

Tracks

VOLUME 24
NUMBER 2

By the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley

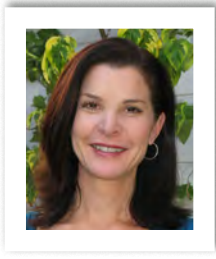
25TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL ISSUE — SUMMER 2018



"If we teach people about wildlife, they will be touched. Share my wildlife with me. Because humans want to save things that they love."

Steve Irwin

DIRECTORS' MESSAGE



It's hard to believe that it's been 25 years since the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley opened its doors. In 1993, our organization was started by a group of people who understood the overwhelming need to help the wildlife of Santa Clara County. This is a need that has not diminished over time. In fact, it has become larger than ever. Over the past 25 years, the amount of human versus animal interactions has grown exponentially as we continue to expand into wildlife habitats. In fact, we estimate that 95% of the patients we treat come in because they've crossed paths with humans. This is why our work is so important. Giving these animals a second chance at a wild life is what we're committed to.

As you can imagine, there have been many changes since we started. From our humble beginnings on Senter Road to our current location in Penitencia Creek Park, we have grown by leaps and bounds. In the beginning, we had two paid staff members, treated approximately 4,000 patients a year, and had just started reaching out to the community. Now, 25 years later, we have nine employees in our peak season, admit approximately 5,500 patients a year, and reach nearly 30,000 residents in Santa Clara through community events and school programs. We are a small but mighty group, working hard every day to fulfill our commitment to helping wildlife, and educating our residents about how to peacefully coexist with the creatures with which we share our environment.

Amongst all the changes, one important thing has remained the same, and that is the

unwavering financial support from you, our donors. We literally could not provide the services and quality of care we do without your generosity. As a small non-profit, it is crucial for us to raise funds to continue with our mission to rehabilitate and release sick, injured and orphaned wildlife. We are grateful for each and every contribution, and every dollar counts. There are also other ways to help WCSV beyond making a cash donation. Here are some suggestions: **Monthly Giving Schedule:** Set up a monthly giving schedule through PayPal. **Employer Matching Program:** This is a fantastic way to see your gift doubled. Ask if your employer has a matching gift program. **Bequests or Living Trust:** A bequest or a gift through a living trust is another great way to contribute to WCSV. **Amazon Smile:** You can donate to the Center when you shop on amazon.com. The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the sale price from your eligible purchases to WCSV. **Amazon Wish List:** If you wish to buy a specific item that we need, try our wish list. **Car Donations:** Consider donating that old car to V-DAC (Vehicle Donation to Any Charity) as a way to help our local wildlife. Visit their website to learn more at <https://www.v-dac.com/>.

We truly appreciate every way you support us, and for your devotion to WCSV and our mission to rehabilitate and release wildlife in need.

With gratitude,

Laura Hawkins, Executive Director

Tracks...across the backyard, along a wooded trail, meandering by a creek. Whose tracks are they? Are they coming or going? Perhaps they are the tracks of things past, or of visions to be revealed, and stories yet untold. Come join us as we explore the different dimensions of wildlife rehabilitation and the special wild neighbors with whom we share our communities. It is the intention of this publication to investigate our dynamic relationship with wildlife within the greater context of our relationship with the earth and each other. The issues are many, as are the myths, feelings, and beliefs surrounding each one. Let's follow the tracks, wherever we may find them, and leave our own for those who may follow.

Tracks



The Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley is a California nonprofit organization that since 1993 has been committed to providing the highest quality care and rehabilitation to urban wildlife and to promoting a mutually beneficial and respectful coexistence between humans and wildlife in our communities.

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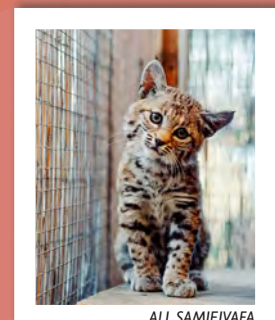
Kira Gunderson

Laura Kurtz

Tracks is a biannual publication of the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley.

