

# Tracks



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*Red-tailed Hawk*  
Ashley Kinney

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# New Face: Stephanie Ellis

According to an African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child." And it takes a special kind of village to raise or rehabilitate an animal. Each of the staff and volunteers at the Wildlife Center bring to their work something very unique. This is certainly true of Stephanie Ellis, our new Director of Animal Care.

Stephanie joined us in February, after serving as the Outreach and Programs Coordinator for the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO). In that role, she was responsible for a wide variety of activities, including managing public relations, recruiting volunteers, coordinating fundraising events and conducting bird banding demonstrations. Prior to that, Stephanie was a Wildlife Veterinary Technician and Licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator in Massachusetts. She holds

a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and Biobehavioral Animal Studies from the University of Massachusetts.



In her new role, Stephanie will be able to combine all of her passions while working with our dedicated volunteers, staff and Board of Directors. "I am thrilled to be part of the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley" she says, adding, "I look forward to continuing the advancement of animal care at the Center and getting to know the many integral people who play a role in this special wildlife hospital."

Welcome, Stephanie, to our village!

# Tracks...

**Tracks** is a publication of the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley.

## Our Mission

To provide high quality care and rehabilitation of injured, sick and orphaned wildlife within the Silicon Valley community. Through educational programs, we foster a positive coexistence between the general public and wildlife and encourage an interest in and concern for wildlife conservation issues.

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Layout and Design - Elizabeth Kricfalusi

Cover Photo by Ashley Kinney

This juvenile Red-tailed Hawk was brought to us extremely emaciated and suffering from a severe Clostridial infection. After a month of medical treatment and support, he was moved to an outdoor enclosure, where he's now flying well and live hunting. He will be ready for release soon.

## Unusual Animal Intakes in 2008

Species	Number
Beaver	1
African Hedgehog	1
American White Pelican	5
Brown Pelican	7
Bufflehead	1
Burrowing Owl	2
Cinnamon Teal	1
Common Golden Eye	2
Common Snipe	1
Gadwall	1
Swainson's Hawk	2

*For a complete list of the 4,388 animals received in 2008, visit our website at [www.wcsv.org](http://www.wcsv.org).*



# Happy Cats and Safer Birds

by Carla de Mos

In a wildlife rehabilitator's "perfect world" all domestic cats would be content to stay indoors, there would be no feral cats because all kitties would have a happy home and birds would enjoy a longer, safer cat-free life. Well, we are all allowed some wishful thinking but we are well aware that in reality keeping a cat indoors can be challenging.

This article presents some information and helpful suggestions for maintaining a safe and enjoyable indoor experience for your cat.

## Keeping Your Cat Indoors is the Best Gift to Wildlife

Last year the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley received more than 300 cat-caught birds. Cats have a natural instinct to hunt; they also have a mouth full of toxic bacteria. When a cat bites an animal, the bacteria infect the animal and can quickly cause its death. Unfortunately, many cat-caught victims do not survive despite our best efforts, so prevention, in the form of keeping cats indoors, is the most effective solution.

If you see your cat with an animal in its mouth or suspect that it has bitten an animal, do not try to treat the victim yourself but bring it directly to a rehabilitation center. There it will be assessed, treated, and if necessary be given a course of antibiotics.



Rescued stray Josie Turner-De Laurentis demonstrates purr-fectly that a former outdoor cat can be happy indoors.

## Keeping Kitty Inside has Great Advantages for Kitty Too

Indoor cats can live to be 20 years old but the average outdoor cat's life expectancy is only 2 to 5 years. Outdoor cats are exposed to all sorts of dangers: cars, cat fights, disease, parasites, predatory animals, poison, traps, and worst of all, human cruelty. Acclimating an outdoor cat to the indoors can be challenging but with patience it will eventually adjust. Life indoors is not limiting your cat's enjoyment of life; it is providing it with a longer, more humane life as part of your family.

## Making a Happy Indoor Cat (and a Happy Cat Owner)

- When you take your new kitten home, keep it indoors. Most cats that grow up indoors are perfectly content to stay inside.
- Spay or neuter your kitten. This will help keep it inside as an altered cat loses the drive to scour the neighborhood for a mate.



- Play with your cat daily. This will provide it with exercise and a way to put that hunting instinct to more positive use. In addition, it's a great way to bond with your feline friend.
- Provide a window seat. Kitty can both enjoy the sunshine and be entertained by looking out.
- Clean the litter box daily to eliminate odors.
- Provide scratching posts, toys, catnip, and potted cat grass, all of which enrich your cat's new environment.

