

2005

Santa Barbara Wildlife Care Network  
**New Volunteer Manual**

**Level 1**  
**Basic Skills**

**Safety**

Volunteer Procedures

**Telephone Procedures**

Answering  
Typical Wildlife Problems  
Rescue Orchestration  
Logging Calls

**Intake Procedure**

Information Acquisition  
Referral Procedures (i.e., to vet)  
Intake Paperwork  
Initial Handling  
Initial Caging  
Initial Exam

**Animal Tasks**

Cage Cleaning  
Animal Feeding  
Cage Set-Up (animal specific)  
Incubator Water  
Communicating About Animals (i.e., cage notes, oral communication)

**Daily Center Tasks**

Laundry  
Dishes  
Sweeping/Mopping  
General Cleaning (i.e., cages, perches, counters, refrigerator, walls)  
Supplies Stock  
Organize Reception Area

**Closing Tasks**

Feeding  
Covering Cages (Inside/Outside)  
Sweeping/Mopping  
Dishes  
Laundry  
Windows/Curtains  
Food Put Away  
Food Available for Next Day (i.e., moist cat food)  
Garbage Thrown in Dumpster

New Garbage Bags  
Inside Lights Off/Porch Light On  
Cage Lights Off

## **Safety**

1. To minimize risk of infection while handling any animals, animal excretions, or equipment contaminated by excretions, volunteers are asked to wear gloves. This is imperative if a volunteer has an open wound on their hands or arms.
2. Masks must be worn when cleaning out aviaries that have hay substrate. This is a safety concern for airborne zoonoses that grow in moist environments.
3. Hands must be washed before and after entering each cage or enclosure. If you are wearing gloves, you must wash the gloves.
4. Heavy leather gloves should be worn when handling mammals or raptors that bite or scratch.
5. Food and beverages should not be consumed by volunteers in the bird or mammal room.
6. Soiled paper towels, tissues, and cloth material used to line cages are to be put into trashcans immediately.
7. You will be required to know where the fire extinguisher is stored, how to turn off the gas and how to turn off the water in the building.
8. Volunteers should ask the supervisors for guidance if they have questions or concerns about the safety of the animals or their personal safety.

# Telephone Procedures

## Answering the Phone

The phone should be answered with a greeting of “Wildlife Care Network, this is (your name).” If you are in the middle of another task, ask if the caller has an emergency. If not, ask the caller to please hold or take their number and return the call as soon as possible.

## Typical Wildlife Problems

There are a number of typical wildlife calls that we receive at the center. You will need to know how to respond to these calls during this level of your training. [As a general rule, nobody should ever attempt to feed or water a wild animal. If an animal needs transportation, they should be properly secured, in a dark and quiet enclosure. If it is hot, they should be kept cool, if it is cold, they should be kept warm.] The typical calls include, but are not limited to:

1. My cat or dog caught a bird/small mammal.  
These animals should be brought in immediately. Often times there is no apparent injury, however, these animals will need to be put on antibiotics. Ask the caller to put the animal in a box or bag with a soft lining on the bottom. The caller will need to keep the animal dark, QUIET, and warm, while preparing for transport and during transport.
2. There is an injured/oiled seabird on the beach.  
Ask the caller if the bird appears injured, lethargic, or oiled. If the bird is lively and appears uninjured, it may be a pelagic bird that needs assistance back into the water. If the bird is injured, lethargic, or oiled ask if they are able to safely contain the bird in a t-shirt/towel/box and bring him to June Taylor’s (the directions to The Pond are in the resource book). If the caller or anyone near the caller is unable to bring in the bird, ask if he/she is able to stay with the bird until one of our rescue people is able to get there. (Often the callers are not able to stay.) Ask for a precise location for the bird. If you are unfamiliar with the location, ask for directions. When you hang up the phone, call people on the Seabird Rescue list.
3. There is a pelican with a hook or fishing line on the pier.  
Ask the caller if they are able to stay with the bird until one of our rescue people is able to get there. (Often they are not.) Ask for a precise location for the bird, and if the bird has been flying. Frequently, if the bird has been flying, there is often little we can do. If you are unfamiliar with the location, ask for directions. When you hang up the phone, call people on the Seabird Rescue list.
4. I found a baby bird.  
Provide these instructions:
  - DO NOT ATTEMPT TO FEED BABIES OR FLEDGLINGS!
  - If the baby bird has little or no feathers and you know where the nest is, return the bird to the nest.
  - If the nest has been destroyed, make a substitute nest using a small basket or Cool Whip container. Line the container with the material from the old nest or leaves. Wire the new nest to a branch or place it securely in a branch fork, as close as possible to the old nest. Put holes in the bottom of the container for drainage.

