

## A Short History of SWRR

In the late 1970's, volunteers dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation and release of injured and orphaned wildlife began providing care in their homes. Carter House Science Museum in Redding, California had always housed a few birds and animals. Eventually the public started bringing in an increasing number of wounded and orphaned wildlife. By 1980, these early volunteers saw a need for a separate operation to care for the overwhelming number of wildlife needing care, resulting in a handful of volunteers starting Shasta Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation (SWRR, Shasta Wildlife). Carter House Science Museum is now a part of [Turtle Bay Exploration Park](#).

In 1982, Tina Thorne, a founding member and Shasta Wildlife's first Director, was instrumental in working with the [Haven Humane Society](#) to provide space at their Placer Road facility for the growing program. That same year, the Private Industry Council contributed some training and supervisory staff. Shasta Wildlife's core group of eighteen volunteers rapidly grew. In 1987, when Haven's Placer road facility was no longer available, dedicated volunteers from Shasta Wildlife worked out of members' homes, forming the foundation for our current out-shelter program.

A founding member and volunteer specializing in raptors, Dr. Eloise Kuntz, served on Shasta Wildlife's Board of Directors for many years. In 1991, as a result of a grant written by Jim Miller, a Shasta Wildlife founder, this dedicated group of volunteers finally opened the current facility in [Anderson River Park](#). The fifteen hundred square foot building, outdoor wildlife enclosures and outbuildings for storage, provided Shasta Wildlife with its first real home.

By 1992, volunteers had built a large flight enclosure which greatly enhanced strength and endurance conditioning for large raptors prior to release. Although the new Center was staffed by an ever increasing number of dedicated volunteers, the need still existed for out-shelter facilities. Experienced volunteers continued to provide intensive care for raptors as well as deer, small mammals, and other animals in need of special care.

In the late 1980's, Shasta Wildlife volunteers completed Shasta Lake Hack, a remote "halfway house" where ospreys are, to this day, released back into the wild. This facility appears to be unique to California and has been credited with notably improving the success rate for release of eagles, osprey and other water related wildlife by Shasta Wildlife and other wildlife rehabilitation organizations able to take advantage of this unique facility.

Since the opening of Shasta Wildlife's Anderson River Park facility, there has been a steady growth of membership to five hundred with more than seventy active volunteers. Approximately fifteen hundred animals come to the Center annually for treatment, rehabilitation and release. Dedicated volunteers continue to work toward development of a larger, multipurpose facility in the future. With ongoing support from the community and volunteers, Shasta Wildlife will continue to educate the public on coexisting with wildlife and ensuring that many animals are returned to the wild.

## Our History - Another Perspective

Fifteen Years of Shasta Wildlife Rescue

By Renee Miller, 1996

Redding's Science Museum, Carter House, came into being in 1977. From the beginning they housed a few birds and animals, and eventually the public started bringing them wounded and orphaned critters. By 1979 Chris Grey, Sheila Ferguson and Marsha Howe saw a need for a separate operation to care for the overwhelming numbers of birds and animals needing care, so these three ladies started Shasta Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation. At first all the critters were housed in the homes of the few volunteers.

In 1980 the [Haven Humane Society](#), then located out on Placer Road near Swasey drive invited us to have a facility on their property. We were given the use of a 3-room home and a mobile. The home which was used as an office, lab and storage and the mobile was used by a disabled person, Paul Strothers, who served as our resident caretaker who was on call 24 hours a day. Also Haven furnished our water and electricity, and we had the use of their euthanizing equipment. In 1982 the Private Industry Council furnished some paid trainees and a paid supervisor. Our volunteer staff grew rapidly.

Among our early volunteers were Reni Michelle, Dr. Eloise Kuntz, Tina Thorne, Susanne Prigmore, Phil Detrich, Lois Bailey, Victoria Walworth, Carol Meaney, Jim and Renee Miller, Susan & Joe Blakemore, Donna Heiman, Ruth McKee and Jackie Boyd.

The experience of the many early volunteers became very valuable in training newcomers, and are still passing along their accumulated experience and knowledge. A thumbnail sketch of some of our founders is revealing: Reni Michelle worked as legal secretary for State attorney General Evele Younger, after that, as secretary of the County Agricultural Commissioner working with agricultural law and wildlife regulation and enforcement. She has had three semesters of agricultural business and animal management, and international Wildlife Rehabilitation Council training. Putting it all to work, she managed a 2500 acre cattle operation, and is now a pre-eminent raptor rehabilitator.

Lois Bailey grew up in Northern California in Westwood and Chester. All her life she has been giving generous loving care to wildlife such as deer, porcupines, rabbits, lynx, raccoons and squirrels, so she brought a world of valuable experience to us.

