High school students raise $2,300 for WCSV

Walk on the Wild Side brings WCSV to the public

Bobcat with broken leg is back on the prowl

Common misconceptions result in “over-rescue”
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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Director of Animal Care – Stephanie Ellis
Animal Care Assistant – Ashley Kinney
Layout and Design – Elizabeth Kricfalusi
Cover Photo by Elizabeth Kricfalusi

In 2009, the Center received 4,136 injured, sick and orphaned animals. For a complete breakdown of the species received, visit www.wcsv.org/patients.
October 17, 2009 was an especially “wild” day at the Center. That date was set aside for the WCSV’s annual Walk on the Wild Side open house. The gathering provided an opportunity for the community to learn more about the Center and the local wildlife it serves.

Joining the WCSV’s staff and volunteers were representatives from the Bay Area Amphibian and Reptile Society, California Bat Conservation Fund, San Jose’s Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services and Youth Science Institute.

Activities for children included decorating bird houses and making natural bird feeders from pine cones covered in peanut butter. Several educational animals were on hand, and special guest Smokey the Bear made an appearance much to the delight of the younger visitors.

To learn more about the organizations above, visit their websites:

- Bay Area Amphibian and Reptile Society (BAARS): www.baars.org
- California Bat Conservation Fund: www.californiabats.com
- San Jose’s Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services: www.sanjoseca.gov/prns
- Youth Science Institute (YSI): www.ysi-ca.org

The 2010 Walk on the Wild Side event has been tentatively scheduled for October 9th. Be sure to check the Center’s website as fall approaches, so you can save the date and join us this year.
Disabled Barn Owl
Defies Odds and Learns to Fly

When a wild bird is born with a wing deformity, the chance of it achieving strong enough flight skills for a successful life in the wild is only about 15%. Apparently no one told that to a special barn owl who arrived at the Center as a downy nestling in June 2009. After months of rehabilitation and careful training, the owl gained full flight and hunting capabilities and was released at Alum Rock Park on December 17.

Visit the Success Stories section of the WCSV website to learn more about this bird’s amazing story and see a video of his release!

And He Said It Couldn’t Be Done!

Bill Paker is a logical person. Those who have worked alongside him at the Center for more than 10 years know that he thinks ahead, plans well and then executes to the plan. For those reasons, it’s easy to take him at his word. On January 23rd however, a crew of 25 volunteers set out to prove him wrong.

Most of the enclosures around the WCSV’s main buildings required special attention prior to the start of busy season in mid-February. As the Center’s buildings and maintenance expert, Bill said the task was too much for one day. The volunteers who arrived on that cold, damp morning thought otherwise.

The schedule called for intensive work: making minor repairs, painting “duck boxes,” cleaning perches and planter boxes, tidying up a storage shed, then cleaning—and disinfecting—all the outdoor enclosures and improving the enrichment.*

Working alongside the Center’s own volunteers were Ms. Barbara McManus and Veterinary Assistant Program students from Western Career College. No time was wasted as everyone received directions and began their tasks. Stopping only for a lunch break of pizza, cookies and beverages, the students and volunteers set a productive pace and kept it. By late afternoon, the job was done.

No stranger to hard work himself, Bill was on hand all day to pitch in and to answer questions, locate tools and help direct the activities.

Those who know Bill have great respect for his skills and the dedication he brings to his work at the Center. When he makes a commitment, it’s understood that he’ll keep it. When he assesses a situation, he is taken at his word. On this one day, however, 25 hard-working volunteers were glad to prove him wrong.

*Enrichment in this context refers to materials or structures added to an enclosure to provide the animals with opportunities to learn or regain skills and behaviors that will be needed upon release such as climbing, perching, etc.
None of us knows what the future holds. It’s hard to think about. We do know that our precious wildlife needs to be protected or future generations won’t have it to appreciate. Won’t you please consider us in your will or trust? Your contribution can be a way to continue giving if you include WCSV in your will or estate plan. You can rest easy knowing that you’ve made a difference for the local animals!

### Bird Brains

**The Intelligence of Crows, Ravens, Magpies, and Jays**

by Candace Savage, Sierra Club Books

This publication is a coffee table book with substance. Its visual appeal is just a starting point. Amazing, colorful full-page photos are accompanied by informative text that covers the expected (such as nesting, feeding and breeding habits) as well as the unexpected (bereavement behaviors following the death of a mate, a surprising capacity for decision-making and for individual or group play). An appreciation of these intelligent creatures shines throughout.

