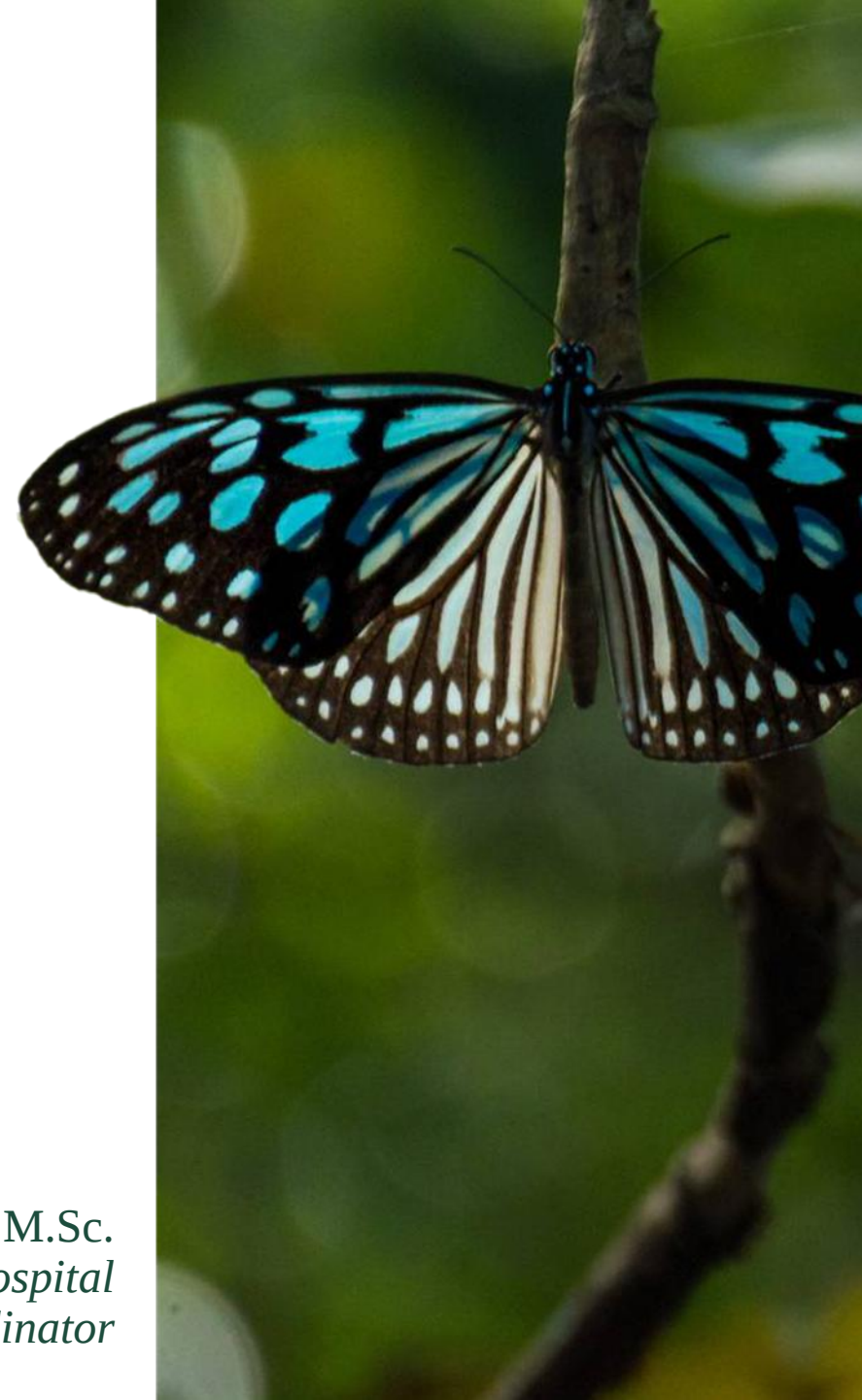




Living with Wild Neighbors

Coexisting with Urban California Wildlife

Presented by Jillian Jorgenson, M.Sc.
Lindsay Wildlife Hospital
Wildlife Husbandry Coordinator





Welcome!

