

Tracks



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BY THE WILDLIFE CENTER OF SILICON VALLEY

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DIRECTORS' MESSAGE



Dear Wildlife Supporters:

I think we can all agree that 2020 has been overwhelming. As we start a new year, I think about the difficulties we've encountered, but

mostly about the positives that have come out of this time. The resilience we've shown and seen, and the dedication to creating a positive out of a negative has been awe-inspiring. Most of all, I've seen the resilience in both the WCSV staff and our community, which is incredibly touching.

We have been open every day since the beginning of the shutdown in March, which coincided with the start of our busiest time of year. Put together the massive operational changes, suspension of our volunteer program, and the unprecedented increase of animals we've taken in this year, and we've had a lot to deal with. But deal with it we have, through humor, compassion and a lot of coffee!

However, one of the main reasons we're able to do this, is because of you, our donors. One huge positive of the pandemic is the number of people that found us and expressed their appreciation of the work we do.

I've been saying for months that "everybody needs a win" right now — the residents that bring us animals, our staff that rehabilitates and releases our wild patients, and most of all the animals that get a second chance at a wild life.

All these things are why we chose to focus on "resilience" in this issue of *Tracks* and why we chose the Golden Eagle to represent this. This beautiful bird made a full recovery to fly free once again. And that, it seems to me, is the ultimate "win" we all need now.

Thank you for your ongoing support and appreciation of our mission to treat local sick, injured and orphaned wildlife. We 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 our work with the wildlife of Santa Clara County. We are grateful for each and

every contribution, and no amount is too small.

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. Once you set it up, you don't have to think about it again, and the Center will benefit from your contribution year-round.

Employer Matching Program: This is a great way to see your gift doubled. See 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 donates 0.5% of the sale price from your eligible purchases to WCSV. To register, go to smile.amazon.com, and select us as the benefitting charity.

Amazon Wish List: If you wish to buy a specific item that we need, try our wish list. To find it, go to wcsv.org/wishlist and you will be automatically redirected to Amazon.

Vehicle Donations: Consider donating that old vehicle to V-DAC (Vehicle Donation to Any Charity) as a way to help our local wildlife. Their programs turn any car, truck, boat or RV into cash and deliver a high percent of net proceeds to non-profits like WCSV. Visit their website to learn more about how to donate a vehicle to help WCSV at <https://www.v-dac.com/>.

We are humbled by your generosity always, but especially in these trying times. Thank you for your support and for your devotion to our mission to rehabilitate and release wildlife in need. We truly appreciate you being a member of the WCSV team and an invaluable part of the work that we do.

With gratitude,

Laura Hawkins, Executive Director

Tracks

The Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley is dedicated to providing sick, injured, and orphaned wildlife with exceptional free care, rehabilitation, and the opportunity for release. We also aim to educate the public about coexisting peacefully with local wildlife.

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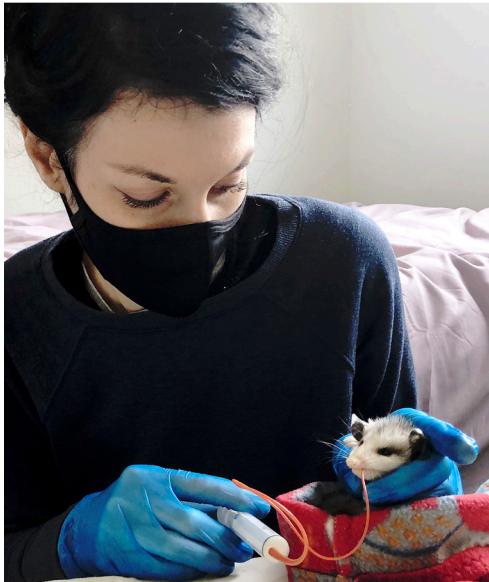
Tracks...across the backyard, along a wooded trail, meandering by a creek. Whose tracks are they? Are they coming or going? Perhaps they are the tracks of things past, or of visions to be revealed, and stories yet untold. Come join us as we explore the different dimensions of wildlife rehabilitation 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.



INSIGHT FROM OUR VOLUNTEERS

The arrival of the pandemic in March was followed by the start of our busy season. Initially, our volunteer program was completely suspended, leaving us without over 200 volunteers. As the summer progressed, we slowly and carefully reopened our volunteer program, allowing a maximum of three animal care volunteers on-site per shift.

