DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE

Dear Wildlife Supporters,

Spring has sprung and our busiest season of the year is upon us! We will soon start seeing animals of all ages and types come through our doors by the thousands. Over the past two years we’ve seen the number of patients grow exponentially, and there is no sign of things slowing down.

We see over 7,000 sick, injured or orphaned mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians of over 160 different species, and most of these arrive in the spring and summer months. In fact, of those 7,000 animals, 78% come in during this time. From the smallest bird to the largest mammal, we do everything we can to give these deserving animals a second chance at a wild life. And it is because of you, our donors, that we can do this.

You make it possible for us to take the winter months to make the critical repairs and improvements to our animal enclosures and hospital that will give each animal we treat the best chance at rehabilitation and release. And, in the spring and summer, you make it possible to keep our very active hospital stocked with everything we need to get our wild patients on the road to recovery.

Thank you all for your ongoing support of WCSV and our mission to rehabilitate and release local wildlife. Every donation is meaningful and done too small.

To this small organization, you are a big deal!

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 contributions.

Employer Matching Program: This is a fantastic 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 Amazon Smile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the sale price from your eligible purchases to WCSV. To register, go to smile.amazon.com, and select us as the benefiting charity. Every little bit helps.

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 CARS (Charitable Adult Rides & Services) 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: http://www.careasy.org/

We are always humbled by your generosity, especially in these trying times. Thank you for your support and for your devotion to our mission to rehabilitate and release sick, injured and orphaned wildlife. 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

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

If you see an animal in distress, find helpful information at:
408.929.8453
info@wcsv.org
wcsv.org
3027 Penitencia Creek Road
San Jose, CA 95132

You can also find us on:
wcsv.org/facebook
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Tracks is a biannual publication of the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley.

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.
THE SYMBOLISM OF CORVIDS

by Laura Hawkins

Yes, they’re noisy and somewhat naughty at times, but corvids are really fascinating birds that are revered and celebrated in many cultures. Check out the examples below and see what you think!

Ravens

In Native American culture, the raven is described as an animal that symbolizes change and transformation. It is also sometimes considered an agent of magic.

In Hinduism, after someone dies, the family prepares their loved one’s favorite food to feed to the crows and raven god. If a raven eats the food, the deceased will be happy and rest in peace forever.

In Celtic and Norse mythology, ravens were highly regarded. This is evident as their images are plentifully carved into instruments of battle such as weapons, shields and armor.

Crows

To Native Americans, the crow is a symbol of deep knowledge and supreme intellect.

In Japanese culture, the crow symbolizes gratitude, family, and love and is considered the divine messenger who represents a good omen. It is also a fixture in Japanese pop culture.

Celtic Druids saw the crow as a harbinger. These prophets focused on the flight, speech and behavior of the crow for the purpose of telling the future.

A Special THANK YOU to our Invaluable Partners in Service!

- Alys Milner & Michael Francini
- Bay Bee Honey
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- Sigrid Roemer
- Silicon Valley Animal Control Authority
- SPCA for Monterey County
- Stanford Redwood City
- Summerlee Foundation
- Sunil Mohan
Here at the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley, we see five species of corvids: American Crows, Common Ravens, Yellow-billed Magpies, California Scrub Jays and Steller’s Jays.

Corvids are opportunistic feeders and will eat whatever is readily available: nuts, insects, small birds, reptiles and even carrion. This actually helps clean up our local ecosystems, eliminating swarms of insects that could destroy your garden and reducing the potential spread of disease by removing decomposing remains from our neighborhoods.

Most corvids - especially jays - cache nuts or store them in the ground to eat during the winter. They will mark the location with a leaf or similar material, but will forget some of the locations. This indirectly disperses the seeds and allows new trees to sprout, assisting in reforestation and recovery from forest fires.

American Crow

American crows are found all over the country year-round, and their range stretches deep into Canada during the breeding season. Crows are incredibly adept at coexisting in urban environments, and can be found wherever there is adequate shelter and food. Their large flocks only need some trees or structures to perch on, and are omnivorous – they will forage for seeds, nuts, and fruit, hunt insects, worms, and mice and even eat aquatic animals such as fish and clams. Young adult crows will often help raise newly-hatched crows, and often do not breed themselves until about four years of age. Crows are extremely intelligent; they will use sticks as tools and even bend wire to make hooks. They’ve also been observed working together to operate water fountains. Studies have shown that crows understand water displacement, and are able to remember human faces and teach other crows to recognize these faces.

Common Raven

Larger than the American Crow, Common Ravens have wedge-shaped tail feathers, unlike the crow whose feathers are fan-shaped, and have a vast repertoire of over 100 different vocalizations. They do not form flocks like crows, but they will gather together when food is abundant; their diet consists of carrion, small animals, fish, berries and food discarded by humans. Ravens will work in pairs to raid nests, with one raven distracting the occupants of the nest while a second raven grabs an egg or nestling. They will also search for carcasses in areas where they hear gunshots during hunting season.
Magpies

Yellow-billed Magpies have a small but varied range that covers portions of the central coast and Sierra mountain range. This region is approximately 500 miles long and 150 miles wide. While magpies are omnivores and will consume vegetation, they are considered beneficial to agriculture as their primary diet consists of insects and rodents. They are sometimes seen picking insects off the backs of animals such as deer.