Presented by **Jillian Jorgenson**

- B.Sc. Zoo & Conservation Science
(*Otterbein University*)
- M.Sc. Environmental/Conservation Science & Policy
(*George Mason University*)
- **Wildlife Husbandry Coordinator** at the
Lindsay Wildlife Hospital since 2024

*Animals have always been a big part of my life, and
now I've built my career around helping them!*

Lindsay Wildlife Experience

A Very Brief Overview





**Located in Walnut Creek
in Larkey Park**



Where We Started...

- Founded in the 1950's by **Alexander Lindsay** - a garage full of natural history specimens, a passion for nature and wildlife, and a dream.
- Became the “**Alexander Lindsay Junior Museum**” in 1962, following the death of our founder.
- Opened the nation's very first **wildlife hospital** in 1970.
- Moved into our current building in 1993, providing more space to expand the museum and ambassador animal housing as well as the wildlife hospital.
- Renamed the “**Lindsay Wildlife Experience**” in 2015 to better reflect the museum's role and significance in the community.



...Who We Are Now

- Natural History Specimens & Museum Exhibits
- Interactive Family Exhibits
 - ✓ *Raptors: Hunters in the Sky*
 - ✓ *Hive Alive*
 - ✓ *What's Wild, What's Not*
- Daily Programming with Education & Animal Encounters Staff
- Ambassador Animals
- Special Events, Hikes, School Visits
- **Wildlife Rehabilitation Hospital**

The Lindsay Wildlife Hospital



Our Mission

The goal of Lindsay's Wildlife Hospital is to provide the best **medical and husbandry care** to native wild animals in need.

Care is provided **on-site** as well as at the homes of our team of trained **homecare** volunteers.

The hospital is staffed by full and part time veterinarians, veterinary technicians, rehabilitation technicians, and support staff, as well as seasonal interns and more than 200 volunteers.



A Day in the Life...

During peak season, the Wildlife Hospital might admit 30-40+ new patients every day!

These may include...

- **Orphaned** animals needing round-the-clock feedings
- **Displaced** animals that lost their nest when a tree limb was cut down
- Birds with **head trauma** from flying into windows
- Animals, big or small, caught on **sticky traps**
- Wildlife suffering from **traumatic injuries** due to vehicle collisions, gunshots, or even electrocution
- Wildlife **caught/injured by cats or dogs**

All are admitted, examined, and provided the best and most humane care possible.



