian. After completing three years of undergraduate study at the Univ. of Maryland, I was accepted into the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine in Blacksburg, VA.

I graduated in 1990 and spent the next eight years working in a small animal practice on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. I finally reached a point where I needed a break from practice, so I quit my job and pursued my interest in wildlife. After completing one year in a conservation biology Master's program at the Univ. of MD., I was accepted into a clinical internship program at the Wildlife Center of Virginia (WCV) in Waynesboro, VA. The WCV is a

high volume veterinary hospital established for the treatment and rehabilitation of injured or orphaned native wildlife. During my internship, I handled over 3,000 animals and was responsible for all aspects of their care and rehabilitation. I also spent a lot of time mentoring and teaching veterinary students about the basics of wildlife medicine.

I was given the opportunity to stay on an additional year as acting director of veterinary services and animal care where I continued my veterinary duties in addition to supervising the rehabilitation staff. When my tenure as director was over, I took a job at a small animal emergency clinic in the area while I waited patiently for another chance to work at a rehabilitation center. And that's when I found the CWC.

As a veterinarian with a special interest and training in wildlife medicine and surgery, I feel extremely fortunate to be able to use those skills fulltime in the rehabilitation of wildlife. You might wonder why a veterinarian would want to do this kind of work when there are more lucrative ways to earn a living in

private practice. I guess for me, it's been about helping those animals that didn't have anyone looking out for them. Since most of the wild animals brought to a rehabilitation center have either been injured or orphaned as a direct result of human activities or ignorance, I find it very rewarding to be able to help them recover and return to their natural habitat. It also gives me the opportunity to educate the public about wildlife issues and hopefully give someone a greater appreciation and understanding for their wildlife neighbors.

For those of you who are active supporters of the CWC, I can only say thank you for your generosity, both in terms of financial commitment as well as time spent volunteering and caring for the animals. The California Wildlife Center could not exist without your support.

Respectfully,
**Lynn Whited,
DVM**



CWC Recognizes Tireless Volunteer Efforts

Selfless dedication to wildlife rehabilitation is the driving force behind the success of the California Wildlife Center. Lending their time, services and talents to a universal mission, volunteers work night and day to help save injured and orphaned wildlife. CWC is extremely grateful to have the support of such a wonderful team and would like to recognize the outstanding efforts of Karla James and Melody Miller.

Volunteer Coordinator

As the Volunteer Coordinator/Supervisor, Karla James is responsible for building the CWC volunteer team. With a list of responsibilities that tends to require 40 to 50 hours a week, Karla is constantly busy recruiting new volunteers, coordinating meetings, scheduling shifts, circulating information, answering questions, and training.

Karla came aboard in January 2001 after learning about CWC from an article published in the L.A. Times. "I had a lot of extra time and wanted to find a fulfilling avenue to add to the quality of my life," says Karla. "I had no previous work with

wildlife, but felt drawn to CWC."

When not consumed with the demands of supervising, Karla also works her regular shifts in the hospital, answering phones, caring for the animal patients and going out on rescues (her favorite part of the job).



L to R, CWC volunteers Karla James and Melody Miller find a minute to relax and enjoy the view between shifts at the animal hospital.

House Mother

Melody Miller has been with CWC for nearly four years. A wildlife veteran, Melody has been taking care of wildlife on and off for the past 10 to 12 years and is known around the center as House Mother.

When CWC opened its doors in

September 1998 at its Malibu Canyon location, Melody was there ready to help. "I love animals and I think that someone really needs to be there to take care of them," says Melody. "There are plenty of people caring for the dogs and cats, but very few who care for native wildlife."

Melody's duties as House Mother include transporting animals, feeding, year-round care, shopping for the center, and some paper work. She was also kind enough to do the center's laundry for nearly two years, until a suitable washer and dryer were donated these past few months. Come baby season, it's not unusual to find Melody at the center about 40 hours a week, tending to all the springtime patients and helping to train new volunteers.

The California Wildlife Center would like to thank both Karla and Melody for their tireless efforts to help rescue and rehabilitate distressed wildlife. Their hard work does not go unnoticed.

If you are interested in volunteering with CWC, please call Karla James at 818/222-2658.

