



# Wild Times

Winter 2018

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

## California Wildlife Center in the Woolsey Fire

by Jennifer Brent, Executive Director

On Thursday November 8th, around 3pm, one of our California Wildlife Center employees let us know that he had heard on the radio that there was a wildfire. We called our local fire station and they said that the fire was a very long way away and it was unlikely that we would be affected. Nevertheless, we took the proactive approach and removed some of the most expensive surgical equipment and reviewed our emergency procedures in case we needed to evacuate.

At 2am on Friday November 9th, two of our staff who live in Westlake Village called me, advising that they had received a mandatory evacuation order.. At that point, I made the decision to evacuate the animals out. Given the speed and unpredictability of the winds, we thought it best to move all of our patients from the facility while we still could.

By 3am, three of us gathered at the Albertson's parking lot, just off of the 101 at Las Virgenes. We were not alone. In fact, we were surprised to see many RVs, boats, and more cars than we'd ever seen before in the lot. We set off to California Wildlife Center immediately.

Once we arrived at the Center, we were struck by the silence and the stars, which were shining bright above us—no signs of smoke or fire. We were soon joined by Mike Remski, our Marine Mammal manager. Fortunately due to the season, we did not have any seals or sea lions in our care, so he was able to help us with the avian and terrestrial patients.

We all grabbed flashlights, headlamps, crates, boxes, nets, gloves and began our evacuation procedures. Jenn Guess, our Senior Wildlife Tech was responsible for catching up the animals that were in our lower enclosures. Those are the patients who are closest to release, who are in the process of de-habituation and regaining their strength prior to return to the wild. They include Red-tailed hawks, Bobcats, Mourning doves, Fox squirrels, Virginia opossums, a Burrowing owl, a Merlin and many more. Working with advice from our veterinarian on the phone who couldn't access the Center from the north due to road closures, we released any of the birds that were on the cusp of being ready to re-enter the wild. Wildlife Technician Cambria Wells was responsible for gathering those patients who were under care in our ICU. *(continued on page 2)*



Fire in Distance  
Photo by Jennifer Brent



Marine Program Manager Mike Remski and Senior Wildlife Technician Jenn Guess load the CWC van with evacuating patients  
Photo by Jennifer Brent

**Inside:** Photos from the Woolsey Fire, Oh Deer! CWC Helps a Deer Impacted by Plastic Waste & Year End Giving

*(Woolsey Fire continued)* The ICU is where the animals who need attention (medication, visual monitoring or physical check-ups) more than once a day are housed. Cambria gathered those animals and their medications and all of their charts, which track their progress. We loaded everyone up in multiple vehicles and drove quickly out. On our way, we could begin to see the eerie glow of the wildfire approaching from the West. By 4:30am we were back at the Starbucks, which was open and packed with people. We contacted our evacuation site in Woodland Hills, which is also the site of one of our longtime home care volunteers. She let us know that she was prepared and ready to receive our animals. As we drove down the 101 East, the sheriffs were closing access to the freeway to westward travel.

Little did we know that by 2pm that Friday, our area would be under mandatory evacuation. We are incredibly grateful to have been able to get out all of our animals.

As our founder, Aaron Frank said via email to me the other day, "Since our inception we've known fire was a threat due to our location and we've come close many times. We've been fortunate to have been spared and owe a great debt of gratitude to the firefighters who helped save our Center this time and many times before."

We have been stunned by the support of the community and the current and former volunteers and absolute strangers who have offered to take animals on our behalf and clean up the site.

On Thursday November 15th, we heard that CWC was accessible on foot so Mike and I hiked in to check on our status. We were shocked and amazed to find our Center untouched. It was exactly as we had left it, green and protected by the beautiful old oak trees that shelter us. Once the roads opened we began moving patients back into the Center and had volunteers come and scrub out all of the enclosures and buildings. It was the first time CWC had been empty since its founding in 1998! We opened for animals on Monday November 19th and are looking forward to being able to once again serve the animals and people of Los Angeles.



The view from CWC before and after the fire  
Photo by Jennifer Brent



Volunteer Maria Kishchenko power washes one of the aviaries  
Photo by Heather Patrice Brown



Veterinarian Stephany Lewis and Wildlife Technician scrub the floor of the ICU  
Photo by Cambria Wells

## Give the Gift of Life to Wildlife

Consider supporting California Wildlife Center's care for sick, injured and orphaned wildlife.

### Purchase an item from our Amazon Wish List

Search for "California Wildlife Center" under wish lists on Amazon.com and you will see many items needed for wildlife care. Like a registry, these items can be purchased and shipped directly to CWC! Don't forget to support us on AmazonSmile! Sign up at [smile.amazon.com/ch/95-4580790](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/95-4580790)

### Employer Donation Matching

Many employers match their employees' donations to charities like California Wildlife Center. This is an easy way to double the impact of your gift to support wildlife. Ask your HR representative if your company has a matching gift program. They can contact CWC at [heather@cawildlife.org](mailto:heather@cawildlife.org).

