

# WILD TRACKS

SOUTHWEST WILDLIFE REHABILITATION & EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION, INC.

## Orphan Matching Campaign!

As you know, spring always means the arrival of an overwhelming number of sick, injured, and abandoned orphans at Southwest Wildlife.

An anonymous donor, who is aware of this annual strain on our resources, has pledged to match ~dollar for dollar up to \$25,000!~ all donations made for orphan care this spring!

For your donation to qualify for this matching opportunity, please check Orphan Matching Campaign on the enclosed donation form or click on the Orphan Matching Campaign button located on our home page at [www.southwestwildlife.org](http://www.southwestwildlife.org).

## Wildlife and Rodenticides

The poisons used to control rodent populations are referred to as rodenticides. Rodenticides are usually members of a family of anticoagulants that kill by causing internal bleeding. Unfortunately, the same thing can happen to wildlife and pets exposed to these poisons.

Over the last few months, we have seen an increase in the number of wildlife coming to Southwest Wildlife suffering from rodenticide poisonings. One of the reasons for this is that, when the weather turns cool, rodents seek places that are warm, often in or around our homes and buildings. Residents and maintenance personnel, attempting to rid their properties of rodents, hire pest control companies that utilize rodenticides or purchase rodenticides themselves at grocery, **nursery**, or hardware stores.

Rodenticide is made to be very palatable so mice and rats will be attracted to it and eat it.

**Rodenticides**

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## Email Newsletters

We encourage you to visit Newsletters on our new website to sign up for our email newsletter. Email newsletters utilize *full-color photos!* In addition, email newsletters allow Southwest Wildlife to save the costs associated with printing and mailing. That means we can utilize a larger portion of our funds for the housing, feeding, and medical care of our wild friends. Help Southwest Wildlife's newsletter become more environmentally friendly—sign up for email newsletters today!



## A Raccoon House

*by Kris Wheaton*

The large raccoon enclosure in the Education area was the first enclosure I entered after I got my pre-rabies vaccinations. I remember my heart thumping wildly and just hoping that the raccoons couldn't hear it. The word among long-time volunteers was that raccoon cages were generally nasty—stinky, dirty, mucky, and loaded with poop. No one's favorite enclosures to clean. Still, I cleaned, fed, and escaped with a huge sense of accomplishment.

There was a second raccoon enclosure in Ed at that time. A smaller enclosure, but one with a very large presence inside: Sumo. (At this point, the theme music from the movie "Jaws" plays in the background.) That was my next hurdle: Sumo. His reputation preceded him. He had run many a volunteer out of his cage over the years, some requiring a bandage or two. Amazingly, Sumo and I did fine. However, volunteers on other days weren't so fortunate. I suppose that sort of sealed my fate—I got to clean raccoons. That was 3 years ago.

Recently, a decision was made to move Sumo into the large enclosure to see if more space would make him less aggressive. The move was successful. With more room to move around, Sumo was much easier to deal with.

From my vantage point, however, there was one problem. When Sumo moved in, he tossed all the other raccoons out of their favorite house. Every time I went into the enclosure, there was Sumo, smugly hanging out in the prime real estate, while 5 or 6 raccoons were crammed in the other house, looking miserable.

I finally decided the solution was to build a fabulous new raccoon house. After much planning, many trips to Home Depot, and countless sideways looks from my husband, family, and neighbors (one thought I was building a tree stand for hunting deer!), I constructed a raccoon house. It has a large inside (I imagined all the happy raccoons—without Sumo), opens easily for cleaning, has a platform on top to hang out on, and two ladders. It's 8 feet tall and almost 4 feet wide and was so huge, I had to assemble it inside the enclosure!

I had such visions of happily ever after. What followed, of course, was not part of my plan. The raccoons ignore it! All but Sumo. Occasionally I find him inside or up on top, but now he mostly hangs out in the little house with everyone else! The lesson: I've got a lot more to learn about raccoons. But, if they think I'm giving up, they've got another thing coming!

