

Critter Capers

April 2024



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A Message from the Director

April has begun and we are still feeling the spring weather over here at CALM! As we continue to enjoy this beautiful weather, we wanted to take time out to say a heartfelt thank you to all CALM members and visitors for joining us at our annual Spring Fling event, which was held March 26 - 30.

We had record attendance numbers and got to enjoy seeing you and your families enjoy all that CALM has to offer. We had some amazing community partners attend, including California Fish and Wildlife and Bako Balloon and Face Painting. We are also thankful to Huckelberry's and First 5 Kern for sponsoring some of the free activities we had on site this year.

As we make our way into warmer months, we are most excited about the new changes happening at CALM. I hope to have more exciting news for

Meg Maitland
CALM Director





Navigating Baby Season with Care and Respect

By Sharon Adams, Curator of Animals

Spring is baby season! Every spring, we get tons of calls regarding “orphaned” wildlife babies. Many of those babies do need help. But many more do not. It can be hard to tell if a baby animal is in actual need of assistance or is better off being left alone.

With wildlife, the natural mother is always going to be better at raising her babies than humans are. Baby animals need to be taught to hunt, hide, and forage and that can be difficult for humans to teach appropriately.

Baby animals also need to have a natural

fear of humans and pets and interfering and raising them on our own can cause them to become habituated to people and pets. While this may seem cute in a baby raccoon or fawn, it can become very dangerous once that animal grows up and is no longer afraid or wary of humans and pets.

We put together some information to help you determine if that baby you found really needs intervention or not. And if you are unsure, please reach out to a wildlife rehabber near you!

FAWNS

Does will leave their fawns unattended for many hours throughout the day. The mother leaves to feed away from her baby so that she is not attracting predators to her baby. The baby will curl up on the ground and silently wait for her to return. If you or your pets stumble across a resting fawn, the absolute best thing you can do is leave it alone and go far away from it. The mother will not come back when you are near it. If you or someone has already picked up and moved the fawn, put it back exactly where it was found. Fawns in need of rescue will show some signs they are in distress. Unless a fawn is injured or crying out, it most likely does not need help and just needs to be left alone until mom returns.

BUNNIES

Mother bunnies leave their babies unattended throughout most of the day. If the babies have their eyes open and are hopping around, leave them alone. They may be hares who are old enough to be on their own. If they are snuggled in a nest, leave them alone as well. The mother will come back and feed them when you are far away from her babies. Unless the babies are obviously injured, they do not need help and need to be left alone for mom to take care of them.

HELPFUL HINT: During the spring, it is always a good idea to check your lawns before mowing them. You might uncover a bunny nest!

HUMMINGBIRDS

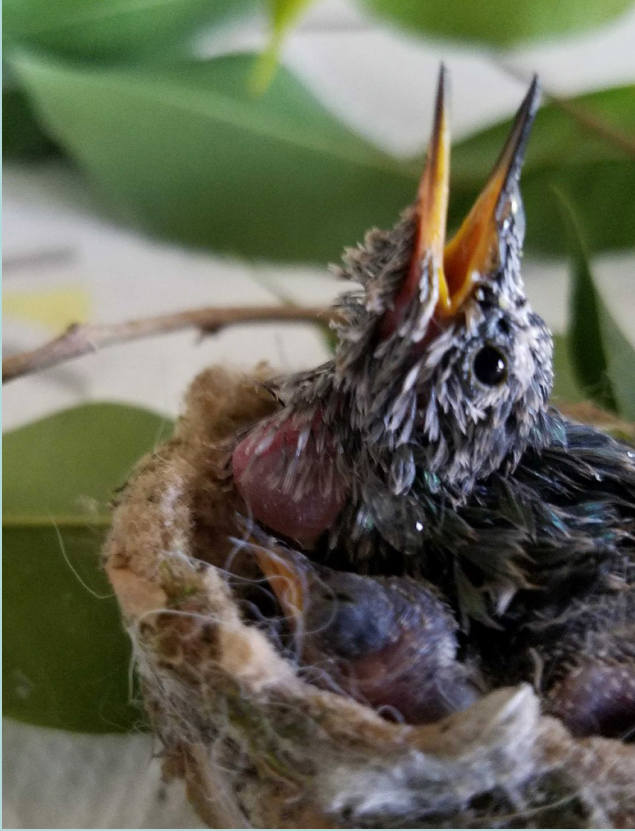
Hummingbird moms feed their babies in a couple seconds and then zip off again. Often, people mistake the babies for orphans because



CALM's Juniper as a fawn. She was an orphaned baby (found with her deceased mother) and was not a release candidate so she now lives at the zoo!



One-week-old Cottontail bunny. It is always best to leave in their nest.



Nestling Anna's Hummingbird

they didn't see the mom come feed the babies. If you see a nest of hummingbirds and the babies are quiet, they are fed. If you notice that they are peeping a lot, they are probably hungry and something probably happened to mom. Call a rehabber near you for advice.

BABY BIRD ON GROUND

Some bird species nest on the ground. Even those that nest in trees and bushes have a phase where they will be grounded. Parents are still nearby and still taking care of them. At this stage, the birds cannot fly yet. They will look like fluffy adults (shorter tail and wing feathers and may be all fluffy or partially fluffy as they lose their down and grow their feathers). The baby birds will spend about 1-2 weeks on the ground, still under the complete care of their parents. Unless the bird is injured, it should be left alone.