California Scrub Jay

California Scrub Jay breeding pairs will defend their territory year-round, aggressively driving off other scrub-jays and other perceived threats. During the fall and winter, scrub jays who do not have their own territory will form flocks of up to about 30 birds, establishing a social hierarchy based primarily on age - with the older birds dominant over the younger ones. Birds in these flocks will disperse in the spring and summer months in hopes of establishing their own territories. They eat mostly fruit and insects during the spring and summer, and nuts and seeds during the winter.

Steller’s Jay

Steller’s Jays are one of the few North American birds with crests. They forage for insects, berries, nuts, and will also opportunistically eat food dropped by humans, and raid bird nests for eggs and even nestlings. These jays can mimic the calls of many other birds and animals, and actively socialize in large flocks, aggressively mobbing predators that encroach on their territories.
PATIENT HIGHLIGHTS

Merlin

One of our dedicated volunteers found this Merlin in her driveway. Hospital staff discovered signs of head trauma - mild swelling of the eyes and blood in the mouth - and believe this bird collided with the window of a parked car while chasing a songbird. The Merlin responded well to supportive care and anti-inflammatory medications, and we were able to release the bird after about a week.

Merlins are extremely fast and can fly up to 30 miles per hour. When hunting, they fly very close to the ground, concealing themselves with trees and shrubs to take their prey (small songbirds and shorebirds) by surprise.

Western Screech Owl

A concerned resident of Saratoga found this Western Screech Owl on the ground, not flying, dehydrated and cold. Staff placed the owl in an incubator to bring up its temperature before administering fluids and anti-inflammatories. After about two weeks in care, the owl received a clean bill of health and was released back into the wild.

Western Screech Owls have a very diverse diet, and will eat a variety of prey including insects, worms, rats and mice, crayfish, small birds and even animals larger than they are, such as brush rabbits.

Deer Mouse

This Deer Mouse came to the Center all the way from San Juan Bautista, where it had been caught by the rescuer’s cat - fortunately, the cat did not injure the mouse. Staff administered prophylactic medications to address the possibility of infection from germs found in the cat’s saliva, and after about a week and a half in care, the mouse was returned to the neighborhood from where it came.

Did you know that most mice you find in the wild in the Bay Area are not native to the state of California? Only deer mice and salt marsh harvest mice are native; most of the other species, such as house mice or field mice, were introduced during the westward expansion of human settlement in the area.
**Striped Skunks**

These two orphaned skunks came in separately over the course of a week. An animal control officer discovered each of these skunks alone in the evening, and delivered them to us for care. Both skunks had fleas, but were otherwise healthy upon intake. We will have them in care for the next several months as they grow up and learn all the natural skills required to survive on their own.

Skunks are able to produce their strong scent at birth, but it takes about four months before they can spray accurately. Young skunks will follow their mother out of the den at about seven to eight weeks old – older juveniles are able to return to the den on their own, but younger babies must be retrieved by the mother, or taken to a permitted wildlife rehabilitator if not reclaimed by the mom.

**Hairy Woodpecker**

This female Hairy Woodpecker was found in the middle of the road in Mountain View, near Creekside Park. The rescuer quickly brought the bird to our Center. Our staff discovered mild shoulder trauma, and prescribed medication to treat the swelling. This feisty patient recovered very quickly, and we were able to safely return the bird to the wild after less than one week.

Hairy Woodpeckers are often mistaken for the smaller Downy Woodpecker, but can be identified due to their significantly longer bills. When nesting, Hairy Woodpeckers excavate holes in the dead portions of trees. During subsequent breeding seasons, these abandoned holes will be taken over by other cavity nesters such as wrens, bluebirds or chickadees.

**Baby Hummingbirds**

Baby hummingbirds spend about three weeks in the nest before fledging – they then remain in care under the watchful eye of their mother for at least another three weeks. Every spring, we get many orphaned baby hummingbirds. A specialist looks after all of these tiny patients, and they will each spend about six weeks in care.

Most of the hummingbirds we receive are actually orphaned, but every year we do get over-rescued hummingbirds that are inadvertently taken from the mother by well-meaning individuals. The mother feeds the babies quickly – it only takes a few seconds, and no longer sits on the nest after the babies are a week-and-a-half old. If the babies are silent, they are being fed and cared for by the mother, they will peep to alert the mother that they are hungry and will peep continuously for over an hour if they are actually abandoned.

It is important you do not feed a baby hummingbird! They will become full and stop vocalizing and the mother may stop coming to the nest if she is no longer alerted by sound. An improper diet or feeding technique can cause more harm than a day or night of being hungry.

Please see wcsv.org/our-activities/hummingbird for more detailed information on how to determine whether hummingbirds need rescue and call us (408) 929-9453 with any questions.
If you see a wild animal in distress, find helpful information at:

www.wcsv.org
408.929.9453
3027 Penitencia Creek Rd.
San Jose, CA 95132

A leased facility of the Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department, funded in part by San Jose Animal Care & Services, the city of Milpitas, Silicon Valley Animal Control Authority and the city of Sunnyvale.

SAVE THE DATE!

WCSV’s Wingin’ It For Wildlife

Saturday,
September 17th @ 5pm

FEATURING A SILENT & LIVE AUCTION

Online event ~ Tickets are free ~ Internet connection required