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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
MARCH 3, 2025**

## **Gray Fox Burned in Airport Fire Returns Home**

*Animal's traumatic burn wounds on paws healed after 153 days of treatment*

**RAMONA, CA** — On this **World Wildlife Day**, March 3, 2025, a gray fox who spent more than five months at San Diego Humane Society's Ramona Wildlife Center for treatment of traumatic burn wounds to his four paws, is back in the wild. The fox was released in Orange County on Sunday, March 2, 2025, not far from where he was found injured during the Airport Fire in September 2024.

The gray fox was first brought to San Diego Humane Society by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife on Sept. 30, 2024. He was in pain with second and third degree burns across all paw pads resulting in severe tissue trauma. He needed daily treatment by Project Wildlife's medical team to stand a chance at survival.

It took months for the injuries to heal. The gray fox had lost several digits, nails and paw pads. Project Wildlife's veterinary team ensured the patient was on appropriate pain therapy and used novel treatments to allow his wounds to heal. On three occasions, he received donated florescent light therapy by local veterinarian Todd Cecil, DVM, DABVP.

Project Wildlife's rehab team provided the fox with comprehensive care, including specialized husbandry and enrichment to encourage him to keep his bandages on. He received a balanced diet to support healing. The medical and rehabilitation teams collaborated closely, evaluating his health and behavior to determine if he could adapt and thrive in the wild despite his permanent injuries.

"This animal was left defenseless with life-threatening wounds from the Airport Fire," said Alexis Wohl, DVM, Wildlife Veterinary Manager of San Diego Humane Society's Project Wildlife program. "His prognosis was guarded for a long time, but in the end, he ultimately overcame his injuries so he could return home."

Towards the end of his recovery at San Diego Humane Society, the fox transitioned from the indoor hospital to an outdoor enclosure. "Regaining his ability to climb and jump was essential for us to determine his readiness to thrive in the wild," said Autumn Nelson, Wildlife Operations Manager at San Diego Humane Society's Ramona Wildlife Center. "Using trail cameras for remote monitoring, we watched as he grew more agile each day, skillfully navigating the logs and platforms in his habitat."

San Diego Humane Society's Project Wildlife program is the primary resource for wild animal rehabilitation and conservation education in San Diego County. Each year, the organization gives more than 10,000 injured, orphaned and sick wild animals a second chance. At the Ramona Campus, the San Diego Humane Society specializes in caring for native apex predators and birds of prey, including hawks, owls, eagles, coyotes, bears, bobcats and, under special case-by-case authorization, mountain lions.





**Photos/b-roll of the gray fox's return to the wild and treatments for media use can be downloaded here:**

**<https://spaces.hightail.com/space/wxZxReaW30>**

**Photo/video credit: San Diego Humane Society**

#### **About San Diego Humane Society**

San Diego Humane Society's scope of social responsibility goes beyond adopting animals. We offer programs that strengthen the human-animal bond, prevent cruelty and neglect, provide medical care, educate the community and serve as a safety net for all pet families. Serving San Diego County since 1880, San Diego Humane Society has campuses in El Cajon, Escondido, Oceanside, Ramona and San Diego. For more information, visit [sdhumane.org](http://sdhumane.org).

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