Several asides in the margins of the book provide glimpses of historical and cultural beliefs about these birds, and thoughtful quotations precede each chapter. Originally published in 1995, it’s a must-have book for those who appreciate corvids—those birds that embody such an intriguing mix of style and substance.

### A Squirrel’s Tale

**by Elizabeth Kricfalusi**

I will always remember the squirrel now gracing the cover of this issue of Tracks. He was only a couple of weeks old, weighing a mere 37 grams, when San Jose resident Danny DeAnda found him in late July 2008, lying on the sidewalk of El Camino Real in Sunnyvale. “I was a little baffled when I found him in that strange place,” said Danny. “Was it a preemie rodent? Did it have rabies? Who do I call? When I saw his beating little heart, I knew I had to do something.”

Danny brought the squirrel into the Center, where I picked him up later that day to add to my existing group of babies. At that size, I was expecting to have him in home care for another 7-8 weeks before he was weaned and ready to move to an outdoor enclosure. However, his story ran a little longer than most.

For several weeks, the squirrel suffered from severe diarrhea, which meant I had to replace some of his formula feedings with hydrations, which provide essential nutrients but don’t include hard-to-digest fats. One result was that his skin grew faster than his body—at one point he was so wrinkly I referred to him as my “Sharpei Squirrel.”

I had another “runt of the litter” in my group, so I ended up keeping these two for an extra two weeks after their bigger brethren had moved outside. By late September, the little 37-grammer was now a healthy 279 grams, and was ready to join the others outside and work on the vital climbing and other skills he would need to survive back in the wild.

That day finally came on October 21st. The squirrel-team leader and I were taking several squirrels to a public park for their release. We were thrilled that Danny was able to join us so he could see the results of his compassion first-hand.

Normally when we open the carriers to set the squirrels free, they huddle in the back, unsure of what’s happening, then suddenly bound outside and simply disappear into the woods. Once again, though, this little guy was unique. He slowly came out of the carrier, looked up at us all and sauntered over to the nearest tree, where he climbed and posed for us for about 30 seconds before finally running off.

And Danny—whose own kind heart couldn’t help but respond to even an unrecognizable baby’s beating heart—no longer had any question about what kind of animal he had saved. That bushy tail disappearing into the woods made it perfectly clear.
Special Care for a Special Cat

by Kathleen Cahill

There was a special animal in our care this past winter. In early December, the Center received a beautiful yearling female bobcat. She was found limping along a road near Uvas Reservoir and brought to WCSV.

During the initial exam, staff members Stephanie Ellis and Ashley Kinney felt a fracture of her right rear leg. She was taken to Adobe Animal Hospital for a radiograph, where Dr. Curt Nakamura confirmed she had a fractured tibia. It was recommended that a plate be surgically inserted into her leg in order to permanently stabilize the fracture site.

Dr. Ryan Knoles, an orthopedic surgeon on staff at Adobe, very generously agreed to perform the surgery pro bono.

The surgery took place the following day, and was successful. The bobcat spent eight weeks on cage rest to ensure she did not move around while the fracture was healing. Once new radiographs confirmed her leg had healed, she was relocated outside to our predatory mammal enclosure which has plenty of dens and two running ponds. In that protected environment she was able to move around and gain strength. “She quickly adapted to the large enclosure,” said Stephanie. “She was running, jumping, climbing, hunting…it was fantastic!”

At the time she was brought in, the bobcat was eight to ten months old and had probably been independent of her mother for two months. This is the most dangerous time in a young cat’s life, as they are testing their ability to survive on their own.

Besides the fractured tibia and an infestation of ticks, fleas and chiggers, she was severely malnourished when she came to us, weighing only four pounds. (A bobcat that age should weigh 10 to 12 pounds.) For a week following the surgery, her emaciation was a greater concern than her fracture, which was healing well. She received fluid therapy as well as a special diet to treat the emaciation.

Bobcats are extremely rare patients at WCSV, so treating this animal provided us with the opportunity to expand our knowledge about this species. Said Ashley, “I learned so much about the natural history of the bobcat, and did a great deal of research to find the best possible diet for rehabilitating a malnourished bobcat.”

As a result of the Center’s efforts, Dr. Knoles expressed great satisfaction with the medical care this cat received at WCSV.

Staff and volunteer interaction with the animal was minimal, as bobcats are easily stressed and very aggressive. The enclosure was only visited briefly for cleaning and setting out fresh food and water. Volunteers did not look directly at the bobcat nor speak when around her. This reduced level of interaction benefited the animal by helping her retain a natural wariness of people.

