



# California Wildlife Center

## Patient of the Week

### May 23, 2023

### California Striped Racer



Technicians washed the snake after they had been freed.

Of the over 4,000 animals that we receive each year at California Wildlife Center, about 73% are birds and the other 27% are mammals. However, we do see a handful of reptiles and amphibian patients each year as well.

While statistically all animals are impacted by human behaviors (tree trimming, cats left outside, driving on streets, building in previously open space), it is our suspicion that there is less concern or compassion for injured amphibians and reptiles than there is for other species. They can be difficult to capture and many reptiles' reputation for fighting back in the form of venomous bites leads many people to "ask questions second."

So when a finder brought us an injured California Striped Racer from Westlake Village earlier in the week, we were happy to lend a hand.

Also known as Whipsnakes, California Striped Racers may be found all over California. They are not venomous, but like all snakes, will bite when threatened. Their diet is comprised mainly of small vertebrates (lizards, small rodents) and while in care, we offered the snake a variety of delicious grubs and worms. In the wild, Whipsnakes are solitary and their young are known as "snakelets." They can grow to up to 60 inches long, while the one in care measures around 24 inches. Our patient is also very narrow—around the same diameter as a pencil.

This Whipsnake was brought to us after having been stuck in a crumpled pile of duct tape. Their stomach had stuck to the tape and wildlife technicians carefully removed the snake and cleaned and bathed them to ensure there were no residual sticky substances. We kept them under observation to be certain that they suffered no damage. The finder was contacted two days later and took the snake for release.