

*'We're
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Don't try this at home:
Native Animal Rescue
coordinator Morgan
Venable is caring for this
baby bat at her house
on Getchell Street.

Dan Coyro/Sentinel



Animal Shelters

Animal rescue group improvises

By **DONNA KIMURA**
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — Native Animal Rescue is back tending to sick and injured wildlife — despite being homeless.

The agency, which shut its doors last August, is working with about 15 experienced in-home caregivers to provide aid to animals, said board president Cliff Feldman.

"We're making sure animals are getting taken care of," he said.

It is a continuation of a mission that began about 16 years ago.

The group decided to enhance a network that was in place since it has yet to find a clinic site, Feldman said.

Under its new operations, Native Animal Rescue officials will direct callers to a network of caregivers. NAR supports these caregivers with medicine, food and other supplies. The agency also will help transport in-

Volunteers nurse injured critters at home

jured wildlife.

These are expanded services since the group closed its clinic, according to Feldman. Up to now, it has had an answering machine, referring callers to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals or some of the in-home caregivers, he said.

Some of the experienced care providers include a Santa Cruz couple specializing in songbirds, a Scotts Valley man who treats turtles and tortoises, and specialists in rabbits, opossums, sea birds, owls and mammals.

"Even when NAR operated a clinic, these people were an important part of what we did," Feldman said. "These are dedicated, experienced caregivers who each specialize in a particular type of animal."

Native Animal Rescue is also hiring

an animal care coordinator to be certain the animals receive care within the guidelines of the state Department of Fish and Game.

The group shut down after an unprecedented number of dying sea birds overwhelmed its facilities. Directors said the \$50,000 budget was a fraction of what the agency needed, and the tiny room used for the wildlife next to the SPCA shelter was too stressful for the wild animals and the staff who cared for them.

Directors had hoped to reopen another clinic to take in the injured and orphaned wildlife by this spring, but they are still searching for a new home.

"We're constantly looking at sites," Feldman said.

Proposals to locate at the Farm property in Soquel and in a vacant building at the Renaissance High School near La Selva Beach haven't worked out, he said.

Issues of affordability, zoning and location have been difficult for the group to overcome.

NAR's new animal rescue coordinator is Morgan Venable, who specializes in treating bats. She can be reached at the Native Animal Rescue Wild Lifeline at 462-0762.

Volunteers are needed for animal care, transportation and other help. Interested individuals should call Robert Servin at 338-6844. For more information about Native Animal Rescue's administrative needs and efforts to find a permanent clinic site, individuals should call Cliff Feldman at 425-8989 or Rob Stevens at 688-9722.