

Marmot found in Bay Area on its way back to Tahoe

By KTVU-TV

SAN JOSE – A marmot that found himself far from his natural mountain habitat in a residential San Jose neighborhood Tuesday has been captured and wildlife workers intend to return him to the Sierra Nevada range.

Wild animal expert Rebecca Dmytryk said the marmot was finally captured in San Jose's Willow Glen neighborhood after it hid in storm drains for hours, coming up only to snack on nearby lawns.

Dmytryk, director of the WildRescue, a Moss Landing-based animal rescue group, had earlier placed apples, carrots and nuts inside "a humane trap" to coax the squirrel-like creature, but the animal preferred to dodge onto front lawns to eat and then run and hide.

The yellow-bellied marmot, so named for its mixture of yellowish and brown fur, was first spotted Monday after it emerged from a storm drain. The animal had been jumping from gutter to gutter since, racing through the drainage pipes beneath the streets, said Dmytryk.

Department of Transportation workers finally helped push it out of a pipe using a Gatorade bottle, Dmytryk said, and scooped the marmot with a net once it was pushed free.

Now the cat-sized mammal is headed to the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley and on Wednesday traveled to Sacramento en route to Lake Tahoe, where animal care workers will give it a checkup before releasing the animal back into the wild before it needs to hibernate, Dmytryk said. "It's very important he gets back to his own habitat," she said.

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