



Shooting Wildlife is Not the Answer!

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The Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley has experienced an abnormal volume of wildlife falling victim to pellet guns. Over the past four weeks WCSV has received over 10 cases of animals shot with pellets. Species include Peregrine Falcon, American Crows, Herring Gull, Eastern Fox Squirrel and multiple Rock Pigeons; all except the Peregrine Falcon, came from different areas in the Silicon Valley.

Whenever we receive a patient that has been shot, we have to wonder why. It's difficult to understand why someone would go to such an extreme measure and intentionally harm or kill a wild animal. Why can't they see that each animal plays a vital role within its ecosystem? While there are often underlying "nuisance" issues at play, the real question is: Will shooting them really solve the problem?? The answer is **NO!** Ironically, when people attempt to control wildlife populations, or simply remove one individual at a time, there are always unforeseen and adverse effects including overpopulation of certain species. These animals do not exist within a vacuum - what we do to one effects the whole - so we must do all we can to protect our native wildlife.

Over the years human's encroachment in rural areas is having a negative effect towards wildlife; causing wild animals to disperse and seek shelter in places where we generally do not think wildlife can thrive, meaning we are witnessing large populations of many different species in our own backyards. The removal of these animals by any means including shooting will not solve any wildlife problems. These animals are opportunistic - attracted to our living spaces simply because we are providing means for their survival in a variety of ways. So what is the solution you ask? Sustainable, long-lasting solutions are humane deterrents that will get at the root of the problem rather than only temporarily covering it up.

Let's take a moment to imagine the life of a Cooper's hawk. As a Cooper's hawk, your natural diet is birds. This is the food you need to eat and feed to your young to survive. You see some feathered prey walking around in a small-open area, and you think "SCORE! Easy meal!" You start to take flight towards what happens to be a chicken coop and all of a sudden...**BANG!!** You feel sharp, hot pain and fall to the ground unable to fly or move at all. You are left to die because you were searching for food, and the food you found was easy to get to.



Peregrine falcon with shattered humerus due to pellet shot.



Rock Pigeon with metal opacity in keel

Does not seem right does it?

Before you think about shooting an animal because it appears to be a "nuisance," let's try to solve the real issue at hand - why is this animal coming into your yard? What is it attracted to?

The information below contains humane deterrent options for species we've treated recently. If you have questions about these or any others, please call or visit our website.

Common reasons crows are shot:

1. Destroying gardens
2. Overpopulations in certain neighborhoods
3. Loud!

Preventative measures to take:

1. Block or limit access to any food in your yard, including access to garbage.
2. Use hot pepper spray and/or motion censored sprinklers in areas where crows are pecking at the ground.
3. Place scare crow in larger garden plots that you can move around frequently (daily).
4. Sudden loud noises at irregular intervals may help keep large flocks from getting too comfortable.

Common reasons raptors are shot:

1. Protecting chicken/pigeon coops, dogs and small livestock

Preventative measures to take:

1. Dog runs for small dogs that have to be outside unattended
2. Chicken or pigeon coops reinforced with “double-wall”—these coops have at least an inch gap between the external hardware cloth barrier and the second internal hardware cloth barrier to keep birds safe if a predator with long, sharp talons tries to reach a bird inside the coop.

Common reasons Band-tailed Pigeons and Rock Pigeons are shot:

1. Overpopulated areas
2. Large accumulation of feces
3. Roosting on homes/sheds

Preventative measures to take:

1. Do not provide a source of food (including cat food)
2. Create barriers: slides, bird spikes, and proper fencing can help keep pigeons from populating a variety of areas
 - a. Resources: www.birdbarrier.com and www.birdbgone.com

Common reasons squirrels are shot:

1. Destroying gardens
2. Overpopulations
3. Chewing on housing structure, wires and fencing

Preventative measures to take:

1. Chewing/Eating/Digging deterrents
 - a. **Create barriers:** Enclosing the wire in PVC pipe or flexible steel conduit; create “cage” out of hardware cloth to protect small plants; wrap base of tree in sheet metal.
 - b. **Taste Aversion:** Hot Pepper Spray—recipe found at www.wcsv.org
 - c. **DO NOT provide food**
 - i. Keep bird feeders out of area, or make sure that no seed is falling and squirrels can't access them
 - ii. Pick up ripe fallen fruit
 - iii. Avoid handouts to any wildlife
 - iv. Use barriers and hot pepper spray to keep them from eating garden items in your yard

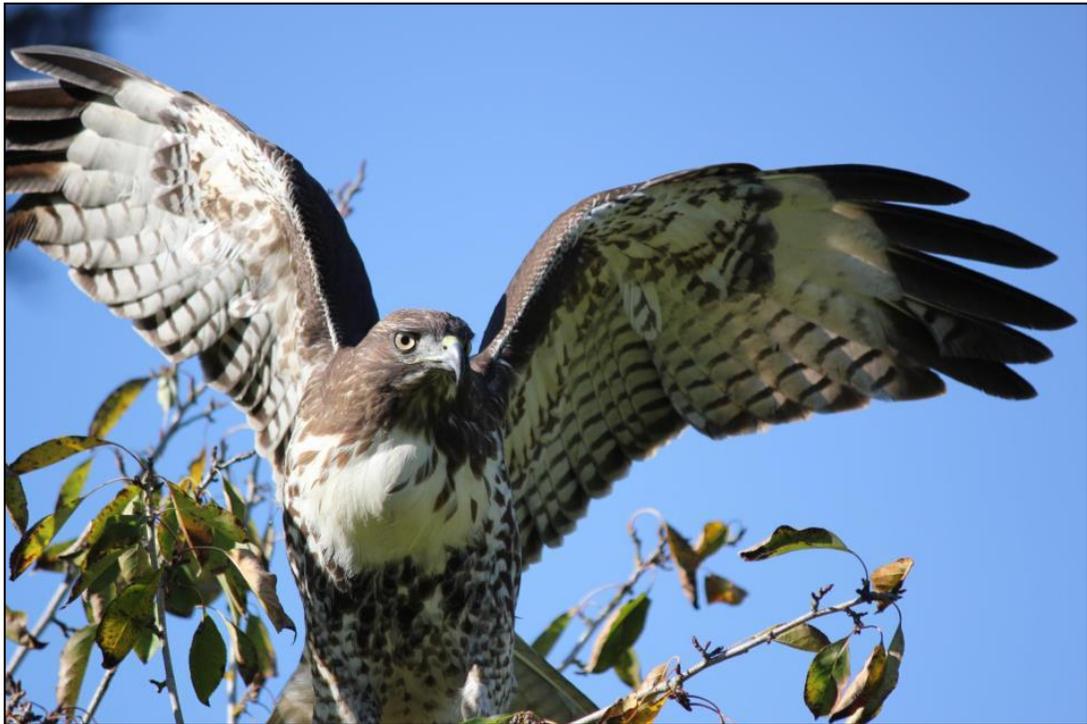


Red-shouldered hawk with metal opacity in right shoulder

The Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley encourages everyone to take a step back and appreciate the wildlife that surrounds us. Learn to enjoy the intelligent American Crow roosting in your neighborhood, watch the Peregrine Falcon dive at 200 miles per hour, and learn to laugh about gulls arguing with one another over food. These animals are all different and wonderful in their own ways, and each species is vital to the ecosystem. The WCSV would like to help discourage illegal shootings of our local wildlife and help you understand that ***there are other options!***

Remember: Shooting native wildlife is against the law! Native animals are protected under state and federal laws. Shooting or killing a wild animal without possessing appropriate permits can and will lead to fines and or jail time.

Take a stand today!! Please join the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley and help stop illegal shooting of local wildlife! If you witness someone shooting wildlife in your neighborhood please do not hesitate to call local law enforcement and or animal control agencies. Together we can make a difference!



For more information visit our website at www.wcsv.org or call 408-929-WILD