Managing Editor – Anna Van Patten

Layout and Design – Ruth McDunn



ALI SAMIEVAFA



FUELED BY VOLUNTEERS

Since the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley originated, we have relied almost solely on the kindness, generosity, and dedication of over 250+ volunteers to care for sick, injured and orphaned wildlife. Every year we admit over 5,500 animals into the hospital, and without volunteers, the Center would never be able to do what we do seven days a week. Through hands on training, volunteers work tirelessly completing basic husbandry tasks for the animals such as cleaning, laundry, food preparation and other tasks. Being a volunteer at WCSV is an extremely rewarding experience and often a once in a lifetime opportunity.

A LOOK BACK THROUGH THE YEARS WITH VOLUNTEER AND OPOSSUM WHISPERER, SUE CUKROV



ASHLEY KINNEY

Sue has been a volunteer with the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley for 18 years. She first got involved when she saw an ad by WCSV looking for volunteers in the San Jose Mercury News. There were only a total of 5 volunteers on her first shift! Remembering back to 2000, Sue mentioned that some of the main challenges WCSV faced was lack of resources and space for the animals. She reflects that the biggest accomplishment of WCSV has been the improvement of animal care, with the expansion of the center and new enclosures to accommodate more species, as well as offering more classes for volunteers to learn about the animals they are working with. Sue has a special place in her heart for opossums. She is really happy to be able to educate people on the importance of having opossums in our local environment. She says, "I have changed the opinions that many people have of them and will continue to do so at least for the next 18 years!" One of her favorite memories while volunteering at WCSV is "Cleaning out the carriers of the adult opossums and finding all their veggies hidden under their bedding! Just like little kids, they don't want to eat their veggies, so they hide them!"

"WCSV makes a difference in our community by helping our urban wildlife!"

—Sue Cukrov

A LOOK BACK THROUGH THE YEARS WITH PAST VOLUNTEER AND BOARD PRESIDENT, PATRICIA ABREU



ERICA FLENIKEN

Patricia got involved with WCSV when she brought a songbird into the center that couldn't fly. She found out about an upcoming orientation and signed up right away! Patricia began volunteering with the animals as well as helping with transport. She then volunteered for six years as a board member, and took on the role as Board President for two years. Patricia helped out in many different ways while being a volunteer: event planning, fundraising, grant writing, volunteer recruiting, and she even taught new volunteer orientations! Patricia remembers how funding was a big worry in the beginning. Patricia wanted the Wildlife Center to be around for years to come to the help any wild animal in need, which is why she believes WCSV's greatest accomplishment is its 25 years of service! (We couldn't agree more). One funny and memorable situation she remembers is when she was releasing a Cooper's Hawk back into the wild. Patricia recalls, "[I was] checking to see which way the bird was facing before opening the cardboard carrier. That bird instantly rose up, turned and flew right at me with bright, round, red eyes and huge talons. I fell back on my butt, in the prickly, dry weeds, and watched the bird take off over the water from my humble spot on the ground. That bird literally brought me back down to earth."

"At WCSV, we can take a wrong and set it right, giving wild animals a second chance at life."

—Patricia Abreu

PATIENT GALLERY Here's who is on the mend at WCSV



LAURA KURTZ

This infant **bobcat**, pictured on the cover of this *Tracks* edition, came to us from Portola Valley. She was orphaned and suffered from a skin disease called mange. She is now three months old and we hope to find another young bobcat for her to be raised with to help foster her natural and wild instincts. Depending on how quickly she learns to live hunt, she may be released this year; if not this year, we will wait for the spring to release her back into the wild.



ASHLEY KINNEY

This isn't just any hummingbird, this is a **Calliope Hummingbird**, the smallest bird in North America! It is also the smallest long-distance migrant in the world, traveling around 5,000 miles every year. This particular Calliope Hummingbird was caught by a cat and stayed in our care for 13 days before it was released.



