Dear Friends of Wildlife:

There is no doubt that this is an unprecedented and challenging time in all of our lives. Things change on a dime and no one is sure what is next, and for WCSV there is no exception. In fact, things have changed so drastically, we find ourselves in a situation we would have never expected.

When the shelter-in-place order went into effect, we made the difficult but necessary decision to suspend our volunteer program for the safety of our volunteers and staff. This was initially overwhelming to us, as we rely heavily on the over 200 volunteers that help us care for the thousands of animals we get March through October, which is our busiest time of year. We always say that our volunteers are the backbone of WCSV, so it is hard to imagine that we find ourselves without them.

However, we are resilient! As a small organization with 10 employees during peak season, we know how to make things work no matter what the circumstance. So, we assembled an amazing team of home care volunteers who tend to many of the animals that would normally occupy our hospital, re-tooled our existing jobs and schedules, and reached out to you, our much-valued donors for help.

Your response was nothing short of amazing, and we are humbled by your support. We know that there are many worthy organizations that need help, so we are extremely grateful for your support of the work we do for the wildlife of Santa Clara County. We appreciate that you understand that wildlife always needs us, no matter what is going on in the world around us. Because of your generosity, we are able to keep afloat and move forward.

We could not provide the services and quality of care we do without your generosity. As a small nonprofit, it is crucial for us to raise funds to continue with our mission to rehabilitate and release local wildlife. We are grateful for each and every contribution, and no amount is too small. Here are some ways to help WCSV beyond making a cash donation:

♦ Monthly Giving Schedule: Set up a monthly giving schedule through PayPal.
♦ Employer Matching Program: This is a fantastic way to see your gift doubled.
♦ Bequests or Living Trust: A bequest or 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 www.amazon.com. The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the sale price of your eligible purchases to WCSV.
♦ Amazon Wish List: If you wish to buy specific items that we need, try our wish list. To find it, go to www.amazon.com, select “find a list or registry,” enter our name, and click “search”.
♦ Vehicle Donations: Consider donating that old vehicle to V-DAC (Vehicle Donation to Any Charity) as a way to help our local wildlife. Visit their website to learn more about how to donate a vehicle to help WCSV at www.v-dac.com.

We truly appreciate you being a member of the WCSV team, and for your devotion to our mission to rehabilitate and release wildlife in need.

With gratitude,

Laura Hawkins, Executive Director

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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Shoes for birds? That sounds crazy, right? Every year, we receive several young birds who our trained staff members must make custom “shoes” for to correct foot deformities, often caused by vitamin deficiencies or congenital issues. Left untreated, the bird will have trouble perching or standing. We have great success with this innovative treatment that gives the animal a better chance at complete rehabilitation.

The purpose of a bird shoe is like that of a cast worn by humans: to hold extremities in place while the bone strengthens and grows. Shoes are made by placing a thin, firm material under the bird’s foot, then covering the top of the foot with soft medical tape to hold the digits (bird toes) in place. The length of time the shoe stays on varies for each bird. The speed at which their digits and bones strengthen will determine when the shoe is removed. Once staff members remove the shoe, the birds are left with a beautiful, strong foot, and are able to have a second chance at a wild life.

Thank You!

- Brigitte Frenay & Craig Ekiss
- Charles Wade
- City of Milpitas
- David Mintz
- Davidson Family Foundation
- Deborah Hoag
- DJ Normark
- Facebook
- Farrington Historical Foundation
- Frank & Lisa Bourgault
- Google
- Heather Hohlowski
- IBM Volunteer Outreach Council
- International Bird Rescue
- Joanne Watts
- Karan Gathani
- Karin Clements
- Kathryn Edwards & Kermit Kubitz
- Keller Family Fund
- Kenneth Gilbeau
- Kristan Rock & Doug Olkein
- Leah Tognetti
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- Lisa Keeling
- Loree McQueen
- Los Gatos Birdwatcher
- Manfroy Family
- Michael Wu & Jennifer Hum
- Native Songbird Care & Conservation
- Noam Mendelson
- Ohlone Wildlife Center
- Pacific Gas & Electric
- Peninsula Humane Society
- Ruth McDunn
- San Jose Animal Care and Services
- Santa Clara County Animal Care and Control
- Santa Clara County Department of Parks and Recreation
- Santa Clara County Vector Control
- Silicon Valley Animal Control Authority
- Silicon Valley Community Foundation
- SPCA for Monterey County
- Vagabond Marketing
- WildCare
In early 2009, WCSV started a very successful predatory mammal rehabilitation program. Through it we are able to provide predatory species with everything they need to grow up and become fully self-sufficient in the wild, including a natural avoidance of humans. Each year we admit over 30 medium-to-large mammals, which include raccoons, foxes, coyotes, and bobcats. In 2020, WCSV has already admitted eight orphaned raccoons, four orphaned coyotes, 16 orphaned skunks, two orphaned bobcats, and four orphaned gray foxes! Due to human interactions and loss of habitat, this number continues to grow. In fact, just between 2019 and 2020, WCSV successfully rehabilitated and released 117 predatory mammals back to their wild habitats!