Let's Break It Down

2024: 4,602 patients admitted

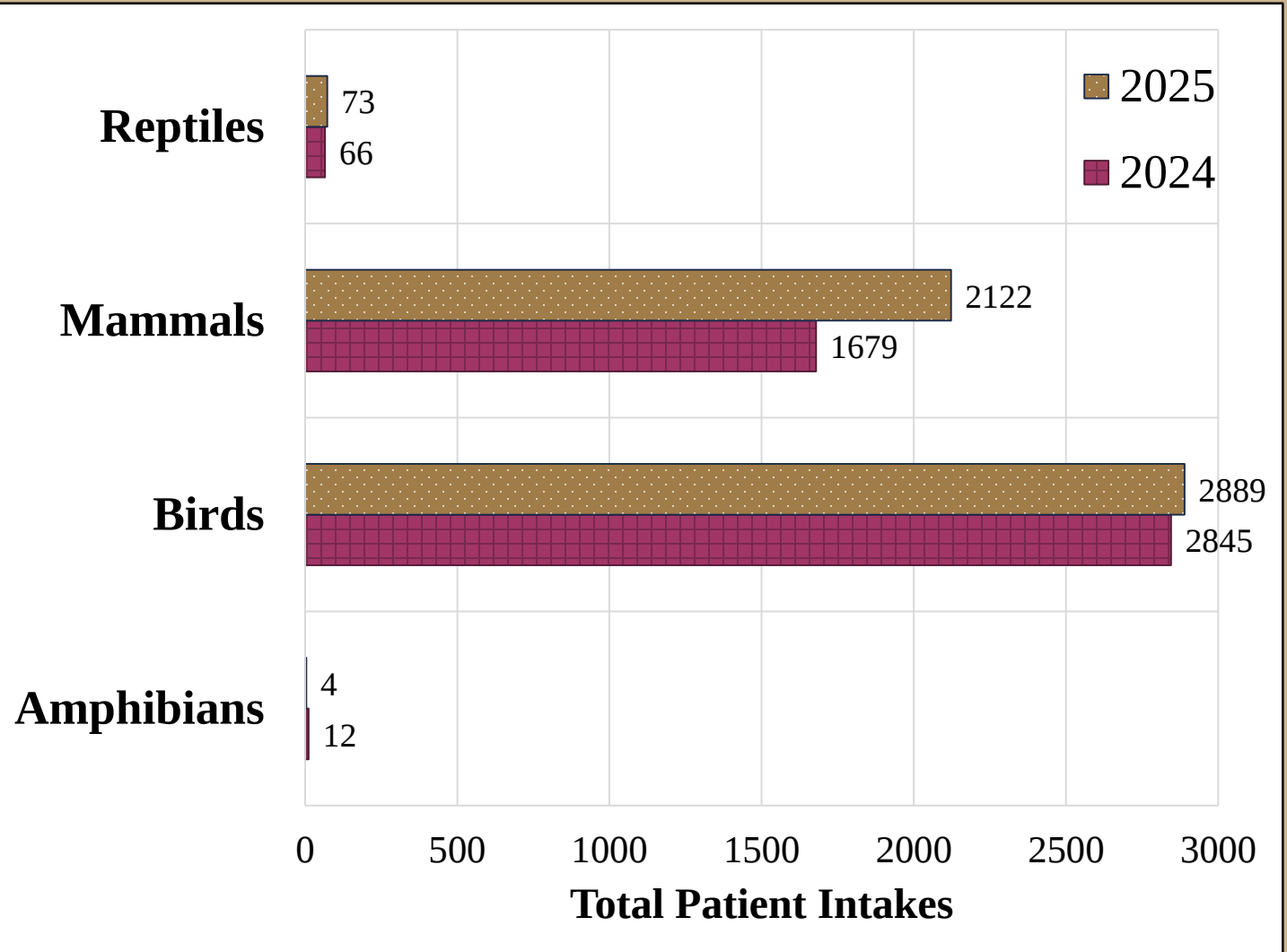
- Representing **155** unique species

2025: 5,096 patients admitted

- Representing **159** unique species

*Species the Lindsay Wildlife Hospital does not admit:

- Domestic/Companion Species
- Introduced/Invasive Species
- Agricultural Species
- Exotic Species
- *Waterfowl & Shorebirds*
 - These are directed to our neighbors at **International Bird Rescue**



