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CENTER

Wild Times

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



Cedar Waxwings migrate to Southern California and the Gulf states from the northern United States and Canada during cold winter months.



This Yellow-rumped Warbler was brought to CWC from Santa Monica. It suffered a scapular fracture after being caught by a cat, an all too common occurrence.

Annual Migration Brings Rare Species

Backyard birdwatching in winter and fall months

By Hospital Manager Jo Joseph

Migration is a fascinating annual occurrence whereby some species of birds make long distance journeys from one location to another in order to find food as the seasons change. Fall is the time of year when birds are migrating from their breeding grounds (summer) to their non-breeding grounds (winter). Right now there are many species that can be seen in your backyard and in birding hotspots like the LA River basin, Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve, and local beaches.

The greater Los Angeles area not only provides multiple layover areas in which birds can rest during their journey but is also the end point for some birds migrating south.

At the end of summer we say goodbye to insect eaters like Cliff Swallows, Hooded Orioles, and Black-headed Grosbeaks as they travel down to Central and South America for the winter months. And we welcome a plethora of Western Grebes, Northern Shovelers, and Western Tanager.



Photos by Jeff Hall

The Sharp-shinned Hawk is one of the smallest hawk species, no bigger than a dove.

In your backyard be on the lookout for small songbirds like Yellow-rumped Warblers, Cedar Waxwings, Fox Sparrows, and White-crowned Sparrows, all who spend the winter in this region. You may also be lucky enough to see the tiny, dove-sized Sharp-shinned Hawk!

My favorite birds to see are the ones you can only see during migration. They don't spend any more time in this area than absolutely necessary, stopping in on their journeys to or from somewhere else. The most exciting one this season is the Yellow-breasted Chat we are currently rehabilitating. Sadly this bird was caught by a free roaming cat and sustained serious injuries to its wing. It is really important to keep cats indoors all year long. Over a billion birds a year die as a result of injuries from free roaming house cats. The massive amount of outdoor cats has caused a decline in native songbird species.

It's really important this time of year to be on the lookout for migrating songbirds that may be injured. California Wildlife Center (CWC) treats many of these birds each year. They can succumb to migratory exhaustion which can make them more vulnerable to human-caused injuries such as window strikes and attacks by free roaming house cats. It's always a good idea to keep your cats indoors year-round to prevent attacks that cause serious injury and death, and place decals or other decorations in your windows to prevent birds from striking windows.

Inside: A one-eyed owl gets a second shot at life in the wild and...
Find out what CWC staff members do during the winter season

What Do You Do During the “Slow Season”?

CWC staff members take time for personal projects and hobbies during fall and winter months

Busy is a relative term here at CWC. There is never a time where we aren't busy, so our “slow season” should actually be called our “slower than usual season”. From the months of November through January the number of animals taken in to the Animal Care Hospital and rescued by the Marine Mammal Response Team drop compared to the number of animals rescued and rehabilitated during the spring and summer months. During this time CWC staff members have the time to work on some personal projects and hobbies. Here's what a few of them like to do:

Jenn Guess - Animal Care Coordinator



Photo by Brian Touhy

Members of the band Blue Lights are Noel Carlon, Dave Mau, CWC Animal Care Coordinator Jenn Guess, and Andy Singer.

During the winter I try to spend as much time as possible working on music with my band, Blue Lights. Since the days are shorter here at CWC, there is extra time after work to focus on writing new songs and going over our current material. My band and I are active all year round, but we make the most progress during the winter. Currently we are scheduled to start recording our EP in January.

