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Two Orphaned Coyote Pups Relocated from San Diego Humane Society to Virginia Living Museum

RAMONA, CA — Two coyote pups who arrived at San Diego Humane Society's Ramona Wildlife Center as orphans are now beginning a new chapter at the [Virginia Living Museum](#), after staff determined they could not safely return to the wild.

Despite the dedicated efforts of Project Wildlife's animal care team to "wild up" the pups by housing them with other coyotes and limiting human contact, both animals had become too imprinted on people. When wild animals lose their natural fear of humans, they cannot safely survive on their own in the wild.



The first pup, a female, was just two days old when she was found under a deck in Palm Desert. Presumed abandoned, a well-intended rescuer bottle-fed her for two weeks before bringing her to San Diego Humane Society in April. By that point, she had already bonded too closely with humans.

The second pup, a male, was rescued from the Long Beach area in May. He arrived with his eyes still closed and required bottle feeding from Project Wildlife staff until he was large enough to be placed with other coyote pups. As the pup grew, staff noticed how frequently he approached caretakers and would run up to the fence-line for attention after moving to the outdoor habitat.

Both coyotes received expert veterinary exams, nutrition support and species-appropriate enrichment at San Diego Humane Society's Ramona Wildlife Center. Once it became clear they could not be released, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife determined placement at the Virginia Living Museum would ensure they will have lifelong care in a safe and enriching environment, while also serving as ambassadors to teach the public about wildlife.

Sept. 30, Project Wildlife's team personally drove the pups to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), where they were met by an escort from the Virginia Living Museum. The escort accompanied the coyotes aboard a FedEx flight to Virginia, where they will now make their permanent home.

"Helping orphaned wild animals return to nature is always our goal, but sometimes the kindest outcome is providing them with a permanent home where they can thrive," said Autumn Welch, Wildlife Operations Manager at San Diego Humane Society. "These two pups will continue to inspire people to respect and protect wildlife."

"The Virginia Living Museum is thrilled to be working with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and San Diego Humane Society's Project Wildlife program to provide these two young coyotes a forever home. As ambassadors for coyotes in the wild, these pups will play an important role in educating our guests about coexisting with wildlife in their state, their community and their own backyard."

San Diego Humane Society reminds the public that the best way to help wildlife is to leave young animals where they are found and seek professional help. Many wild mothers will leave their young alone for extended periods, and human intervention can sometimes do more harm than good.

If you encounter an injured, sick or truly orphaned wild animal, please visit San Diego Humane Society's Wildlife Help Hub at sdhumane.org/wildlifehelp for guidance.

Photos/b-roll of the covotes care and transport to Virginia for media use here:

<https://spaces.hightail.com/space/k5XPIWB92F>

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.

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