

Critter Creek Chronicle

Animals for Education

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Newsletter of Critter Creek Wildlife Station

Fall 2023

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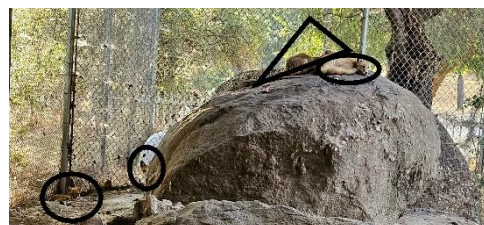
Membership Categories Annual Dues

Student	\$ 15
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Members receive our quarterly newsletter
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Critter Creek Wildlife
Station
36710 Sand Creek Road
Squaw Valley, CA 93675



CRITTER CREEK WILDLIFE STATION'S
FALL OPEN HOUSE
SEPT. 23rd SATURDAY
11:00 AM TO 2:00 PM

Gates will close at 1:30 to allow time to tour

Entrance is by donation. Field parking is free. 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. The gift shop will be open and has many gifts for early holiday shoppers. We accept cash, checks, debit, and credit cards. We have a picnic area, so bring a lunch or the country store next door has refreshments. Call (559) 338-2415 or email at crittercreekwildlife@hughes.net



We took in a young golden eagle in the winter of last year. After months of flight conditioning, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife helped us locate a suitable release site. Since the eagle came from Tule River Reservation land, they picked a site close to where the eagle was found and successfully released it.

How Hard Are Heat Waves on Nesting Birds

During the hottest days of the summer, we do receive more baby bird calls. By August, most birds of prey have already had their young fledge, so they are able to find shade to avoid overheating. However, sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks are the exception. They nest later in the summer and build their nests much higher in the canopies, so their nests are often more exposed to direct sunlight. When the days are 100 degrees or more especially for a series of days, the heat becomes too intense, and they fall or jump from the nest often getting injured. When you find them, they are often panting and lying flat on the ground. If they appear uninjured and the parents are around, you should leave them alone. The parents will continue to feed them. You can set out a shallow bowl of water to help them rehydrate.



It is fairly easy to see when a bird is overheating. They pant; it is the best way to move air across moist surfaces thus increasing evaporative cooling. They also vibrate their throat which is called gular fluttering. This behavior is common when they are stressed as well.

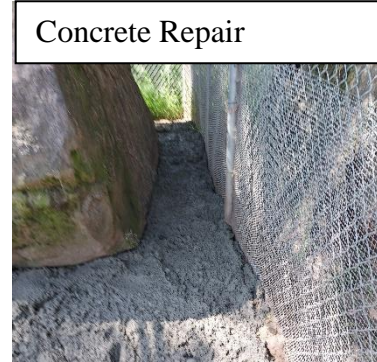
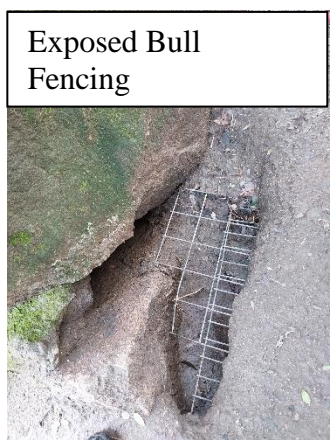
Here at Critter Creek, we have made a concerted effort to plant trees in or around our enclosures. If not trees, wild grape works great because it climbs over the enclosure. In the summer it provides lush green shade and, in the winter, it loses its leaves allowing winter sunlight to warm the enclosure. If growing plants aren't possible, then we resort to using shade cloth.



So during these strings of over 100 degree days, be on the look out for baby birds of all sizes and shapes as they struggle to stay cool.

Red Foxes Back in their Enclosure

It took almost a year, but we were finally able to repair the red fox enclosure. Despite burying serious bull fence panels in their enclosure a few years ago, they managed to dig under cement around the boulder pile and get underneath the fencing. Until we caught all four of them, we could do nothing not knowing who was in what burrow. The excessive rains from this past winter did the trick. Their burrows flooded and with the



enticement of food, we were able to move them to adjacent caging so we could work on their main enclosure. With extra cement from a pour we had done, we were able to wheelbarrow cement all around the boulder pile. They continue to dig down to the wire, but they are unable to dig under it. Based on work done with artificial dens for kit foxes in Bakersfield, we are trying several approaches for artificial dens for this winter. For now, with the warm weather, they prefer to relax on top of their boulder pile.



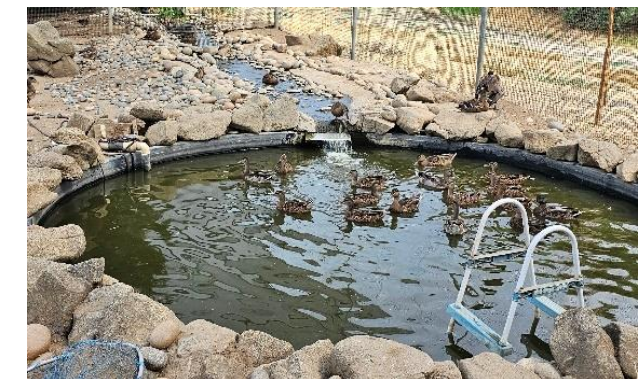
Can you find all 4 Red Fox in this picture? Answer on back



Artificial Burrow

Updates

Both biofilters (alligators and heron creek) are up and running just in time to avoid botulism in both ponds.



Our telephone land line (559) 338-2415 is finally working (at least for now).