Denys Hemen - Facilities Manager

Winter is my favorite time to watch all the waterfowl that has migrated in for the season. By far my favorite spot is Bolsa Chica. It is a birding winter wonderland in Huntington Beach right by the ocean. There are many small inlets that offer a great view of all the wildlife and excellent trails. Buffleheads, American Wigeons, Northern Shovelers, Blue-winged Teals, Pied-billed Grebes, Eared Grebes and many others are present this time of year. The usual year round species are present also. Look up and you are guaranteed to see American Kestrels and Northern Harriers flying around. The Great Blue Herons love to hang out on top of large eucalyptus trees while they squabble over the best roosting spots. Peer into the trees next to the water and you might see 4 or 5 Black-Crowned Night Herons crouching down in the same tree trying to not be noticed. But when I go, it has to be on a Sunday because Saturday is reserved for my next favorite thing, Auburn Football. War Eagle!

Jeff Hall - Marine Program Manager

I love to travel. Two of my favorite words are “road trip”! I love a road trip with no time frame and no clear destination, just a vague sense of direction and an adventurous spirit. Half the fun is getting there! Each year I take a road trip up to San Luis Obispo (SLO) county for some camping and sightseeing. There is so much beautiful country in California it's impossible to take it all in. I've been visiting SLO for years and still manage to find new scenic areas to explore. One of my favorite destinations is the Northern Elephant Seal rookery just past Hearst Castle.



Photo by Jeff Hall

Northern Elephant Seals haul out on the beach by the hundreds at a rookery in San Luis Obispo County California.

Each year hundreds of seals converge on a short stretch of beach to give birth and mate. It is a sight to be seen! Any time of year is good for seeing Northern Elephant Seals at this rookery, but the best time is December and January. That is when the large males, which can grow to over 4,000 pounds, take over the beach and fight each other for the best location and most females to mate with. The battles can be epic. In January and February pups fill the beaches and their squawking calls for their mothers are deafening. There are also opportunities to see Southern Sea Otters, Pacific Harbor Seals and the always popular California Sea Lion. Viewing marine mammals in this way is rare and I encourage everyone to make the trip up there at least once in their lives. Remember, all you have to do is say “road trip” and I'll join you!

Jonsie Ross - Asst. Marine Mammal Coordinator



Photo courtesy Jonsie Ross

Asst. Marine Mammal Coordinator Jonsie Ross with her dog Bailey in Towsley Canyon, Santa Clarita.

What I love to do during the winter season is to go hiking with my family and dogs. This time of year it's nice and cool outside in Santa Clarita where I live. Family time together is always very important. But best of all in the winter there's no rattlesnakes to deal with so I can take all my dogs, kids and husband out on the trails and just focus on having fun as a family and not search the ground in front of us for “rattlers”.

Jo Joseph - Hospital Manager

My favorite winter activity is birding! So many species migrate down here from up north so it's fun to see a different set of species at this time of year. It's most fun to see the variety of ducks and other water birds. I also love to hike and camp during the fall and winter when it's not so hot out.

Mike Remski - Marine Mammal Rehab Manager

The fall and winter seasons at CWC are when animal care comes to a halt around the elephant seal enclosure. With the pen empty, I try to take advantage of a little extra time to work on other projects and hobbies. The big side project for me this year is the re-articulation of an adult male California Sea Lion skeleton. This is being done at the Marine Mammal Care Center (MMCC) at Ft. MacArthur. The staff at MMCC was kind enough to let me try my hand at bone articulation using one of their formerly deceased patient's remains. It is a very time consuming project, but well worth it. Reconstructing the animal has given me a crash course on anatomy and an understanding of how sea lion bones and joints move and interact with each other while the animal walks, swims or lies down. The last finishing touches are now being assembled, and within the next couple of months I hope to unveil the finished skeleton as it takes its final resting place in the classroom at MMCC for future students to learn from and to appreciate.

Ask Dr. Tom

Wildlife with contagious diseases

By Director of Animal Care Dr. Duane Tom, DVM

Some of our volunteers, particularly those working in ICU or RVU this year likely have noticed “Contagious” signs on the cages of some of our hawks. Early this year we got in a Red-tailed Hawk with bright green urates (normally a chalky white). Tests came back positive for the disease Psittacosis. This provided an opportunity for one of our past interns, Leah Pomerantz, to do her senior research fellowship on the subject. While she is currently still in the process of writing it up, our preliminary findings showed 11% (6 of the 54 post fledgling birds) were infected and shedding the bacteria. Once we started treatment, those birds stopped shedding within a week.