Let's Break It Down

2026: January – August

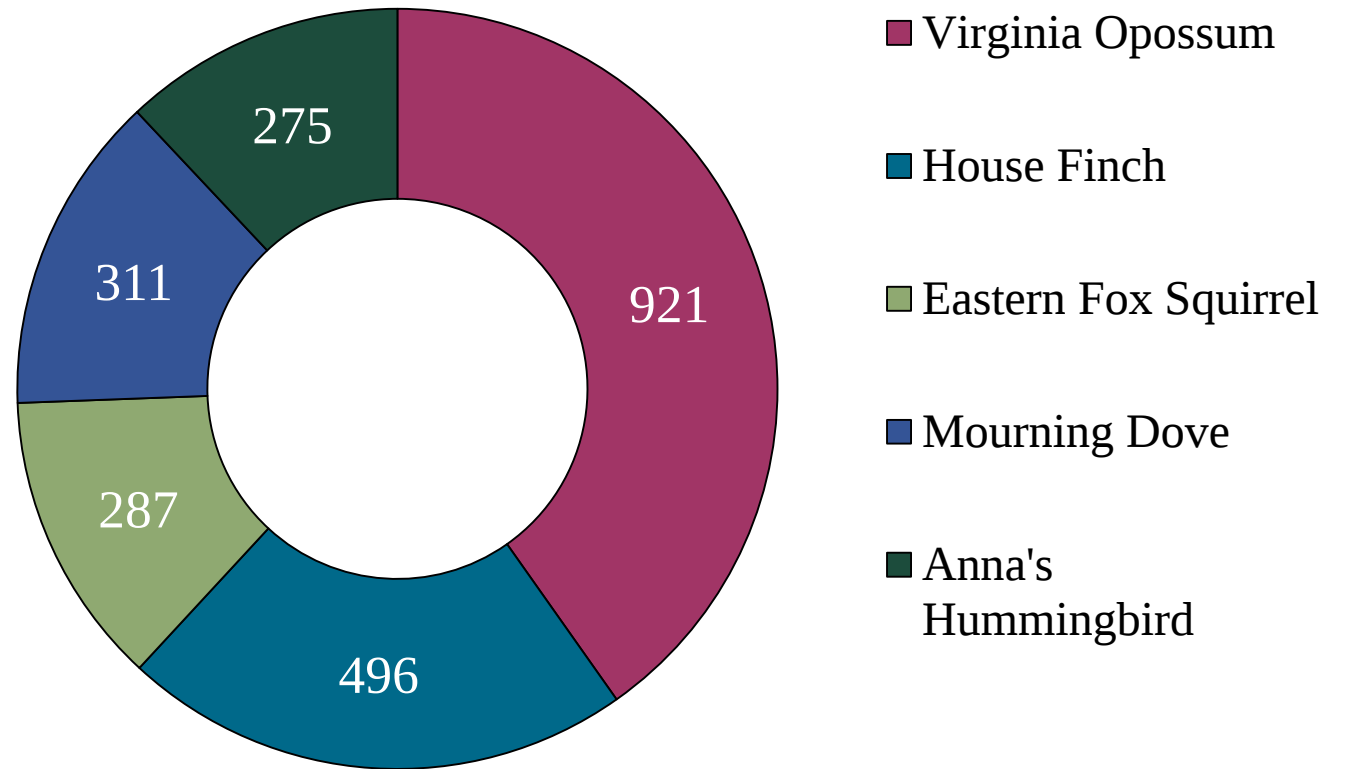
- Total Patients Admitted: 4,691
- Number Unique Species: 151

Both statistics are ~9-10% **ahead** of where we were this time in 2025!