### Cash Contributions

California Wildlife Center relies on tax-deductible donations to support our Intensive Care, Orphan Care, and Marine Mammal programs. Make your donation today at [cawildlife.org](https://cawildlife.org).

## Oh Deer! CWC Helps a Deer Impacted by Plastic Waste

By Dr. Stephany Lewis, Veterinarian

This fall the California Wildlife Center was given a unique opportunity to help a Mule Deer buck who had gotten PVC piping entrapped on one of his legs. A caring citizen named Brenda Robinson contacted our hospital manager, Denys Hemen, regarding this buck in need of help. The buck spent much of his time with a herd at the Getty Villa, and a few days prior Brenda had noticed that the animal had gotten a piece of white PVC piping trapped just above his hoof. He was licking at the area and had begun to limp on the leg. Brenda was worried that this animal was in pain and would eventually be weakened to the point that he could fall prey to coyotes or mountain lions known to be in the area.



This Mule Deer buck had a plastic pipe stuck on his leg  
Photo by Heather Henderson

After learning of the situation, Denys and I visited with Brenda at the Getty Villa to observe the Deer and see if it would be feasible for us to help the animal. Brenda knew exactly where the herd would be throughout the morning, and he was so accustomed to her presence that we were able to observe him from a reasonable distance. We were excited to be able to potentially help this animal, and after organizing with biologist Amelia Viera at the California Fish and Wildlife Service, we were scheduled to return on the morning of October 30th to sedate the Deer and remove the plastic pipe from his leg.

The morning of October 30th, the group of us involved in the procedure as well as grounds crew at the Getty Villa, met just before sunrise to discuss the plan of action. Immobilizing an adult Deer in the field requires quite a bit of preparation, and it's extremely important that everyone involved knows each step in the procedure, what to expect, what could go wrong, and what their responsibilities are.

The grounds crew quickly located the buck for us, and I was able to get into a position to successfully dart the animal. Our dart gun at CWC is a simple carbon dioxide-powered rifle (sort of a glorified blowpipe), and the darts are pressurized with air so that when the needle enters an animal's skin, a rubber sleeve is pushed off small holes on the side of the needle, and the drugs are quickly injected right after impact.

The Deer was darted in the hindquarters with a combination of sedatives, half of which were reversible, and the other half were short-acting. He trotted off a few meters after darting, but we were easily able to watch him as the sedation was taking effect.

The PVC pipe was quite tight around the Deer's leg, around the pastern area, which is just above the hoof and below the fetlock joint. It has caused several large wounds on the leg around its entire circumference, but none so severe that we did not think he could recover once it was removed. Heather Henderson, our marine mammal stranding coordinator, removed the pipe with a coping saw, starting between the pipe and the leg and sawing outward to avoid causing further trauma. The wounds were clipped of dirty hair, cleaned, flushed, and an antiseptic ointment was applied. The buck then received an injection of a long-acting antibiotic, a pain medication, and reversal of the sedation.

His close-knit herd stayed by his side the entire time until I approached. About 15 minutes after darting, the buck laid down, and we were able to safely approach him. We protected his eyes with lubrication, blindfolded him and placed cotton in his ears to decrease stress and make him less reactive. He was held in a safe position and his vital signs were monitored by Denys and Maria Jose Lopez Jara, a visiting veterinarian from Chile. *(continued on page 4)*



The deer was sedated so the pipe could be removed  
Photo by Heather Henderson

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(continued from page 3) It took just over a half hour after reversing the sedation for the buck to start to stand and walk on his own. While he was recovering, one of his herd-mates, a little doe, came to check on him! He spent most of the rest of the day relaxing with his herd, but has since been up and about, no longer in pain. We are still receiving updates from Brenda, and the buck is doing fabulously! We are so thrilled to have been able to help this animal, and hope this serves a reminder to everyone to please be neat and remove your trash!



Staff was able to remove the restrictive pipe from the Deer's leg  
Photo by Heather Henderson

## Gifts that Support Wildlife

### Animal Sponsorship

This is the perfect gift for the animal lovers on your list, and they support the care of wildlife patients at CWC. Choose from eight different species with sponsorships starting as low as \$50! You may also add a plush replica of the sponsored species for an additional cost.

The gift recipient will receive: Certificate of Sponsorship with the recipient's name, Fact Sheet about the animal & a Full-Color photo of the animal  
Sponsor an Animal today at [cawildlife.org/ways-to-support-us](http://cawildlife.org/ways-to-support-us)

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Give the gift of award-winning wine and support wildlife at the same time! Colcanyon Estate Wines in Malibu is donating 100% of all profits from their 2010 Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Both wines were recognized by Wine Enthusiast magazine. The Merlot was awarded 86 points and the Cabernet Sauvignon 91 points and selected as "Editor's Choice." The wines are shipped in pairs of each varietal in 2-bottle (\$99), 6-bottle (\$176) and 12-bottle packs (\$299). Prices include tax shipping within California. To purchase, email whether that you wish to purchase 2, 6 or 12 bottles to [Colcanyon@verizon.net](mailto:Colcanyon@verizon.net) and mention you wish to support CWC. They can ship anywhere in the lower 48 states!