



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

Wild Times

Celebrating the Newly-Rebuilt Marine Mammal Enclosures

by Heather Henderson, Stranding Coordinator

On January 11, 2018 honored guests, staff, volunteers, and our first California sea lion pup patient of the season all gathered to officially unveil the new and improved marine mammal rehabilitation enclosures.

We were fortunate to be joined by longtime CWC supporters, actress Shannen Doherty and Malibu City Councilmember Jefferson "Zuma Jay" Wagner. The entire project was made possible with funds from the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation. Mike Remski, Marine Mammal Program Manager, shared CWC's rehabilitation and response history and details about why this rebuild had become a necessity.

Highlights of the new enclosures include additional drainage with sloping floors, a loading dock that provides access to the vehicles, and enhanced slip-proof entrance stairs.



Ribbon Cutting, Jennifer Brent (left), Shannen Doherty and "Zuma Jay" Wagner
Photo by Harry Vamos



2018's first sea lion patient
Photo by Heather Henderson

Finally, a redesign of the filtration system will enhance water quality during the busy season. The structure is built above ground, creating the perfect space for a seascape mural, donated and painted by former volunteer and friend of CWC, Ann Jin Chiu.

Throughout the presentation, the first sea lion pup of the season propped herself in the center enclosure, eyes closed and head held high. This body posture is generally displayed by sea lion patients as their health improves, suggesting that they are responding to care, and it is always wonderful to observe. While she was aware of the activity occurring in front of the enclosure, watching her behave in a natural manner is also a delightful sight, since our goal is to nurture these wild instincts. It was a great reminder of why the enclosure is so sorely needed.

Inside: Rabbit Rescued from Fire Returns to Wild, Birds of Australia, Leaving a Legacy for Wildlife, Owl Rescued from Soccer Net & more!

Rabbit Rescued from Fire Returns to the Wild

by Heather Patrice Brown, Development Coordinator



Exam of the burnt tissue on the rabbit's ears
Photo by Alyssa Shlange

Rabbit after surgery
Photo by Jamie Pelayo

This fall, when terrible wildfires ravaged the Southern California landscape, there came a spark of hope. A video went viral of a young man rescuing a wild rabbit from the flames of the Thomas Fire. The rabbit was initially brought to a local animal hospital and was then transferred to California Wildlife Center for care on December 6th.

The rabbit had suffered serious burns to her ears and toes, minor burns to her lips and singed fur all over her body. She was given pain relief and a quiet place to recover from shock. At first, she was not very active. There were concerns that she might have internal injuries from the fire as well as the obvious burns.

After two days, she began to perk up and eat again. The burn areas on her feet began to scab over, which was a sign of healing, but the burned tissue on her ears began to die. Dr. Duane Tom surgically removed the dead tissue from her ears. The overall shape of her ears did not change, so her hearing was not impacted. Dr. Tom also removed some dead tissue from her outside toes, and she was still able to hop and get around.

The rabbit continued to recover and was transferred to a larger enclosure at the house of home care volunteer, Julie Gluck, for rehabilitation. Her appetite and activity level continued to increase. Her wounds healed well, and she was given a clean bill of health for release. On January 17th, she was released in Ventura. While she couldn't be returned to her exact location because of the fire's deforestation, she was released in a nearby area that had plenty of food, water and shelter. After a moment's hesitation, the rabbit leapt out of the cage and quickly made her way to the cover of nearby bushes. The rabbit's recovery from her horrible ordeal was a bright spot of hope amid the devastation of the fires.



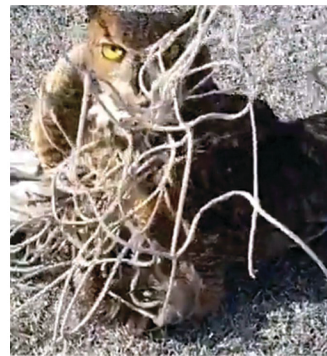
Rabbit returns to wild
Photo by Heather Patrice Brown

Owl Rescued from Soccer Net

by Jennifer Brent, Executive Director

The day after Christmas we received an urgent call from the folks over at Chaminade College Prep in West Hills. They had found a Great Horned Owl caught in their soccer net. Students started to cut him free but were concerned about handling the owl. We were able to send Heather Henderson from the Marine Mammal rescue team to try to rescue the trapped bird. Throughout the rescue, the owl was calm and relaxed, but once she was completely separated from the netting, she regained her normally wild demeanor.

Heather transferred her to our hospital for our vet to check for injuries. The owl had suffered abrasions to a few toes on her left foot and perhaps a minor injury to her wing. X-rays revealed no actual signs of breakage, and she was confined to cage rest for a few days because of the duration and extent of her entanglement in the netting.



Owl in soccer net
Photo by Fernando Romero



Owl being examined by CWC staff
Photo by Jennifer Brent

We did a test flight with the owl in one of our fully enclosed outdoor flight pens, and she soared! Volunteer Corby Sandberg, who brought the Great Horned Owl back to West Hills for release, said, "It was an uplifting experience...carrying the box with the owl in it felt light as a feather. When I opened the box and tipped it on its side — after some long pauses and curious wide-eyed looks around, it didn't walk out, it swooped out without even a running start!"

Thanks again to the alert and caring students at Chaminade and to our volunteers who are able to assist with returning these wild creatures back where they belong.



