The “Red Shouldered Girl” in My Backyard by Sylvia DeHart

She visited my backyard on occasion. She’d sit on the beam of the arbor that shades a hot tub, several bird seed feeders and a good sized bird bath. She looked at my yard and house from her perch. Occasionally she’d take a drink from the bird bath. I could admire her beauty from the sliding glass door but any movement to open it caused her to fly away.

One morning, 3/17/15 to be exact, she was sitting in the bird bath water and didn’t move when I opened the sliding glass door. When I called out to her then did she fly out of the water but only to the fence at our property line. She remained sitting there allowing me to photograph her.

She appeared a little wobbly and her right foot looked like it was clinging more tightly to the wood than the left. I briefly went inside the house and when I returned she was back at the bird bath, this time perched on the side. After only about a minute, she was on the ground beside the birdbath. She couldn’t fly. She needed help.

I called the vet I use, Animal Care Clinic seeking guidance and they gave me the number of Pacific Wildlife Care. After leaving a message describing the situation, I waited for a return call and checked on the hawk. She had not moved. I spoke softly to her so I wouldn’t frighten her. When I got too close she spread her wings and fell backwards and took a little while to right herself again. I again photographed this.

It was several hours before someone from Pacific Wildlife Care could come and take her to the hospital. I kept checking on her, even bringing her a dish of cooked chicken in a little broth which of course she wasn’t interested in.

The volunteer, Shirley put a blanket over her and the hawk had strength enough to run towards the fence. The second attempt Shirley was successful and gently placed the hawk in the box she brought to transport her in.

While she was hospitalized, Shirley and other staff very graciously kept me informed of her progress. She was diagnosed with rodenticide poisoning and was treated with Vitamin K orally daily. Initially she had to be force-fed, but after some time became strong enough to eat on her own. She laid a non-viable, blue egg on 3/20/15. A picture of it was emailed to me next to a book picture of what a normal Red-shouldered Hawks egg should look like, beige with brown speckles. She was hospitalized for 6 weeks. During this time I kept seeing and hearing a solitary hawk flying and calling in my neighborhood. This was probably her mate I’m told.

Another Pacific Wildlife Care volunteer, Melinda, returned the Red Shouldered Girl to freedom, in my backyard, on 5/6/15. As she regained her strength, she became very feisty with the volunteers, Melinda told me. She was ready to be released. What a happy day that was! She flew to the telephone pole on the next lot, sat there a minute, and then flew away.

Whenever I hear a hawk call, I always look up now and wonder if it’s her. A couple weeks ago, when it was very warm, she visited me. She drank from my birdbath like she used to do before her poisoning, then flew away when she sensed my movement at the sliding glass door.
Thanks to our volunteers, staff, members and donors, 2015 was a productive year for Pacific Wildlife Care! It was also challenging, due to the influx of Common Murres, and shortage of volunteers. We received 463 Common Murres in three months, and 2,923 total cases for the year. Luckily, our new Center Director/Volunteer Coordinator, Vann Masvidal, arrived during the seabird siege and the expertise he brings is invaluable.

We have determined that our Rehabilitation Technicians should become employees rather than contractors; hence, for 2016, they receive a well-earned raise to place them just above the new minimum wage.

Building additional animal housing on our limited footprint will continue in 2016. We were especially pleased with the Fund-a-Need support we received from Windows into Wildlife and Soupabration, and we did not dip into our reserves to support our $23k monthly animal care.

However, we must look to future growth and change to accommodate the expanding needs of wildlife in our county. By 2020, we hope to have found sufficient acreage to better support the needs of our patients, and to better educate the community about wildlife issues - the second half of our mission. We will at some point need an Executive Director, to help us achieve this goal. In 2017 we'll celebrate our 30th Anniversary as a nonprofit. Stay tuned!

MATCHING FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR 2016!

We are delighted to announce that some very generous donors have given us the opportunity for matching funds this year. Given our increased expenses, we need to raise $110,000 more in 2016 from members and donors than we received from you in 2015.

How to double your financial support (from March 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016):

1. New: First-Time Members/Donors (100% matched)
2. Lapsed: Members/Donors who have not made a donation in 2015 (100% matched)
3. Increased: Membership/Donations increased in the last year (increased amount will be matched) For example: if you donated $200 in 2015, and donate $350 by December 31, your additional $150 will become $300 to PWC! (or if your dues were $50 in 2015 and you pay $75 this year, the extra $25 will be matched/doubled.)

Currently, we have $60,000 in our “matching pool” to help us achieve our goal by the end of this year. Your contributions that match the criteria above, should be received no later than December 31, 2016.

IMPORTANT SPRING MESSAGE

to share with family & friends

SPREAD THE WORD! KEEP THE WILDCREATURES IN THE WILD BY TAKING THESE PRECAUTIONS

- Check trees & bushes for nests before trimming.
- Walk your property to look for ground nests before mowing, weed-whacking or leaf blowing.
- Trapping wildlife in the spring often results in their young being orphaned.
- You don’t need to feed orphaned or injured wildlife. They may be in shock and need veterinary assistance.
- Baby deer need to be left where their mother has safely stashed them. Only if they wander around crying do they need rescuing.
FOR MEMBERS

As part of a unique and special group who have given money and, for many of you, time and talent to help wildlife in San Luis Obispo, we are again asking for your help. Thanks to your generosity, P.W.C. is rescuing twice as many animals as we were in 2009. Also, since that time, we have significantly improved our ability to help injured and orphaned wildlife by contracting with a wildlife veterinarian and hiring an experienced Center Director/Volunteer Coordinator.

Our facilities, which are a large factor in animal care costs, have been added to and upgraded and that process continues. It should come as no surprise that with these improvements and the increase in animals, our budget has also grown. It has doubled since 2009 which was the last time we raised our membership dues. We continue to seek funds from governments, grants and other sources but the backbone of P.W.C. continues to be our members and donors. We hope that you are as proud of your part in our achievements as we are grateful for all that you do. We hope that you will continue to support our efforts knowing that every animal that is released back to its rightful place in the sea, sky or woods is a tribute to your commitment. It would be impossible to achieve what we have without you! Watch for our new dues levels in the summer issue of your “Second Chance” newsletter.
YOU can help protect wild babies this Spring! See page two...

Membership/Donations Save Lives

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

- Benefactor $2,500
- Patron $1,000
- Sponsor $500
- Contributor $250
- Supporter $100
- Advocate $50
- Student/Senior/Volunteer $25
- Other ______________

I would like information on adding Pacific Wildlife Care to my will or trust.

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:  □ New Membership    □ Renewal    □ Donation    □ I would like to volunteer

Please mail completed form with check to Pacific Wildlife Care, PO Box 1134, Morro Bay, CA 93443

Special Thank Yous

Lily Thayer – for holding a holiday fundraiser at her work for PWC, raising over $500. (see photo on page 3)

Bernice Barbor Grant – for medications.

Hind Foundation Grant – for new pelagic pool.

Guerilla Gardeners – working on our grounds to prepare for facility upgrades.

Photo: Morro Bay non-profit Guerilla Gardeners donate time to PWC at events and with our clinic’s native plants. L to R: Silas, Justin, Victor, Taylor, Aria

PWC’s mission is to support San Luis Obispo wildlife through rehabilitation and educational outreach. We envision a community aware of and responsive to wildlife and wildlife issues.