Two of our gray foxes were transferred to us from Salinas after a homeowner illegally trapped and relocated their parents, leaving the two kits orphaned. The third fox came from Santa Cruz after it was found orphaned on the side of a mountain road, and the final kit came from east San Jose, where a homeowner heard it vocalizing in a tree searching for its parents.

When young mammals, such as these foxes, are admitted, they are given a thorough physical examination, weight check, fluids, anti-parasitic medication, and any other necessary medical treatments on intake before being temporarily quarantined to prevent the potential spread of disease. After 14 days, all of the foxes were slowly introduced to each other and have now formed their own fox family, called a skulk.
WCSV has strict protocols to prevent mammals from becoming habituated while in care. We have developed a hands-off approach to ensure these mammals are set up for success in the wild. Each mammal is only given natural food items, and set up in an environment that mimics their wild nature as closely as possible.

Over the course of the next four months, these foxes will be housed in our large mammal enclosure, giving them plenty of room to den, climb, run, and forage. From there, they will be returned to their home range by fall of 2020 when natural dispersal occurs in the wild.

**Gray Fox Facts**

Gray foxes (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) resemble small dogs with bushy, black-tipped tails. They have long, slender bodies, pointed noses, and large, pointed ears. They have silver-gray backs, with a white to rusty colored underside. The gray fox is found throughout most of the southern half of North America. They are classified as nocturnal but are also seen active during the day. The gray fox is the only true tree climber in the canine family. They have strong, hooked claws that allow them to scramble up trees to avoid predators or to access hanging fruit.

Gray foxes birth kits in a ground burrow. Litters of up to seven kits are born during April through May, with both parents raising the young. At three months of age, kits begin to explore outside of the den, and learn necessary hunting skills from their parents. By four months of age, the kits are able to forage on their own. The family unit will generally stay together until mid to late fall. From there the young will disperse in search of their own territory.

Like all predatory mammals, gray foxes perform a valuable service to the environment by controlling rodent and insect populations. Their diet consists of rabbits, mice, squirrels, insects, and fruit.

Foxes are, by nature, very reclusive and are seldom spotted by people. They have little interest in interacting with humans or domestic animals. If you happen to come across a fox, enjoy the rare sight of one of the more unique predatory mammals found in California.

**Other Foxes in California**

In addition to the common gray fox, California is home to three other native species of fox.

- The Island fox is native to six of the eight Channel Islands of California. Each island has its own unique subspecies, and four of them are considered endangered.
- The San Joaquin kit fox is found in the San Joaquin Valley and throughout central California, and has been on the endangered species list for the past 50 years due to habitat loss and consumption of pesticides and rodenticides.
- The Sierra Nevada red fox, not to be confused with the non-native European red fox, is found in only the high elevations of the Sierra Nevada and southern Cascade mountains. This fox is one of the rarest mammals in North America, with a population consisting of fewer than 50 individuals.
The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 has been perhaps the greatest challenge WCSV has ever faced. Due to the shelter-in-place orders mandated by Santa Clara County, our lobby is now closed, and we are admitting sick, injured, and orphaned animals at an outdoor intake table. Our staff wears proper personal protective equipment when interacting with the public, and takes animals directly to our examination room.