- If the baby is cold to the touch, take him inside to warm up before placing him back in the nest. Nestle the bird in a warm towel or use a hot water bottle (with a towel between the bird and the bottle). Place the bird in a warm, dark, quiet place away from children and pets. Return the bird to the nest as quickly as safely possible.
- If the young bird is hopping and running away from you, leave it alone. The parents will find him. If he is in immediate danger of becoming a snack for a cat or dog, scoop him up and put him in a nearby bush or shrub out of harm's way.
- If you cannot find the nest or the bird appears to be sick, starving, or injured or your pet brought him to you as a gift, please bring him into the center.

5. There is a sick bird hanging around my bird feeder.

The bird feeder should be taken down and bleached really well. Keep the feeder down for a couple of weeks. You do not want the feeder to be a source of transmission for disease. Do not throw seed on the ground, or feed the birds any other way. If the bird looks sick and you are able to safely capture him, bring him into the center.

6. There is a baby opossum/squirrel/chipmunk/raccoon in my yard.

Opossum – If there is a baby opossum in the yard, alone, or with one other, it has likely fallen off the mother. These little ones will need some care until they are old enough to travel alone. Please bring them into the center. They can be scooped up in a t-shirt and put in a box.

Raccoon – Raccoon mothers transport their young one at a time. There is a chance that the mother is simply in transition and will come back for the baby. Leave it alone and keep people and animals away from it! If the baby is in the hot sun, move him under a nearby bush or shrub. If the animal looks sick or injured, bring him into the center. If after watching the baby for a couple of hours and the mother has not returned, call us back.

## **Rescue Orchestration**

There are many situations that require volunteers to orchestrate the rescue of an animal. When this is necessary, it is important to get as much information, from the caller, as possible. This information should include:

- the type of animal
- the nature of the injury
- if anyone has handled the animal and who
- the condition of the animal
- the precise location
- if someone will remain with the animal until a rescuer can get there

It is the responsibility of the volunteer orchestrating the rescue to find a rescuer who is qualified and experienced with handling the specific type of animal. There are resources and lists to assist with finding a qualified rescuer.

## **Logging Calls**

Every call must be logged into the phone log. The information required includes:

- caller's name
- caller's phone number
- type of animal
- reason for call
- action taken
- outcome of call

The phone log is necessary to track calls, refer back to callers or situations, or follow-up on previous calls. A sample phone log is included in the back of this manual.

# Intake Procedure

## Information Acquisition

When someone brings in an animal, take the time to get as much information as possible. Although some of the information will also be included on the paperwork, the majority of the information acquired will be based on your questions. All information should be summarized on the bottom of the intake form. Questions should include:

- Where did you find the animal?
- Were there other animals around?
- Were there any clues as to what happened to the animal? (i.e., hit by car, attacked by hawk)
- How was the animal picked up and transported? (i.e., with a towel, in a box)
- Who has handled the animal?
- How long have you had the animal?
- How has the animal been kept, since being picked up?
- Has the animal been offered food or water?
- Did it eat or drink?