Psittacosis is also known as Chlamydiosis, Ornithosis or Parrot Fever. It is caused by the bacteria, *Chlamydia psittaci* (formerly *Chlamydia psittaci*). It causes respiratory signs in birds, such as eye and nasal irritation or discharge and dyspnea as well as anorexia, depression, diarrhea and dehydration. It is spread to other animals in their droppings and other secretions. In people it generally causes fever, cough and pneumonia.

You may have seen us taking swabs of the bird’s choana (the slit in the



Photo by Duane Tom

Many different species of wildlife, such as this Red-tailed Hawk, are susceptible to infectious diseases that are transmittable to humans.

roof of their mouth) and cloaca (the back end exit). We send these swabs in for PCR testing which is the best diagnostic tool to detect DNA of the bacteria to see it is actually shedding.

It is a disease of particular concern due to its zoonotic potential and previous outbreaks. Diagnosis of the disease must be reported within 48 hours. Those birds that are infected and shedding are mandated to be treated with the antibiotic Doxycycline for 1 month and thereafter have a negative test before stopping their treatment.

Whenever I bring up the subject of Chlamydiosis with some of my colleagues, I commonly hear how they had diagnosed a bird with the disease and how when one of their technicians happened to become ill for some reason, they would go to their physician to get a precautionary test. They explain how they had been working with a bird that was diagnosed with Chlamydiosis and want to make sure that there are not actually infected. When their physician writes up a test panel to have them checked for venereal diseases, they have to tell them, “not THAT Chlymidia!”

My Alaska Adventure

From Anchorage to Los Angeles in five days

By Volunteer Claudia Herrera and Marine Program Manager Jeff Hall

CWC volunteer Claudia Herrera and her husband made a trek across the Yukon and viewed much wildlife along the way.

How long did your trip from Anchorage to Los Angeles take?

It was 3,550 miles and it took 5 days.

What was the best part of your adventure?

The road trip was part moving-out-of-Alaska and part mini-vacation. It was an opportunity to experience the Yukon and British Columbia.



Photo by Claudia Herrera

Young Big Horn Sheep spotted south of Muncho Lake, British Columbia along Toad River.

The best part was experiencing the Canadian Rockies. The mountains went on forever. The wildlife was a treat especially the Bison. They were so much fun to watch. We had to keep distance as they can be quite aggressive.

What other wildlife did you see along the way?

We saw many American Crows and Common Ravens, Bald Eagles, an Arctic Fox and lots of Moose.

Would you do this same drive again?

Yes we would. We plan to do it again someday when we can allocate more time.



Photo by Claudia Herrera

Bison gather around Watson Lake in Yukon Territory along the Alaska-Canadian Highway.

Coastal Cleanup Day 2014

Hundreds of pounds of trash collected from Zuma Beach

By Marine Program Manager Jeff Hall

Each year thousands of pounds of trash collect on Los Angeles County beaches. The source of trash is litter brought to the beaches from storm drains during winter runoff, trash left behind by people visiting the



Photo by Dana Hallagan

Marine Program Manager Jeff Hall gives safety talks to volunteers at this year's Coastal Cleanup Day.

beaches, and other sources such as shipping and fishing debris. Coastal Cleanup Day (CCD) is a one day worldwide event held to draw attention to the health of our beaches and waterways. CWC hosts the Zuma Beach location each year and this year was one of the most attended cleanup days we've ever seen! Over 380 people showed up to do one thing, clean the beach! With reusable buckets in hand the volunteers set



Photo by Dana Hallagan

Volunteers line up to receive supplies and Data Cards which help track what types of trash are being collected. The most common type of trash is cigarette butts.

