

February 6, 2006

## Wildlife Rescue Resources

**Press Contact:**

Elin Ljung, Communications Coordinator

Mono Lake Committee

(760) 647-6595

*www.monolake.org*

### **For Immediate Release**

As residents of Eastern Sierra towns know, living in close proximity to wildlife means that humans and animals cross paths frequently. Whether it's a bear in the garbage, an eagle hit by a car, or a bird bonking against a house window, Sierra wildlife often ends up worse for wear after such an encounter with humans. However, thanks to the work of the Eastern Sierra Wildlife Care (ESWC) in Bishop, many injured or orphaned wild birds and mammals can be released back into their home habitats as good as new.

According to the ESWC website (*www.eswildlifecare.org*), an animal needs help when it does not fly or run away when you approach it. If you're not sure what to do, call ESWC at (760) 872-1487 for advice. That's just what Nancy and Bill Boman of Murphey's Motel in Lee Vining did when they spotted a stunned-looking Northern Pygmy Owl on the pavement of their parking lot on January 19<sup>th</sup>. Following ESWC's advice, and with the help of Donnette

Huselton and Santiago Escruceria of the Mono Lake Committee, the Bomans attempted to rescue the owl. To their dismay, the owl took off east toward Mono Lake, but struck the windshield of a Mono County Animal Control truck passing on Highway 395! The Animal Control officer, the Bomans, and their helpers rushed into the street and picked up the owl, which appeared to be dead.

To keep injured birds calm and quiet, ESWC advises placing the bird in a box only slightly bigger than its body with a towel for padding and a leak-proof hot water bottle to combat shock. Ms. Huselton prepared a small box for the Pygmy Owl, the second smallest owl in North America. She planned to transfer the body to Lee Vining-based researchers from PRBO Conservation Science, to use the bird for educational purposes. ESWC volunteer Trina Jennison, who had been standing by in Crowley to receive the owl and provide first aid was saddened when Ms. Huselton called with the bad news that the owl was dead.

An hour later Ms. Huselton removed the towel-wrapped body from the box. To her surprise and delight, the little owl was moving in an attempt to get out of the towel! She placed it back in the box and called Jennison to tell her that the owl was in fact alive and on its way to her. After stabilizing the owl, Jennison in turn transported the small bird of prey to ESWC director Cindy Kamler, at the Center near Bishop.

Sometimes injured birds need extensive rehabilitation, but amazingly, the Pygmy Owl showed only slight signs of head trauma and was flying within three days. It took a few more days for the bird to regain its strength and be ready for release. Art Lillund, an ESWC volunteer, brought it back to Lee Vining on January 30<sup>th</sup> and he and Ms. Huselton released it successfully into an evergreen tree in Hess Park, a safe distance from Highway 395.

When in doubt about an animal's health and your ability to help, call ESWC at (760) 872-1487 or the California Department of Fish and Game at (760) 872-1171 for larger animals like deer, bears, or coyotes. With the resources that Eastern Sierra Wildlife Care provides, animals can often be rehabilitated and released safely after their encounters with vehicles, windshields, and windows. Abundant wildlife makes living in the Eastern Sierra rewarding, so help keep these fellow residents safe!

# # #

Photo caption: Northern Pygmy Owl recovering at Eastern Sierra Wildlife Care. (photo by Cindy Kamler)

The text of this press release may be downloaded from  
[www.monolake.org/press](http://www.monolake.org/press).

# # #

*The Mono Lake Committee is a nonprofit citizens' group dedicated to protecting and restoring the Mono Basin ecosystem, educating the public about Mono Lake and the impacts on the environment of excessive water use, and promoting cooperative solutions that protect Mono Lake and meet real water needs without transferring environmental problems to other areas.*