

PWC to the Rescue



Opossum Rescue April 2007

The Pacific Wildlife Care hotline (543-WILD) received a call that there was a possum that had been attacked by dogs. In true survival style, this mother possum got herself up over 15 feet in a large oak tree.

Our problem was getting the hurt and terrified animal down to help her heal. Note: most of our rescues are NOT this hard - thank goodness! One of our expert rehabilitators, Janis Barrows, gamely climbed a fifteen foot ladder next to the tree and brought the mother possum down. Unfortunately, there was only one baby found clinging to her back. They do that once they are too big for the pouch, but too young to go off on their own.

Janis took the two home with her (until recently all our rehabilitation took place in rehabilitator's homes). There, the mother was fed a smoothie made of Ensure vegetables, fruit and kibble all blended together.

Janis took her to the vet, and learned that the mother will never be able to eat normally as her jaw will be permanently out of alignment which makes her non-releasable. We will seek an educational position for her so she gets special care, and the baby will be released in a safer environment when he is old enough.

All of our education animals are taken only from animals found to be non-releasable. They were hurt or deformed prior to being rehabilitated by our group, and determined to be too hurt to be able to survive in the wild. Then they can be considered for educational animals if they are found to be gentle and calm enough to be able to tolerate contact with unfamiliar humans during our educational sessions.

Sometimes, when animals aren't releasable (since they couldn't survive in the wild); but they aren't calm enough to tolerate humans up close; they can be given to a zoo or other demonstration facility where they are not in close contact with the public.