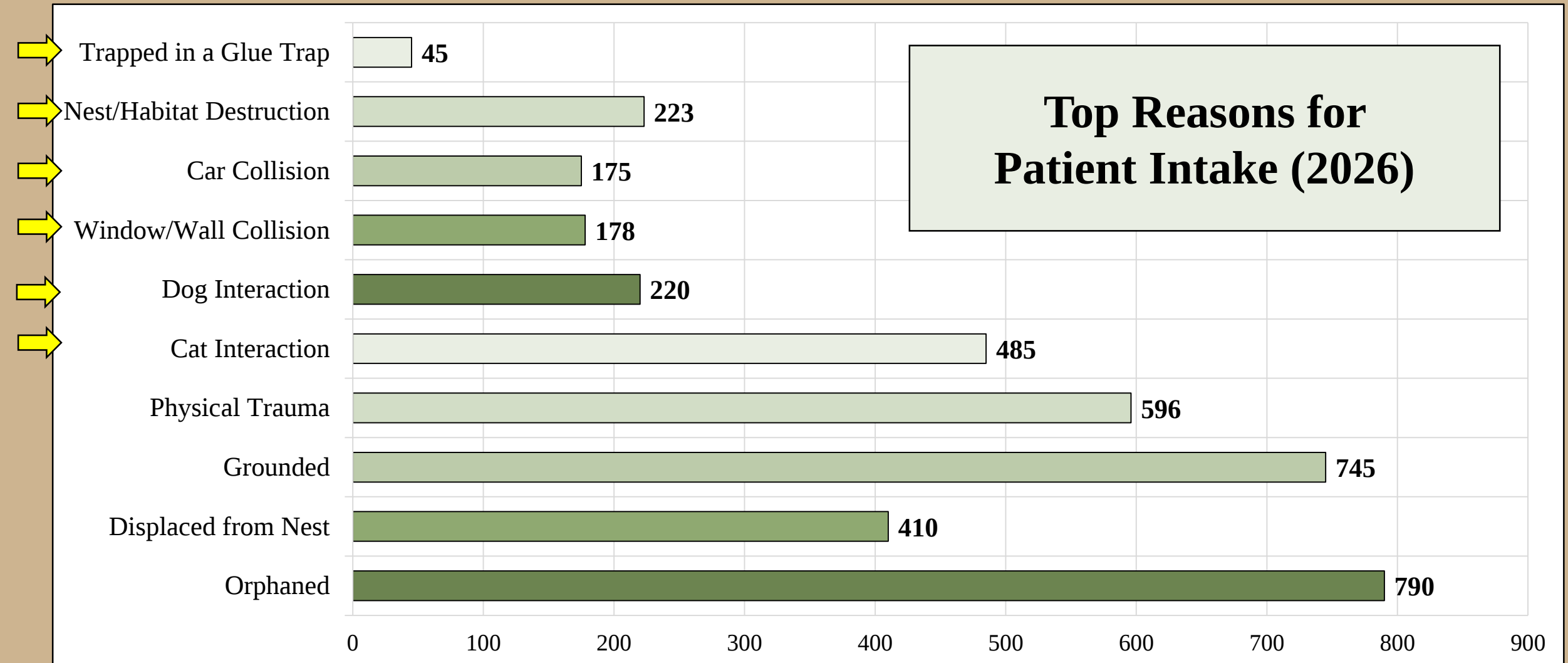
Patient Categories

- Reptiles: 63 patients
- Mammals: 1,791 patients
- Birds: 2,833 patients
- Amphibians: 2 patients

Most Commonly Admitted Species (Jan. – Aug. 2026)



Let's Break It Down



Patient Survival Rate

The first 24 hours in care is a **critical time** for all patients, regardless of reason for intake.

Animals may come to us stressed, injured, malnourished, dehydrated, etc. It is an unfortunate reality that many patients do not survive.

Annually, once patients pass their first 24 hours, we see a **survival rate of ~75-80%**. These odds may vary depending on reason for patient intake and severity of patient injuries or medical condition. For example, patients admitted due to injuries from a **cat attack** tend to see a **survival rate of ~64%** after the first 24 hours.



Growing Urban Environments and Climate Change Leads to More Trouble for People *and* Animals...



...so, what can we do?

Safely Coexisting with Wildlife

*How we can keep ourselves, our pets, and
our wild neighbors safe in a changing world*



Preventing Window Strikes

- One of the most common causes of adult **songbird** intake, but other species (such as **raptors**) are susceptible, too.
- While window strikes can occur year round, they are most likely to happen in the spring and fall when birds are moving around more for **breeding and migration seasons**.
- Glass is invisible to birds and reflects the sky and surrounding foliage, which further confuses them.
- There are many simple options available to help birds avoid your windows:
 - ✓ Attach stripe window decals to help birds recognize it as a barrier
 - Stripes actually work better than other shaped decals, which birds may try to dodge around.
 - ✓ At nighttime, turn off lights in unused rooms and draw the window shades



Case Study: Osprey in Fishing Line

- Admitted: August 2025
- Reason for Intake: Found tangled in fishing gear with hooks embedded in its wing and neck
- The fishing hooks had to be surgically removed and the wounds carefully cleaned and closed up to allow proper healing.
- Due to this species' unique adaptations for **diving and catching fish**, it can be very difficult to convince them to eat on their own while in human care. This bird needed **daily hand feedings** while at the hospital.
- To help its recovery, this patient was transferred to another facility that had a larger aviary available.
- This patient was **released in October 2025**