Once she was healthy enough to be released, the Center staff chose a date and location when the weather would be warm enough and there would be enough food available to help the cat make a successful transition back into her natural environment.

On Friday, March 26th, after nearly four months of rehabilitation, specialists from WCSV and the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority (OSA) released the bobcat at dusk at the nearly 4,000-acre Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve in the Santa Cruz Mountains.
WCSV would like to thank Dr. Curt Nakamura and Dr. Ryan Knoles at Adobe Animal Hospital in Los Altos for their professional services, including performing the bobcat’s surgery pro bono.

On Friday, March 26th, after nearly four months of rehabilitation, the bobcat was released at Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

More photos from the release, as well as a video of the happy event, are available on the WCSV website at www.wcsv.org/injured-bobcat.
2009 Financial Overview

### INCOME

While the WCSV’s overall income for 2009 declined about 31% from 2008, this was due primarily to less income from grants and estates, which can vary widely from year to year. Excluding that source of income, receipts were down about 6%. Approximately one-half of this drop was from lower private donations with the remaining one-half resulting from a delay in the receipt of some service fees. The 3% reduction in private donations in 2009 was considerably less than the reduction that occurred in 2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service Revenues</td>
<td>$107,816</td>
<td>41%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donations and Memberships</td>
<td>60,376</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeals</td>
<td>46,815</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>25,398</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants and Estates</td>
<td>3,827</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Income</td>
<td>9,749</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment Income</td>
<td>11,097</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL INCOME</strong></td>
<td><strong>$265,078</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### EXPENSES

Expenses in 2009 rose some 18% from the prior year, with a 33% rise in Program Expenses, virtually all of which resulted from greater personnel costs. Both Support Services and Fundraising declined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programs-Wildlife Animal Care</td>
<td>$181,653</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs-Education</td>
<td>24,492</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Program Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>206,145</strong></td>
<td><strong>82%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Services</td>
<td>36,898</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>9,939</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td><strong>$252,982</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### NET INCOME, before allocation to Contingency Reserve

$12,096

#### Allocation to Contingency Reserve

0

#### NET INCOME, after allocation to Contingency Reserve

$12,096

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 2009, there was no additional amount allocated to that Reserve and as of the end of 2009, the Reserve’s balance remained at $300,000.

Shout Out to PG&E

It’s easy to talk about doing the right thing; it’s often more difficult to actually do it. PG&E is one company that is “walking the walk.” With their wide-ranging commitment to a sustainable environment, they actively promote—by words and deeds—their dedication to a cleaner and greener future for the communities in which they operate.

Their Charitable Contributions Program is a good example. For 2009 the company’s goal was to contribute $19 million to nonprofit organizations; past recipients include groups focused on community, arts and culture, education, economic development, environmental stewardship and more. For the second year in a row, the Wildlife Center was among the fortunate recipients. The Center received a $500 grant from Pacific Gas and Electric Company for general operating expenses.

PG&E first contacted the WCSV in 2008 to request information on how best to deal with nesting birds where projects were planned or underway. This concern was consistent with the company’s Avian Protection Plan which “seeks to protect migratory, threatened and endangered birds from these risks, while improving safety and reliability for our customers.” Well-qualified to provide information, the Center was very pleased to be able to assist.

The WCSV gratefully acknowledges the support of Pacific Gas and Electric Company as valuable partners involved in the protection of the valley’s wildlife. Information about the company’s commitment to this important work can be found at www.pge.com/about.

Learn more about the Avian Protection Plan at www.pge.com/about/environment/pge/stewardship/protectingbirds

Wildlife Hotline

If you find a wild animal that needs assistance, secure it in a well-ventilated, paper towel-lined box and place it in a warm, dark and quiet place. Call the Center for advice. Trained staff and volunteers can assess the situation and determine what course of action to take. Please do not feed or handle the animal; every species has different dietary requirements and giving the wrong food can be detrimental.

**408-929-WILD**

Help the Environment:
Please Recycle
This Newsletter
Debunking Some Myths About Bats  
Source: Dana Leong

Ever since she saw “The Bat Lady” on the Tonight Show in the 1960s, Dana Leong wanted to work with bats.

When she joined the Wildlife Center in 2000, she hoped to see a few bats but not many were brought in. Several years later at a WCSV Open House, the California Bat Conservation Fund set up an educational booth. As Dana recalls it, “I was instantly hooked.” In order to work with bats brought to the Center, Dana obtained the required rabies vaccine, a series of three injections.