## Improving Safety for Birds

- Place birdfeeders in a clearing. This enables birds to see any approaching cat.
- Don't feed the birds if you have trouble with feral or loose cats in your yard. Let them find food in a safer location.
- Watch for nestlings and fledgling birds. When a young bird leaves the nest it is very vulnerable. It may require a week or so before it can fly. This is the most important time to try to confine your cat. If you have an outdoor cat, try to take it inside during the winter so that it is used to being inside before nesting season.
- Make an outdoor enclosure for your cat. This way your cat gets to be outdoors and both cat and birds are safe.
- Only put your cat outside on a leash while you are watching it. Leashed cats can still catch birds or get tangled.
- Bells on a cat's collar do not ward off birds, who do not associate the ringing of a bell with danger.

**Visit the American Bird Conservancy's website to learn more about Cats Indoors! The Campaign for Safer Birds and Cats**

[www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org)

# Home Sweet Home Care

by Elizabeth Kriefalusi

I've participated in several volunteer activities for the WCSV since I joined in 2007, including animal care at the Center, event planning, and website maintenance. But by far the most rewarding experience for me has been squirrel home care. As I watch the orphans develop from babies with their eyes still closed, completely dependent on me for their food and care, to bushy-tailed juveniles racing around their cage and snatching a prime piece of apple away from one of their "siblings," I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to give these animals a second chance for a wild and healthy life.

The Center is currently looking to add more home care volunteers to our team so, if you or someone you know may be interested in joining us, here is some basic information about the job.

## What do home care volunteers do?

The biggest part of our job is feeding the squirrels. At first, they are given a specially designed formula (provided by the Center) that has the correct balance of nutrients for their growing bodies. We feed them using a small syringe with a nipple on the end to suck on. Volunteers generally have four to five squirrels in a group, so feedings take about 30-45 minutes on average.



The youngest squirrels are fed six times a day (about three hours apart). As they grow, we gradually reduce the number of formula feedings and supplement their diets with solid foods until they are fully weaned at about 9-10 weeks of age, depending on the species of squirrel. (Fox squirrels develop more slowly than Eastern or Western Grays.)

Another responsibility is to keep their cage clean, which simply involves removing old food and changing and washing the soiled t-shirts we use to line it.

We also monitor the animals' health and treat any medical conditions that arise. The most common one is diarrhea, but they also often come in dehydrated or have wounds that need treating, and they may occasionally develop other conditions such as pneumonia. The Center trains all volunteers on how to recognize symptoms and administer any necessary medications and there are many people available to help when we're not sure how to deal with a particular situation, including other volunteers, our home-team coordinator, and the Center's professional animal care staff. Volunteers also receive a copy of the squirrel care manual, which is an excellent resource for the most common situations we face.

Note: New volunteers start by working with older squirrels that have already been stabilized and display no serious health issues, so they can gradually ease into their new role.

## What is needed for volunteers to do squirrel home care?

Time. It's important to stick as closely as possible to the appropriate feeding schedule for their age. As mentioned earlier, this can be every

three hours for the youngest orphans. However, if your situation would only allow you to feed four times a day (e.g. you work but can come home for a noontime feeding) you may still be able to join the team. You would simply be given older squirrels to work with.

Depending on the age of the squirrels when you first get them, you may have them anywhere from four to eight weeks. If you need to go away for a short period during this time, we arrange for "babysitting" services with one of the other volunteers.

Space. One of our most important jobs as wildlife rehabilitators is reducing the stress on the animals, so volunteers need a quiet location in their home where the squirrels can be left alone between feedings. A separate room where you can close the door is best but, if you have a corner of a room that isn't heavily used, that may be acceptable as well.

Supplies. Most of the necessary supplies are provided by the Center. These include:

- Carriers and cages
- Bedding materials
- A heating pad to put partway under the cage (baby squirrels are not able to self-regulate their body heat)
- Formula
- Syringes and nipples
- Medication

Volunteers are asked to provide the following:

- Pedialyte® and Gatorade® for hydration (available at supermarkets and drugstores)
- Solid foods (leafy greens, fruits, and vegetables)
- A scale for tracking the squirrels' weight gain

Last, but definitely not least, volunteers need ENTHUSIASM. This is an exciting and rewarding position, but it does require a serious commitment, so we want people on the team who are ready to put in the time and energy needed to give each squirrel its best chance for a successful release.