Do your part by picking up after yourself after visiting public spaces, and pick up one piece of trash that isn't yours.

By The Numbers - CCD 2014 Facts

Distance Covered: 1.5 Miles

Number of Volunteers: 382

Weight of Trash and Recyclables Collected: 355 Pounds

Most Trash Collected by One Volunteer: 45 Pounds

Most Unusual Item Found: Full Six-pack of Beer

Most Common Item Collected: Cigarette Butts

One-eyed Owl Spots Freedom

Injured Great-horned Owl faces world without one eye but with new lease on life thanks to dedicated staff and volunteers

By Director of Animal Care Dr. Duane Tom, DVM

Did you know that the natural predator of skunks is the Great Horned Owl? In the beginning of September we actually got one that had been skunked! Along with the stench, it also appears that it turns their feathering a dark reddish orange. This (presumptive) male appeared as if he might have gotten sprayed in the face and then crashed into something, causing head trauma and severe damage to the left eye.

We tried medically treating his eye for a couple weeks, hoping he could recover his vision. As time went on, we could finally get a good view of what was going on within the eye and it became apparent that he would



Photo by Julie Ellerton

The left eye of this Great Horned Owl was severely injured and no longer functional.

not be able to see out of it again. As well, there was likely nerve or soft tissue damage around the outer eye and his cornea began to ulcerate.

Because owls greatly rely on their sense of hearing in hunting prey, we give these birds a chance to see how they adapt to having just one eye. We perform a procedure called, an "Evisceration", which is removing all the contents of the eye itself, but leaving the protective boney globe in order to retain conformation of the head. Doing so is believed to help retain their normal hearing orientation for locating prey.

After his surgery he recovered in ICU, also needed a second touch-up surgery about a week later. While recuperating in the hospital, he got a visit from Mary Tafi, one of the people who rescued him along with her class of first-graders from Our Lady of Malibu School, who sent him a "Get Well" booklet with heart-felt drawings.

The area soon healed and he was finally able to go out to a flight enclosure, much to the delight of his care-givers who had to medicate him, as he was likely the most bitey owl we have ever dealt with. While conditioning his flying, he continued to do well outside, except he was not very keen on having a roommate. He would persistently show signs of aggression towards another Great Horned Owl that was moved out with him. When we noticed him attacking the other owl we had to give him an enclosure all to himself.

On November 1st, we took him back to his home for release just as the sun had set. It was a big event, attended by the rescuer's family, friends and students. We were pleased to have Ms. Tafi have the pleasure of releasing him. It was a touching moment for all as he flew off into the twilight sky.

Coyotes Released Back to the Wild

On a crisp October morning five Coyotes rehabilitated by CWC were released back to their native environment near Tujunga California. After being brought to CWC for a variety of maladies the animals were healthy and large enough to return to the wild!



Staff and volunteers transport the Coyotes in crates covered with sheets to the release site. The sheets help minimize stress on the animals during transport.



Photos by Kim Barker

(Left) Racing out of the transport crates the Coyotes are ready to enjoy their freedom. (Above) Exploring their new territory these Coyotes will explore together as a pack before breaking off to form new packs or joining others.

Don't Throw Trash in Your Bed

Overlooked ways trash enters the environment

By Marine Program Manager Jeff Hall

Road rage can start from any little mistake made on the road. I've witnessed seemingly unflappable people fly into madness when someone switched lanes without blinking. I am a fairly calm driver but sometimes people need to be reminded that they are driving like an idiot with a gentle beep from my car horn that happens to last for 22 seconds. There are few things that really grind my gears while I'm in the car, but one of them has to be people who throw trash in their bed. I'm not talking about your Sealy Tempurpedic with 600 thread-count Egyptian cotton sheets. I'm talking about throwing trash in the bed of your truck



Photo by Jeff Hall

Trash in the back of a truck can easily fly out and become litter with a gust of wind.

