

Dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation and release of Southern California's sick, injured and orphaned wildlife



Photos by Jeff Hall



(Above) A Northern Elephant Seal pup rehabilitated by CWC's Marine Program emerges from the back of the boat that brought her to Santa Rosa Island. (Left) All seals receive an exit exam prior to their release to ensure they are healthy and prepared for their return to the wild. (Below) After quickly surveying her surroundings the seal jumps into the ocean for the first time in over two months.



Return to the Pacific

Northern Elephant Seals released near Channel Islands

By Marine Program Manager Jeff Hall

Waves crash along the side of the high-speed catamaran as we cruise across the Santa Barbara Channel to Santa Rosa Island. Two very special passengers are onboard the Island Explorer, a pair of Northern Elephant Seal pups. Rescued, rehabilitated, and now, ready to be released by California Wildlife Center's (CWC) Marine Program, the two seals were patients at the Center for just over two months. During that time the seals gained nearly 100 pounds each on a diet of herring, first in the form of a "fish smoothie" then as whole fish. CWC's marine mammal rehabilitation facility, now in its second year, was first built in response to the Unusual Mortality Event (UME)

declared by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in 2013. Effects of the UME continue to be felt and CWC's Marine Mammal Rescue (MMR) Team has rescued over 180 seals and sea lions so far this year. Theories vary widely as to the origin of last year's UME, everything from global



Photo by Jeff Hall

Without turning back this Northern Elephant Seal pup swims swiftly out of sight. A two-hour trip by boat on the Island Explorer brought two seal pups, CWC Marine Program Manager Jeff Hall and Marine Program intern Amanda Gnerlic, to a Marine Protected Area off of Santa Rosa Island.

warming, pollution, and radiation poisoning have been tossed around as potential causes. However the official preliminary report from NMFS states that the likely cause was a "change in the availability of sea lion prey, especially sardines, a high value food source for nursing mothers" (source: NOAA Fisheries 2013 California Sea Lion Unusual Mortality Event in California).

Island Packers, located in Ventura Harbor, provides free transport for our seals and two handlers. Passengers peered curiously at the transport crates on the back of the catamaran. After hikers and campers disembarked onto Santa Rosa Island, the last disembarkation of the day was ready to happen. In a Marine Protected Area (MPA) on the northwest side of the island two more Northern Elephant Seal pups were returned to the wild, healthy and prepared for their new home.

Inside: New staff members help with ever increasing number of animals & Preview CWC's annual fundraiser The Wild Brunch: Call of the Wild

From Our Board of Directors

By CWC Board President Victoria Harris

I started volunteering with CWC in June of 2000. That year the Center took in 884 animals. It's hard to believe that last year we took in 4,701 wildlife patients. In a perfect world where everyone treasured and respected the environment and our wild neighbors there would be no need for a place like California Wildlife Center. Through education people would learn to appreciate our wild neighbors and the value they provide, but we're not there yet.

We say goodbye to Marcella Bell, our Executive Director, who welcomed baby Emerson Rose into the world in March as she and husband Josh return to Portland to begin life closer to family.

The Wild Brunch committee is working to make this year's annual fundraiser the best ever! Look for details on our website and check out the preview in this issue!

A special thank you to the estate of
Billie N. Tyrrell for their very generous donation.

CWC Takes Center Court



Photo courtesy Los Angeles Lakers

CWC Board Member Nikki Lafferty accepts the Lakers Youth Foundation Award before a game at Staples Center

CWC won a \$5,000 grant from the Lakers Youth Foundation, thanks to hundreds of online supporters who voted on the YOU Grant website. The YOU Grant is awarded monthly to local organizations in a variety of fields. Several other organizations were also in attendance for the ceremony that was held just before a Lakers game at Staples Center. CWC Board Member Nikki Lafferty was on hand to accept the award and represent CWC to the thousands of fans in attendance. CWC actively searches out grant funding opportunities to continue the incredibly important work completed here of rescuing, rehabilitating and releasing native California wildlife.

There's a First Time for Everything



Photo by Victoria Harris

This Ferruginous Hawk appears to have been kept as a pet.

The Ferruginous Hawk is an uncommon site anywhere in the state of California, and is the first of its kind admitted to CWC. Found at Malibu Golf Course it is believed to be an illegally kept falconry bird. This determination was made due to the animal's unusual behavior and trimmed claws. CWC worked with local falconers to place the three-year-old bird in a setting where it will be properly cared for.