Understanding Our Wild Neighbors

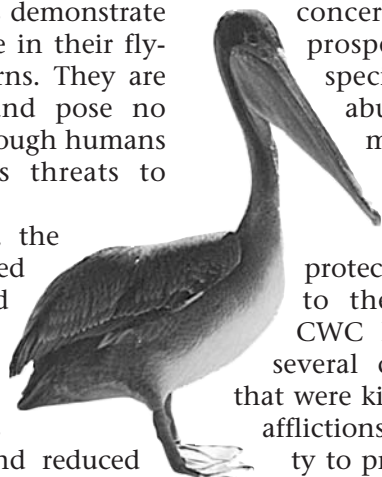
A closer look at the brown pelican.

Easily distinguished by its massive size and large bill with expandable pouch, the brown pelican is native to the Southern California coastline and recognized as a federally protected wildlife species. Found on both shores of the United States, these giant birds are social creatures that nest during the spring and summer in colonies of several thousand.

Flying low over the waves in single file, groups of brown pelicans glide along the coast searching for schools of fish. With a wingspan that often measures over six feet in

length, brown pelicans demonstrate profound natural grace in their flying and feeding patterns. They are beautiful to watch and pose no threat to humans, although humans often pose numerous threats to them.

In the early 1970's, the brown pelican was listed as an endangered species due to the harmful effects of pesticides such as DDT. Pesticide chemicals weakened eggshells and reduced breeding success, causing great



concern about the future prosperity of this native species. Today's growing abundance of these majestic sea birds represents a great success for conservationists who fought hard to protect them. Please be kind to these gentle creatures, CWC has recently received several dead brown pelicans that were killed by human-caused afflictions. It is our responsibility to protect this endangered species.

Hats Off to CWC's Outstanding Supporters

CWC depends completely on the compassion and support of the community. Without your concern, our organization would not succeed and natural wildlife would suffer the consequences. We are extremely grateful for all donations and merit every measure of generosity with sincere appreciation.

To those outstanding individuals who have gone the extra mile to make a difference and support our mission, CWC would like to send out a special thank you.

PENNY SAVERS

A warm thank you goes out to the fifth grade class at Canterbury Elementary School in Arleta, California for saving their pennies to adopt two owls as part of their bird environmental project this year. The class managed to collect a small fortune of \$110 in pennies, which they used to sponsor CWC's Adopt-A-Species program.

GETTING IT PRINTED

Providing a much needed and valuable service, Hamilton Direct of Chatsworth helped CWC by offering to print and process our newsletter for free. CWC is extremely grateful to Neal Flyer, president of Hamilton Direct for his considerable generosity in helping us to deliver our public awareness initiatives.

CONCERNED CITIZENS

Committed to supporting projects that promote education, community and the environment, The Aaroe Associates Charitable Foundation made a very generous donation this spring to CWC. Our sincere gratitude goes out to Chris Humphrey of Prudential California Realty, John Aaroe Division who brought CWC to the attention of The Aaroe Associates Board of Directors.

CWC would also like to thank Radio Shack in Malibu for their wonderful support and donations.

THE STELLAR LIST

The Stellar List features donors who have contributed \$250 or more to CWC. This season, which began in January 2002, the Stellar List includes Lisa-Marie Lerner-Krause, Bryan Kest, Joan and Larry Tyler, Navabeh and Burt Borman, Shelly Smith, Peter Ente, Dennis and Tina Ito, Stephanie Babcock, Gayle Smart, Skip and Victoria Harris, Judi Levi, Tracy and Noah Wyle, John and Mischelle Uhlman, Bruce and Shelley Whizin, Honey Coatsworth, and Henry Holmes.

SEASONED SUPPORTERS

Thanks again to Remarketing Associates, Charter Communications, Conejo Valley Vet, Malibu Animal Hospital, Adelpia Communications, Time Warner Cable, and Earth2Net for your ongoing contributions.

If you are interested in becoming a CWC donor, please contact Michelle Garcia at 818/222-2658.