## Referral Procedures (i.e., to vet)

If an animal is brought in and the care required exceeds the care that can be provided at the center (i.e., hard-to-handle species, aggressive animal, sutures, broken limb), a referral will need to be made. Depending on the animal, a referral can be made to someone knowledgeable about the specific species or if the animal is in medical crisis, a referral can be made to a vet. Referral numbers for specific animals can be found in the Resource Manual, as can referral numbers for local veterinarians.

## Intake Paperwork

All initial paperwork needs to be completed in full, before an animal is put into a cage. The initial paperwork includes:

- an intake form,
- a cage tag, and
- logging into the intake book.

Samples of each type of paperwork are included in the back of this manual. Be specific about the nature of the injury upon admission, your observations, and the initial steps taken for treatment (i.e., taken to vet upon admission, given antibiotics upon admission, etc.). Please make certain that you have put your initials on the intake form, should anyone have questions about the intake.

## Initial Handling

All animals should be received by a volunteer, checked for species, and taken into the back room. Typically animals are scared, injured, in shock, or dying when they come into our center and as such, should be placed in a warm, dark, quiet area, in confined caging, until they can be examined by a rehabber. If an animal comes into the center in proper caging (i.e., adequate size, clean, secure), put the whole cage in the back room. If the animal needs to be transferred to another cage, do so quickly and quietly, after you have received training on proper animal handling for the different species.

## **Initial Caging**

When deciding on caging for an animal consider the following:

- Is the animal injured and does it need confinement?
- How large is the animal?
- Will it need something sturdier than a basket with clothespins?
- Does the animal need to be on heat?
- Does the animal perch, stand on platforms, or need a nest box?
- What enrichment items can be placed in the cage?
- What type of flooring or liner is needed?
- Should the animal be placed outside?

Every cage should be covered from top to bottom on at least 3 sides, and at times, the animal should be completely covered (i.e., more skittish birds, mammals in stress/injured, babies).

## **Initial Exam**

An experienced volunteer should do the initial exam. However, when you are taking in an animal and setting it up in a cage take notice of:

- injured wings,
- blood,
- injured legs or arms,
- twisting or tilted head,
- inability to stand or gain balance,
- temperature, and
- weight.

This information should be recorded on the intake form and reported to an experienced volunteer, who will do the initial exam.

## **Animal Tasks**

### **Cage Cleaning**

Cages should be cleaned a germicidal/antibacterial cleanser prior to putting any animal in it. The perches will also need to be cleaned with the same cleanser between each use. Daily cage cleaning should consist of:

- clean cage liners,
- new paper towels,
- clean dishes (no poop or crusty food), and
- clean perches and clean enrichment items.

### **Animal Feeding**

All animals and species have specific dietary needs. There are lists of appropriate foods posted on the refrigerator. Every animal should always have fresh food and water available. The dietary needs of each animal will be taught during your shifts.

Baby animals have specific requirements, namely, they will need formula-based nutrition. Feeding a baby animal requires training and mentoring, as babies' needs are much different and much more demanding. Therefore, if you are interested in working with babies (mammals in particular), let a supervisor know.

### **Cage Set-Up (animal specific)**

Cages are selected in a number of ways. Foremost, cages are selected according to size and type of animal; secondarily, cages should be selected according to rehabilitation needs (i.e., confinement). All of the animals have specific caging needs that will need to be considered when setting up the caging. Examples of these are below.

- Most songbirds will need perches, which are chosen according to size of their feet.
- Pigeons will need a flat, raised platform on which to set.
- Opossums need cages with logs, branches, etc. on which to climb.
- Rodents need nesting boxes.
- Gophers (unless there is an open wound) need dirt in which to dig.

The caging set-up is based on rehabilitation needs, natural animal behaviors and habitats, and enrichment opportunities.

### **Incubator Water**

Incubators are used all year long, but are most occupied during the baby season. On the left side of the incubator is a reservoir of water that needs to be filled daily. This allows the incubator to regulate humidity.

