Glue traps are cruel and inhumane
By Alison Hermance

WildCare's wildlife hospital cares for more than 4,000 ill, injured, and orphaned wild animals every year. Of these, a dozen or more are brought to the San Rafael clinic stuck to glue traps.

Although they may be inexpensive, and their cheerful packaging proclaims these traps to be "safe," "clean" and "nontoxic," nothing could be farther from the truth. Glue traps are actually one of the most cruel and inhumane pest control products on the market. They should never be used under any circumstance for any reason.

When you set a glue trap, the trap itself doesn't kill the animal. The glue is nontoxic, and it doesn't end the animal's life. Instead, animals stuck to glue traps must wait to die slowly of dehydration, starvation, and exposure.

Many of the glue-trapped patients admitted to WildCare are rodents, the intended targets, but other animals also fall victim. Most people are appalled when they see what happens to an animal stuck to a glue trap, and no matter how much they may despise the animal they intended to trap, many people bring glue-trapped rodents — and other animals — to the wildlife hospital expressing deep regret and horror at the realities of how glue traps work.

A recent glue trap patient at WildCare, a Western scrub jay, likely thought it had hit the jackpot when it saw chocolate chips and bread placed under some bushes. But as soon as it set foot on the glue trap tray holding the food, it must have realized it was in trouble. First one foot then the other were quickly ensnared by the sticky glue. In its frantic flapping, the bird's tail feathers got stuck — then its wings. Animals stuck to glue traps will rip out fur and feathers, break bones, dislocate joints, and even chew off their own limbs in their desperation to escape the sticky trap.

All this bird could do was squawk and struggle, increasingly ensnaring itself in the glue. Fortunately, a young boy saw this bird stuck to the glue trap and brought it to WildCare.

Upon intake, WildCare medical staff sedated the jay, and carefully and painstakingly removed it from the glue. This must be done with the utmost care to prevent further injury and to protect feathers and delicate bones. Oil should never be used to remove a bird from a sticky trap; any animal in this situation needs professional care at a wildlife hospital like WildCare. This bird's story ended well — its feathers recovered, and it stayed in WildCare's aviary for about a week.

After WildCare staff confirmed no more glue traps would be set, it was released back to its home territory.

But too many animals are not as fortunate.

What can you do? Most importantly, never use glue or sticky traps under any circumstance. Give friends and family the facts about the slow and brutal death glue traps inflict on animals, and ask them to help spread the word. WildCare wants to stop the sale of these brutal and inhumane traps, and we have started a letter-writing campaign to ask retailers to stop selling glue traps. Our website has a letter you can share with your local retailers at discoverwildcare.org/gluetraps.

There is no excuse for the use of glue traps. Please help WildCare, Marin Humane, and everyone who cares about the suffering of animals to stop the sale and use of these cruel and inhumane devices.

Alison Hermance is the director of communications and marketing for WildCare. Marin Humane contributes Tails of Marin articles and welcomes animal-related questions and stories about the people and animals in our community. Go to marinhumane.org, find us on social media @marinhumane, or email lbloch@marinhumane.org.