Once she was fully prepared, Dana began working with bats, learning more about them in the process. Noting the abundance of myths surrounding these mysterious creatures, she has provided the following facts for Tracks readers.

- “Rabies in bats are relatively rare,” Dana says. “Unlike dogs, when bats get rabies they become paralyzed. So the bat on the ground that isn’t moving is the most likely to have rabies.”
- Of the approximately 1,100 species of bats found globally, only three are vampire bats. These bats feed on the blood of mammals or birds. These bats feed on the blood of mammals or birds.
- The old saying “Blind as a bat” isn’t accurate. As Dana explains, “Bats see very well, but their eyes are sensitive to light because they are nocturnal and do their hunting at night.”
- Contrary to popular belief, bats do not generally land on a person’s head or become tangled in their hair. “Bats use sonar to locate their prey. They can detect and avoid a human hair. So much for getting tangled in your hair!”
- Bats are very beneficial to the environment. Micro bats are insectivores; several sources report that they can eat over 600 mosquitoes an hour. Mega bats include fruit in their diet, and their guano can re-seed their natural habitats.

In the Bay Area there are at least 13 species of bats, all micro bats. For those who come across a downed or injured bat, Dana cautions not to touch it under any circumstances. “Call us at the Wildlife Center,” she advises. Additional information can be found on the Center’s website; see the Bat link on the Coexisting page.

Creatures of myth and mystery, bats continue to fascinate people even as they play their part in the global scheme. As Dana would tell you, “The next time you go out to your mosquito-free yard at night, thank a bat!”

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Wish List

Your help in acquiring these items would be greatly appreciated. Remember your generous donations are tax deductible.

**Equipment**
- Intel® Pentium® 4 or newer computers or laptops
- Flat screen monitors
- Portable generator
- Heating pads (no automatic shut-off)
- Heat lamps
- Digital weighing scales
- Baby bird incubators
- Pedal garbage cans
- River Rock
- Pea gravel
- Gift cards (even partially used!) – Safeway, Home Depot, Office Max, Staples, Orchard Supply, Costco, or any credit card company

**Basics**
- Facial tissues, unscented
- Toilet paper, unscented
- Paper towels
- 33-gallon garbage bags
- Bleach, unscented
- Laundry detergent (HE only), unscented
- Distilled water
- Science Diet Feline Maintenance dry cat food
- Wild bird or finch seed
- Plain millet
- Raw peanuts (in shell), unsalted
- Walnuts (in shell or chopped)
- Fresh/frozen whole smelt
Milpitas High School Students Raise $2,300 for WCSV

On Friday, February 19th, the L.I.F.E. club (Liberated Individuals For the Environment) at Milpitas High School hosted a fundraiser to benefit the WCSV. The event was a roaring success, selling more than 230 tickets and raising $2,300 for the Center!

The event included a pasta feed, entertainment provided by local musicians and dancers and a silent auction of several ceramic pieces, including one donated by Bay Area artist Jeff Albrecht.

Thanks to sponsors Crunch Catering, Marie Callender’s, Safeway, Savemart, and Nob Hill for their contributions to the event and to everyone who attended.

And a very special thank you to Milpitas High seniors Diane Tran and Laverne Nguyen for all their hard work organizing this fun evening. Diane, who volunteers at the Center and is planning a pre-law program with an emphasis on environmental studies and political science, says the group chose the Wildlife Center as the beneficiary because “L.I.F.E. club’s mission is to ‘conserve the environment while educating within our community.’ The WCSV’s mission goes right along with ours in conserving wildlife, a huge part of the environment.” She’s not through helping out either. “I thought the event turned out great. It was very fun but next time it will be bigger and better!”

Environmentally Friendly Gardening

by Margaret Hu

We’ve all dreamed of it—the perfect garden: roses arrayed in neat columns, freshly trimmed lawns and shrubbery without a villainous bug in sight. But what are the secrets to achieving one? Extensive use of pesticides, exorbitant watering, and a strict clipping regimen—all of which are detrimental to the environment in the long run. There are alternatives, however. You can maintain an environmentally friendly garden without sacrificing aesthetics.

Here are some tips for eco-friendly gardening:

Go native. Native plants are inherently adapted to the climate and soil conditions of their region, which means much less maintenance in terms of supplementary watering and use of pesticides/fertilizers.

