



Javelina Family

A small family of javelina traveling through what was once pristine Sonoran Desert found themselves in deep trouble. We received the call on Tuesday morning, from some very distraught construction workers. They had arrived at work the day before and discovered two adult and two baby javelina at the base of what would become the elevator shaft in the underground parking garage for the high-rise condos they were building at the edge of the desert in north Phoenix. This hole was about eight by ten feet in size and about five feet deep.

In one corner of that hole there was another, much more dangerous hole. It was about 3 feet square—but 70 feet deep! They knew they had to be very careful, or the family would fall into the second hole. They also knew that the family could have been trapped there since Friday night. After throwing fruits and vegetables down to feed the adults and keep the mom hydrated so she could nurse her babies, the workers decided it would be best to leave them alone. They built a sort of ramp from plywood and, before they left for the day, placed it into the hole hoping the family would climb out overnight.

But the next morning, the javelina were still down in the hole. The men were thankful that none had fallen into the second hole, but realized that the javelina needed more help than they could provide. They were determined to save this family. After numerous unsuccessful phone calls, they were finally directed to Southwest Wildlife and were very relieved to hear that we would send a rescue team over immediately.

Two Southwest Wildlife volunteers set out on this particular rescue not to save one animal, but an entire family! Upon arrival, they realized there was no power yet in this garage, so they worked their way through the dark maze of concrete pillars toward the future location of the elevator. As they assessed the situation with the help of a floodlight, the construction workers crowded around them to get a closer look.

The two babies, about two pounds each, were huddled tightly between the adult male and female in one corner. The rescuers would have to use jab poles to sedate the adults, trying not to startle the entire family into running headlong into that second, ominous hole.

The two adult javelina were successfully sedated and, five minutes later, both adults were lying quietly at the bottom of the elevator shaft. Each baby was netted and placed in a crate. Then one of the volunteers jumped

down into the hole and, one-by-one, handed the adults up to the other. After the adults were also loaded into crates, the rescuers returned to Southwest Wildlife.

Once at the clinic at Southwest Wildlife, each javelina was carefully examined. Everyone was surprised—and very pleased—that none showed any injury from its fall into the hole. The family was reunited in an outdoor rehab enclosure, where they will rest and recuperate from their misadventure. In a few weeks, they will begin the process of joining a herd at Southwest Wildlife and will soon be released. An entire family was saved because these men were determined to find someone who could help them.