

**2004 Wildlife Rehabilitation  
Annual End of the Year Report**

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**Submitted by:**

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The Department of Fish and Game's (Department) primary role in wildlife management is focused on a population basis rather than on an individual animals' fate. Exceptions to this are management activities related to threatened and endangered species; another is public possession of injured or orphaned wildlife. Animals that are classified as "wild" are considered restricted species and illegal for the public to possess longer than 48 hours after found but it has been the Department's experience that most people will not leave sick, injured, or perceived orphaned animals in the wild. Wildlife rehabilitation fulfills a specific niche in our state. Wildlife rehabilitators provide care for these animals and rehabilitate them, at their own expense, for the purpose of releasing them back into the wild. Thousands of calls and physical responses to wild animal calls are handled by wildlife rehabilitators each year. The Department does not have existing resources to deal with injured or orphaned wildlife. If the Department did not permit wildlife rehabilitation facilities the Department would either have to start participating in wildlife rehabilitation or be under public scrutiny for not caring for injured or orphaned wildlife.

A wildlife rehabilitation facility is defined as a site where activities are undertaken to restore to a condition of good health, for the purposes of release to the wild, animals occurring naturally and not normally domesticated in this state. Some "facilities" are a center where there are many volunteers or a facility could consist of one person rehabbing in their home.

In 2004, the Department of Fish and Game permitted 116 Wildlife Rehabilitation facilities throughout California. The distribution of these facilities is as follows: Northern California and North Coast Region - seven (7) permitted facilities; Sacramento Valley and Southern Sierra Region – fourteen (14) permitted facilities; Central Coast Region – twenty-seven (27) permitted facilities; San Joaquin Valley and Southern Sierra Region – nine (9) permitted facilities; South Coast Region – forty (40) permitted facilities; Eastern Sierra and Inland Deserts Region – nineteen (19) permitted facilities.

As a condition of the Wildlife Rehabilitation Memorandum of Understanding, permittees are required to provide an "End of the Year Annual Report" to notify the Department regarding species, number, and final disposition of animals taken in for rehabilitation. Tables 1 -3 broadly summarizes those reports.

In the year 2004, 116 permitted facilities received 81,680 birds, mammals and reptiles they are broken down as follows. Of the 81,680 wild animals taken in by rehabilitators approximately 20% were mammals, approximately 80% were birds, and approximately 1% were reptiles (Table 1). Individual facility data is available on the Wildlife Rehabilitation web page located at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wmd/rehab/index.htm>.

Of the approximately 16,259 mammals received for rehabilitation, 8,612 (53%) were rehabilitated and released back into the wild. Approximately 798 (5%) of the animals were transferred to another rehabilitation center. Most of the transfers occur within the state; however there is a small percentage transferred out of state for different reasons. Approximately three hundred and three or 2% of these animals are in a "pending" status (pending is defined as holding the animal longer than normal for evaluation and/or healing). Many times a pending animal has a bone fracture that is healing or is undergoing rehabilitation after the bone has healed. Although bone fractures account for many of the pending status animals, a variety of medical factors could impede the release of an animal. Approximately 3,448 (21%) died naturally (without euthanasia) during the rehabilitation process.

Of the 16,259 mammals received by rehabilitators in 2004, 5,173 (32%) were opossums, 493 (3%) were red fox squirrels, 486 (3%) were fawns, 93 (.01%) were coyotes, three were badgers, and two were black bear cubs (Table 2). Approximately 10,009 (62%) were other miscellaneous mammals including rabbits, mice, chipmunks, ground, chickaree and western gray squirrels, beavers, otters, bobcats, bats, porcupine, raccoons, skunks, and weasels.

Of the approximate 64,964 birds received by rehabilitators in 2004 approximately 25,631 (39%) were released back into the wild, approximately 3,300 (5%) were transferred to other permitted wildlife rehabilitation facilities, approximately 533 or (1%) are pending, approximately 13,445 or (21%) were euthanized, and approximately 1,760 or (3%) died naturally during the rehabilitation process.

Of the approximate 457 reptiles received by rehabilitators, approximately 148 (32%) were released, approximately 158 (35%) were transferred, approximately 7 (2%) are pending, approximately 52 (11%) were euthanized, and approximately 55 (1%) died.

Rehabilitators are often brought non-native wild animal for rehabilitation. Some organizations choose not to rehabilitate non-native animals. Some organizations rehabilitate any wild animal that is brought to them. In 2004, less than 1% of the total number of animals rehabilitated were non-natives (Table 2). Approximately 5,173 opossums were rehabilitated. Approximately 493 red fox squirrels were rehabilitated. Approximately 691 starlings were rehabilitated. Reports have been received that English sparrows have also been rehabilitated, however, most rehabilitated sparrows are lumped into one group when reported

In 2004, approximately 241 Threatened, Endangered or Species of special concern were taken in by rehabilitators. The following species were rehabilitated: burrowing owl - 27, brown pelicans - 180, Bald Eagles - 6, Clapper Rail - 6, Kit fox - 2, Spotted owl - 3, Kangaroo rat - 6, Pond turtle - 8 (Table 3).

**Table 1 – Total individuals by class**

| <b>TOTAL SPECIES</b> | <b>Received</b> | <b>Released (%)</b> | <b>Transferred (%)</b> | <b>Pending (%)</b> | <b>Euthanized (%)</b> | <b>Died (%)</b> |
|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Mammals              | 16,259          | 8612 (53%)          | 798 (5%)               | 303 (2%)           | 2,750 (17%)           | 3,448 (21%)     |
| Birds                | 64,964          | 25,631 (39%)        | 3,300 (5%)             | 533 (1%)           | 13,445 (21%)          | 1,760 (3%)      |
| Reptiles             | 457             | 148 (32%)           | 158 (35%)              | 7 (2%)             | 52 (11%)              | 55 (1%)         |

**Table 2 – Non-native species**

| <b>SPECIES</b>   | <b>TOTAL RECEIVED</b> |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| Opossum          | 5,173                 |
| Red Fox Squirrel | 493                   |
| Starling         | 691                   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>     | <b>6,357</b>          |

**Table 3 – Listed species**

| <b>SPECIES</b> | <b>TOTAL RECIEVED</b> |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| Burrowing Owl  | 26                    |
| Brown Pelican  | 180                   |
| Bald Eagle     | 16                    |
| Clapper Rail   | 2                     |
| Kit Fox        | 2                     |
| Spotted Owl    | 3                     |
| Kangaroo Rat   | 6                     |
| Pond Turtle    | 8                     |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>243</b>            |