ASHLEY KINNEY

This is just a few of the 30 **Black-crowned Night-herons** that have been admitted to our facility from a local correctional facility. These baby birds have been consistently brought to us by a concerned employee that would find them orphaned on the ground. These heron's are typically released after a month in our care. One heron eats approximately 40-60 smelt per day: that's over 1,200 smelt in a month!



ASHLEY KINNEY



ANNA VAN PATTEN

This is an albino **Northern Mockingbird**. On the right is a typical, fully colored Northern Mockingbird for comparison. What makes the Northern Mockingbird on the left an albino, aside from its white color, is the fact that it has red/pink eyes. This indicates that there is no pigmentation in the eyes, which is the sign of true albinism.



NICOLE ALPER



ANNA VAN PATTEN



ANNA VAN PATTEN

Look at these **Wild Turkey** chicks! Although there are three together in the photo on the right, each one of them came to our center individually, orphaned and alone. We housed them together, despite their age differences, so that they would be with the same species. They are growing fast and are now in one of our outdoor enclosures preparing for release!



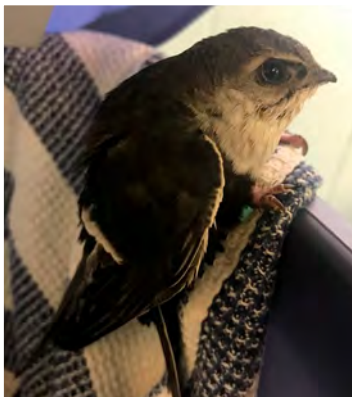
ASHLEY KINNEY

On a rainy day in April of this year, a plastic bag full of soaking wet **Northern Raccoons** were left outside our facility. We suspect that they were thrown in the creek outside of WCSV. These little raccoons were only four to five weeks old and suffered from hypothermia and dehydration. They have been patients for over 70 days now, receiving one-on-one care from an off-site volunteer. Once they have reached about six months of age, they will be released back into the wild.



ANNA VAN PATTEN

These birds, **White-tailed Kites**, are actually small raptors, and California has the highest population of them in North America. They get their name from their hunting tactics: they hover above the ground, almost like a kite on a string. The White-tailed Kite on the right was brought to us from Stanford after it had been attacked by crows. This bird suffered various injuries such as abrasions to its talons and spent a total of 49 days in our care before being released. During its stay here, we received four other White-tailed Kites (one pictured on the left) that we housed all together in a large outdoor aviary. All five of these raptors were successfully released!



ASHLEY KINNEY

Adult **White-throated Swifts** spend their whole lives in the air, only stopping to roost and raise young. They eat, drink, and mate in flight, and some swift species even sleep while flying! Their feet are adapted to cling to vertical surfaces, and they cannot walk or take off from the ground. These juvenile swifts were brought to us after being found trapped in a structure on Mount Umunhum. We have received 37 swifts from this location and are working with other wildlife centers to provide care until they can be released!



JENNY LIU

In July, we received a **Gopher Snake** that had been stuck in garden netting for three days! Animal care staff got to work, cutting the snake free from the remaining netting. This snake suffered constriction injuries to its neck and had to shed its skin so that we could re-evaluate the extent of the injuries. After almost three weeks in care and a re-evaluation of body condition, this Gopher snake was released.



NICOLE ALPER

We have received two **Pied-billed Grebes** this year. These waterbirds are known for their expert diving skills, using their powerful feet for propulsion. They also have lobed toes (not webbed) to assist with swimming. Although they thrive in the water, they are awkward on land and poor fliers in the sky. Both of these birds were transferred to International Bird Rescue, a center that specializes in aquatic bird rehabilitation, after a short stay in our care and will be released when they are ready.

A DETAILED LOOK INTO WCSV HISTORY: 25 Years of Change and Growth

By Anna Van Patten

The Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley (WCSV) was established in 1993, after the Humane Society of Silicon Valley discontinued their wildlife rehabilitation program due to budget cutbacks. A small group of dedicated volunteers spent numerous hours, an extensive amount of energy and offered their own homes to provide wildlife a refuge for rehabilitation. With no funding, a lot of passion and hard work, WCSV was founded and originally located on Senter Road, about 10 miles from our current location on Penitencia Creek Road. From our modest beginnings in 1993 to our present-day facility in 2018, WCSV has had 25 years worth of improvements, achievements, and upgrades.