## What are the steps to becoming a home care volunteer?

Home care volunteers must attend a WCSV orientation session and basic care class, just like every other animal care volunteer. They must then work five shifts at the Center (four hours each) so they can be trained on proper animal handling, feeding, and care techniques. During this time, the home care coordinator or another experienced volunteer will also spend some time mentoring you—going over the manual and answering any questions you have—to help prepare you for fostering your first group of squirrels.

For more information or to sign up for an orientation session, contact Jen at 408-929-9453 or e-mail [volunteer@wcsv.org](mailto:volunteer@wcsv.org).

We look forward to having you join our team!



## Beautifying the Center



Over 400 daffodils were planted at the Center by members of Junior Troop 60501 from the Girl Scouts of Northern California. The City of San Jose donated the bulbs as part of the “Beautify San Jose” program. Troop Leader Nora Segovia arrived with the girls on a cold December day and they were assisted by WCSV volunteer Cory Barfield who set them up and determined where to plant the bulbs. Daffodils do well without much care, so planting them in the natural setting just outside the Center will allow them to multiply, to be enjoyed by visitors and volunteers for years to come.

### Other Ways to Help the Squirrels

If you would like to help rehabilitate squirrels but you aren't able to do home care, here are three other ways you can make a difference:

**1. Host an outdoor enclosure.** If you have space in your yard, an enclosure allows the animals to get used to the outdoors and work on their squirrely skills in a safe environment prior to being released into the wild. They need to stay there about three to four weeks and you would be expected to provide solid food and clean water for them daily and change their bedding every couple of days.

**2. Provide a site for release.** We release many squirrels in parks around the area, but we can also release them in people's yards where the neighborhood has enough trees to provide food and nesting areas. If you think you have a suitable location, please let us know.

**3. Volunteer at the Center.** You can help feed and care for squirrels—as well as many other birds and mammals—by working one four-hour shift a week at the Center. To learn more, check out the Volunteer section on our website at [www.wcsv.org](http://www.wcsv.org) or send an e-mail to [volunteer@wcsv.org](mailto:volunteer@wcsv.org).

## In Nature, Mother Knows Best!

Every year, many kindhearted and well-intentioned members of our community bring us animals that would have been better off left alone. We call this situation over-rescue.



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Often when we see young birds or mammals floundering around on the ground, they look completely helpless and alone. In many cases, however, their mother is close by, gathering food or hiding because she senses a threat and is just waiting until it's safe to come out. That's why

sometimes the best thing to do is simply let her come back and take over, as she can provide the absolute best care for her young.

Recently a Morgan Hill man had the rare pleasure of seeing this maternal instinct in action as he watched a Fox squirrel rescue her five babies that had been moved by tree trimmers.

To read more of this wonderful story and learn how to recognize if an animal really needs our help, please visit our website.

**[www.wcsv.org/motherknowsbest](http://www.wcsv.org/motherknowsbest)**

You can also call our helpline to get advice from our trained staff and volunteers.

**408-929-WILD (9453)**

# 2008 Financial Overview

## INCOME

Overall, 2008 income for the WCSV declined about 2% from 2007 with donations and memberships, appeals, and events each falling between 20% and 25%. These decreases were largely offset by the income received from a single estate and higher investment income.

Service Revenues	\$128,553	34%
Donations and Memberships	67,120	17%
Appeals	40,431	11%
Events	20,559	5%
Grants and Estates	105,365	27%
Miscellaneous Income	10,552	3%
Investment Income	10,411	3%
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$382,991</b>	<b>100%</b>

The WCSV currently does not have an endowment fund. In lieu thereof, it has established a Contingency Reserve to fund periods when its expenses exceed its income. In 2008, \$130,000 was allocated to that Reserve and as of the end of 2008, the Reserve had a balance of \$300,000.

## EXPENSES

Expenses in 2008 declined some 15% from the prior year, with decreases occurring in both Support Services and Fundraising. Total Program Expenses rose 14%.