Compost. Using compost is an easy and natural way to bring nutrients into your soil while reducing the amount of waste going into landfills. Begin creating compost by mixing vegetation high in both nitrogen and carbon in compost bins: rotted vegetation such as leaves, grass cuttings, fruit and vegetable peelings and even shredded newspapers.

Xeriscape! Landscaping that uses native or drought-tolerant plants helps to minimize water use. Try cacti, agave, and ornamental grasses; cheddar pinks, lavender and the multi-colored lantana also bring vibrant colors into the garden.

Rethink the “perfect lawn.” According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), lawns use up 30% to 60% of urban fresh water each year. Reduce your lawn area to lower water consumption and waste produced by mowing. Ditch the automatic sprinkler, watering only when your plants need it—and slash your water bill. Cultivating a variety of plants in place of plain grass also offers shelter and food for wildlife while improving the overall look of your garden.

Love them bugs. The good ones, anyway. Introduce beneficial insects such as ladybugs, honeybees and spiders to serve as “natural pesticides.” Avoid inorganic pesticides and herbicides whenever possible.

Welcome wildlife! Planting native plant species attracts wildlife, which is the easiest and most natural way to maintain a beautiful and eco-friendly garden. Build bird feeders and birdhouses and leave out nuts for squirrels.
When Normal Seems Abnormal—
Common Misconceptions About Wildlife

by Jen Constantin

Each year as the Bay Area weather turns even more beautiful and wildlife activity begins to peak, we see common trends in phone calls and animals brought into the Wildlife Center for care. Because animal mothers (and fathers) know best, we want to avoid over-rescues at all cost, and to prevent any wildlife problems before they start. Here are a few of the most common misconceptions about wildlife in the spring and summer months:

Misconception #1: A baby bird on the ground—with most or all of its feathers—has been abandoned by its parents and needs to be rushed to the nearest rehabilitation center.

Reality: Having all or most feathers developed means that this bird is a fledgling and must spend some time on the ground in order to finish development. A vast majority of the time, at least the mother is nearby keeping a close watch on the situation and waiting for the safest moment to come down and feed her still-dependent offspring. Some species (like American crows) spend up to nine days on the ground until it’s time to fly. So what’s the best thing to do in these cases? Watch carefully from a distance (inside your home if possible) for forty-five minutes to one hour and you should see an adult come down to feed the fledgling.

Misconception #2: If you’ve touched a baby bird to put it back in the nest, the mother will reject it due to the foreign scent.

Reality: Most birds (with the exceptions of Turkey vultures and a few others) lack a developed sense of smell. There could be other reasons behind possible rejection by the mother based on the condition of the young bird itself, but it won’t be due to your scent on the bird.

Misconception #3: A lone spotted fawn must have been abandoned by its mother.

Reality: Female deer typically leave their dependent young alone for several hours at a time to go off and forage on their own, then return to the same area to be reunited. If the fawn is quiet, this is more than likely the situation. What should you do? Never try to approach the young animal and certainly never touch it or offer food. If the fawn is drawing attention to itself by vocalizing loudly, please call the WCSV and our Deer Team will be happy to assess the situation.

Misconception #4: American crows or other birds are “dive bombing” when my pets or my family enter the yard; there must be something wrong with them.

Reality: These birds are simply doing everything they can to keep their babies safe from potential predators, by flying low and trying to scare off anything that gets too close. This behavior will cease as soon as their young have left the nest. Crows in particular are very social birds and have strong familial bonds. Even siblings and extended family help to care for and protect the babies.

Other helpful seasonal tips to avoid wildlife problems before they start:

1. Carefully examine the outside of your home for small openings, unsecured grates, etc., since birds and other animals are looking for safe places to raise their young. Take care to wildlife-proof these areas after making sure there aren’t any unwanted guests.
2. Be sure to keep pet food picked up and inside (far away from pet doors, too!) and wildlife-proof garbage cans that must be left outside.
3. Keep pet doors securely closed at night to avoid allowing any unwanted, opportunistic visitors inside.
4. Fallen bird seed and ripe fallen fruit can attract wildlife, so if you aren’t keen on having a variety of wildlife in your yard, be sure to keep these items picked up, too.

In the event of any of these scenarios or others, please do not hesitate to call the Wildlife Center with your questions. We’re here to help!
Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley
A Rehabilitation, Release & Educational Facility
3027 Penitencia Creek Road • San Jose, CA 95132

Find more Center highlights including news, photos and success stories on our website and Facebook page.

www.wcsv.org
www.wcsv.org/facebook

How to Contact Us
Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley
3027 Penitencia Creek Road
San Jose, California 95132

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