What We Can Do



- Countless species, including birds, mammals, and reptiles, have come to the hospital over the years entangled in **fishing line**, having **hooks** embedded in their skin, or even having swallowed hooks.
- A simple solution that can make a big difference is to **pick up and properly dispose** of fishing line and hooks that are left behind along waterways.
- Docks and beaches that permit fishing may even have a **designated place to safely dispose of these hazardous materials!**
- If you go out fishing, keep an eye on your surroundings – if you see large numbers of wildlife in an area, you may want to move to another spot to give them space and safety from your fishing line.

The Problem with Glue Traps

- **Glue traps cannot control what critters they catch**, and quite often it ends up being anything *but* the intended pest.
- The Lindsay Wildlife Hospital has removed lizards, snakes, songbirds, opossums, owls, and even hawks from sticky glue traps - these animals often have additional injuries from trying to free themselves.
- **Domestic animals** can also come into contact with glue traps and may become panicked or injured in trying to free themselves.
- Glue traps are, even when used as intended, very inhumane.
- **Snap traps are a more humane method of rodent control** as they act quickly and do not leave the trapped rodent to suffer.



The Problem with Glue Traps

Earlier this week in
Northern California...

Not one...
Not two...

But THREE
Northern
Pacific
Rattlesnakes.



Case Study: Gopher Snakes in Garden Netting

- Admitted: May 2025
- Reason for Intake: Three adult Pacific Gopher Snakes were tangled together in garden netting.
- All three snakes had **lacerations around their necks** from the netting cutting into their skin, requiring wound care and suturing.
- Had to remain in care while wounds healed and then until each one went through a full shed – this allows hospital staff to ensure that the wound healed properly and wouldn't cause problems with future skin sheds.
- By the end of **June 2025**, all three snakes had made complete recoveries and were released back into the wild.



What We Can Do



- If netting is needed to protect plants from wildlife, chose to use deer netting or other stiff netting/wire that has a larger mesh to prevent animals getting stuck.
- Keep netting away from the ground so other critters don't become entangled.

Other Kinds of Netting

- **Sports netting** can also cause problems for wildlife – numerous animals have been brought to the hospital after becoming entangles in **soccer netting** or even **basketball hoops**!
- When not in use, please put sports netting away where it cannot be accessed by wildlife.



Gardening with Care

Plan Your Yardwork Carefully

- Animals of all sorts make their homes in trees and shrubs, sometimes in your own backyard!
- To avoid primary nesting seasons, plan your pruning for a time **between October and December**



Consider Choosing Native Plants

- Gardens of native plants and flowers provide wonderful, healthy habitats for backyard wildlife and help support pollinators.
- Using compost to enrich soil quality can also help restore necessary nutrients to the environment.



Gardening with Care

Clean Birdfeeders and Birdbaths Often

- Birds stop by many different feeders and birdbaths as they travel, sometimes over great distances. You can help stop the spread of disease, such as avian influenza, by regularly disinfecting these surfaces.
- The Lindsay Wildlife Hospital recommends cleaning bird feeders and birdbaths at least weekly or between seed/water changes, cleaning with soap, water, and a 10% bleach solution.



Bird feeders can attract more than just birds!

- Critters like squirrels, rats, and mice may enjoy the free meal, as well, and can cause additional problems around the house.
- Carefully monitor crawlspaces, vents, garages, and so on for signs that wildlife may be using the space to nest.
- If you have concerns, contact a **local pest exclusion service** to help make appropriate modifications to keep wildlife out!



Monitoring Our Furry Friends

Even the most well-fed, well behaved pets have the potential to cause great harm to wildlife.