With such limited on-site opportunities, many of volunteers stepped up to take on expanded roles. Volunteers who previously only worked in the hospital once a week added extra days, and a number of them joined our homecare program.



L. TAUMAN

Lauren Tauman has been an animal care team volunteer since 2016. Right before the pandemic hit, Lauren joined our homecare program and spent the past summer experiencing her first busy season as a member of the team, caring for 64 Virginia opossums. Here's what Lauren had to say:

"[The biggest difference] is actually going through the transitions with the animals [as they develop]. I'm used to caring for [opossums] four hours once a week where the diet and care is predetermined by staff. The hard part is getting them from the soft food to weaning onto solid food. I had to develop the intuition to properly care for them and be able to sense when they were ready for the next stage."

Jackie Turner has been volunteering with the Center for 15 years and is a long time veteran of the homecare program. Having looked after squirrels, raccoons, turtles, and currently specializing in opossums, Jackie has her routine down pat and felt that the animal care aspect this season was the same as any other. What she did notice, however, was the transportation volunteers stepping up to offer additional assistance regularly transporting of animals and supplies to the homes of homecare volunteers. "For them to be bringing the animals, the specialized foods and medicines to those who needed it...was so special."



J. TURNER



M. CHEN

Our transportation volunteers rose to the occasion this past summer, spending many more hours than usual on the road, ferrying patients and supplies to where they needed to be, and releasing healthy animals once they were ready to return to the wild. During previous years, volunteer Claire Xue would often help with releases after her shift, but this year she has spent a lot more time transporting animals and supplies for WCSV. "It's really important to get healthy animals out the door as soon as possible, so I've been coming in to help release animals on my days off. This year I drove about 5,300 miles, compared to a typical year where I only make one or two extra trips and drive about 200 miles for the Center." ♡ ♡

DEVELOPMENT UPDATE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Though we couldn't have a live release, we brought the magic to viewers on screen with never-before-seen footage of releases made possible by all of you.

WCSV cannot express enough gratitude for everyone who has supported us this year. Our annual fundraiser is critical

to enable us to continue our mission of rehabilitating and releasing sick, injured and orphaned wildlife. Our dedicated staff and a handful of volunteers have worked tirelessly this busy season to stay open every day as an essential business. This pandemic has been a challenge for everyone, but we are happy to report WCSV is still persevering, thanks to your help. ♡

RELEASE HIGHLIGHTS

JUVENILE SKUNK



L. KURTZ

This juvenile striped skunk was found caught in two snap traps in late June. One trap was attached to the left side of its neck and the other trap was stuck around the head. Staff removed the traps from the skunk and gave fluids and medication to treat pain and inflammation. Luckily, the bruising on the skunk's neck went away after a couple days and there was only minimal tissue damage from the traps. After two weeks in care the skunk received a clean bill of health and was returned to the wild near East San Jose.



C. XUE

POCKET GOPHER



J. ESTRADA

This pocket gopher was found in San Jose after its fur became contaminated with an unknown substance. On arrival the gopher was alert and began cleaning itself during the initial examination. Staff administered preventative antibiotics and medication for possible toxin ingestion. After medicating, the gopher was set up in suitable housing containing dirt for burrowing and a proper diet of root vegetables. After several days of supportive care, the gopher was deemed healthy and released in San Jose.



C. XUE

FOX FOLLOW-UP

You may remember these orphaned gray foxes from our Spring/Summer 2020 issue of *Tracks*. They spent their summer here at the Center in our large mammal enclosure, gaining strength and learning important skills such as climbing, denning, running, and foraging. After approximately six months in care, where we helped them grow from little formula-fed kits to healthy, lively juveniles, these foxes were finally ready to return to their home range. They were released in Prunedale in October to naturally disperse and establish their own territories.



