

Stanislaus Flyer

Summer

Stanislaus Wildlife Care Center

2020

The Mission of SWCC is to promote respect for wildlife and increase the public's awareness of the importance of preserving wildlife through the care of injured and orphaned California native wild animals and community education.

Inside this issue...

Creature Feature	Pg 1
Baby Animal Season 2020	Pg 2
Striped Skunks	Pg 3
Flying Squirrel Release	Pg 4
Douglas Squirrel Release	Pg 5
Mailing Labels	Pg 6
Long Awaited New Shed	Pg 6

SWCC Staff

Executive Director	Cindy Manning
Assistant Director	Donna Burt
Animal Care Manager	Veronica Sandow
Animal Care Coordinators	Duane Dahl CeCe Hurst Alyssa Washburn Sierra Mathiesen

Board of Directors

Donna Burt	Chairperson
Linda Weidman	Vice-Chair
Cindy Manning	Director
Dorothy Tuggle	Secretary
Janice Lookabaugh	Treasurer
Phil McKay	Member
Dr. Doug Marks	Veterinarian

Creature Feature

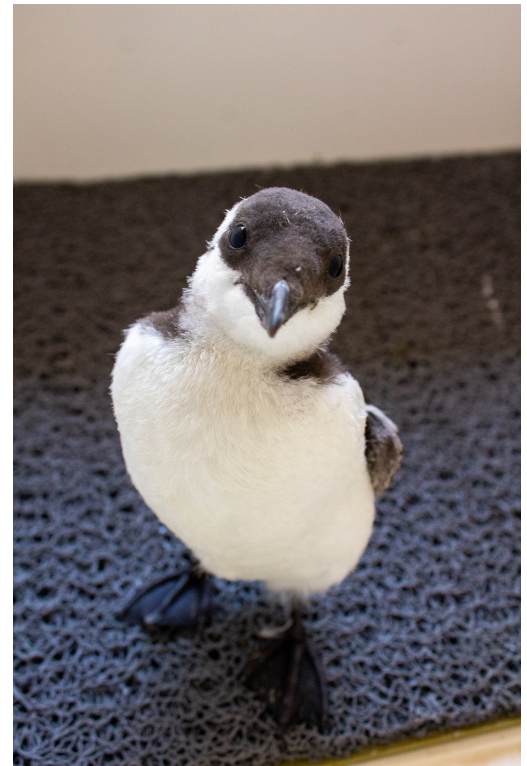
Common Murre

By Nancy Haydock

On July 29, 2020, we received a young common murre from a market in Redwood City. Since the person who found the bird was on their way to Modesto, they brought the bird to us. Common murres are pelagic sea birds. They only come on land to nest. We've no idea how he got to the market or where his mother was.

He appeared to be uninjured and in good health. We put him in one of our duck brooders and fed him fish – lots of fish.

Common murres weigh around two pounds and have a wingspan of a little over two feet. They are black and white and somewhat resemble penguins. Murres are also called auks, or Alcids, members of the family Alcidae. Like most auks, they forage at sea and nest on high cliffs in dense colonies.



Common Murre

Veronica Sandow

Murres are excellent swimmers and divers, darting around underwater for herring, cod, capelin, haddock, and any other fish small enough to swallow whole. Various crustaceans are also on their diet.

Eggs of the common murre are whitish, tan, blue, or green with brown, reddish, or black markings. The different colors and patterns may help parents to recognize their own eggs. The eggs are pointed at one end. When placed on a flat surface and pushed, they roll in a circle. This prevents them from rolling off the narrow ledges that murres choose as nesting sites. Young murres take their first flight when fifteen to twenty-five days old. Both parents continue to feed the babies until they can support themselves. They can live close to thirty years.

continued on page 7

Baby Animal Season 2020

By *Cindy Manning*

In March, California issued a stay at home order to prevent the spread of Covid-19. I knew it would be difficult for the center because the animals have to be fed and the cages cleaned every day. I checked the state order. Animal shelters are considered essential businesses. After consulting the staff and board of directors, we decided to stay open.

Soon after the stay at home order, a relative of a volunteer was exposed to COVID-19. Luckily, the volunteer had not been to the center since being exposed. We asked all volunteers to stay at home, and stopped accepting new volunteers. We continued to admit and care for animals with only employees. But the busy season was coming, and we could not care for all the animals without volunteers.

During the time without volunteers, many people made masks for us. After a month, we invited volunteers to come back if they were comfortable doing so. A few came back, but the majority did not. I started the new volunteer orientations in May, which helped us get more volunteers.

We implemented many rules to keep us safe. From the beginning, we wore masks while working in the buildings or with other people. We stocked up on gloves. We emphasized washing hands frequently and wiping down places that are touched often. We tried to have only one person in a room at a time. When it got busy, we permitted two people to work on opposite sides of the baby bird room.



Titmice

Veronica Sandow



Killdeer

Veronica Sandow

To keep us, and the public, safe, we closed the lobby and did intake in the parking lot. When it got hot, we installed a pop-up for shade.

