



THE Q & A

NICOLE WEGER

From turkey vultures to baby squirrels, the director of wildlife operations at Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA in Burlingame shares some wild tales about her unusual job.

What is your role at Peninsula Humane Society?

I'm responsible for the department that cares for sick, injured or orphaned wildlife and returns them to their natural habitat, and for the Imperiled Species Breeding Program.

Who has your vote for cutest animal?

Baby screech owls. They are tiny puffballs.

What's a typical day on the job like?

The great thing about wildlife rehabilitation is that every day is unique. There might be a couple hundred baby squirrels that need feeding, or maybe a bunch of young raptors who are having trouble learning to hunt, or maybe we have orphaned songbirds that need to be fed every 30 minutes. I love the variety and fast pace of working with wildlife.

Are there any animals that are especially tricky to care for?

Turkey vultures are one of my favorites, but when stressed, they basically puke at you. Feeding them when in care can be interesting, to say the least.

What was your first job and what do you remember most about it?

Working in a fast-food chain in high school. It was always fast-paced and involved feeding and cleaning—a lot like wildlife work!

What was your childhood dream job?

Horse trainer.

If you could pick a superpower, what would it be?

Invisibility. I could sit and watch nature and wildlife!

Is there something that surprises people about your job?

I love wildlife, but I'm thrilled when they hate me. The animals I care for are safest if they stay clear of humans.

What's the wildest thing you've ever done?

Boating through the Peruvian Amazon.

Did your family have a lot of pets?

So many pets growing up—cats, dogs, rabbits, fish, pigs, horses and more. Now, pet rats (super sweet), a lovely dog and fish.

What is the weirdest thing you've ever eaten?

Spicy mealworms. Delicious!

What's your most cherished possession?

My camera.

What advice would you give to your younger self?

Spend as much time as you can out in nature.

What part of your job do you look forward to the most?

Releases. Getting wildlife back where they belong! [P](#)