1993 The WCSV was founded and treated approximately 4,000 animals in 1993. The Humane Society of Silicon Valley served as a public drop-off site for the animals that were then cared for in the homes of volunteers.

1994 In May, 1994, WCSV finally opened its Senter Road location to the public. The first edition of the *Tracks* newsletter was also published this year. Since almost all of the animals were being cared for in volunteers homes, due to the absence of enclosures at the facility, WCSV served primarily as a drop-off and initial exam location.

1995 In 1995, WCSV held its first educational event “Walk on the Wild Side”



Comparison Chart (1993 - 2018)	1993	2013	2018 (Jan-July)
Number of animals cared for	4,000	5,500	4,050
Number of species cared for on-site	20	100+	165+
Number and type of enclosures on-site	0	36	53
Number of volunteers	50	150+	300+
Number of employees	0	3	8-10
Summer Interns	0	25	25

at the Senter Road site, which was open to the public. There were educational displays and booths for residents to learn about WCSV, our mission, and get information about local wildlife.

1997 The Lions Club built a large aviary used to house songbirds and around the same time, the golf course adjacent to our facility notified us that we would need to move due to their expansion plans. After four years without staff, WCSV was able to hire its first Animal Care Coordinator, in 1997.

1998-1999 The founders got to work trying to find a new location for WCSV. They refused to give up and eventually discovered the Penitencia Creek Road site and convinced the City of San Jose to lease it to them. This new site had almost triple the existing interior space and double the exterior space of the Senter Road location. It also had a larger isolation room, a laboratory, and a classroom. What this new facility did not have was heat, plumbing, fencing, and aviaries, but those were soon to come. While all of this was occurring, the Senter Road site was still a functioning rehabilitation facility and with the help of an Eagle Scout WCSV built with a mammal enclosure that could house up to twenty opossums.

2000 In 2000, WCSV received a donated modular building from the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory which allowed more room to operate. On June 15th of that year, WCSV admitted 106 animals, the highest number of intakes in a single day to date, due to a heat spike the day before. Temperatures reached

109 degrees in San Jose, causing wild animals to suffer from dehydration and hyperthermia.

2001 On May 23, 2001, after two and a half years of sweat, negotiations and fundraising, WCSV finally made the move to the new site location on Penitencia Creek Road. Later this year, the first raptor flight enclosures were built, allowing these birds to be housed and cared for on site.

2002 WCSV was finally able to hire lead staff for the first time. A Director of Operations was hired and got to work developing city relationships, securing contracts with them to help fund the Center and its efforts. At the same time, the Animal Care Coordinator, responsible for the care of over 4,000 animals, began to develop rehabilitation policies and organized much needed home care teams.

In 2002, We were also the benefactor of an Eagle Scout project that would provide WCSV with a large mammal enclosure to house tree squirrels prior to release. This new enclosure allowed us to house these squirrels on site, rather than in volunteers’ homes.

2003 With the help of a matching grant and donated labor, WCSV installed four ponds to be used for waterbirds during their rehabilitation. The ponds freed up more space in the main hospital and provided ducklings and goslings the ability to strengthen their swimming skills and natural behaviors.

2004 In 2004, WCSV welcomed the help of Intel volunteers, who built much

needed corvid enclosures as we lacked space for birds like the American crow, scrub jay, and raven.

2005 WCSV received a \$12,000 grant from Santa Clara County to build our first predatory mammal enclosure. After finalizing the plans and dimensions, volunteers went to work to build the first of the predatory mammal enclosures. 2005 marked the year in which the WCSV became the only wildlife rehabilitation facility in Silicon Valley to have specific enclosures for this type of mammal. This gave us the ability to not only help mammals in need throughout Silicon Valley, but also to help our surrounding organizations with their care. These enclosures provide these animals with a lot of space to run, hunt, forage and den. Allowing this type of mammal access to such an open but secluded space during their rehabilitation benefits their recovery process and helps foster natural instincts so that they are better prepared to re-enter their wild habitats.