We didn't know how the pandemic and stay at home would affect the number of animals we received. Were people staying at home and not finding animals in distress? Or would the public find more injured and orphaned animals?

We have admitted more animals this year than ever before. Last year we received 1878 animals by August 16 (when I wrote this article). This year we are at 2018 animals – 140 more animals than last year.

	2020	2019	2018
Mourning Dove	160	119	135
California Scrub Jay	150	126	146
European Starling	140	149	96
House Sparrow	133	170	126
House Finch	103	112	74
Mallard	100	150	91
Opossum	93	120	135

With the help of our dedicated volunteers and employees, we cared for all of the animals. Many of the animals have been released, and the baby bird room is almost empty.

Striped Skunks

By Janice Lookabaugh

What animal is about the size of a small house cat and has black fur with either white stripes or spots? It's a skunk, of course. Skunks were classified in the weasel family until recently, but now they are in their own family, Mephitidae.

In California, there are two species of skunks; striped skunks and western spotted skunks. Currently, the wildlife center is caring for seven striped skunk babies.

Aside from their distinctive color: black with white stripes or spots, skunk's most well-known characteristic is the odor they can produce. If a skunk feels threatened, it will usually try to run away. If that isn't possible, it will give warning by stamping its feet, raising its tail straight up, and snarling.

Then if that fails, they point their behinds at the offending object and spray a slick, yellowish fluid from scent organs near the base of their tail. Sulfur compounds give the spray its characteristic foul odor. A skunk can squirt this fluid up to 10 feet, six times in a row. They can spray when eight days old, although learning to aim takes about three weeks.

Skunks are nocturnal and typically live in abandoned burrows. But they will also live in abandoned buildings, under large rocks, in hollow logs, or under porches. They have sharp claws on their front feet to dig for grubs and worms. They also eat insects, rodents, eggs, and young waterfowl. They can be a problem for beekeepers because they raid hives and eat bees.



Skunks.

Janice Lookabaugh



Baby skunk hunting mealworms

Donna Burt.

They only live about three years in the wild, but can live for seven to eight years in captivity.

Males are promiscuous and mate with several females. They do not help to raise the young.

Before giving birth (usually in May), the female digs a den to house her four to seven young. Skunks are born blind and deaf. Their eyes and ears open about three weeks after birth. They are weaned about two months after birth but generally stay with their mother until they are ready to mate at about one year of age.

Do skunks have any natural predators? Some birds such as great horned owls, golden eagles, and bald eagles don't have a keen sense of smell. They will eat skunks, but they need to avoid getting sprayed in the face!

How do we care for skunks at the wildlife center? We move very slowly and carefully and wear full personal protection. If handled properly, skunks seldom spray. They don't like the smell, either.

Rabies is uncommon in most wild mammals, but it is quite common in skunks and bats. If you find an injured or orphaned skunk or bat, please use gloves or towels to pick it up, even the tiniest babies. Our skunk and bat handlers are vaccinated against rabies and know how to care for them without risk.

If you come to the wildlife center and you notice a 'funny' smell, don't worry, it's not because we haven't been cleaning up after the animals. It might be that one of the skunks decided to let loose with its most effective defense mechanism.

Flying Squirrel Release

By *Alyssa Washburn*

Three infant northern flying squirrels were brought to our clinic on September 23, 2019, all the way from Long Barn. They were about the size of a small mouse, and their eyes were still closed. However, they already had the loose fold of skin, called the patagium, extending from the front ankle to the rear ankle, which allows them to glide from tree to tree.

They went into homecare so they would get around the clock care. Once the squirrels were close to adult size and self-feeding, they were moved into an outdoor enclosure. That was December 5, 2020, way too late in the year to release them.

To make their surroundings feel natural to them, the enclosure had a nest box and Christmas trees. Our staff and volunteers enjoyed the chance to view these unique and quite adorable squirrels.

Northern flying squirrels have big dark eyes and grey fur that feels like velvet. They occasionally stick their heads out during the day. But they are most active at night because they are nocturnal.



Flying Squirrel

Veronica Sandow

We over-wintered the flying squirrels because of the harsh snowy conditions at their released site. They were in our care for a total of 256 days.

When the weather was finally suitable, it was time for their release.

I took part in the long-awaited release. Our Animal Care Manager, Veronica Sandow, and I, along with the flying squirrels safely in tow, drove all the way to Yosemite National Park. A biologist for California Department of Fish and Wildlife told us that Yosemite would be a great spot for their release because northern flying squirrels live in that area.

On June 5, 2020, after walking into the woods and away from any roads, we found a perfect tree to hang the nest box. Once we removed the covering, they were free to come and go as they pleased.

It was quite bittersweet to release them back into the wild, but I was moved after having been a part of their rehabilitation for all that time.



Release Sitel

Veronica Sandow

amazon smile
You shop. Amazon gives.

Open an Amazon Smile account and designate the SWCC as your charity. It's the same as a regular Amazon account except they donate a percentage of each purchase to us.

You don't pay anything extra, but we get some, much-needed money



Flying squirrel when first admitted

Donna Burt

Douglas Squirrel Release

By Dong Marks

We all appreciate the work that goes into releasing an animal. The staff at the SWCC should get kudos for their work and dedication to the animals!