•••• CWC In Full Force •••• Baby Season Has Arrived

By Lisa Jenkins

Spring has sprung at the California Wildlife Center, and with the changing of the seasons comes one of the Center's largest responsibilities: caring for injured and sick orphans needing rehabilitation. The CWC is a haven for native Californian wildlife of many species, from squirrels to hummingbirds to opossums and deer. (The CWC also rescues local sea mammals and birds of prey and then transfers them to the Marine Mammal Care Center at McArthur and the Ojai Raptor Center, respectively.)



Thus far this year CWC has taken in over 350 juveniles and babies - in addition to nearly 250 adults - and our busy season has only just begun!

The vast majority of CWC's little patients arrive after being found by concerned Southern Californians. "People call us up after finding about us online, checking with animal control, their veterinarians or the Department of Fish and Game," explains COO Victoria Harris. "Maybe they've been trimming their trees, or there's been some high winds, and they find babies who have fallen out of nests.



From baby bobcats to elephant seal pups, fawns and baby birds, orphans of all sizes are cared for at CWC.



"We received some of our baby opossums after their mom was killed by a car or dog attack," she continues. "The man who brought them in thought to check and see if Mom had any babies in her pouch...and there were!"

The California Wildlife Center's first "graduating class" of orphans is set for release in the next couple weeks. "It's wonderful to see them returned their natural environment," Victoria says.

Rehabilitating and eventually releasing young animals back into the wild is a profoundly enriching experience, but the babies are also incredibly demanding of time and energy; the hummingbirds alone must be fed every 30 minutes from sunup to sundown! CWC's resources are stretched



to capacity, and they need your help to continue in their efforts to care for nature's orphans. The Center is in dire need of money for all supplies, especially incubators (which are nearly \$1000 each) and an energy efficient freezer. Participation in CWC's "Adopt-A-Species" program allows donors to help participate in caring for Spring's influx of patients - please see page 7 for further information.

If you are interested in donating time or money to assist the California Wildlife Center in caring for orphaned and injured wildlife, please go to www.californiawildlifecenter.org for more information or call 818/222-2658.

..... One Big Happy Family

By Liam O'Hagan

Only once in awhile in wildlife rehabilitation do you get the opportunity to release animals, especially young orphans, within a week. In late March we received our first orphaned duckling all alone and by himself "peep" "peeping" away that he definitely needed some company. We called area rehabbers and local rescue organizations, but they had no companions for this lonely duckling. We decided to keep him here until we had more or another place had received some.

The next day, 10 more ducklings came in all the same size and weight of the first duckling. We set them all up in the lower waterfowl pen and prepared them for a few months here until they were ready to be released. On the third day, we received a mom and 13 of her offspring at the center. The female mallard was found on the side of a road in Westlake, possibly hit by a car. After an exam she was deter-

mined to be in good health and put with the others in the lower waterfowl pen.

All of the ducklings immediately bonded with the mom and soon this



Can you count how many little ducklings are part of this clutch?



family became not just 14, but 25. Since mallards don't nurse like mammals do, and they are really just there to protect and teach, we found a perfect situation for everyone, without hindering the mother. With more numbers, these ducks now have a better chance of survival than clutches with less numbers.

All of the mallards came from the same area in Westlake and since they all migrate, they would soon be off flying away and beginning their cycle of life. By the 5th day, all of these patients were deemed ready for release. Marty, Karla, and myself found a perfect spot on a pond in Westlake for them all to finish growing up. When the cage door was opened they bolted for the water, with mom leading and the rest in tow. They all have been reported to still be there, swimming around and "peep" "peeping" to their hearts content.

continued from front page

body in order to ensure that the tube is inserted into the animal's stomach and not the lungs.

After ten days, the infants had gained considerable weight and were just starting to open their eyes. Debbie was relieved to see no signs of blindness, which can result when infants are exposed to low temperatures early in their development.

"Once the eyes are fully opened, I will move them to a larger opossum house where they are free to move around and go into and out of their surrogate handmade pouches," says

Debbie. "A gradual introduction of solid food soaked in formula begins at 60 grams and by 100 grams they will be weaned onto a special opossum diet, preparing them for release."