with the misguided notion that some sort of magical force vacuum surrounds the back of your Ford F150 and keeps turbulent air from affecting the Doritos bag you have back there. Unfortunately there is no magical force vacuum that surrounds the back of truck. The cab of a pickup can actually create turbulence that drives wind gusts into the bed of a truck and carry trash out onto the streets. I see this happen nearly every day and I have no idea how many hundreds of pounds of trash this translates into after a year. I do know how trash affects wildlife. Entanglements in trash are a frequent occurrence at CWC and many animals are admitted to our Animal Care Hospital each year with plastic bags wrapped around beaks, plastic tubing stuck around legs, fishing line preventing flight, and ingestion of plastic or other items. These types of injuries are particularly infuriating, it ignites a type of rage in me not unlike road rage. These types of injuries are completely preventable, if only the simple act of picking-up-after-yourself was followed by everyone. One way to start is by following my new Rule for the Road: "Don't Throw Trash In Your Bed!"

35

The number of marine mammals CWC has rescued since 2010 that were affected by entanglements due to trash, fish nets or hooks.

The Wild Brunch: Call of the Wild Update

Raising funds for wildlife rehabilitation and entertaining at the same time

By Administrative and Database Assistant Karoline Carlman

Those who attended were part of a sell-out crowd of 500+ guests who, for the eighth year, enjoyed the setting at Gull's Way estate overlooking the Pacific. Highlights this year included "Compassionate Cuisine" featuring gourmet vegetarian cuisine from fabulous local restaurants, wine-tasting courtesy of eight vintners from Southern California, delicious baked goods and two margarita bars! Children enjoyed face painting, interactive activities, up close and personal encounters with wildlife from Brockett's Film Fauna, as well as art instruction with Bobbie Rich and crafts with The Wilderness Institute!



Photo by Marshall Thompson

The Wild Brunch attendees look over silent auction items that included once-in-a-lifetime vacations, jewelry, art and more.

Guests had over 250 items to choose from in our amazing silent auction, and several were lucky enough to win trips to South Africa, Bali and a surf lesson with Laird Hamilton during our exciting live auction.

The crowning feature of The Wild Brunch was the release of a Cooper's Hawk that had been rehabilitated by CWC. As he soared gracefully up into the sky, each guest witnessed the true purpose of the Center's mission: to rescue, rehabilitate and release



Photo by Marshall Thompson

Celebrity guests included film and TV star Shannon Doherty, along with her husband celebrity and fashion photographer Kurt Iswarienko, and CWC Board Member Dr. Lisa Newell,

imperiled wildlife. I can't say that the crows resting in a nearby tree were equally as happy to have a new neighbor!

Our board, staff and wonderful volunteers look forward to this signature event every year because we get to personally thank all our supporters, share the strides we have made over the years in improving patient care, and talk together about our plans for the future. These future plans include continuing to provide rehabilitative care for Northern Elephant



Photo by Marshall Thompson

Kids and adults had the opportunity to interact with wildlife thanks to Brockett's Film Fauna which is dedicated to the respectful and responsible use of animals in the film industry. Here an animal handler shows off a rambunctious Raccoon that has appeared in numerous commercials, film and TV shows.



Photo by Marshall Thompson

Bids went into the thousands of dollars during the festive live auction.



Photo by Kim Barker

The highlight of The Wild Brunch is always the release of a rehabilitated CWC patient. Here Director of Animal Care Dr. Duane Tom (Right) prepares a Cooper's Hawk for release, assisted by Kurt Iswarienko who won the opportunity to release the hawk.

CWC's 2014 Top Ten List

Hundreds of species cared for each year

CWC admits over 180 different species of animals a year. That is unique among rehabilitation facilities because most specialize in one class of animals (birds, mammals, etc.). Even more specialize among classes (marine mammals, raptors, etc.). CWC has gained experience caring for a vast array of species. Here is a list of our top ten most common patients with total rescued this year (current as of October 2014).