Juvenile Great Horned Owl too young to be on her own. However, if seen on the ground hopping around branches, it could still be under parental care.

If a baby bird has fallen out of the nest but looks too young to be out of the nest (still naked or all fluffy with few to no feathers coming in), you can look for a nest in a nearby tree and return the baby. If you cannot reach the nest, you can fashion one out of a box or hat, line it with soft tissues, put the baby in it, and get it as close to the nest as possible. Mother birds will NOT reject their babies because they "smell like humans." Baby birds often are displaced from nests after storms but unless they are injured, the best thing we can do is put them in their nests so their parents can continue to care for them.

HELPFUL HINT: Bird nests are protected by federal law. If you are going to trim any trees or bushes in the spring, it is always advisable to check for nests first. If there are active nests, it is unlawful to disturb or destroy them.



We appreciate how much everyone cares about wildlife and we understand it can be distressing to find an animal that appears alone and in danger. We completely understand how leaving it alone and walking away feels wrong; that it is leaving a helpless animal vulnerable.

But in many cases, it is the right thing to do for wildlife. In most cases, unless the baby is obviously injured, sick, or icy cold, it doesn't actually need any help and the mom

is caring for it. However, if you every have any questions, always reach out to a wildlife rehabber who can help you determine if the animal does need help, and how to help it appropriately.

We do not recommend feeding wildlife, the wrong formulas and foods can be dangerous (and fatal to babies) and wildlife can transmit diseases to you and to your pets. Thank you for caring about the animals as much as we do! And thank you for helping us help wildlife!



The Railroad Wizard

Getting to know CCCRR Volunteer Mark Huntley

For over a decade, Mark Huntley has been a steady presence at the Central California Children's Railroad. He has dedicated his time and expertise to not only ensuring a smooth ride for countless passengers, but also for creating memories.

With a background in mechanical engineering at Chevron, Mark brings a

wealth of expertise and dedication to the operation, earning him the affectionate nickname of "Wizard" among his peers.

Prior to retirement, Huntley found purpose in building things, a passion he continues to pursue as a railroad crew volunteer.

From fabricating parts needed for the track to undertaking ambitious projects

like installing engines, his skillful hands and keen eye for detail make him an important contributor to the railroad's infrastructure. But Huntley's contributions go far beyond his technical skills. He is a patient mentor, always willing to share his knowledge and expertise with the rest of the crew.

Whether it's troubleshooting mechanical issues or assisting the construction of key infrastructure at Buzzard's Bluff and the waterwheel tower, Mark's involvement in every aspect of the operation is invaluable.

According to Randy Grueber, the CCCRR's volunteer coordinator, Huntley is the epitome of a wizard—a person of unparalleled skill and accomplishment.

"Mark is a person of unparalleled skill and accomplishment," said Gruber. "While he may shy away from the limelight, his impact resonates throughout the organization, and we are all better for it."

In Mark's own words, the Children's Railroad "keeps [him] out of the house."

But for those who know him, it's clear that his presence brings so much more—it brings joy, laughter, and a sense of belonging to all who have the pleasure of sharing the tracks with him.





Being a CALM member comes with perks:

- 10% discount on merchandise and party rentals
- A list of reciprocal zoos and museums - this means you can get free or discounted admission to dozens of other zoos and museums in California!
- Discount on special fundraising events
- Bring a friend for FREE on the first Sunday of each month



Hours

Tuesday-Sunday 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Closed on Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Admission

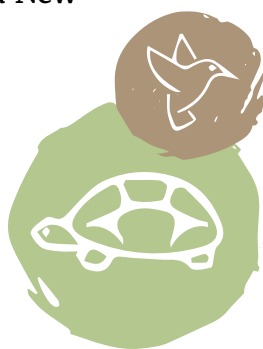
Adults: \$10 | Seniors (60+): \$7
Children (3-12): \$6 | Children 2 and under: FREE

Members: FREE
US Veterans and Active Duty: FREE with ID

Weekend Opportunities



Central California Children's Railroad
Cost: \$2 for unlimited rides
(volunteer availability dependent)



California Coast Room
Operating hours: Saturdays/Sundays 10 a.m.-3 p.m. (volunteer availability dependent)



DONATE TODAY!



Commemorative Opportunities

DONOR WALK BRONZE PLAQUE



CALIFORNIA COAST ROOM ENGRAVED ACRYLIC PLAQUE



For more information, please reach out to
Jordan Reed at joreed@kern.org



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MUSEUMS ON US

Did you know you can come to CALM for free? During the first weekend of every month, Bank of America cardholders are given free admission to our zoo. Just bring your BofA card and a valid ID to receive one free admission to CALM.



Find us on social media!

Our handle for Facebook is @calmzoo and Instagram is @visitcalmzoo.

Got Fish?



Bring 'em to CALM!

We have CALM residents that LOVE fresh fish. We will happily take legally caught fish from anglers with a valid fishing license issued from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

To donate, freeze your extra catch with NO seasonings or salt (must be within a year and can not be re-frozen).

When you are ready to deliver, simply call 661-872-2256.

