Wildlife Rehabilitation 2006 Annual Report California Department of Fish and Game

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Wildlife rehabilitation facilities are required to submit a yearly report that includes reporting the disposition of animals handled in the following categories: Total number of species received, total number transferred, total number pending (still being evaluated), total number released, total number expired, and total number euthanized. The reports are sent to and kept by the state wildlife rehabilitation coordinator. This report summarizes the results of 2006 wildlife rehabilitation activities.

As a condition of the wildlife rehabilitation Memorandum of Understanding, permitees are required to provide an "End of the Year Annual Report" to notify the Department regarding the species, number and final disposition of animal received.

In 2006, 108 wildlife rehabilitation facilities possessed permits to rehabilitate orphaned or injured native wildlife (excluding "Big Game" species) in the state of California. Big game mammals that cannot be rehabilitated by rehabilitation facilities include deer (excluding fawns), elk, bear (excluding bear cubs by special permit), wild pig, bighorn sheep (except by special permit), antelope and mountain lions.

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/ employees or a facility could consist of one person rehabbing from their home. The 108 wildlife rehabilitation facilities reported having over 2,000 volunteers. Some facilities do have staff, but the most of the facilities heavily depend on volunteers to function.

The distribution of these 108 wildlife rehabilitation facilities across the California Department of Fish and Game (Department) six regional offices are as follows: Northern California and North Coast Region- seven (7) facilities; Sacramento Valley and Southern Sierra Region nine (9) facilities; Central Coast Region twenty-seven (27) facilities; San Joaquin Valley and Southern Sierra Region- ten (11) facilities; South Coast Region- Thirty eight (38); Eastern Sierra and Inland Deserts Region- sixteen(16).

In the year 2006, permitted facilities received a total of 69,153 animals. Of the 69,153 animals received 53, 397 were birds, 14,828 were mammals and 928 were reptiles. See Table 1.

| Species | Received |
|----------|----------|
| Mammals | 14,828 |
| Birds | 53,397 |
| Reptiles | 928 |
| Total | 69,153 |

Table 1. Summary totals of types of terrestrial species received (2006)

In 2006, the total number of animals received was lower than the two previous years. In 2005, a total of 75, 696 animals were received from the public by rehabilitation facilities and in 2004 approximately 83,000 animals were received. The reason for the decline in animals being brought into rehabilitation facilities is unclear.

Of the 69,153 wild animals presented to wildlife rehabilitation facilities in 2006, the majority were birds. Seventy-seven (77 %) percent of the animals presented were birds, approximately 21 % mammals, and approximately .01 % reptiles. See Figure 1.

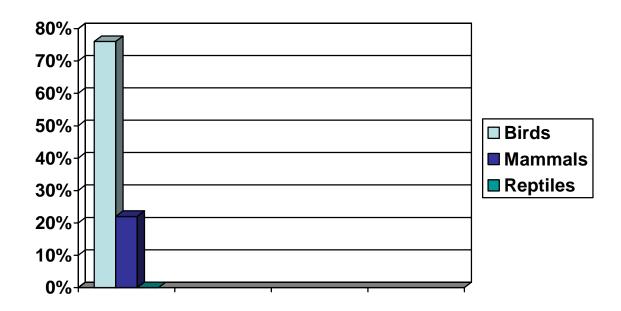


Figure 1. Summary % of types of terrestrial species received (2006)

Approximately 416 different species were received by rehabilitation facilities. Approximately 293 species of wild birds were presented to wildlife rehabilitation facilities. Approximately 79 different species of mammals were received. Approximately 44 different species of reptiles were received.

The mallard duck was the most common bird (5,871) brought into California rehabilitation centers. The Virginia opossum (5,188) was the most common mammal brought in and the desert tortoise (178) was the most common reptile.

A total of 1,229 Threatened and Endangered species (T&E species) were turned into rehabilitation facilities in 2006, not including the 178 Desert tortoises. It is

unknown how many of the tortoises were actually wild species or escaped pets so they are not included in the total number of T&E species. Of the 1,229 T&E the majority were brown pelicans 1,097. The remaining T&E species included (5) Bald Eagle, (1) Willow Fly Catcher, (83) Swainson's hawk, (1) Marbeled Murrlet, (4) Spotted Owl, (18) Western snowy Plovers, (8) California Black Rail, (3) California Clapper Rail, (9) Bank Swallow.

One bear cub was rehabilitated at Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care in 2006. The bear cub was from Mendocino County and orphaned due to depredation. The bear was released January 11, 2007, at Cache Creek Nature Area weighing 130 pounds. The bear was a male. An ear tag transmitter was place in the left ear of the bear. The bear was monitored from the air during seven telemetry flights for the Cache Creek elk herd. On March 1, 2007, the telemetry signal was found about ten miles south, southwest of the original release site just outside of the Cache Creek Nature Area. On March 12, 2007, the bear was heard again in the same area. On April 4, 2007, the signal was not picked up during the telemetry flight. On May 8, 2007, the signal was heard in the same location as found before. The signal from the bear was then heard again on August 9, 2007. Flights on October 22, 2007, and on November 26, 2007 did not receive the transmitter signal for the bear. On November 28, 2007, the bear was legally dispatched within one mile of where the signal had previously been heard. The bear was legally dispatched due to depredation and public safety starting in the month of November. The bear was necropsied on December 18, 2007. The bear weighed approximately 170 pounds. The bear appeared to be in good general condition and the stomach content analysis showed the bear was feeding on natural food sources.