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Excelentismo Presidente  
Don Patricio Aylwin  
Palacio de la Moneda  
Santiago, Chile

Presidente Don Patricio Aylwin:

We have recently returned from a white-water expedition in Chile. We found your country to be beautiful - the countryside was covered with colorful wildflowers and the Andes were even more spectacular than we had imagined. Although we only spent a limited time in Santiago and Los Angeles, we were impressed on how clean and well cared for your cities are and the people so friendly.

The majority of our time in Chile was spent on the Rio Bio Bio, one of the most challenging and beautiful rivers we have ever seen. We were most fortunate to have highly experienced guides, not only in their technical rafting skills, but also in their knowledge of the Bio Bio region and the Chilean people who live around and near the river. We were told of the plans to place numerous dams on the Bio Bio and indeed we saw the beginnings of construction of these dams during our trip. Through our guides, we met and talked with some of the Mapuche Indians who will be directly affected by this dam project. We became painfully aware of the devastating effects the dams will have on these people.

We have enclosed an article that appeared in our newspaper concerning a not so different plan to relocate a herd of deer because they interfered with suburban growth and development. Specialists investigated the needs of these animals and felt that they were providing them with a safe and sufficient habitat. However, within several months, every one of the animals were dead.

At the same time, the Chilean government is making plans to relocate thousands of Mapuche/Pehuenche people to make way for Indesa to develop their hydroelectric system. These people will be torn not only from their native habitat, social structure, cultural unity, but also from their source of trade (i.e. Araucaria trees). Few living things can survive the abrupt and brutal wrenching from their roots!

We urge you to reconsider your decision to proceed with the dam project on the Bio Bio. No possible benefit of a hydroelectric plant could outweigh the morbidity and mortality of thousands of people in the Bio Bio region.

Sincerely,

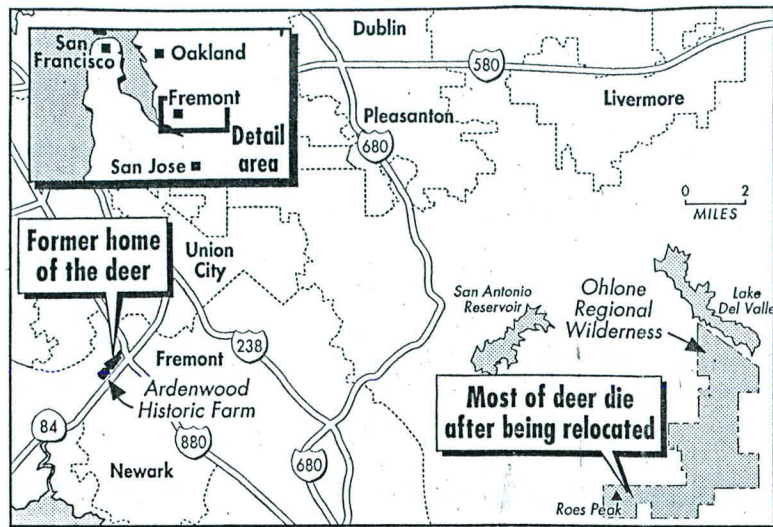
*Marlene Enderlein*

Marlene Enderlein

*Robert Ovanin*

Robert Ovanin

cc: Mr. Andrew Solomon  
Steve Curry Expeditions



# Relocation of Wild Deer Ends in Death of Herd

By Rick DeVecchio  
Chronicle East Bay Bureau

When the East Bay Regional Park District decided to move 29 pesky deer from an increasingly crowded suburban park to a primitive wilderness, it seemed a humane — and politically acceptable — solution to a difficult wildlife management problem.

Now, one year later, an embarrassed hush seems to have fallen over the episode. The district admits only that most of the deer have died, saying it is withholding the details until its wildlife biologist makes a final report to the board of directors next month.

Others say all the deer have perished — done in by a human assistance program that was misguided as it was well-meaning. "They were all dead within

the first couple of months," said Elizabeth Hendrickson, president of the Ohlone Humane Society in Fremont.

The district maintains that it never had unrealistic expectations about the survivability of the herd, but the loss of so many animals after such an elaborate effort to save them is troubling.

It raises questions about relocation as a technique for balancing conflicts between wildlife and people throughout California's urban fringe. And some observers say it points to more controversial methods — such as hunting — to deal with such problems in the future.