## Rodenticides

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Unfortunately, these products are capable of killing animals much larger than rodents. Other wildlife and pets are often attracted to the bait and die from ingesting it.

Another reason rodenticides are so dangerous to wildlife and pets is because, in many cases, their toxic effects are cumulative. In others words, once ingested, such chemicals essentially never break down in the body. Repeated ingestion of even small amounts can eventually lead to toxicity levels that are high enough to cause death.

Rodenticide use is also a hazard for predators (including your dog or cat) due to secondary poisoning. If a predator such as a raccoon, fox, coyote, bobcat, hawk, or owl eats a mouse poisoned by rodenticide, that predator will also be poisoned and almost certainly die.

When treating rodenticide poisoning, it is very important for the vet to know which kind of rodenticide the animal has ingested. With regards to wildlife, this is usually impossible to know.

Once ingested, there is a limited amount of time for a veterinarian to be able to reverse the effects of these poisons. When ingestion is not identified immediately or treated in time, the toxin causes severe bleeding. Signs can vary depending on where bleeding occurs—bloody noses, bleeding gums, or black tarry stools may occur. When bleeding occurs

in the chest cavity, the animal will start having trouble breathing. When they bleed into their abdomens, animals may show weakness, collapse, and pale gums. Vets often see wildlife and pets present collapsed for no known reason, only to find that they are bleeding internally due to rodenticide poisoning.

By the time wildlife are sick enough to have visible symptoms and be captured for treatment, it is usually too late—too much damage has been done and they die. In the twenty years that I have been rehabilitating wildlife, I have only been able to save one coyote from the effects of rodenticide poisoning.

### Alternatives to Rodenticides

If there is no food for them to eat and no place for them to nest, you are less likely to have a rodent problem in the first place. Make sure all pet food, bird seed, and livestock feeds are in sealed, locked containers. Check around your home for any small holes, cracks, or vents were rodents could enter your home and seal them. Vents can be covered with wire mesh to keep small rodents from getting into crawl spaces and attics. Do not put wire mesh over a dryer vent, as it will clog with lint and could cause a fire. Instead of using cardboard boxes, which rodents can chew into and nest in, store Christmas ornaments and other items in tight-sealing plastic containers. Rodent repellents may be effective, as are live traps. Once trapped, relocate rodents away from your home. The Tin Cat live trap can catch multiple rodents at a time. Then, of course, there is the family cat...if your cat is a good mouser!



**A great Valentine gift idea!**

**Valentine Sponsorships: \$50**

**You may choose to sponsor a Fox, Raccoon, Wolf, or Bear for your special valentine!**

Valentine Sponsors receive:

- personalized sponsorship certificate;
- 4 X 6 photo of the sponsored fox raccoon, wolf, or bear;
- personalized valentine card;
- a stuffed animal toy: fox, raccoon, wolf, or bear

**Valentine Sponsorship orders should be received by February 7, to ensure Valentine delivery.**

Place your Valentine order(s) and pay via credit card online at: [www.southwestwildlife.org](http://www.southwestwildlife.org).

OR Place your Valentine order(s) using the mail-in form on page 7.

Adoption Questions? Call 480-473-8005.

All donations are tax deductible.

# Kit Fox

by Hillary Williams

The Kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis*) is smaller than any other North American fox. However, it has the largest ears! Kit foxes belong to the Canidae family, which also includes wolves, coyotes, red and gray foxes, and domestic dogs. The kit fox is the most specialized of the canids for living in the desert. They are found mainly in the Southwest, but also north to southeastern Oregon and southwestern Idaho.

Kit foxes are highly adapted for living in the desert and semi-arid regions of western North America. They are nocturnal and have sensitive eyes, which allow them to hunt in the cool of the evening. Their large ears help to locate prey in the dark and also serve to dissipate body heat. Their fur-covered feet help them walk on hot surfaces.