L. KURTZ



C. XUE

RING-NECKED PHEASANT

A concerned couple found this ring-necked pheasant sitting on their patio in late October, not moving or standing. Upon initial examination, staff discovered a patch of missing feathers and some frayed tail feathers with no further injuries. The pheasant was given pain medication, fluids, and was set up in an incubator to stabilize. By the end of the day, the bird had begun standing, eating and drinking. After several days it was moved to an outdoor enclosure to test its flight abilities. After about five days, it was returned to where it had been found in San Jose, and it quickly flew away. ♡

GOLDEN EAGLE

By Ashley Kinney

Golden eagles are one of the largest predatory birds in North America. These eagles mainly hunt rabbits and squirrels, but have been known to prey upon larger animals such as fawns, seals, and coyotes. This beautiful eagle will grow to three feet tall and have a wingspan of six to seven-and-a-half feet.

WCSV rarely admits eagles. In our 27 years of existence, we have only admitted five, four of whom were found so debilitated and injured that they unfortunately did not survive.

On July 5, 2020, our eagle luck changed after Bay Raptor Rescue received a call regarding a downed male Golden eagle in Portola Valley, CA. The eagle was reported as not flying and weak. Once the rescue group contained it, they transported the two-year-old raptor to our rehabilitation hospital.



M. CHEN



A. KINNEY

When the eagle arrived at our center, animal care staff members safely examined it and found the animal to be dehydrated and thin, and noted a right wing drop, which was later determined to be a soft-tissue injury. Staff members provided the raptor with fluids, vitamins, anti-inflammatory medication, and appropriate nutrition.

Within seven days, the eagle's wing drop was showing signs of improvement. He was moved to one of our outdoor enclosures so staff could easily evaluate his range of motion and ability to use both wings normally. Twenty days later, staff members were comfortable with the bird's progress, and felt he was ready for his next phase of rehabilitation—conditioning in a large outdoor flight enclosure!



A. KINNEY



R. MCDUNN

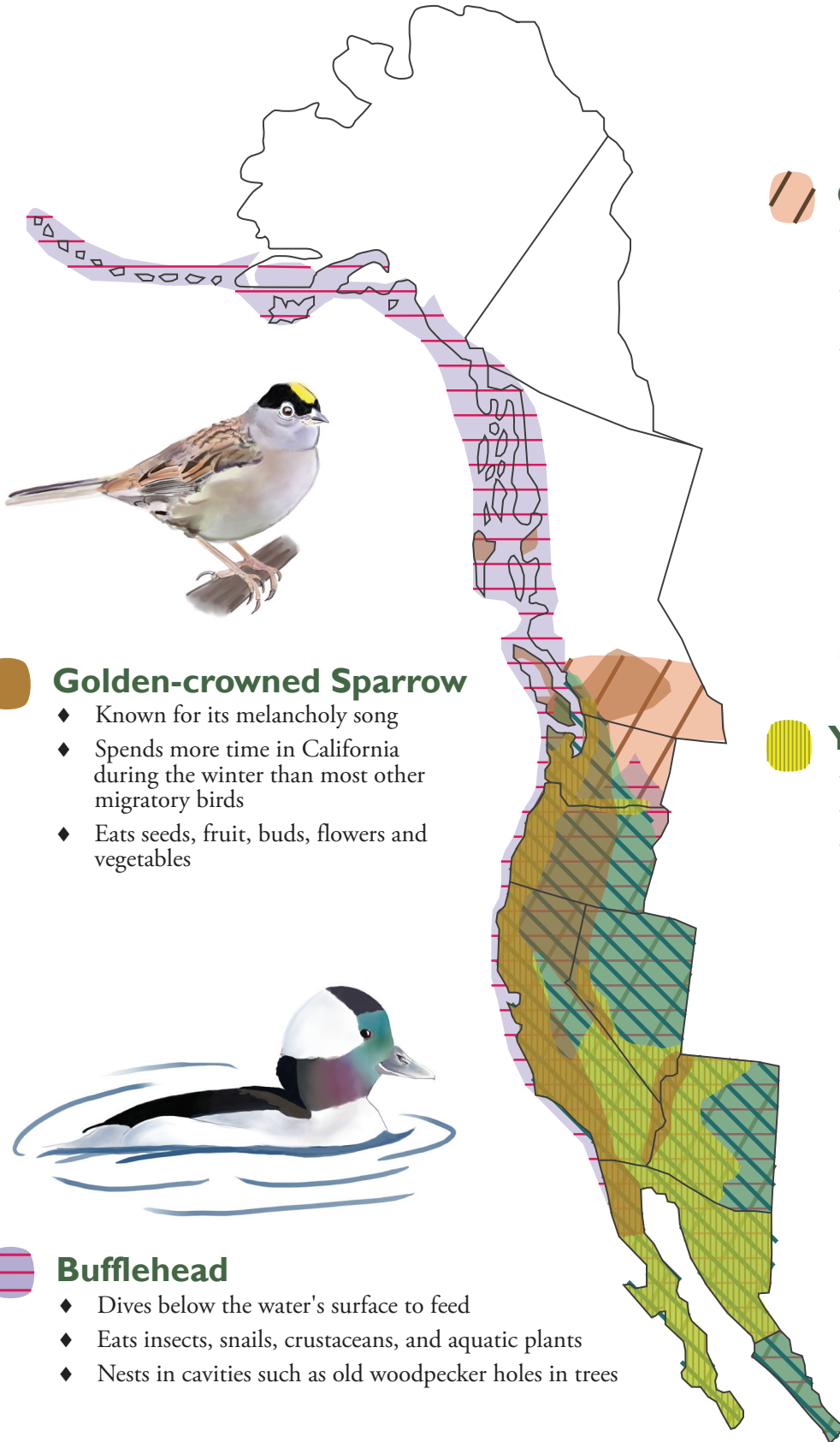
After 26 days in care at WCSV, we sent the eagle to our friends at the Wildlife Education and Rehabilitation Center (WERC) in Morgan Hill. WERC has a 100-foot flight enclosure, which is the ideal flight space for this species. The bird spent 18 days at WERC, where they closely observed the eagle's flight to make sure he was strong enough to fly free once again.