Programs-Wildlife Animal Care	\$125,820	59%
Programs-Education	29,566	14%
<b>Total Program Expenses</b>	<b>155,385</b>	<b>73%</b>
Support Services	46,008	21%
Fundraising	12,631	6%
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$214,024</b>	<b>100%</b>

**NET INCOME, before allocation to Contingency Reserve** \$168,967

**Allocation to Contingency Reserve** 130,000

**NET INCOME, after allocation to Contingency Reserve** \$38,967

## Feeding Wild Birds: The ABCs of Doing So Safely

*I value my garden more for being full of blackbirds than of cherries, and very frankly give them fruit for their songs.*

Joseph Addison (1672 - 1719), "The Spectator"

Are you one of the many Bay Area residents who includes bird seed or other bird-friendly food on your grocery shopping list? According to the National Audubon Society, more than 100 species of North American birds enjoy food from feeders—apparently, many of us take delight in attracting birds to our yards by providing food for them.

It's not difficult to set up a feeding station. It is essential, however, to observe a few guidelines in order to protect the birds' wellbeing. Keeping in mind the ABCs of good bird-feeding habits will help ensure good health for our feathered friends, and many hours of bird watching for you.

Avoid avian salmonella—it is one of a number of diseases affecting wild birds. According to information from the California Council of Wildlife Rehabilitators (CCWR), Bay Area songbirds experienced an outbreak of the disease in January 2009. The CCWR notes that "While Salmonella is a bacteria present in many species of wild animals, stress, overcrowding and unsanitary conditions can cause an overgrowth that can quickly become deadly to birds and can spread rapidly through songbird populations."



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It adds, "An epidemic can start when birds feed together at bird feeders, or when they use improperly-cleaned birdbaths." Understanding the cause is a first step toward prevention.

Become familiar with safe feeding practices, such as disinfecting bird feeders every two weeks, reconsidering or avoiding feeders made of wood, and using a large tray to collect and discard seed hulls. Placement of the feeder is also a consideration. It should be situated in a quiet area near trees or shrubs where the birds can take cover if a predator approaches.

Check out online resources for more information. The National Audubon Society offers a very comprehensive website. From their homepage, [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org), hover your computer's mouse over the menu bar labeled **Audubon at Home > Helping Birds and Wildlife > Basic Bird Feeding**. You may also want to review the information provided by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Their **Project Feeder Watch** page ([www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/AboutBirdsandFeeding/abtbirds\\_index.html](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/AboutBirdsandFeeding/abtbirds_index.html)) contains interesting program information as well as a link called **Safe Feeding Environment**.

# A Day in the Life of a Volunteer

by Michelle Thiebaud

*I wonder if they were once at the Wildlife Center,* I thought to myself as I saw two birds flying above me on my way to the Center. I didn't know what type of birds they were, but in time I'd learn. The thought was still with me as I started my evening shift.

When I first started at the Center, I jumped right in and started on whatever needed to be done. Experience has taught me that during the first ten minutes at the Center, it is best to get a sense of what needs to be done and when. It starts by asking questions of the volunteers who are finishing their shift, and assessing all the animals.

The status of the animals is posted on two boards. One board is for adult animals housed outside; it indicates what kind they are and which enclosures they are in. The other board is for animals kept inside and for those that have just arrived at the Center. These animals are typically young, injured and in need of medications or hourly feeding. There was a plethora of animals listed: raccoons, opossums, coyotes, foxes, squirrels, pigeons, ducks, doves, a skunk, a fawn and a hedgehog.

Once the animals' status is known, then the kitchen must be checked for food and formula to be prepared. Lastly, the laundry room is checked for bedding to be washed, dried or folded.

The plan was set, and started with feeding the animals. On this particular day, I concentrated on feeding squirrels while two other volunteers fed the other animals. The vast majority of animals inside were squirrels, some so young their eyes were not open and others that were close to going to the outside enclosures, soon to be released. I started with the babies, who needed hydration and received a formula which included Pedialyte®. They were in shoe boxes containing a t-shirt for bedding, and which were positioned halfway on a heating pad for warmth. Seeing the babies get nourishment from a syringe with a nipple was amazing. No matter how many times I had done it before, a sense of calm and fulfillment always flowed through me.



The older squirrels were in cages covered with a sheet and lined with t-shirts. Another shirt hanging from the top inside each cage provided simple nests. These squirrels were fed a formula with syringe and nipple since they were not old enough to self-feed. I had learned that when a squirrel can crack a nut, that is one indication that they are probably ready to be released back into the wild. When the squirrels were all fed, it was off to the kitchen to chop fruits and greens for the self-feeders.