The opossums will be released when they are about 5 months old. "We still have many more milestones to achieve before they can be released," Debbie says. These infants may be showing positive signs of growth and development, but they are still very young and only weigh between 37 and 45 grams. Foster care is needed for several more months



Foster care for these tiny orphans required regular feedings every 2 hours, night and day! Thanks to volunteer and wildlife enthusiast, Debbie Pedrazzoli, these precious infants got a second chance.

Give the Gift of Wildlife!

With Spring in the air, and summer fast on its heels, graduation ceremonies, weddings, and birthday parties are quickly filling up everyone's schedules. With so many gifts to consider, why not give a gift membership to the California Wildlife Center? You can also make a donation in memory of a departed relative or friend, adopt a species, contribute monthly donations, or sponsor infant foster care. And with CWC's secure online donation form, you can do so quickly and easily! Just log on to www.californiawildlifecenter.org and click on "How You Can Help." Or fill out and mail the form on page 7.



Yes! I want to support the efforts of CWC!

Name _____ Phone _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
 Please charge \$ _____ to my credit card once every month for _____ month(s):
 Visa MC AmEx Number _____ Exp. _____
 Signature _____
 Email Address _____



I have enclosed a check payable to CWC for \$ _____
 The California Wildlife Center P.O. Box 2022, Malibu CA 90265
 818/222-2658; 818/591-WILD; 310/457-WILD
www.californiawildlifecenter.org

*membership and Adopt-A-Species donations can be made online at our secure website (click on "How I Can Help")
 clip and send to CWC

Membership

- Individual \$40 Sponsor \$250
 Couple/Family \$75 Benefactor \$500

Adopt A Species

- Fawn \$250 Sea Lion \$125 Pelican \$100
 Bobcat \$75 Owl \$50 Squirrel \$25

Corporate Sponsorships

- Medical Fund - Baby Hospital \$2,000
 Building Fund - Animal Enclosures \$1,000
 Educational Outreach Fund \$1,000

Community Support

Buy a House, Send 'em Home

By Nina Borin

The California Wildlife Center and R.J. Thomson at RE/MAX Centre Calabasas join to provide "Send 'em Home"—a fundraising program to significantly increase the number of animals rehabilitated and released to their natural homes in the wild.

For the first time, The California Wildlife Center will join in a fundraising program with a real estate agency, RE/MAX Centre, called "SEND 'EM HOME", that will provide a referral service of professional agents for people who are planning to buy or sell a home ANYWHERE in the United States.

The project is designed to help raise funds for The California Wildlife Center. In addition to providing a valuable referral service for people buying and selling homes, generous portions of the commissions and fees that would typically occur in a standard property transaction are donated to CWC, allowing the person to not only buy or sell a home, but also to make a difference by enriching the lives of helpless animals that are sick, injured and orphaned. People using this service will be acknowledged by The California Wildlife Center for their participation.

Call 818-652-9887 or email R.J. Thomson at rjonline@earthlink.net. You can also visit his web site at www.thevalleyteam.com.

You will be put in touch with an experienced Real Estate specialist doing business in your immediate area, who is participating in this program. Upon the selling and or purchasing of a home, a percentage of the real estate agent's commission will be sent directly to The California Wildlife Center from the Escrow Company handling the transfer of property.

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Photo courtesy of Jackie Wollner

HOUSE FINCH

RESCUED: nest destroyed by tree trimming
REHABILITATION: feed every 45 minutes for several weeks
RELEASED: at approximately 8 weeks old after learning to fly in CWC's aviary

By Liam O'Hagan

CWC is constantly exploring new avenues to raise money to fund our efforts. We have recently joined with three online retailers, so that when you shop, you can help the animals, while paying nothing more than the standard price. Shopping online has always been quick and convenient, but now it assists CWC in caring for injured and orphaned wildlife.

Our partners are Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble, which need no introduction, and MyCause.com, which is a general portal to a complete range of online storefronts. You can support CWC when you buy anything from pet supplies and clothes to air travel and wine. See the full list below.

You must access the sites from the Shop for CWC page on our website. Please make sure you bookmark the page, so you can click straight to it when you want to shop online. CWC does not benefit unless you link to either Amazon, Barnes & Noble or My Cause by clicking the icon at the top of the page.