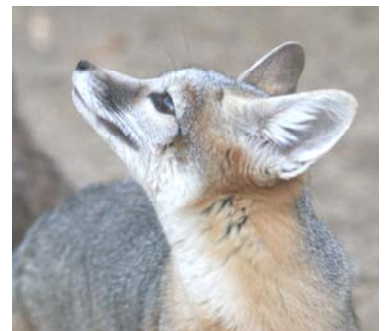
The kit fox measures between 15 to 20 inches in length, with a 9-to 12-inch tail. They stand 11 to 12 inches high at the shoulder, and adults weigh 3 to 5 pounds. Their slender body is pale gray, tan, or sandy, with a slightly darker back. The throat, belly, and inner ears are a cream color. They have black or brown patches on each side of their muzzles (noses), and bushy tails with a dark tip. Their sight and hearing are keen, and they have an excellent sense of smell.

Kit foxes are found in desert scrub and desert grasslands, preferring sandy, sparsely-vegetated areas, often in creosote bush communities. The kit fox uses underground burrows, usually found in loose desert soil, to avoid extreme temperatures. The dens may have several entrances, with openings just large enough to admit a kit fox. Kit foxes move around frequently, abandoning dens and moving to new ones.

In most cases, kit foxes do not mate for life. A male and female may stay together for more than one year, but seldom for more than two years. Kit foxes begin breeding in late December through February, and 4 to 7 pups are born in March or April. The female remains in the den, nursing the pups, while the male provides food for the female. The pups disperse from their parents' den after 4 to 5 months.

Kit foxes are opportunistic omnivores. Cottontail rabbits and kangaroo rats are the main prey of kit foxes, but they will also eat grasshoppers, horned lizards, rodents, ground-nesting birds, grasses, and fruits. Water is sometimes scarce in the desert, so kit foxes can survive without free water by gaining what they need from the blood and moisture in their prey.

Kit foxes are prey to eagles, coyotes, and bobcats. Humans are also a significant threat to kit foxes, as habitat loss and poisoning are the main reason kit fox populations are declining. The San Joaquin kit fox, a subspecies of *Vulpes macrotis*, is currently endangered in California.



## Southwest Wildlife Needs...

- ...airline miles! Donate your airline miles to our *Wild About Wildlife XII* auction.
- ...auction items for *Wild About Wildlife XII*.
- ...volunteers for *Wild About Wildlife XII*.

Please call LoriAnn at 480-471-0125 for more information or to make a donation.

## Help Southwest Wildlife While You Shop!

The eScrip program is a way for you to help Southwest Wildlife when you make purchases at Safeway, Wild Oats, Payless Shoes, Claim Jumper, Pep Boys, American Airlines, and more. To register with eScrip, go to [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com) or call 800-801-4973. You must renew your registration with this program annually, by the end of October.

Southwest Wildlife's eScrip ID number is 11704234.



## Wild About Wildlife XII

cocktail party & auction

Four Seasons Resort  
Scottsdale at Troon North

Saturday, March 7, 2009

5:00pm - 7:30pm

Special Guest Master of Ceremonies:  
Tom Chambers

\$100 per person · \$120 per person after February 14

\$150 per Patron

Reservations may be made at  
[www.southwestwildlife.org](http://www.southwestwildlife.org)