Two hours had passed when I went to the front lobby to assist a woman dropping off an injured bird. I felt a shared bond with the woman when she handed me the box—she had care and compassion in her eyes. I brought the bird to the exam room to give it time to calm down before someone could examine it.

At that point, the cleaning could begin. First came the cages: providing clean t-shirts, fresh water and food in the cages of the self-feeders. After that I washed dishes, prepared formula for use by the morning shift, cleaned the kitchen, and did a few loads of laundry. I also assisted again in the front lobby and helped more people as they dropped off wildlife to the Center. Finally, I helped an Animal Care Supervisor as she examined the bird that had been dropped off earlier.

At the end of my shift, tired as I walked to my car, my heart filled with the sense of making a difference in a creature's life. I saw two ground squirrels scurry across my path. A smile crossed my face as I thought to myself, *I wonder if they were once at the Wildlife Center.*

## In Memoriam

Over the course of its 16-year history, the Wildlife Center has benefitted greatly from the time, talents and support of many exceptional individuals. Two such men who left their mark on the Center passed away recently, and we would like to remember them here.

### Spaulding Norris



Spaulding's love of animals was evident during much of his life. He travelled with his beloved therapy dog "Fella" to local homes for

elderly and disabled residents. Together with his late wife Gail, he volunteered with the wildlife department of the Humane Society in the late 1980s. In 1993, Spaulding was among those who founded the WCSV; he also played a critical role in obtaining both our first and current sites. Well-known in his San Jose neighborhood of 35 years and treasured by those of us at the Center, he will be sorely missed. Acting Executive Director Larry Stites says it well: "We continue his legacy and honor him with every animal we help."

### Dr. David Webb, DVM

Dr. David Webb was an indispensable resource to the Center's deer team, and we benefitted from his expertise for nearly seven years. Although he was a small-animal veterinarian (deer would normally be attended by a veterinarian with large-animal background), his first encounter with a fawn apparently won him over. He was an intelligent, caring man with a big heart, and he learned more about the deer he treated through his work with us and by asking questions of the team. He was also involved in discussions about the ways in which volunteers can provide assistance to deer, as well as the need to be somewhat guarded in helping these delicate but strong animals. Deer team member Dina Hawkins recalls, "He took the best care of the creatures he, in my opinion, had come to revere."

# Tracks



## Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley

A Rehabilitation, Release & Educational Facility

3027 Penitencia Creek Road • San Jose, CA 95132



## Jewels in Flight

May 9, 2009

11 am - 2 pm

At a private home in  
the San Jose foothills

Tickets: \$75



Please join us at our annual fundraiser that  
helps support our animal care programs.

To register or for more info:

408-929-9453 (929-WILD)

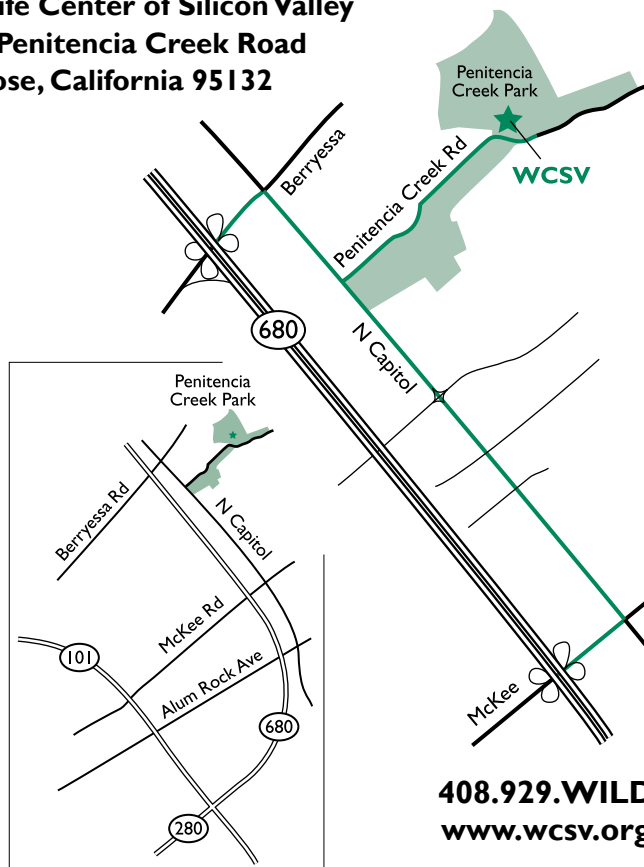
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WCSV is a leased facility of the Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department