Don't forget to tell your friends!

Shop Online For CWC

SITES ACCESSIBLE THROUGH MYCAUSE.COM:

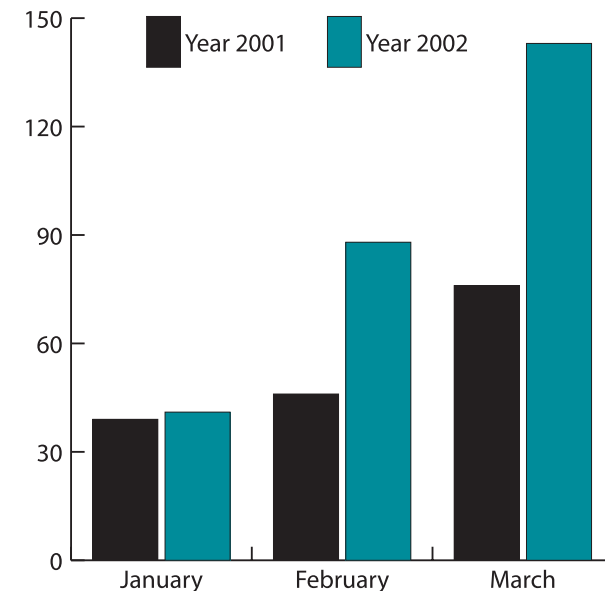
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 Clothing: Brooks Bros, Bare Necessities, LL Bean, J Crew, Gap
 Computers: Dell, IBM
 Food: Cooking.com
 Flowers: FTD, Flower.com
 Gifts/Certificates: GiftCertificates.com, Hickory Farms
 Magazines: Magazines.com
 Makeup: Sephora
 Pets: PetSmart
 Toys: Toys"R"Us
 Travel: Hotwire, Travelocity
 Wine: Wine.com

Please note that while MyCause.com is affiliated with both Amazon and Barnes & Noble, CWC benefits more if you go directly to Amazon or Barnes & Noble using the direct link found at www.californiawildlifecenter.org



GREAT HORNED OWL

RESCUED: found in a hot tub with an injured left wing
TRANSFERRED: Ojai Raptor Center



ANIMAL INTAKE THIS SEASON AT CWC

As of the first three months of 2002, the California Wildlife Center has noticed a dramatic increase in the amount of animal intakes. In March alone, CWC nearly doubled the number of animal patients with a record high of 143 animals. This year's baby season is sure to be our busiest ever as our center continues to grow.



KESTREL

RESCUED: picked up by West L.A. Animal Control
CONDITION: emaciated and in poor health
REHABILITATION: kept at CWC for two days for treatment
TRANSFERRED: Ojai Raptor Center



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www.californiawildlife.org

Survival Story

On the Wing to Freedom

Taking to the open skies once again, this snowy egret received a second chance on February 23rd, when CWC volunteers released their recovered patient back to the great outdoors after a 3-week stay at our wildlife recovery center.

When rescued on February 1st, this male bird was considerably underweight and suffering from an injured wing. After being transferred from Pasadena to our medical center, he was diagnosed with a sprained left wing and immediately received the necessary medical treatment.

Snowy egrets are widespread in California, nesting along the shores

of coastal estuaries and wetlands. These birds feed mostly on aquatic species, including small fish, frogs, and crustaceans, but will also eat



A CWC volunteer ducks for cover as this snowy egret spreads his wings to freedom.

lizards, insects and small rodents. Knowing that snowy egrets prefer live prey, CWC volunteers were lucky to have a couple young lizard catchers on hand. Thanks to the grandchildren of one of our senior volunteers, this captive egret was able to enjoy a few live meals in between his standard feedings of thawed anchovies and night smelt.

Our patient gained weight daily and eventually gained back the strength to fly. After a week of exercise and physical therapy in the flight cage, he regained flight endurance and was released at a local avian wildlife preserve

**CWC WILDLIFE
Emergency Hotline
310-457-WILD
818-591-WILD**

The California Wildlife Center is a federally recognized 501(c)3 charity.

**SAVE THE DATE:
CWC's Annual Gala
Wild Hearts 2002
November 16**