

Wildlife Investigations Laboratory



Wildlife Rehabilitation 2010 Annual Report California Department of Fish and Game



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As a condition of the Wildlife Rehabilitation Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Wildlife Rehabilitation permittees are required to provide an “End of the Year Annual Report” to notify the Department regarding the species, number and final disposition of wildlife received.

The End of the Year Annual Report 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 2010 wildlife rehabilitation activities (numbers are approximate).

In the year 2010, one-hundred permitted California wildlife rehabilitation facilities received 71,458 sick, injured or orphaned wild animals from the general public (Table 1). As in previous years, the majority of wildlife species brought to facilities were birds. In 2010, a total of 52,860 birds were received, 18,134 mammals and 464 reptiles. Birds represent 72 percent of the animals received, mammals represent 26 percent and reptiles represent < 1 percent of the animals received. See Table 1.

Species	Total	Percentage
Birds	52,860	74%
Mammals	18,134	25%
Reptiles	464	<1%
Total	71,458	

Table 1. Summary % of Types of Terrestrial Species Received (2010)

The most common mammal brought into rehabilitation facilities in 2010 was the non-native Virginia Opossum, *Didelphis virginiana* (5,431). The opossum has held this status since 2004. The majority of the opossums turned in from the public were from urban areas around the San Francisco Bay Area and the Los Angeles/ San Diego area. The most common bird turned into rehabilitation facilities was the House Finch *Carpodacus mexicanus* (4,095) also commonly from urban areas. Other birds frequently turned into rehabilitation facilities in 2010, include the Mallard Duck *Anas platyhnchos* (3,309), Mourning Doves *Zenaida macroura* (3,530) Rock Pigeon *Columba livia* (2,191) Anna's Hummingbird *Calypte anna* (1,621), Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis* (1,192) and Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis* (1,142). Over 250 different species of birds, over 40 different species of mammals and approximately 20 different species of reptiles were turned into rehabilitation facilities.

Ninety- eight animals classified as State and/or Federally Threatened or Endangered Species were turned into rehabilitation centers in 2010. These species included 8 Bald Eagles *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, 36 Swainson's Hawk *Buteo swainsoni*, 4 Spotted Owls *Strix occidentalis*, 8 Snowy Plovers *Charadrius alexandrinus*, 1 Marbled Murrelet *Brachyramphus marmoratus*, 1 Great Gray Owl *Strix nebulosa*, 3 Least Turns *Sterna antillarum*, 3 Bank Swallows *Riparia riparia*, 1 Bell's Vireo *Vireo bellii*, 28 Virginia Rail *Rallus limicola*, 2 Black Rail *Laterallus jamaicensis*, 1 Clapper Rail *Rallus longirostris*, and 2 Riparian Brush Rabbits *Sylvilagus bachmani riparius*.

Animals classified as "Big Game" species in the Fish and Game Code are not allowed to be possessed by wildlife rehabilitators; however, the Department does allow orphaned fawns to be rehabilitated and released under conditions provided in the Wildlife Rehabilitation Memorandum of Understanding.

A total of approximately 439 deer fawns were turned into rehabilitation facilities in 2010; approximately one hundred thirty-five were released back into the wild. The other 304 fawns either expired upon arrival, were euthanized upon arrival, expired in care or were humanely euthanized during care. The Wildlife Rehabilitation MOU states all fawns must be rehabilitated only with other fawns from the same deer herd. There are approximately 81 deer herds identified by the Department in California. Each facility has a map of the deer herds and must seek approval if a single fawn from another herd is placed in a neighboring/different herd. Protocol requires a quarantine period before placing new fawns in with other fawns. Fawns raised with other fawns are less likely to become imprinted and therefore every effort is made to try to incorporate single fawns into a group.

The data collected from "2010 End of the Year Reports" was totaled by each Department Region and reports are available for each Region. This will enable any person interested in wildlife rehabilitation data to see how the different Regions of California compare to with respect to species and numbers.

The table below shows the total number of wildlife species received by rehabilitation facilities since the Department started compiling the data in 2004.

Year	Total Number Animals Received
2004	83,000
2005	75,696
2006	69,153
2007	68,437
2008	70,233
2009	79,007
2010	71,458

Table 3. Previous Year End totals compared to 2010 Totals

Four black bear cubs were deemed rehabilitation candidates in 2010. On May 13, 2010, a cub was taken in at six pounds from the Mendocino area. The cub was released on February 2, 2011, in Mendocino County.

On June 6, 2010, a cub from the Kings Beach area of Lake Tahoe was received. The cub was released January 26, 2011, in Placer County.

On August 3, 2010, a cub from the Markleeville area was deemed a rehab candidate. This Cub was released on January 26, 2011 in Placer County.

On September 18, 2010, an orphaned 18 lb cub was received from Tehama County. This cub was released on February 9, 2011, in Tehama County.

All cubs were outfitted with VHF ear tag transmitters. All VHF ear tag transmitters are mostly monitored by a specially equipped department airplane. The transmission can be picked up by the plane via telemetry equipment from approximately a 1-5 mile radius if there are no obstructions. Transmitter verification comes from monitoring a signal emitted frequency from the VHF ear tag and most of the time is not visually confirmed. Note: the battery life is approximately 12 months.

Notable events in 2010 include the surge (1,621) of Brown pelicans found stranded along the California coast in the winter of 2009-2010. Most pelicans received were found starving, malnourished and anemic, but responded well when given nutrition supplementation. Pelicans were found and seen in abnormal places trying to find abnormal foods. Normal foods for brown pelicans are anchovies and sardines. Exams of stomach contents found abnormal food items. Many of the pelicans also lacked waterproofing. Testing concluded the lack of waterproofing was not due to a petroleum based product but an unknown substance. In the 2010, event the underlying cause of the strandings seems to have been primarily due to the lack of normal prey items; anchovies and sardines.

For more information regarding the 2010, pelican stranding and a previous pelican event in 2008-2009 refer to the "Summary of Unusual Mortality Events of Brown Pelicans along the Pacific West coast in two winters, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010" distributed as a Department report on July 7, 2011 by Hannah Nevins, Melissa Miller, Laird Henkel, Dave Jessup, Nicole Carion, Carol Meteyer, Krysten Schuler*, Judy St. Leger, Leslie Woods, Julie Skoglund and Deborah Jaques.