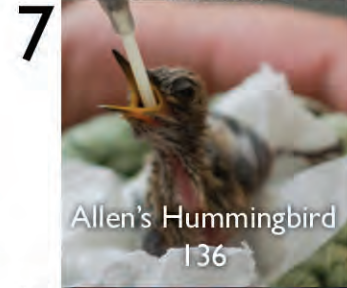
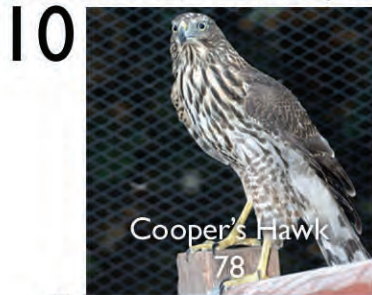


Photo credit:
10 - CWC Staff; 9, 3, 2, 1 - Jeff Hall; 8, 7, 6, 5, 4 - Kim Barker

This list is only for our Animal Care Hospital and does not include animals rescued and rehabilitated by our Marine Department. So far this year our Marine Mammal Response Team has rescued 173 California Sea Lions, two Pacific Harbor Seals, 24 Northern Elephant Seals, and one Northern Fur Seal.

From CT to CA

New CWC staff member travels cross country

By Administrative and Database Assistant Karoline Carlman

Growing up in Connecticut, my sisters and I worked as animal caretakers for the local Audubon Society. There, we befriended the animal rehabilitator who became our primary contact person for all of our questions about the injured birds and animals that found a way into our lives. We learned early, for example, how to spot a fledgling, and to leave them alone – they were usually just in the process of learning how to fly.

We had pets – small rodents and bunnies (not dust bunnies!) and dogs and ponies and a horse; I learned a lot about the care and attention that animals deserve while I was growing up in Glastonbury.

Through all of my formative years, I never visited California. Everyone on the East coast knows three things about California: earthquakes, forest fires, and, well, traffic. So, I kept clear of the West coast and traveled south or east – all the way to England and Poland and Lithuania, but eventually, finally, I found my way to California, and...I loved it.

When my family visited California in March of 2014, we were inspired to move away from the cold, snow, and ice in Connecticut.

The adventure of moving across the country came with the very real need to find a job. Along with sunshine and palm trees, I quickly realized that life in Los Angeles involved lots and lots of concrete - a far cry from the rural Connecticut life I had left behind.

Life in the big city left me hoping for time close to nature. I submitted my resume to the California Wildlife Center in the hope that I could once again spend time closer to nature and work for a non-profit that was helping to preserve California's animal life. I was delighted to come to work for the CWC, and every day is an adventure.

Life in the big city left me hoping for time close to nature.

I have been blessed to come in contact with animals that I didn't even know existed. The eared grebes that have recently come through the center for rehabilitation are lovely, and I've been lucky enough to capture some nice photos of the patients here. Most amazing to me, however, have been the elephant seals I briefly encountered during my first weeks at the center.

In one way, my new life working at the CWC is a far cry from living in cold Connecticut, but in another way, being surrounded by animals and fun co-workers, it feels just like home.

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Your contribution will provide critical care for wildlife in need.
Visit www.cawildlife.org for information on donating and volunteering.

Wild Times

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Five Fawns Find Freedom

Mule Deer fawns released after successful rehabilitation

Five Mule Deer fawns rehabilitated by California Wildlife Center (CWC) were given a "soft release" this fall. A soft release is when an animal is given supplemental food and shelter for a period of time while having access to their natural habitat. The length of time the food and shelter is provided varies by species, and the fawns continued to visit CWC's Fawntasia Enclosure for approximately two weeks until they felt comfortable enough to venture away on their own.



Photos by Kim Barker

Mule Deer fawns rehabilitated by California Wildlife Center's animal care staff and volunteers are successfully released into the Santa Monica Mountains.

www.cawildlife.org