The Douglas squirrel was released this spring up in the Sierras. I tried to do it a couple times, but spring snows kept it from happening. On April 15, it happened.

To make sure he had some easy access to food, I spread a few walnuts out on the ground. After the box was secured in the tree, I opened it very carefully.

He "talked" quite a bit! I took it to mean he was happy!

I have heard him, I think it's him, a few times when I've been in his neighborhood. He seems to be doing great.



Taken from my trail camera a couple weeks later.



This is just after I put his box in the tree.

Notice the white door. Douglas squirrels are highly territorial. At the center, he attacked and bit anyone who entered his enclosure. He hung on the wire walls and screeched at people who came near and then ran for the safety of his nest box. That gave us the chance to close the door from the outside so we could go inside to clean in safety.



The Douglas squirrel when he was a baby...Donna Burt

**DONATE YOUR CAR,
TRUCK OR BOAT**



It's Easy

**Tax Receipt Given
Not running OK
FREE PICK UP
Call 877-411-3662**

Mailing Labels (or current resident)

By Donna Burt

Several people have asked why their mailing label has **(or current resident)** under their name. It almost sounds rude, as if we don't know who you are. We are not trying to be rude, only to comply with US Post Office regulations.

There are two things we can do to remove that line. We can mail all our newsletters and fundraising letters first class. Or we can hire a mailing service to guarantee each name and address, and to put a zebra stripe on the envelope for the sorting machines to read. With the small number of letters we mail, that costs more than mailing first class.

First class postage is 55 cents per letter. Non-profit bulk mail costs 17 cents per letter. This is a savings of 38 cents per envelope. For a mailing of 1000 newsletters, that little phrase saves us \$380. For a mailing of 2,500 fundraising letters, it saves us \$950.

And, while I am talking about mailings, some of you may get duplicate mailings. We apologize. For fundraising letters, we merge our membership list and the addresses of finders (people who brought animals.) I can program the computer to catch most of the duplicates, but computers are absolutely literal. If there is the tiniest difference between how two addresses are typed, the computer will consider them two different addresses. Since the finder list changes at every mailing, there is little point in changing finder addresses to match the membership list.

I search on addresses and names looking for duplicates. But at some point, the time involved in finding duplicates is not worth the extra postage.



Common Murre

Donna Burt

The Long Awaited New Shed

By Donna Burt

Several months ago, we asked for donations for a new shed to keep our tables, chairs, and other equipment safe. But when I went to order the building, it was out of stock. Every time I tried to order, it was out of stock. Apparently, this item is so popular that it sells out quickly.

Then spring baby animal season put a hold on facilities improvement. During that time, we are just too busy with all the babies to do anything else.

The shed is now on order and should arrive in late September!

Anchor bolts are required to secure the shed. The longer concrete sets, the harder it gets. So, we will pour the slab after the shed arrives.

We already have two other sheds just like this one. The instructions say it can be assembled in eight hours. It takes longer than that to get the parts out of the boxes and get the plastic covers peeled off the panels. But the shed is on the way, and we finally get to spend all the money you so graciously donated. It has been sitting in our restricted funds' account, waiting for this day.

Supplies We Need

Paper Towels
Toilet Paper (for bird nests)
Kleenex (for bird nests)
Puppy Pads
13 gal plastic garbage bags
Dishwashing Gloves (S & M)
Visit our Amazon Wish List for other ideas.

Volunteers & Money

Common Murre continued from page 1

Common murre live all along the west coast of North America and on the east coast of Canada. They do not live in the Central Valley of California. It was great to have him for a few days. Unfortunately, we don't have facilities to care for seabirds.

We transferred him to the International Bird Rescue and Rehabilitation Center (IBRRC) in Fairfield. That organization specializes in caring for seabirds. When he is ready to be on his own, IBRRC will take him back to Redwood City and release him along the coast to join the other common murre living there.



Common Murre

Veronica Sandow

Moving??

If your address changes, please let us know. Send in the membership form or email:
SWCCenter@StanislausWildlife.org

Membership Form

Name _____ Date _____

Street _____ Phone() _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail Address _____

New Membership Membership Renewal General Donation Restricted Donation

\$20 Individual \$30 Family \$50 Grantor \$100 Sustaining \$500 Contributor \$1000 Donor Other \$ _____

If you do not need a receipt, please check here . You'll save the SWCC the price of a stamp. Thank you!

All donations are tax deductible and gratefully accepted. Please consult your tax advisor.

Make checks payable to: SWCC, P.O. Box 298, Hughson, CA 95326 - THANK YOU!

Please email SWCCenter@StanislausWildlife.org if you would like to volunteer.

The SWCC does not sell or give addresses to anyone!

Summer 2020

Stanislaus Wildlife Care Center
P.O. Box 298
Hughson, CA
95326 209-883-9414
SWCCenter@stanislauswildlife.org
www.stanislauswildlife.org

NON-PROFIT ORG
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 278
MODESTO, CA



Douglas Squirrel

Donna Burt