On August 14, 2020, this strong and very feisty eagle was released back into his territory in Portola Valley. He immediately bolted out of his transport kennel and took flight, circling in the sky a few times before disappearing out of sight.

This was such a special moment for all of us at WCSV. Not only was he our first eagle release, but he was a great example on how teamwork truly benefits our animals. Thank you to our friends at WERC and Bay Raptor Rescue for helping to make his rescue and release possible. 🦅

West Coast Migratory Birds

Many birds migrate as the seasons change, traveling great distances from one region to another, following abundant food sources, preferred nesting locations, and favorable weather. Here is a look at the ranges of five birds found in the Bay Areas during the winter.



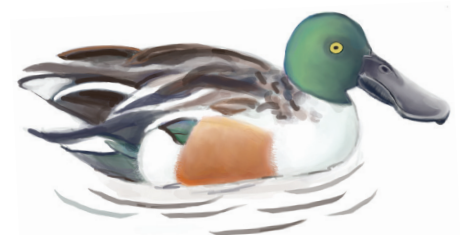
Cedar Waxwing

- ◆ One of the few birds whose diet primarily consists of fruit
- ◆ Can become intoxicated from eating fermented, overripe fruit
- ◆ Tail tips are usually yellow but can turn orange upon consumption of honeysuckles containing red pigments



Yellow-rumped Warbler

- ◆ Travels in large flocks
- ◆ Eats insects from ground and in-flight
- ◆ Eats berries in the winter

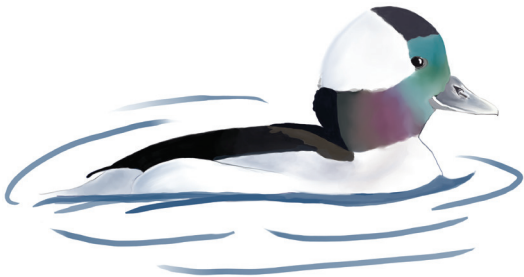


Northern Shoveler

- ◆ Large bill contains comb-like structures called lamellae, used to filter food from the water and sediment
- ◆ Eats tiny insects, crustaceans, algae, and seeds
- ◆ Also overwinters in Europe, Africa, and India

Golden-crowned Sparrow

- ◆ Known for its melancholy song
- ◆ Spends more time in California during the winter than most other migratory birds
- ◆ Eats seeds, fruit, buds, flowers and vegetables



Bufflehead

- ◆ Dives below the water's surface to feed
- ◆ Eats insects, snails, crustaceans, and aquatic plants
- ◆ Nests in cavities such as old woodpecker holes in trees

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If you see a wild animal in distress,
find helpful information at
wcsv.org
(408) 929-9453

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