

Ringtailed cat shot with BB-gun
Meadow Vista, CA (US)

Incident Date: Thursday, Jan 6, 2005

County: Placer

Disposition: Open

Suspect(s) Unknown - We need your help!



A two pound ringtailed cat is fighting for his life in a local veterinary hospital after apparently being shot by a BB gun. An unidentified man found the small creature at the bottom of his driveway in Meadow Vista. Gold Country Wildlife Rescue was contacted by the Meadow Vista Veterinary clinic, where the man took the animal.

Kari Freidig brought the injured animal to Companion Veterinary Care clinic for care because the Meadow Vista clinic does not treat wildlife.

LaBarre said when she first examined the animal it appeared that he was shot in the head and had a hip wound. "We X-rayed and found that it had four pellets, one through the large intestine, one in its genitals, one in the hip and one in the head," LaBarre said. "Shotgun pellets and BB gun pellets are both copper-coated. What we found in the animal could be either one."

After performing the operation to remove the pellets, all staff at the clinic could do was hope for the best.

"He may or may not make it," LaBarre said. "There is always the possibility of brain damage from the shot to the brain."

The cost of the surgery was paid for by Gold Country Wildlife Rescue.

The ringtailed cat spends most of the daytime hours sleeping and forages for food during the night, feeding on spiders, scorpions, snakes and fruits, an Auburn Area Animal Rescue Foundation official said.

Donna Parks, a veterinary technician at the clinic said she had never before seen the creature, which looks like a cross between a raccoon and a squirrel.

Whoever shot the animal, if caught, could face felony charges of cruelty to animals, officials said. The crime is punishable by state prison time, a fine of \$20,000 or both, according to Deerings Penal Code Sec. 597 (a).

RINGTAIL CAT FACTS: Although they are called 'cats,' ringtails are more closely related to raccoons than felines. Species: *Bassariscus astutus* Habitat: Woodland regions of southwestern United States including Oregon, California, Nevada and Utah Body Length: 15-18 in. Tail Length: 15-20 in. Weight: 2-3 lb. Diet: Omnivorous; feeds on spiders, scorpions, crickets, rats, mice and fruit.