### **Communicating About Animals (i.e., cage notes, oral communication)**

As a largely volunteer-based organization, we need to rely heavily on clear communication. It is imperative that if you notice something unusual about an animal, have concerns or suggestions, that you communicate these orally to a supervisor or write a note and post on the cage. Likewise, anything important to the care of an animal will be noted on the cage. If an animal needs to be weighed daily, fed something specific, needs to be observed for something specific, this will all be noted on the cage. Please read all notes on all cages!

## **Daily Center Tasks**

### **Laundry**

Shake out all laundry before loading into the machine. If you see that the machine is dirty with seeds, hay, etc, please take a paper towel and wipe it out. Use laundry soap and bleach for every load. When laundry is finished, please fold and put into the correct storage bins.

### **Dishes**

All dishes should be soaked in Dawn soap and bleach for at least 10 minutes before washing. This soaking time ensures that things are disinfected. Please wash well, air dry, and put dishes, silverware, tubes, syringes, etc. in their proper places.

All syringes and tubes should be rinsed out with bleach (draw water into tube and syringe and push out) several times and then soaked in soapy bleach. Disconnect them to soak. When the tubes and syringes are rinsed out, allow them to air dry. The syringes should be dried with the plunger IN the syringe. This will prevent the rubber stopper from drying and expanding.

### **Sweeping/Mopping**

Sweeping and mopping should be done at least one time per day. If time permits, sweeping can and should be done more frequently. Do not use bleach for mopping – the fumes are too strong and are dangerous for the animals.

### **General Cleaning**

General cleaning should be done after the animals have been cared for. This cleaning includes the walls, counters, floors, windows, outside area, etc. When cleaning around animals, **DO NOT USE BLEACH!** Acceptable cleansers to use around animals are Simple Green, Dawn soap, Shackleys, and other bottles marked as “SAFE” for use around animals.

### **Supplies Stock**

Supplies that are used daily should be checked and stocked daily. These supplies include

- paper towels ripped and stacked,
- newspapers,
- seed bins filled,
- laundry done and put in storage bins,
- clean perches, and
- clean cages.

A supplies manager manages all other supplies. However, should you notice that we are either out or running low of something, please add it to the supply list next to the administration office.

## **Closing Tasks**

### **Feeding**

Every animal should have fresh food and water before the center is closed for the evening. Diurnal animals do not need full dishes of food - just a snack-sized portion. Nocturnal animals should receive a regular portion, as they probably have not eaten during the day.

### **Covering Cages (Inside/Outside)**

All outside cages should be covered, if there is a tarp attached to the cage. Secure the tarp with bungee cords or clothespins. During the winter or if it is raining, every cage should be covered.

Indoor cages should be at least partially covered at all times. Cages should be covered top to bottom on at least 3 ½ sides. These covers are in place to help reduce stress in the animals.

### **Sweeping/Mopping**

Sweeping and mopping should be done at least once daily and before closing the center for the evening. This is an aesthetic issue as well as an issue of hygiene and safety in an environment that should strive to be "hospital clean."

### **Dishes**

Dishes should be done before closing the center for the evening. Exceptions are made for dishes or equipment that needs to soak overnight.

### **Laundry**

Effort should be made to complete all laundry by the end of the day. However, if laundry is still being done at closing time, please turn off the dryer before leaving the building.

### **Windows/Curtains**

Please close all windows and all curtains before closing the center for the evening.

### **Food**

All food should be put in their proper place before closing the center for the evening. Also, any food that needs preparation for the next day (i.e., hard boiled eggs, moist dog/cat food) should be done before the center closes.

### **Garbage Thrown in Dumpster**

Please collect garbage from all inside and outside trashcans and dispose of them in the dumpster. Trashcan liners should be put in all trashcans to be ready for the next day.

### **Inside Lights Off/Porch Light On**

Please turn off all indoor lights and leave only the porch light on outside in the front.

### **Cage Lights and Heating Pads**

All cage lights must be turned off before leaving the center for the evening. Heating pads may remain on, however, please be sure that the cords are in good repair, and that the heating pad is not on a flammable surface. If you are not sure, ask!