2006 The first occupants in the new predatory mammal enclosure was a litter of young coyotes on one side and a female adult coyote with a broken leg on the other side. By sheer chance, the female adult took to these babies and 'raised' them while in our care. When they were ready for release, they were all released together. 2006 is the year WCSV became known for its predatory mammal work.

2010 In 2010, four years after the first predatory mammal enclosure was built, a

second one was constructed. Word was spreading that we specialize in predatory mammals, which meant that there was a greater need for more space and housing. The number of mammals needing rehabilitation increased over the years and WCSV was the only place capable of accommodating them.

2011 Another item on WCSV's wishlist became a reality in 2011 when we were awarded a \$50,000 grant from the Thelma Doegler Trust for Animals. With that money, WCSV bought its first radiograph machine.



2012-2013 Between the years of 2012 and 2013, WCSV went through many upgrades, renovations, and improvements. First, a 50-ft raptor flight enclosure was constructed, which allowed rehabilitation and release of larger raptors such as red-tailed hawks and great horned owls. This project was funded by a former board member as well as Eagle Scouts. This new flight enclosure was first used to house a great horned owl that needed more room to practice flying before its successful release in January 2013.

This year another upgrade was made. The animal care kitchen was renovated and enlarged and a new laundry room was

added. This allowed for more mobility in the kitchen, and doubled the space for appliances in the laundry room.

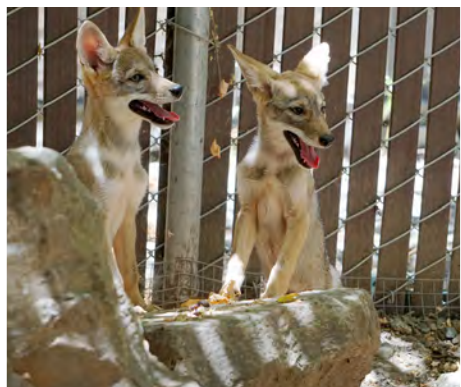
2015 A third predatory mammal enclosure was built in 2015, for the early stages of the rehabilitation process. This enclosure is divided into three separate spaces to house mammals that are not yet ready to be moved into a large enclosure. The ability to house three separate species in the same enclosure gives WCSV much more flexibility when determining housing for patients.

2016 In 2016, two outdoor skunk enclosures were constructed. This need for more skunk housing came from the increase in the number of bobcats admitted to WCSV. The bobcats in our care were being housed in the enclosures that would typically house skunks.

2018 WCSV went through a period of major improvements. In 2017, one of our very generous volunteers donated money to build a new structure to house baby songbirds. After researching various options, we determined that a Tuff Shed would be the best way to house young birds. Each year, WCSV admits over 1,000 songbirds. With the construction of the new shed, which we subsequently named the "Baby Bird Barn", we can now house 45 more birds than before and regulate the temperature of the room more closely. This increase in space is imperative during our busy season from April through September, during which we receive a constant flow of these tiny patients.

Next on our list of renovations was the expansion of our isolation room. Led by our main construction volunteer, a crew knocked down the wall between the old baby bird room and the existing isolation room. This room is sectioned off from the main hospital to hold animals that need to recuperate from critical injuries in a quiet environment. We are now able to house twice the number of animals we had previously!

Continued on page 10



A LOOK BACK INTO WCSV HISTORY ... Renovations, Upgrades, and Accomplishments



WCSV was Born

HSSV announced its need to cut wildlife programs. WCSV moved into its first location on Senter Road.



Moving Day!

After over 2 years of sweat, research, and negotiation, WCSV moved into Penitencia Creek Park.



First Tree Squirrel Enclosure

Eagle Scout built mammal enclosure for tree squirrels.