Carol Meaney started her avocation with Palo Alto Rescue in 1975 as a result of rescuing a swallow. Soon she became the expert on swallows and swifts. She researched the eating habits of both species and dramatically increased the success of rehabilitating them. The diet she developed was one of germ-free flies and yogurt. She did further research and published several papers on insect eating birds. Her success in publishing was no doubt helped along by her Bachelor of Science degree from the University of San Francisco. Her work and knowledge were crucial to us during those first years, especially during the time we had no facilities. Most of the time Carole and Don's home was loaded wall to wall with baby birds in the kitchen, dining room, and breakfast nook.

Jim Miller has always cared for birds and animals. He received one of the earliest falconry licenses from the [California Department of Fish and Wildlife](#). He had studied for forestry and took a job in the Los Angeles Fire Department where, after serving in several capacities, he developed a resource conservation and fire prevention educational program for the schools. After that he worked for U.C.L.A. as their Senior Museum Scientist in the Zoology Department. After that, the work to be done with Shasta Wildlife just seemed a natural thing to do, where he serves as volunteer, and was president for a term. At present he and Renee maintain their own wildlife preserve near Bella Vista, and help where they can with Shasta wildlife.

One of the pillars of Shasta Wildlife Rescue is Dr. Eloise Kuntz, who, if not involved in a tedious tender care routine, might be found at the North or South Pole, Madagascar, or other remote parts known for wildlife viewing and photography. Dr. Kuntz received her Master's degree in zoology at the University of Washington, and her PhD in

physics and biochemistry at Brown University. She taught at Vassar University and spent her summers in research at Woods Hole Marine Research Center. Later she worked for Ethicon, Johnson and Johnson, followed by a stint at Michigan State doing research in biophysics. She has always been interested in wildlife. She joined the Audubon Society years ago and Shasta Wildlife in 1979.

Some of the volunteers become specialists. One of those is Rhoda Antos. Long a keeper of goats, the rearing of orphan deer was a natural for her. Until she came on board we had not much luck with fawns, but her goat's milk worked fine, where commercial formula did not.

Dr. Eloise Kuntz and Reni Michelle have specialized on large birds, mainly raptors, and have received great help from Drs. Troop, Haynes, and Grych, veterinarians who donate their services to the wildlife rescue effort. The expertise evolves, and eventually Lois Bailey became the expert on rabbits, opossums, raccoons and squirrels, having adapted her house and yard to appropriate cages. Preceding her was Donna Heiman with raccoons.

In 1987 Haven Humane sold their property on Placer Road, leaving us to find other quarters. We improvised, dispersing various cages and functions to members' homes, and some of these persons' facilities often became what is now considered to be satellites of SWRR, which, of course cannot go on forever, so we are constantly searching for future sites suitable for specific functions. Presently Reni accommodates the Raptor flight rehabilitation cage. Dr. Kuntz' home is the critical care facility for immediate care of severe cases. Lois Bailey takes many of the small mammals, Rhoda Antos the deer and antelope.

Early in our existence we had an educational program which is still a large part of our operations. Early participants were Paul Strothers and Laura Manford.

In 1991 Jim Miller wrote a grant for \$170,000 for our present center, which was to have a resident caretaker's quarters. The grant was issued by the California Department of Natural Resources Environmental License Plate Fund for \$100,000, which, with \$10,000 of our operating funds, built the present center in Anderson. We are extremely grateful for that. We are still hoping for a facility with resident caretaker's quarters.

Mary Belkin's contacts with Chief Raines and others in Anderson were very helpful in securing the use of the land in [Anderson River Park](#).

The law now requires certified training to handle wildlife, and our volunteers are enrolling and qualifying at a satisfactory rate. We expect to have training programs available locally in early 1996. Training achieved in 1984 provided a base on which to build. Some of the first members to receive training were Reni Michelle, Dena Enloe. Jim Miller, Jesse Tappy, Donna Heiman, Tina Thorne and Dr. Eloise Kuntz.

It would be remiss not to mention some of the great volunteer contributors to whom our board has awarded Life Memberships. They Are: Tina Thorne, Dena Enloe Guthrie, Sheila Ferguson, Thomas and Janith Gandy, and Barretos La Fonda Inc. Honorary members are Carol Meany, Reni Michelle, Rhoda Antos, Dr. Eloise Kuntz, and Lois Bailey.

In fifteen years we have had six presidents: Reni Michelle, Dena Enloe, Dr. Eloise Kuntz, Mary Howland, Jim Miller and Gretchen Ring. Anderson opened with Randy Lewis as manager for the first year.

Since locating in [Anderson River Park](#) we have enjoyed steady growth of our membership to over 250, and volunteers handle all the functions. Public cooperation and demand for our services is extremely good. The media has good things to say about us. We received grants and donations from many sources, including several of \$10,000, some anonymous. We have been fortunate to meet our budget limitations and with the continued services of volunteers and the many memberships and donations we hope to continue. To donors it should be very comforting to know that 100% of their funds go to wildlife rescue, a far cry from the mere 10% to 60% so allocated to the basic purpose of most non-profits.