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**CRITTER CREEK WILDLIFE STATION
WINTER OPEN HOUSE
SATURDAY, DEC. 13TH, 2014
11:00 AM until 2:00PM**

The gate will close at 1:30pm to allow you enough time to tour. The Open House will be unguided, so the pace is leisurely and there are more opportunities to take pictures. Our volunteers will be on hand to answer any questions that you have and to share stories about some of our permanent residents. Call (559) 338-2415 or email at crittercreekwildlife@hughes.net for information.



Visit our gift shop where you'll find unusual handcrafted gifts for the holidays.

Reminder

We recently sent out a flyer urging our supporters to help us raise money by using Amazon Smile when you shop on-line or the S.H.A.R.E.S. card when you shop for groceries. We will receive a percentage of your purchases from these corporations. Please keep us in mind as the holiday season approaches and contact us if you have any questions (559) 338-2415

WORK HAS BEGUN ON THE SOLAR PROJECT



Despite delays, construction of the two solar arrays has begun. The electrical work on the two meter boxes has been completed and approved by the county. Currently the land mounts are being cemented in and the frames for the solar panels are being put up.

Each day more progress is made. The actual solar panels are being installed. Hopefully, the system will be up and running within a few weeks.

We appreciate any support you are able to provide. We have made it easy for you by going to our website at crittercreek.org and clicking on the Give Direct button.



Pictures (top to bottom):
Land mounts across creek
Land mounts and frame being installed
Start of solar panel installation

TURKEY VULTURES MAKE GOOD NEIGHBORS

Vultures are nature's sanitary engineers. Their daily habits of cleaning up deteriorating and often diseased carcasses make them indispensable as man's neighbor.

Vultures have extremely sensitive senses of smell—a very unusual trait for a bird. Dangerous gas leaks and toxic wastes can be located by using the vulture's keen sense.

Also, the creature's ability to conserve energy has intrigued researchers for decades. A turkey vulture actually turns down its body temperature requirements at night. To warm up the following morning, the bird contorts its body unequalled by any bodybuilder. Finally it settles on spreading its often six feet wing span to catch every ray of available sun.



The prehistoric looking bird also practices a behavior called urohidrosis. Having no sweat glands, the bird cools itself during hot spells by defecating on its legs. "The slurry of white uric acid in the feces contains moisture that cools by evaporating," says Michael Fry, zoologist at U.C. Davis. It requires no sweating which in turn requires no metabolic increase.

Another basic energy conserving maneuver for turkey vultures is staying in one spot for long periods of time. "If the weather is bad for flying," says Oregon biologist Debbie Davis, "they can and will sit at their roost for days." Remember, their metabolism is low innately, so fasting for a few days is really no big deal for these birds. The ability to go without food for several days helps turkey vultures survive because they literally never know where their next meal will occur.

The turkey vulture does not use much energy when taking off or landing because of its long, broad wings. They are designed for excellent lift. Turkey vultures are also graceful, almost effortless fliers. They ride air thermals searching for "downed" food over dozens of square miles flapping their wings only a few times.

They locate food—often road kills or "downed" natural wild deaths by smell. Turkey vultures can literally eat food so decayed—so rotten—that it would kill any other creature that ingested it. They have evolved into detoxification systems. By eating such unappetizing creatures along roads and wherever they die, turkey vultures act as a disease preventing mechanism for society.

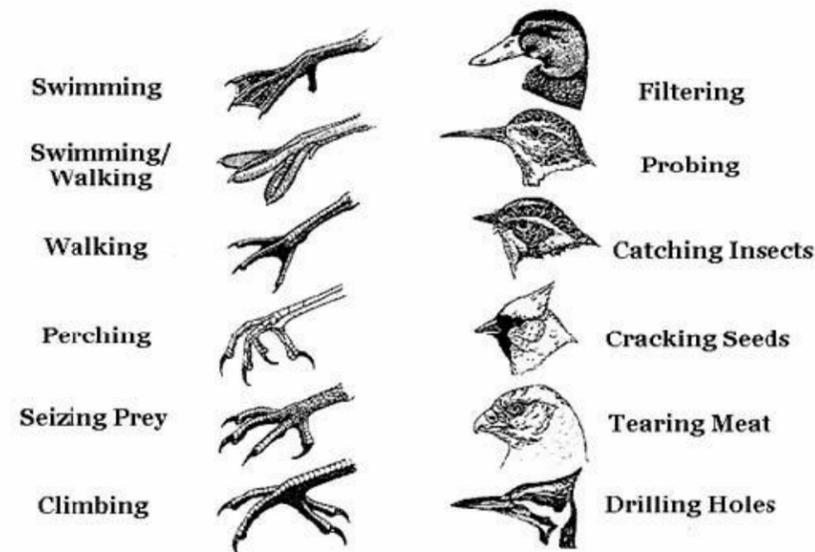
Biologists have discovered that turkey vultures have botulism-resistant nervous systems and extremely powerful immune systems that literally ward off bacterial toxins.

Turkey vultures survive encountering man by becoming almost docile. They are very shy, cautious creatures. When trapped and frightened, they regurgitate their last meal. The vomit is as bad or worse than skunk spray.

Turkey vultures around the fall and early winter usually head for warmer climes—either the Central Coast or Mexico. They come together in what are called "kettles." These can consist of thousands of turkey vultures. They catch thermals and travel for miles.

Turkey vultures are often pictured as symbols of death, when they are actually shy, inoffensive birds that serve a useful function in nature. (taken from Wildlife Health News published by The North American Wildlife Health Care Center)

Bird Beaks and Feet



Here is an easy guide for identifying the type of bird you may be calling us about.

It is very helpful if you can describe the type of beak and feet of the bird we will be dealing with.

The type of beak tells us what type of food it requires, and the feet tell us the type of environment it needs to be housed in so we may prepare for its arrival.

Happy Holidays