Preview This Year's Wild Brunch: Call of the Wild

CWC's annual fundraiser is setting up for the largest event in the Center's history on Sunday September 14

By CWC Board President Victoria Harris

Every year our team at CWC strives to make our annual fundraiser "The Wild Brunch" even better than the last. Well this year we believe we're doing just that! We're bringing back event favorites like the "Kid's Zone", and our popular psychics and healers will be there to amaze. Your favorite restaurants, wineries, margarita bars will be there plus some new great taste treats from first-time participants like Nikita and Casa Escobar.

Our live and silent auctions are legendary – and this year we have outdone ourselves! Our live auction includes trips to the Galapagos islands (Natural Habitat Adventures), India (Aman Resorts), the popular Villa Pantai in Bali, South African safaris, Waldorf Amsterdam & London (Hilton Hotels & Resorts), and more! Our silent auction will have a new section called "Unique Experiences". Like what you ask? How about a paddle board and paddle board lesson with the legendary surfer Laird Hamilton? Or ride the Zamboni before a King's game, and spend time in the penalty box with friends! Or a local tide pool adventure led by Heal

the Bay's own Marine & Coastal Scientist Dana Murray! Or a trip to visit a Meerkat Sanctuary! A weekend trip to Napa Valley including hotel, and food and wine pairings at Consentino Winery!

Grab a friend and order your tickets online now – with limited capacity we've sold out every year! See you soon.



Capture amazing wildlife scenes like this Cheeta in South Africa by bidding on our live auction trips. There are also vacations to Bali, the Galapagos Islands and unique experiences like a paddle board lesson with surf legend Laird Hamilton!

Photo by Victoria Harris

New Hires Bring Help for Increasing Workload

New staff hired to help with rise in patients admitted to Animal Care Hospital and rescues by Marine Program

By CWC Board Vice President Julie Gluck, Marine Program Manager Jeff Hall, and Hospital Manager Jo Joseph

California Wildlife Center has hired a few new people, both full-time and part-time, to help with the increase in rescues and rehabilitation. Samantha Harrison is our new seasonal part-time Animal Care Coordinator and Bruna Valentine is our new full-time Animal Care Coordinator. You may see both of them around the center answering phone calls or preparing diets for any of our hundreds of patients. Michael McGehee is the Marine Department's new part-time seasonal Assistant Marine Mammal Coordinator, conducting beach rescues of marine mammals, or helping in our Elephant Seal Enclosure with the daily feeds. Each of these new staff members come to us with varied backgrounds, but the one thing that brings them all together is their passion for wildlife!

Samantha Harrison

Recently graduating from California State University – Northridge with a major in education and sustainability, Samantha has been a volunteer at CWC for a number of years. Samantha's favorite thing to do at CWC is "leading the tours and encouraging our youth to be wildlife warriors" she stated. A lover of otters because they are "just so cute", Samantha also enjoys hiking, going to the beach, and spending time with her family. In the future Samantha hopes to continue using her educational background by working with "children and animals, educating how best to coexist."

Bruna Valentine

Bruna started volunteering at CWC as an intern during the summer of 2008. Her favorite part of her internship was the fact that it was so hands-on. She was impressed by the staff's willingness to allow interns to work in the same capacity as staff. "It was great to feel that the Center trusted us so much. It made me feel important and excited to learn more" Bruna said. A native Brazilian, Bruna received her degree in Biological Sciences from Santa Catarina Federal University before moving to the United States in 2011. Each day is different at CWC but Bruna's favorite part about work is intakes from the public. "Intakes are always fun because each case is different and it's always a surprise" she stated.

Michael McGehee

Michael has been a volunteer at CWC since 2004. During that time he has enjoyed the hands-on experience of working with wildlife. "My volunteer teammates became some of my closest friends and made every weekend an adventure" he said. While CWC was experiencing unprecedented numbers of marine mammal strandings in the spring of 2013 during the Unusual Mortality Event, Michael volunteered nearly 30 hours per week to assist staff in rescue and transport of hundreds of California Sea Lions. In the future Michael hopes that CWC will find a bigger home to accommodate the growing number of patients. "We are in a prime position to educate kids about the wildlife around them" he commented. "I relish the chance to educate people on the beach about protecting marine mammals. As important as our work is to rescue the injured or sick animals, it is equally important to inform the public about how human interactions affect coastal wildlife. As a staff member, I get to spread the word daily."



