

# Released

Back to the Wild

## Great Horned Owl

Released February 2007



On February 4, one of our expert rehabilitators, Kay Parkman, was called by the person taking calls for Pacific Wildlife Care, about an owl that had been treated at Atascadero Pet Hospital and needed rehab.

The vet said the bird had been brought in by some people who had discovered him hung up in a barbed wire fence. They were bike riding in a ranch area north east of Atascadero and saw the Horned Owl struggling to free his wings from the barbs.

Meanwhile a young Bobcat had noticed a potential easy meal and was stalking the bird.

Christopher Alakel and his friends managed to break off enough wire to carry the bird to the vets office where it was examined and treated for several cuts and torn skin on the wings. The Bobcat had to find another source for lunch.

The owl spent about a week in Kay's recovery room. He was very reluctant to eat white mice so she made a trip to get a batch of frozen brown mice. She finally had

to resort to subterfuge and trick him into eating by hiding under a towel and making the mouse move by flipping it with a wire coat hanger. He thrived!! After a week of exercises at another rehaber's gym, he let her know he was ready to leave by tearing down the interior door to the flight cage. Kay contacted Christopher to take her to the original rescue site and they carried the owl up the trail looking for the perfect quiet release site. They located a nice remote area, carefully placed the cage with the door open and slightly upraised.

The owl took flight. Christopher was in place with his camera and got the perfect shot. When they turned to leave they discovered that the empty field had been filled with about a dozen very curious heifers appreciatively watching the show. What a wonderful ending to a successful RRR. (Rescue, rehab. and release.)