First Staff Members

WCSV hired Lead Staff: Director of Operations and Animal Care Coordinator.

1993 - 1994

1999

2000

2001

2002

2006 - 2007

Struggle to Find a New Location

WCSV secured City funding contracts from surrounding cities including a \$250,000 relocation grant from the City of San Jose. Negotiations began with Santa Clara County for leasing the Penitencia Creek property.

Highest Number of Intakes in WCSV History

On June 15th WCSV admitted 106 animals due to a heat spike the previous day.

Santa Clara County Comes to Rescue of Wildlife Group

By Maria Alicia Gaura
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

Untold numbers of baby animals were granted an 11th-hour reprieve yesterday by Santa Clara County, which agreed to become the new landlord for a wildlife rescue group threatened with homelessness.

County supervisors voted unanimously to grant a 10-year lease to the Wildlife Center of the Silicon Valley, a volunteer group whose

First Raptor Flight Enclosure Constructed



First Predatory Mammal Enclosure

With the help of \$12,000 grant from Santa Clara County, WCSV's first predatory mammal enclosure was built.





First Radiograph Machine

This was purchased with a \$50,000 grant from the Thelma Doelger Trust for Animals.



New Predatory Mammal Enclosure

This new enclosure was built for predatory mammals in their early rehabilitation stages.



New Predatory Mammal Shed

This shed was purchased with a \$10,000 grant from the Thelma Doelger Trust for Animals. This allows WCSV to house stressed predatory animals in a quiet location.

2011

2012-2013

2015

2018

50-ft raptor Enclosure was Constructed and Immediately Put to Use



New Baby Bird Barn

Funded by one of our generous volunteers, the addition of this new "Baby Bird Barn" allows WCSV to house more baby birds in a larger, quieter space.

Expansion of WCSV's Isolation Room

Our construction volunteer, Jim, took on the project of breaking down a wall to create one large isolation room. This room is reserved for species that are recovering from treatment or require a very quiet space.

Kitchen and Laundry Room was Remodeled



A DETAILED LOOK INTO WCSV HISTORY *Continued from page 7*

The last renovation completed in spring of 2018 was the addition of another shed similar to the Baby Bird Barn. The new shed, funded by a grant from the Thelma Doelger Trust for Animals, was constructed to house predatory mammals.

This new structure is beneficial to these young animals that are not yet ready to move to an outdoor enclosure because it is quiet and separate from the main hospital.

Although the WCSV has made numerous improvements, changes, and updates throughout our 25 years of service, one thing that has remained the same is our mission. Our mission is to provide sick, injured and orphaned wildlife free high-quality hospital care, rehabilitation, and opportunity for release. We promote a mutually beneficial coexistence between humans and wildlife through education and outreach events. We share with the public coexistence techniques and instill an appreciation for urban wildlife that is often viewed as a nuisance.

Thank you to all of those who have helped us along the way. Whether you were a one time donor, selfless volunteer, or a supporter since the beginning, we couldn't have made it to 25 years of service without you. ♪♪



THANK YOU! *To Our Invaluable Partners in Service*

A Special Thanks to...

- Apple Employees
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- Chris Conlin Design and Illustration
- City of Milpitas
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- Karan Gathani
- Karen Campbell
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- Monterey SPCA
- Native Songbird Care and Conservation
- New Seasons Market
- Nikitha Shenoy
- Oakwood High School
- Ohlone Wildlife Center
- Pathways for Wildlife
- Peninsula Humane Society
- Ruth McDunn
- Santa Clara County Animal Control Authority



- Santa Clara County Department of Parks and Recreation
- San Jose Animal Care and Services
- Sereno Group - Willow Glen
- Silicon Valley Animal Care Authority
- Sunnyvale Animal Control
- The Pastaria and Market
- Thelma Doelger Trust for Animals
- Vagabond Marketing
- Whole Foods

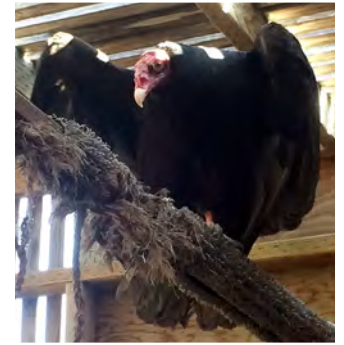
RELEASE HIGHLIGHTS



LAURA KURTZ

Vulture in incubator recovering after supportive care was given.

