Being a PWC Phone Volunteer by Dave Klinzman

The first contact with PWC usually comes from a citizen calling the PWC hotline 543-WILD (9453) to report an encounter with a wild creature. The PWC answering system provides a lot of information to the caller as well as the ability to leave a message.

Currently, 22 PWC volunteers call the answering service (8:00 AM to 7:00 PM seven days a week in half day shifts) to retrieve calls. At a minimum, this means a call back to the person leaving the message. Volunteers usually call in every couple of hours to collect messages, more often during busy periods.

Instantly, the PWC phone volunteer becomes a kind of crisis counselor, emergency technician, educator, animal expert, and behavior analyst—sometimes all of them—during the course of a single call.

In many cases, the caller is reporting a sighting of (or problem with), take your pick: raccoon, opossum, skunk, mountain lion, bobcat, coyote or other creatures. Other calls involve shore or seabirds that have had encounters with fishing gear, dogs, oil, etc. Still others involve reptiles [eagles, hawks, owls and vultures] and other bird species.

In all cases, the phone volunteer advises and counsels the caller about appropriate steps. When the wild creature is uninjured, the phone volunteer advises the best course of action: DO NOTHING. PWC isn’t allowed to respond to animals that are not in distress. Some callers need the counseling session. Often the creature is just looking for water, food or a safe place to rest and suggestions on how to encourage the animal to just move on are offered.

The PWC phone volunteer becomes a kind of crisis counselor, emergency technician, educator, animal expert and behavior analyst.

Meanwhile, calls that identify orphaned or injured wildlife (or those in peril) often result in the volunteer instructing the caller as to how to capture the creature and bring it to the Rehabilitation Center in Morro Bay, or, keep an eye on it, while the phone volunteer contacts a dedicated “transporter volunteer” to come to the site, capture and/or collect the creature and deliver it to the Rehab Center where even more dedicated volunteers are working seven days a week, 365 days a year!

Later the caller may ask for a follow-up report. Often, at this point the phone volunteer becomes a “member recruiter” by pitching PWC’s pivotal role in our County and the fact that we are a non-profit, member-supported organization. Often this results in a new member, new volunteer or a monetary contribution to us.

Indeed, the phone volunteers represent the “public face” of PWC and perform a critical service. They also have some very interesting stories to share about their encounters with the public, which we will continue to share in time.

HELP?! If you can give 4-6 hours per week, or even once or twice a month for the next three months, we sure could use more help covering the PWC phone hot-line [volunteers take vacations and students go home]! You will learn so much about our local wildlife! Call 543-WILD and leave a message for Mo!
A New Approach

In many of the cases admitted to the Pacific Wildlife Care Rehabilitation Center, large birds such as pelicans and raptors are severely malnourished as well as suffering from injury. Why? An injured animal struggles to find food. Indeed, malnourished juvenile pelicans – who are not yet skilled at feeding themselves – are often doomed. Their health deteriorates until a kindly human alerts PWC’s telephone hot line.

Once admitted, PWC faces a very difficult task. Before addressing injury, PWC has to stabilize the patient nutritionally.

Until recently, PWC used Ensure and other protein additives. However, injured animals tend to reject almost all food provided. Why? The energy required to digest the food depletes the energy needed to sustain life.

The Opportunity

Recently, PWC tested a promising product called “Emerald” from lafebever.com. Emerald consists of basic proteins; hence very little energy is required for digestion. The protein is absorbed directly into the blood stream, quickly nourishing the animal. Emerald contains “balanced omega 3 and 6 polyunsaturated fatty acids, all essential amino acids making protein more easily absorbable, and dietary nucleotides to provide DNA and RNA precursors.”

PWC has had early success with Emerald. Routine blood tests of newly admitted pelicans show zero or near-zero protein levels. After using Emerald most cases have moved from being critical to non-critical status quite quickly.

The Challenge

There is one big problem – Emerald’s cost. First, a little background. So far in 2010, PWC has admitted over 60 pelicans and 85 raptors and expended almost $8,000 to feed them. Avian food comprises over 75% of our annual $20,000 food budget.

A single 5 lb. tub of Emerald costs $120.00 retail. This provides 15 lbs. of supplement to feed malnourished birds. Indeed, the cost of Emerald taxes our rehabilitation efforts.