Photo by Jeff Hall

Bruna Valentine, Michael McGehee and Samantha Harrison are pleased to join CWC.

Abandoned Home for Wildlife

By Marine Program Manager Jeff Hall

Sometimes it's easy to forget that wildlife is all around you. In the middle of Los Angeles animals have adapted and evolved to coexist with humans, even if humans haven't done the best to coexist with them. Sparrows, opossums, raccoons, hawks, squirrels and skunks all have a secure, if sometimes unwanted, place in urban environments.

On a recent trip to Northern California for some camping and sightseeing, I discovered first-hand how wildlife and the environment can take back what humans leave behind. About 20 miles east of Interstate 5 in Kern County I came across an abandoned house while on my way to Kern National Wildlife Refuge. I quickly became more interested in this dilapidated find than I did with the refuge just down the road. Looking behind broken doors and under floorboards I discovered how wildlife had made this house their home.

I discovered two Barn Owl nests, one with two nestlings nearing their fledging stage, in different areas of the house in heating ducts. I probably would have missed them, they were well hidden and deep in the metal tubing, if it weren't for the huge piles of owl pellets under each nest. Owls eat their prey, bones and fur, and regurgitate what can't be digested in the form of a large pellet. I found mostly mouse and rat bones in the few pellets I inspected.



Photo by Jeff Hall

This abandoned house in Kern County provided Wild Times Editor and Marine Program Manager Jeff Hall the opportunity to do some unconventional wildlife viewing.

An enormous nest of Honey Bees had also colonized inside the walls of the house. What was once the kitchen seemed to hum, the inside of the walls teeming with thousands of bees. These important pollinators were content to go about their business inside and outside of the house while allowing me undisturbed access to every room.

Many other animals made that abandoned house their home, even if I didn't see them directly. Feces found in the kitchen and in large holes in the living room told me that Virginia Opossums and Raccoons frequent the locale, but most likely at night. A House Finch nest behind a light switch and Fence Lizards on the window sills rounded out my wildlife viewing.

Never forget how close wildlife is to you in your everyday life. Also, never forget how quickly nature and wildlife will take back what once was theirs when given even the briefest opportunity.

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CWC is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.
We do not receive any local, state or federal
funding. Please make a donation today!
Tax ID # 95-4580790



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Fading Bobcat Syndrome

Number of Bobcats sickened by unknown cause increase at CWC

By Director of Animal Care Dr. Duane Tom

The past few years there's been a dramatic increase in the number of emaciated sickly-looking Bobcats. Though there are several theories, the originating cause is still unknown. One thought is that anticoagulant rodenticides may play some role, but while a recent study showed that significant percentage have been exposed to anticoagulant rodenticides, felids tend to be much more resistant to its effects than other animals. Other thoughts are something infectious, perhaps viral (FIV, FeLV) or bacterial (Toxoplasmosis). Some think it might be associated with the recent droughts and accompanying shortages of food, but of the ones that don't survive; they always have feces in their intestinal tract.

With the cause unknown, all we can do is call it a "syndrome". The signs of this syndrome increase in severity over time. The animals are emaciated, dehydrated, hypothermic and hypoglycemic. Sometimes infested by external parasites (mange, ticks, fleas) or intestinal parasites (roundworms), but other times insignificantly so. We've broken it down into four stages of progression:

Stage 1: People first start to notice a bobcat, which by itself is unusual as they are usually secretive and rarely seen during the day.

Stage 2: Over time people see the animal more often, sunning itself during the day and disappearing as the sun sets. The animal does not retreat until actually approached.

Stage 3: Eventually the animal seems unmindful of people and can be easily netted, but still resists once caught.

Stage 4: The animal seems oblivious to what is going on around it. Often it can be just picked up and put in a crate without any struggle.



In an attempt to find what might be affecting them and ways we might be able to treat them, we are conducting more research. It does seem to be reversible! In the past 2 months we have attempted to catch 8 of these animals, successfully catching 4 with only one surviving, which was recently released back at the Adamson House in Malibu.

An increase in the number of Bobcats admitted to CWC's Animal Care Hospital seems to be caused by an as of yet unknown disease.

Photo by Kim Barker