This **Turkey Vulture** was admitted to WCSV on January 8, 2018 from Milpitas. After initial examination, our staff member suspected that this bird had been poisoned. The bird had labored breathing, was hypothermic, thin, and weak. We provided supportive care, which included oxygen therapy, and fluids with much needed vitamins. The bird was moved to a large flight enclosure after two weeks of intensive care. From there the vulture gained much needed flight muscles. This Turkey Vulture was released back into the wild just one month after intake!



ZABET GERBER

Vulture in flight enclosure awaiting capture for release



ASHLEY KINNEY

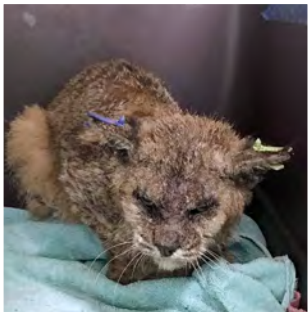
Left: Photo of wound taken two days after intake Right: Photo of wound covered in dressing

This **Virginia Opossum** was admitted to WCSV on January 13, 2018 after an ill-intentioned member of the public struck her face with a stick. During the examination hospital staff found a large-deep lesion on her snout. The wound was so large it required extensive wound treatment and dressing changes. Not only was the opossum recovering from a horrific injury, she was also raising nine joeys in her pouch. After two months of treatment the opossum and her babies were ready to run free.



ZABET GERBER

Three months after intake she was released with her babies still in her pouch



ASHLEY KINNEY

In recovery kennel after physical exam

WCSV was contacted by Wildlife Biologist, Laurel Serieys when one of their radio-collared bobcats being studied had developed severe mange. On February 28, 2018 Laurel and her team were successful in trapping the sick male **Bobcat** and then transferred him to WCSV for treatment. At the time of intake, staff determined he had demodectic mange, a disease that causes significant hair loss. He was given subcutaneous fluids, vitamins and mange treatment during the initial exam. From there, the bobcat was housed in an outdoor enclosure until he stabilized and the mange was fully resolved. After four months in our care, this bobcat was healthy and ready to be released back to his home in the Coyote Valley area.



RUTH MCDUNN

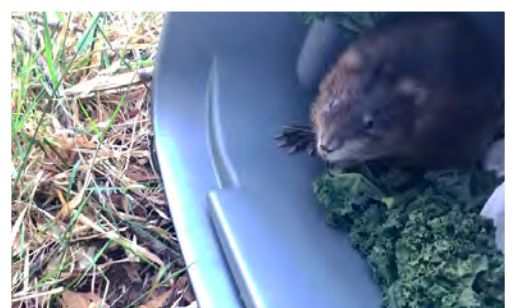
May 30th FREEDOM



ASHLEY KINNEY

Muskrat at time of examination

On July 27, 2018 San Jose Animal Care & Services rescued a **Common Muskrat** that was stuck in a fence. The Animal Control Officer rescued the large rodent and transported it to our hospital. After initial examinations, staff did not find any injuries that would cause the Muskrat to remain in our care, so just a few hours after the initial exam, she was released back to her natural habitat in San Jose.




JENNY LIU

Muskrat at the release site



3027 Penitencia Creek Road
San Jose, CA 95132-2815

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If you see a wild animal in distress,
find helpful information at:

[wcsv.org](https://www.wcsv.org)
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Authority and Sunnyvale.



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Wingin' it at the Winery



SAT, SEPT 15TH | 5:30-8:30PM
COOPER-GARROD ESTATE VINEYARDS | SARATOGA, CA

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*PENDING AVAILABILITY	

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