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36710 Sand Creek Road  
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Members receive our quarterly newsletter  
Visit [CritterCreek.org](http://CritterCreek.org) to see back issues of the Chronicle



Newsletter of Critter Creek Wildlife Station

Fall 2014

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## Fall Open House

Saturday, September 20, 2014  
11:00 am until 2:00 pm  
Last tour begins at 1:30 p.m.

**Come and enjoy Critter Creek and find out how you  
can help support California wildlife.**

**Admission is by donation.**

**For more information call (559) 338-2415 or  
email at [crittercreekwildlife@hughes.net](mailto:crittercreekwildlife@hughes.net)**

### CRITTER CREEK TO BECOME MORE ENERGY SELF-SUFFICIENT

Critter Creek is purchasing a system of solar arrays to help defray the costs of electricity. Two meter boxes will be connected to solar arrays. The one meter box operates the walk-in freezer, barn, galley, and compound and the other meter box operates the entire other side of the creek including the well pump, infirmary and reptile house. Both of these PG&E bills were hundreds of dollars a month. Once completed our solar energy system should lower those bills substantially allowing us to spend that money on wildlife. The other benefit is to the environment. Both systems are sizeable reducing our use of traditional fossil fuels to generate the electricity needed to operate Critter Creek. We want to do our share in reducing carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases that have been linked to global warming. Some other stats that make this project fit the environmental mission of Critter Creek are that one solar array is the equivalent of planting 148 trees or 5,900 trees cleansing the air for one year. The power generated from one solar array is equivalent to removing 24 cars off the road for one year. It saves the use of 20,376 gallons of gas. We have been trying to go solar for over a decade and now is our best opportunity. About a third of the project costs will be covered by federal tax credit incentives. The other two thirds will have to be financed. Under the contract we have time to raise funds that allow us to recalibrate the loan. We would like to start this campaign now. If you support renewable energy help us make the switch to solar power. We have made it easy for you to give online...just click on the GIVE DIRECT button at [crittercreek.org](http://crittercreek.org)

**Critter Creek Chronicle**  
Animals for Education

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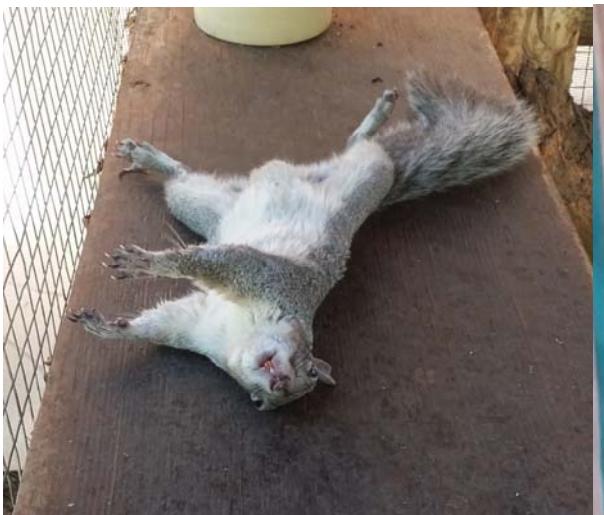
# Permanent Resident: Galileo—Great Horned Owl



Galileo arrived at Critter Creek this year in March. He had fallen from his nest in a pine tree that was over thirty feet in the air. He broke his left wing in two places. We set the wing and taped it to his body hoping it would heal securely. As a baby bird his bones knitted together quickly. Within a few weeks we were able to unwrap the wing to see if the repairs were aligned. One break healed perfectly; unfortunately the other break left him unable to fly but a few feet. In the picture you can see that his left wing droops lower than his right wing. He has quite a personality so we have been working with him to do educational programs. He is still very young, but he has already attended several programs and has all the signs of a true professional.

Great horned owls are one of the largest owls in California only topped by the Great Grey Owl. They stand 18-23 inches tall with a 5 foot wingspan. The females are larger than the males. They are amazingly camouflaged for cottonwood and oak woodlands. The basic body color is overall gray spotted with brown, with white and black markings. Their eyes are a deep yellow. Their name “horned” owls comes from distinctive ear tufts that are 1 ½ to 2 inches long. They have a remarkably strong grip, second only to eagles. Great horned owls give a cry of 3-8 hoots. They are silent in flight. Because their eyes are positioned in the front of their heads, they have excellent binocular vision even at close range. Their vision at night is 100 times more sensitive than humans and their hearing is equally sensitive. The feathery facial disks help channel sound to their large eardrums. They are capable of turning their heads 270 degrees.

## How Wildlife Can Stay Cool



## RELEASES ARE UNDERWAY

For the past 6 weeks we have been releasing many of our birds of prey, herons, ducks, opossums and squirrels etc. Finding places with a reliable source of water has been a real challenge this year. In the coming months we will be releasing our young larger mammals once we know they can hunt and fend for themselves.