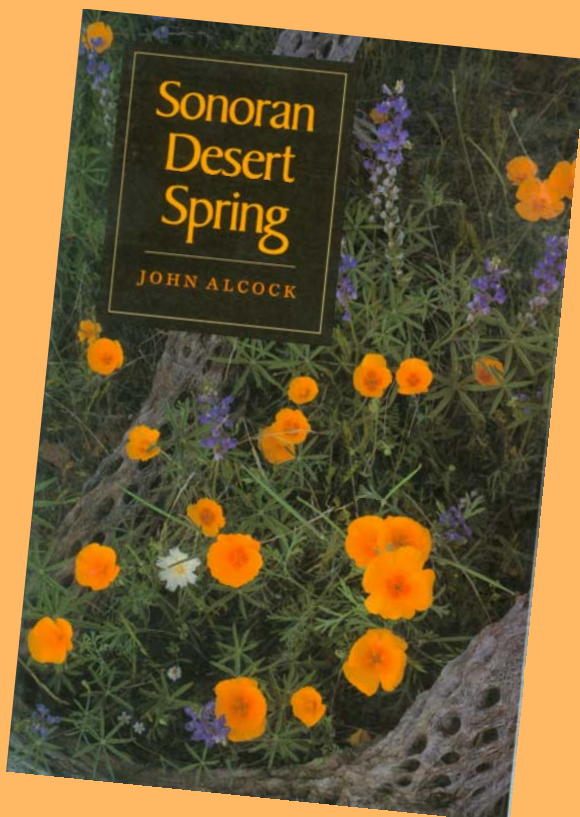
For reservation information  
call LoriAnn at 480-471-0125.

View

Select Auction Items

at

[www.southwestwildlife.org](http://www.southwestwildlife.org)  
after February 1, 2009



## BOOK REVIEW

### Sonoran Desert Spring

by John Alcock

published by the University of Arizona Press

Alcock provides a virtual tour of a Sonoran Desert ecosystem, including several illustrations, in this entertaining combination of science and prose. The author shares his personal experiences as he observes the lives of both plants and animals on a Sonoran Desert ridge throughout the springtime months.

The Sonoran Desert is, in the author's opinion, "one of the most beautiful and intriguing places on our planet." His enthusiasm for his subject matter is contagious. If you appreciate the desert, you'll love this book—the insights it provides will help you enjoy the desert's beauty even more.

## A Recent Rescue

The employees weren't sure what it was, but some type of critter had definitely set up housekeeping in their Home Depot. They set a trap and were rewarded with a healthy, bouncing...adult ringtail. OK, they'd trapped her. Now what?!?

When they couldn't find anyone in their city to take her, one of the employees was elected to take the ringtail home and figure out the next step. He took her home and put her in his garage, still in the trap. He gave her food & water and set about finding someone who could help him help her.

His search led him to Southwest Wildlife. "Of course, we'll take her!" he was told when he called. He and his wife went into the garage to collect her, only to discover she had somehow managed to escape the trap and was loose in the garage. They reset the trap, but she was a very smart ringtail and not about to go in there again!

When they checked on her later, they found she had made a nest in a box of their Christmas ornaments. They taped up that box up real quick, punched some air holes in it, and set out on the 2½-hour drive to Southwest Wildlife.

When they arrived, we took a peek to see what we were dealing with. That ringtail looked so cute—and peaceful!—lying next to the treetop angel. We decided to net her by opening the box just enough to slide the net in. Our intention was to remove her from the box without damaging any of the ornaments and place her into a crate in the clinic for a medical exam.

Well, she clearly didn't care what our intentions were,



good or otherwise. She shot out of that box as if she were spring-loaded!

We returned the box of ornaments to her rescuers—amazingly, not a single ornament had been broken!—and returned our attention to the ringtail. We'd had the foresight to attempt her transfer in a small room, just in case she escaped during the process. That didn't seem to help much, though. Scared ringtail can bounce around a room as if they had suction cups for feet! It took us a good half hour to catch her.

A medical exam showed the only negative affects of her ordeal were stress and fatigue. We were pretty certain, however, that she was not as stressed or tired as we were!

She will be given a few days to eat and recover. Then, thanks to the efforts of a couple who cared enough to make a five-hour drive to make sure she got the medical attention she might have needed, she will be released with another ringtail that was trapped by a homeowner.