Recommendations for Cats

- **Keep them indoors** or, if they are used to going outside, consider building a **catio**!
 - ✓ Many volunteers at Lindsay Wildlife have constructed these for their furry friends and swear by them for keeping their pets safe while still allowing them to enjoy the sunshine.
 - ✓ **Catio kits** are readily available on Amazon and in pet stores and are relatively inexpensive.
- Some cats have also been trained to **walk on a harness and leash** as a way to satisfy their sense of adventure without the risk of encountering a skunk or coyote.
- On average, outdoor cats have a much shorter lifespan than indoor cats, need more medical care, and are exposed to more diseases.

General Recommendations for Pet Parents

- Keep them close and under your direct control while outside.
- Avoid leaving dishes of pet food outside while not being monitored – urban wildlife, such as opossums, raccoons, and skunks are more than happy to accept the free meal but have the potential to spread diseases to domestic animals.



Monitoring Our Furry Friends

Even the most well-fed, well behaved pets have the potential to cause great harm to wildlife.

Recommendations for Dogs

- As with cats, free roaming dogs are at greater risk of coming into contact with wildlife, diseases, and other dangers. While taking them out for walks or playtime, it is safest to **keep them leashed** unless safely inside a fenced yard or dog park.
- Even in a fenced yard/park, it is important to **be aware of your surroundings** and what your pup is up to – during the spring and summer months, especially, young wildlife may be venturing out for the first time and learning how to evade threats.
- **Understand your breed's behavior** – certain breeds were once used as hunting dogs and may still act on instinct when encountering wildlife.
- A “gentle mouth” can still cause harm to wildlife, so it is important to bring any animals caught by your pet to a licensed wildlife rehabilitation facility, such as the Lindsay Wildlife Hospital.



Keeping Wildlife Wild

Deer and **rabbits** are some of the hospital's most common “kidnapped” patients, as well as **fledgling songbirds**. Not every baby animal on its own needs human intervention, but how can we tell?

Deer

- A doe will often leave her fawn hidden on its own while she goes off to find food, sometimes for an entire day – this is completely normal behavior.
- If you find a fawn lying quietly in the grass, leave it where it is and keep yourself and pets away. The mother is most likely just out of sight watching. If you pick up a fawn, return it to where you found it so the mother can find it again.



Rabbits

- Young rabbits may also be left on their own for extended periods of time while their mother is out foraging for food.
- Keep an eye on them from a safe distance and keep pets away – the mother should return to them over time to care for them.



Keeping Wildlife Wild

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Fledglings

- Fledgling are the "awkward teenagers" of the bird world – they're nearly grown but don't exactly know what to do with themselves just yet. They may be similar in size to an adult bird, but with scruffy feathers of baby fluff still on parts of their body.
- These birds, while out of their nest, are still being tended to by their parents and are not considered orphaned/abandoned. If they have found their way onto a path or a street, all you need to do is help move them into a nearby bush for cover and their parents will do the rest!

**If you are uncertain if an animal needs help,
call our wildlife hotline for guidance!**

(925) 659 - 8156



Take a Hike... Safely!



Coyotes in the Bay Area

Once eradicated from the San Francisco area, coyotes have made a comeback and are now a fairly common sight in neighborhoods and greenspaces. They are resilient, adaptive, and help keep pest populations down in urban areas, so it is important to learn how to safely coexist with them.

- **Help Keep Wildlife Wild** – Avoid feeding coyotes. We don't want to lure them closer to humans with the expectation of food. These animals are very capable of hunting on their own!
- **Secure Garbage and Compose Bins** – This prevents all wildlife, not just coyotes, from digging through and learning to go into yards for an easy meal.
- **Haze to Prevent Habituation** – Nonlethal deterrents, such as “hazing”, can be very effective in encouraging coyotes to avoid yards. This may include making loud noises, banging pots/pans, or using an air horn to scare them away.
- **Predator-Proof Your Fencing** – For the best chances of keeping coyotes out of your yard, fences should be >6ft tall and extend partially into the ground (to prevent digging under). This can keep your pets safe while still being able to enjoy your yard!
- **Keep Your Pets Close** – Shorter, non-retractable leashes are ideal for walking pets. This helps the owner keep a closer hold on them and prevents them from being carried off by larger wildlife.