In order to help offset these costs, PWC has established a special program that allows supporters to donate specifically towards the purchase of Emerald. It started with a few loyal volunteers contributing once they saw the nearly miraculous outcomes and it grew at the Windows into Wildlife event. Thank you to those who pledged enough for six tubs!

Calendar Dates

June 16 (Wed.) 5:30 - 7:00 PM
New Volunteer Orientation
RSVP jstone_tierney@charter.net

July Advanced Training for Rehab Center Volunteers
*check web-site for date/time*

July 14 (Wed.) 6:00 - 7:00 PM
Wildlife Transporter Training
RSVP solarken@att.net

August 14 (Sat.) 10:00 - 11:30 AM
New Volunteer Orientation
RSVP jstone_tierney@charter.net

August 21 (Sat.) 10:00 - 11:00 AM
Wildlife Transporter Training
RSVP solarken@att.net

September 15 (Wed.) 6:00 - 7:00 PM
Wildlife Transporter Training
RSVP solarken@att.net

Thank you to all who attended Windows into Wildlife II at Edna Valley Vineyard in March. It was a lovely day, wonderful food, animal ambassadors, auctions and a very successful fund raiser!

The Social Side of PWC

by Tamar Carmona

Rescuing and caring for animals is serious and important business for those of us who volunteer as transporters, phone volunteers, Rehab Center workers, office staff or the Board of Directors at PWC. As a group of caring people, we often focus mainly on the sick, orphaned or injured wildlife and lose sight of the chance to nurture connections with each other and other like-minded county residents.

PWC now has a social group dedicated to animals, their environment, and enjoying beautiful S.L.O. County through volunteerism, exploration and collaboration with other similar groups.

We invite you to join our social group “SLO Volunteers for the Environment” available at meetup.com. You can visit: http://www.meetup.com/SLO-Volunteers-for-the-Environment/ OR http://www.facebook.com/pages/Pacific-Wildlife-Care/51606612743

VOLUNTEERS!

Speaking of “social opportunities” and to put names and voices to faces: Expect to see posted at the Center and sent via email, an invitation for the Annual Volunteer Appreciation Picnic July 24th
Story of an Acorn Woodpecker by Laurie Abshire

On Saturday May 15th I showed up for my regular volunteer shift at Pacific Wildlife Care Rehau Center. The Supervisor that day was Melinda, we reviewed treatments and cases for the day. She had me work with a fledgling Acorn Woodpecker brought in by Kati and Alan of Santa Margarita. Their dog found this little guy in their backyard.

Kati and Alan moved from Arizona and immediately embraced the nature and wildlife in their backyard. They trained their dog not to chase or bite their chickens and when the well-trained dog found this fledging woodpecker, he brought it safely to Kati.

Kati noticed the bird’s leg was injured and brought it to PWC Friday. He was examined, weighed, fed and placed in a recovery cage. Fledgling baby birds need to be fed every ½ hour during daytime hours.

This bird, named “Sid” by the folks who rescued it, responded so well to the treatment he was soon ready to be released. I was asked if I would like to drive to Santa Margarita for the release back to his home tree and parents. I jumped at the opportunity, Melinda gave me release instructions.

After my shift, I put “Sid” in a carrier, put him into my car and drove to Kati and Alan’s home. They were so excited “Sid” had made it through his ordeal and that he was to be released.

I made sure “Sid” was secure in the tree where I placed him. Sure enough, after a half hour, mom and dad Acorn Woodpecker appeared and started feeding their baby.

I left him in the care of his parents and Kati and Alan. Alan took the reunion picture of the parents feeding Sid. I was so blessed to be able to treat, release and send this bird back into the wild.

Wow, what a way to spend a Saturday! It makes all the work we do as PWC volunteers worthwhile.

[Editor’s note: Alan and Kati emailed Laurie a few days later.] “After you left, Sid made his way down the tree and disappeared for a few hours, reappearing on the neighbors’ fencepost staring at the cottonwood tree across the creek. His parents came out and continued feeding him,” they wrote. “The next morning, we heard the familiar squawking, but couldn’t see Sid. Later, there he was, back on the fencepost, staring at the other tree (not the sycamore tree we had thought was his home). Finally, we took him over to that tree,” Alan and Kati continued, “and carrying on like two crazed cheerleaders at the Superbowl, we witnessed the little guy climb 50 feet to the top, where he now resides, hopefully, happy ever after!”