WCSV, like most non-profit organizations, depends heavily on volunteers, but unfortunately we have had to suspend our volunteer and internship programs to keep everyone safe. Typically we have more than 200 volunteers working during the spring and summer. This is our busiest time of the year, when we see thousands of animals and admit over 30 patients per day. The absence of volunteers is a loss of over 800 animal care hours per week. Many of the young animals in care require feeding, medical treatment, and supervision throughout the day, which is a monumental undertaking even with a full contingent of volunteers, interns, and staff.

Every staff member has stepped up to support each other. Take our administrative staff, for instance. In addition to managing hundreds of phone calls and handling all incoming wildlife, they now also assist in the hospital by cleaning and staying on top of laundry and trash. This allows animal care staff to focus on providing quality care for the 200 patients on-site at any given time.

With only six animal care staff members, we knew we needed volunteer support to provide the best care possible for our wild patients and further manage the workload at the hospital. Because of this, we expanded our satellite homecare program—a team of 28 volunteers who selflessly care for a multitude of animals from the safety of their own homes under our rehabilitation permit. Other volunteers support this team by transporting animals, medications, and supplies. Our program has already cared for over 400 patients this year.

We are so grateful to have an amazing village of volunteers supporting us and our mission, and look forward to resuming normal operations on-site once it is safe to do so.
**Patient Highlights: Who’s on the Mend at WCSV**

**Stranded Skunks**
A concerned family in Fremont discovered three young skunks living under a shed in their backyard. At first, the homeowners enjoyed watching the young skunks venture out from the shed, but became concerned when they noticed the mother was nowhere to be found. One of our trained volunteers went out to assess the situation, and he determined the skunks were dehydrated, thin, and too young to fend for themselves. He was able to safely capture the three orphaned skunks and transport them to our hospital.

When the skunks arrived, they were given thorough exams, vitamins, fluids, and parasite treatment before being set up in our mammal shed, our dedicated space where baby mammals can recuperate in a quiet environment. For the next three weeks, the young skunks were fed formula four times a day and then we began weaning them. Weaning is a process where young animals learn to eat solid foods, rather than milk or formula. Once they were fully weaned, we moved these three skunks to a large enclosure, where they are housed now. Here, they will learn to forage for food and be self-sufficient.

We always take a hands-off approach to raising young wildlife so that our patients will be able to thrive in the wild without depending on humans.

If you find an injured, orphaned, or sick skunk, coyote, fox, bobcat, raccoon, or bat, please do not handle it for your own safety! Please call us at (408) 929-9453, or call your local animal control services for advice.

**Orphaned White-tailed Kite**
In early May, a concerned individual discovered this young white-tailed kite on the ground in Lathrop Park, near Stanford University. The nest had been destroyed, and the kite was orphaned. Upon intake, staff members performed a full examination, provided fluids, and set up the kite in the hospital. Kites, by nature, are high-stress, which can cause them to not eat in captivity. At first, we had to force feed the kite to make sure it was getting the proper nutrition, and after a week in care the young raptor was eating on its own. We moved it to an outdoor enclosure to allow it to stretch its wings and begin to fly. In our 50-foot flight enclosure, this kite is able to strengthen its muscles and learn other necessary flight and hunting skills before release. This bird is scheduled to be released by mid-June 2020.

**Lizards in a Sticky Situation**
On May 12, we took in four alligator lizards that were found stuck to an adhesive glue trap. Glue traps, intended for insects and mice, often catch other animals such as snakes, songbirds, and opossums. These animals are attracted to what appears to be an easy meal of immobile insects, but then they become stuck to the trap themselves. Animals stuck on these traps will attempt to unsuccessfully free themselves and suffer critical injuries in the process. If they are not found in time, many of these victims will die of dehydration and starvation.

When the lizards arrived at our hospital, staff members quickly freed them by using an animal-safe solvent to dissolve the glue without harming the lizards. Staff members then had to wash each of the lizards twice a day for several days to remove the remaining residue. After a week of baths and close monitoring, we determined the lizards were ready to go, and they were released by a volunteer. 🧬
Wingin’ it for Wildlife on the Web

Save the Date!
(details to come)

Saturday, September 12

Featuring a silent & live auction
Online event | Tickets are free | Internet connection required