Take a Hike... Safely!

Rabies – Scary, but Preventable!

Rabies is a widely known (and feared) disease that has the potential to infect and/or be transmitted by all mammals. However, in the United States, most documented cases of rabies are seen in skunks, raccoons, bats, coyotes, and foxes.

How It Spreads

Rabies is transmitted in saliva, usually from a bite to a human or animal by an infected animal. It has also been documented to be transmitted when infected saliva comes into contact with an open wound or the eyes/nose/mouth of a person or animal.

If you or your pet is bitten by a wild animal, remain calm and contact the appropriate medical professional for guidance – an emergency vet or your doctor.

When possible, **many counties will require rabies testing on the animal that has come into contact with a person/pet.** Notify your local animal services for assistance with safely catching the wild animal (do not put yourself at risk).

How to Prevent It

Thankfully, **rabies is entirely preventable through vaccination!** Vaccination programs have been effective in preventing rabies and are available for cats, dogs, ferrets, horses, cattle, and sheep. There is a rabies pre-exposure vaccine series for humans, as well, for individuals that commonly work with rabies vector species (such as wildlife rehabilitators).

Regardless of if you/your pet is vaccinated against rabies, you will need to be revaccinated if bitten.

From the American Veterinary Medical Association



Take a Hike... Safely!



Rattlesnakes in the Bay Area

While they may seem scary at first, rattlesnakes are fairly non-aggressive and will prefer to avoid humans and conflict when possible. In the Bay Area, we have **Northern Pacific Rattlesnakes**, and while they can certainly have a formidable bite when provoked, it can be easily treated at a hospital.

Identification

- Distinctive, triangular-shaped head
- Thick body with large scales
- Rattle at the end of its tail



What To Do If You See One On A Path

- Remain calm and back away from it, giving it the opportunity to leave on its own.
- Do not poke at the snake with a stick or try to move it with your hands – this is how people get accidentally bit.
- Stomp your feet – the vibrations in the ground can help alert the snake of your presence and may encourage them to leave.
- Maintain a distance of about 10 steps back at all times to keep out of the snake's strike range.
- Keeping pets on a short, non-retractable leash can help better guide them away.

Take a Hike... Safely!



Rattlesnakes in the Bay Area

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What to Do If You (or Your Pet) are Bitten

- **DO:**
 - Remain Calm
 - Limit mobility of the bite location
 - Proceed IMMEDIATELY to a hospital/emergency veterinary office - if possible, call them on your way there so they can prepare the antivenom
- **DO NOT:**
 - Apply ice to the bite (may cause additional tissue damage)
 - Tie a tourniquet around the bitten limb (keeps the venom concentrated in one place, leads to greater tissue damage)
 - Attempt to suck the venom out (while it may work in movies, this has never worked in real life)



Take a Hike... Safely!

Meet The Neighborsssss

Snakes are some of the most misunderstood animals found in the Bay Area, even though they do a lot of good for the environment!

Pacific Gopher Snake

- 2.5-9' long on average, feeds on small mammals/birds and sometimes eggs

California Kingsnake

- 2.5-3.5' long on average, feeds on small mammals, lizards, frogs, young turtles

Sharp-Tailed Snake

- 8-12" long on average, feeds on garden slugs and salamanders.

These are just a couple of the more common species of snakes in the area. They are generally **harmless to humans** and will prefer to move away rather than act aggressively.

If you encounter a snake on a path or trail, give them some space and stomp your feet to alert them of your presence – more often than not, they will peacefully move on their way in no time.



At the end of the day...

As long as urbanization continues to spread, humans and wildlife will find their lives increasingly overlapping. The more we learn about our wild neighbors, the better we become at coexisting in a way that keeps us all safe – people, our pets, and wildlife alike.





Caring for others,
whether people or
animals, is what makes
us fully human.

Jane Goodall

**Thank You for
Attending!**