Releases Total 126
January – April

Anna’s Hummingbird 1
Band-tailed Pigeon 1
Barn Owl 1
Beaver 1
Brandt’s Cormorant 1
Brown Pelican 42
Bullock’s Oriole 1
Cedar Waxwing 3
Clark’s Grebe 1
Common Murre 5
Cottontail 1
Deer Mouse 1
Double-crested Cormorant 1
Eurasian Collared-Dove 8
Golfinch 2
Great Blue Heron 1
Great Horned Owl 1
Grey Squirrel 1
Ground Squirrel 2
House Finch 4
House Sparrow 1
Mallard 1
Mourning Dove 2
Opossum 7
Poonwil 1
Raccoon 5
Red-shouldered Hawk 1
Red-tailed Hawk 2
Rock Dove 4
Scrub Jay 1
Sharp-shinned Hawk 1
Song Sparrow 1
Turkey Vulture 1
Unknown Bird 1
Western Grebe 13
Western Gull 3
Western Pond Turtle 4
Western Screech Owl 1
White-crowned Sparrow 2
Total 126

New Members! January – April

Roberto Acosta & Natalia Diaz Acosta
Jennifer Jenkins
Susan Mills Barrett
Sandra & Ed Jennings
Gail Johnson
Becky Kelly
Dustin Kennedy
Patricia Kernier
Dr. Richard J. Kresja
Sandra Lakeman
Maureen Lance
Alia Lautrup
Mary M. Leizear
Kinuyo Levin
Bonnie Little
Sharon Lovejoy & Jeff Prestovich
The Lusby Family
Ari Lyne
Sneley A. Lyon
Barbara Mannheiser
Jane Manriquez
Jane Maxwell & Michelle Page
Cathy McCandless
Mike McGranahan
Jeanne Mello
Howard & Mario Miller
Victor & Marion Mueller
Sandra Nalumn
Lisa O’Brien
Megan O’Neill
Susan Owen
The Parham Trust
John Peploe

Lauren Poe
Beverly Polokoff
Anita Price
Jeni Proft
Rita Rietswet
Lisa Roberts
McKenna Rodrigues
Janice Anne Rohn
Lori Rosenlund
Julianne Roth
Janice Scabrough
Kathy Schwartz
Brad Seek
Ike Silver-Krott
Nadra K. Simpson
Nancy & Paul Soyster
Travis & Quincy Storm
Meg & Roland Syfan
Terence & Patricia Taylor
Toy Zoo Anything Educational
Lian Trekkel
Brian Trekkel
Scott Urman
Leon & Kathleen Van Beurden
Carolina & Tiko Van Stone
Corbin Valbert
Patrick & Carolyn Waller
Wine from the Vine
David Wolfson

We apologize if we left you off our list, let us know and we’ll include you in the next issue.
We now have 52 “subscribing” members who really help our monthly cash flow!

Why a Subscription Membership?!

We currently have around 50 (out of 800) members who support us using a “subscription” (or monthly donation).

A Subscription Membership is a HUGE help to PWC because it quite simply provides us with the cash flow needed to support our month-to-month basic operational expenses at the Rehab Center. Good cash flow in turn allows us to continue our mission of saving SLO County’s wildlife. Won’t YOU please consider switching from a once a year donation to a subscription? It can be charged either to your PayPal account or to your credit card (Visa, Mastercard or Discover).

Visit www.pacificwildlifecare.org (go to Support tab and click on Membership on the left and then scroll down to find the Monthly Subscription option).

Membership/Donations

Yes, I would like to give wildlife a second chance!

- Benefactor $2500
- Patron $1000
- Sponsor $500
- Contributor $250
- Supporter $100
- Advocate $50
- Student/Senior/Volunteer $25
- Donation $ __________

Visit us online at www.pacificwildlifecare.org to set up a monthly subscription or pay by credit card.

Name: ____________________________

Phone: ___________________________ Email: ___________________________

Address: __________________________

City: __________________ State: _____ Zip: ______ Date: ______

Please check: o New o Membership Renewal o Donation o I would like volunteer

Please mail completed form with check to:

Pacific Wildlife Care, P.O. Box 1134, Morro Bay, CA 93443

Special PWC Thank Yous

We are very appreciative for grants and generous donations from the following:

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Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians

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