## Please Remember Southwest Wildlife

When planning to provide for your family and friends after your lifetime, please remember Southwest Wildlife! Including Southwest Wildlife in your estate planning allows you to continue your commitment to supporting wildlife stewardship and education for the benefit of future generations. Such a legacy benefits both humans and wildlife, because all lives—both plant and animal—within an ecosystem are dependent upon one other for their health and survival.

There are many ways you can help Southwest Wildlife via bequests: a certain dollar amount or percentage of your estate, particular stocks, bonds, or mutual funds, or specific real estate. You may even want to donate a highly appreciated asset to Southwest Wildlife now! A charitable remainder unitrust, for example, allows you to receive the tax benefits of a donation during your lifetime and allows you to continue to receive income generated from the donated asset during your lifetime.

We are a nonprofit, 501(c)3 charitable organization. Your estate planner/tax advisor will also need to know our tax ID number: 86-0765249.

# Donation and Sponsorship/Adoption Form

Please use ONE form for each donation, sponsorship, or adoption!

The most secure way to donate or sponsor/adopt an animal  
via credit card is online at: [southwestwildlife.org](http://southwestwildlife.org).

- I would like to make a cash donation in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to Southwest Wildlife.
- I would like to make a donation to the Orphan Matching Campaign in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.
- I would like a Valentine Sponsorship! I wish to sponsor a: \_\_\_\_\_ for \$50.00.

Donor Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Donor Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City

State

Zip

Donor Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

## Payment Information

- Please charge my
- MasterCard
  - Visa
  - Discover
  - American Express

- Enclosed is my check

In the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Check number: \_\_\_\_\_

in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

To make your donation via credit card, please complete the following information:

Cardholder's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Billing address for card: \_\_\_\_\_

City

State

Zip

Card number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_ CVS number (located in signature strip on back of card): \_\_\_\_\_

Authorization Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Sponsor Information

(Please use ONE form for each sponsorship!)

Valentine Sponsor Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Valentine Sponsor Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City

State

Zip

Valentine Sponsor Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

## Southwest Wildlife News

- YES, I would like to receive Southwest Wildlife's quarterly newsletters via email!

- I would also like to receive information via email regarding Southwest Wildlife's:
- special wildlife/conservation events
  - educational programs
  - wildlife/conservation Action Alerts

# SOUTHWEST WILDLIFE

Rehabilitation & Educational Foundation, Inc.

PMB 115

8711 E. Pinnacle Peak Road

Scottsdale, AZ 85255

[www.southwestwildlife.org](http://www.southwestwildlife.org)

Wildlife Emergencies: 480-471-9109

Wildlife Education: 480-471-3621

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**Southwest Wildlife wishes to thank all individuals and organizations  
who have given so generously to enable us to help the many animals who come through  
our doors—we couldn't do this without your help!**

**With special thanks to:**

Dr. Steve Gilson & Dr. Mark Soderstrom of Sonora Veterinary Specialists  
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Dr. Ronald Sigler, Dr. Jennifer Urbanz, and Staff of Eye Care for Animals  
Dr. Visser, Dr. Kaufman, and Staff of Aid Animal Dental Clinic

Dr. Barnes and staff of Del Lago Veterinary Hospital  
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AJ's Fine Foods for produce  
Albertsons-Via Linda for produce  
Safeway at The Summit for produce  
Safeway at Pinnacle Peak for produce  
Safeway Corporate for cleaning supplies  
Basha's in Carefree for produce  
Sprouts  
Safeway eScrip Program  
Bill Hood, Scottsdale Accounting Service  
Pet Club, Country Club Dr, Mesa  
Nestle Purina  
Wes Patrick and Kristin & Scott Patrick of Critter Control  
Tohono O'odham Farming Community

Extreme Internet for the website  
California Pools for maintaining the bear pool  
Chris Hock of North Valley Pump  
Dale Husband of Husband Car & Truck Repair  
Environmental Fund for Arizona

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would like to send you  
our newsletters  
—with more,  
full color photos!—  
via email.**

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