"As urbanization continues

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in the East Bay, we're going to find some of our parks become island parks," said Ned Mackay, a district spokesman. "The issue will come around again, and probably soon."

## Completely Cut Off

Long ago part of a free-ranging herd, the East Bay deer over many generations had become completely cut off by highways and subdivisions. Their world had shrunk to an ecological island of little more than 200 acres.

Furthermore, they shared their confinement with a tenant farmer who made his living growing row crops at the district's Ardenwood Historic Farm near Fremont. The farmer complained that the black-tailed deer were eating as much as \$13,000 worth of his leafy vegetables each year.

By 1991, it was obvious that the animals and the farmer could not live happily ever after.

Some members of the public urged the district to sterilize the deer, but birth control was rejected as only a temporary fix. And shooting half-tame deer seemed repugnant.

After much public debate, the decision was made to corral the deer, put them in trailers and take them to the district's Ohlone regional wilderness — a prime deer range 20 miles southeast of the farm. Two died in transit. The other 27 were tagged with radio collars so their movements could be tracked.

But, one by one, the collars soon stopped beeping.

Apparently, many of the animals fell prey to mountain lions, their instincts for survival no doubt having been dulled by generations of suburban scavenging. The humane society's Hendrickson also speculated that the handling of the relocation added to the animals' vulnerability in the wild.

## The Stress of Relocation

"There were too many to die from mountain lion attacks. There had to be starvation and the stress of the relocation.

"The district had no practice with relocating deer, and the relocation itself was handled miserably," she said. "Once the deer were trapped in a corral, totally stressed, four men would jump on a deer, hog-tie it, put a hood over it, saw off the antlers, give it a mild tranquilizer, withdraw blood and toss it into a trailer.

"Then they had to go on a ride of more than one hour into the wilderness. Once they were there, they opened the doors and just let them go," she said.

The park district relocated the Ardenwood herd in spite of evidence that such programs are of questionable benefit to the individual animals and to the environment as a whole.

In 1980, the state Fish and Game Department moved most of the deer on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay to Mendocino County. Wildlife officials opposed the action but were forced to take it because of a lawsuit by the San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

In less than a year, all the Angel Island deer wearing radio collars had perished.

A number of natural forces

worked against the Angel Island relocation. The deer had to compete with native animals of their own kind, and they faced predators for the first time in their lives.

Ten years later, East Bay park officials thought there was a chance their nuisance deer were made of sturdier stuff. But state experts had their doubts.

"We were pretty sure what was going to happen," said Jim Swanson, a senior biologist for the Fish and Game Department's Yountville office. "In California, most deer habitat is filled up. When you have a full house and you put added deer in there, somebody ain't going to make it, and usually it's the newcomers."

The Fish and Game Department finally consented to the Ardenwood move on the theory that it would provide crucial data to guide wildlife managers in handling similar conflicts in the future. In particular, state experts hoped to learn how a transplanted herd would affect established animals. Black-tailed deer normally spend their lives within a mile radius of where they are born and do not take well to interlopers.

### **Ohlone Deer Wary**

That part of the project was frustrated because the resident Ohlone deer were too wary to be captured and tagged.

Yet Swanson said he understands why the park district moved the deer in spite of having other choices. "Sometimes you have to, because the pressures are so great," he said. "We have a hard time convincing people that moving deer is not really saving deer."

"This is one way to get the data we need," he said. "When these proposals come up, we can show this is not really a good idea."

After the loss of the transplanted Angel Island herd, the state Department of Parks and Recreation also rejected birth control and a number of other management techniques as unworkable. Finally, the agency decided on the least politically acceptable but most scientifically sensible method: thinning the herd with sharpshooters.

Once experts determined how many healthy deer the island could support, it became a simple matter to remove surplus individuals every year or so. "Seems like it's worked, and we've had a healthier herd," said Carl Chavez, the park agency's deputy division chief.

### **Imperfect Choices**

But, to East Bay park board member John O'Donnell, a passionate wildlife preservationist, sending the Ardenwood deer to the wild was the least objectionable of several imperfect choices for the hapless herd.

"It was too late," he said. "They grew up without instinct and experience. . . . The only other thing we could have done was fence them in, which would have been a zoo. It was nobody's fault. It did happen, and we had to find a solution."

Hendrickson disagreed. She said the transplant was designed to fail and thus is useless for predicting how well-run relocations might fare in the future.

The Ardenwood deer "were set up," she said. "No way these deer could have survived. . . . Nobody wants to take blame for what happened."

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