Squirrel
Photo By Anne Slattery

Sponsor an Animal

Do you love wildlife or know someone who does? Sponsoring an animal is a great way to support wildlife and CWC. There are eight species to choose from. You or your gift recipient will receive a certificate, fact sheet, and photo. You also have the option to add a plush replica of your sponsored species. To learn more or to "Sponsor an Animal" today, visit <http://cawildlife.org/ways-to-support-us/sponsor-an-animal/>

Avian Conservation in Australia: Doing it Right

by Jennifer Brent, Executive Director

During our recent slow season, I was fortunate to be able to spend a week at Heron Island in the Great Barrier Reef. As well as being a nesting spot for Loggerhead and Green Turtles, Heron Island is home to a wide variety of bird species. At certain points in the year, as many as 100,000 birds can be found on this tiny 72-acre island. The sight, sound and smell of so many birds was amazing—even for someone used to seeing birds close up. Egrets, gulls, sea eagles, doves, rails, terns, cormorants, cuckoos and, of course, herons are all over the island and easily viewed.



The Black Noddy
Photo by Jennifer Brent

In December when I was there, the black noddy was nesting. There seemed to be thousands in the trees, creating unique nests made of leaves in every nook and cranny of every Pisonia Grandis tree. This tree, also known as the "Grand Devil's-Claws" has sticky berries that grow at the same time as the birds are nesting.

As well as providing a nesting spot for the birds, the tree was also the birds' mortal enemy. Every day, we would see black noddies covered with berries and sticks from the tree. The noddies would start with just a few sticks, and then grounded, quickly be covered with the sticky substances from the tree. Unable to pull them off, the birds quickly perished from starvation and their bodies littered the island floor. We were cautioned by the naturalists on the island to not interfere with the wildlife and the natural cycle of life where we were the interlopers.

Seeing the visitors' respect for the animals and the instructions of the naturalists on island was truly impressive. There was only one occasion when humans interfered with animals — a nesting female Loggerhead Turtle had gotten lost and swum into the salt water pool instead of the ocean, 50 feet away. She was quickly relocated back to the sand.



Victims of the Pisonia Grandis Tree
Photo by Jennifer Brent

The reverence and respect that Australians show to their native animals is unlike anything I've seen elsewhere in the world. They have seen first-hand the devastation caused by the introduction of non-native species on their flora and fauna and want to preserve their natural habitat as much as possible.

Leaving a Legacy for Wildlife



Richard Zamora
Photo Courtesy of Rebecca Wierda

We recently received a bequest from well-respected attorney, Richard "Rick" Zamora (1964-2016). Rick split his time between El Paso, TX and Venice, CA and had a thriving practice in Texas. Rick passed away suddenly on November 29th but his legacy lives on. Through his bequest to California Wildlife Center, thousands of imperiled wildlife will receive the care they need for a second chance at life.

Rick supported the protection of many endangered species and once said "When we speak for animals — it makes it easier for others to do the same." He rescued two domestic rabbits that the owner was going to release to the wild. Realizing they would not survive, this kind and caring man took in the two fortunate animals and gave them run of his house. He also helped rehabilitate another domestic rabbit with a broken back.

Rick was described by this family as being someone who stood up for the underdog and who felt a great deal of compassion for animals in need. Consistent with his life, Rick wanted to his legacy to help animals. He even stipulated that the military gun collection he left his nephews never be used for hunting or to harm animals. His family described him as very deliberate and desiring the most impact for his dollar when helping animals.

We are grateful to Rick for his gift that will continue to help the animals in need at CWC.

Thank you to Rebecca Wierda for sharing her brother's story with us.

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CWC's Gull Patients: An Earful

by Melissa Hartman, Administrative Assistant

*O*f the animal patients we see at CWC, the gull is not the most universally well-regarded. Say the word *seagulls* to the average person, and you may elicit revulsion. Or indifference. Or resignation, as in, *I should have known better than to leave my kale chips unattended while I took that dip in the surf.*

Or you may get a blank stare followed by this clapback: *Dude, there are, like, no actual birds known as seagulls!*

Say...what?

It may or may not surprise those born before the "Me Decade" of the 1970s that one of the era's bestsellers was, of all things, a moral fable about a philosophical gull intent on seeking a higher purpose in life. The book's effect on, like, actual enlightenment is a discussion fit for another forum; however, Jonathan Livingston Seagull practically assured that the moniker "seagull" is pretty much used describe any of the 44 types of gull species found worldwide, including twenty-eight types of gull species found in North America.



Heermann's Gull
Photo by Jamie Pelayo

Fortunately, the concerned members of the public who alerted us to the circumstances of the 93 gull patients seen in 2017 were free from any such prejudices, pedantic or philosophical, and wanted to do all they could on behalf of these birds!

Of the seven species seen last year at CWC, 68 were Western Gulls, nineteen were California Gulls, and the rest were the locally-less-populous species of Bonaparte's, Heermann's, Herring, Ring-billed and Sabine's Gulls. These birds were admitted for a variety of reasons: broken bones, fishing line and other plastic entanglements, oiling, pellet shot.

While some presented with injuries too complex or too old to allow for rehabilitation, approximately half were transferred after treatment to a partner agency, San Pedro's International Bird Rescue, to continue their journey of healing. We are grateful to those area residents who cared enough to bring our attention to these patients who needed our help!