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Critter Creek Wildlife Station
36710 Sand Creek Road
Squaw Valley, CA 93675



Newsletter of Critter Creek Wildlife Station Winter 2011 Volume 16, No. 4

EVERYONE AT CRITTER CREEK HOPES YOU
HAD A HAPPY HOLIDAY

AS EVERYONE SETTLES INTO THE NEW YEAR WE INVITE
YOU TO SPEND TIME AT CRITTER CREEK DURING OUR
OPEN HOUSE JANUARY 28TH
SATURDAY
11:00A.M.-2:00P.M.

Take your time and visit those animals you enjoy watching the most. Volunteers will be stationed nearby to answer any questions you might have. We hope to see you on the 28th.



Critter Creek Chronicle
Animals for Education

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PERMANENT RESIDENT: Golden Eagle – Tahoe

Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care took in an injured Golden Eagle from Susanville. Their vet found an old wing injury which made the eagle non-releasable. Unable to keep the eagle permanently, they set out to find him a home. Having lost Sequoia a little over a year ago, we have been without an eagle we can keep for educational purposes.

I met the Millhams in Elk Grove on December 3. They are the owners Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care. We transferred the two bear cubs to their facility in August. They said both cubs were doing well and that the littlest one was especially shy. They transferred the eagle to Critter Creek. We named him Tahoe.

If you come to Open House on January 28th, you will have an opportunity to meet Tahoe.



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PERMANENT RESIDENT: Grey Fox – Rose



Our local Fish and Wildlife warden brought Rose to us in October. She was kept in a backyard ever since she was tiny. The people felt they weren't breaking any laws by feeding her since she was free to run around and come and go at will. Unfortunately what they were doing was habituating her (making her far too comfortable and friendly around humans). She relied on people for her food making her non-releasable.

We currently have her in an adjoining kennel to Fox Haven where Sterling and Shadow, our two permanent grey fox live. Over the past few months, they have accepted her through the fencing. We hope to place her in Fox Haven so all three can socialize.

National Geographic's "Wild Justice" Comes to Critter Creek

In March of this year a Fish and Game warden from the South Valley brought three bobcat kittens to Critter Creek. The film crew from National Geographic's "Wild Justice" program was accompanying him for the day. He got a call from workers chipping piles of orange wood that had been bulldozed into piles the previous fall. In one load headed for the chipper three little bobcat kittens fell to the ground. Fortunately the workers stopped and called the warden. One kitten was injured from the fall with a broken jaw. The other two seemed relatively unharmed; however they were only a few weeks old, clearly still nursing. That first night the injured kitten died. Over the next weeks we were able bottle feed them and in time wean them. Thankfully they had each other so it was easy to keep them wild and releasable. After months of growing and hunting practice, they were released in early December with Wild Justice's cameras rolling. Watch for the program to be aired in the next few months.



From Bottle Feeding to Adolescents Hunting to Release with Camera Crew Filming

LEG-HOLD TRAPS TO GLUE TRAPS TRAPS ARE NOT THE ANSWER

Recently we have received calls regarding animals caught in traps.

In California, the use of leg-hold traps is illegal though it is easy to find one online, in garage sales, etc. Some think that as long as the trap doesn't have teeth, it isn't painful or cruel. When these traps snap shut, guaranteed, the animal's leg is broken. The trap is also supposed to be anchored down so the animal can't run off injured.

Neither the law, nor the trap, nor the tie-down helped the little grey fox found running around at an industrial site on December 26th. The vet found the leg broken and almost severed. There is no way to know how long the fox had been running around with the trap destroying his leg. He had to be euthanized due to his injuries. We handed over the trap to Fish and Game, but there were no identifying marks to help them trace it to the trapper.

Should you ever see someone using such a trap—please call Cal-Tips at 1-888-334-2258. You can remain anonymous if you are worried about the person threatening your safety.



We also received a kestrel covered in glue from a glue trap. These sticky glue traps are supposed to target mice (rodents in general) or birds like pigeons. While glue traps are legal and sold at every hardware store, they do not work as advertised. Supposedly the animal struggles and suffocates in the glue; in reality the animal usually struggles until it dies of exhaustion or starvation. Often people who set these traps aren't always so good about checking them regularly.

If you find an animal stuck in a glue trap, you should powder them with flour or talc to stop the glue from covering any more of the animal. There are ways to get the glue off, but you should contact us first. The animal is already stressed and the glue-removal process can be even more stressful. While the kestrel we picked up responded well to the clean-up process, she must have ingested some of the glue because she died shortly after she was given solid food. She is a good example of the biggest problem with glue traps. Like poisons, they kill more than just the targeted victim.

Here at Critter Creek, we understand how annoying mice can be. We have tons of uneaten food around all of our indoor cages such as the back porch where ferrets, parrots, and sugar gliders all eat foods that mice treasure. We don't care to live with mice running around our house, so we use live traps to catch the mice, baited with the same food as the mice are seeking. We let them go on the other side of the creek in a big wood pile. We joke that this colony of mice must believe in the "back porch myth" full of stories of warm places to nest and of ample supplies of food.

With research, you can find a humane way to remove an unwanted pest. However try to prevent the problem to begin with. If at all possible don't leave scraps of food around and try to minimize access by plugging holes and caulking cracks big enough for entry. If there continues to be a problem, look into using live traps. You need to check with Fish and Game before trapping and relocating an animal over 3 miles from where it was captured.