



Urban Wildlife Issues  
Wildlife Rescue column by Nicky Fried  
as appearing in the *Burnaby NOW*

## Beaver finds help in city

Beavers are definitely not built for ocean voyages.

A beaver is on the mend at the Wildlife Rescue Association in Burnaby after being rescued from the sea. "She came in on April 2 after being washed up on the shore of Jericho Beach," said Jackie Ward, team leader of animal care. "She was critical."

Because beavers are fresh water creatures who live in creeks, lakes and ponds, they aren't able to physically cope with salt water. It leads to severe dehydration and, often, kidney distress. "She was completely lethargic, unable to move a limb," Ward said. "She was critical in every sense of the word."

The Wildlife Rescue Association treated the beaver by administering fluids under the skin to flush the kidneys and rehydrate the animal, and giving her oxygen therapy for her laboured breathing. The association doesn't treat beavers often, perhaps two or three a year.

"They are certainly one of the more docile creatures we take care of," Ward said. "They are so gentle."

Most wild creatures are quite agitated having people around them, but beavers are quite calm. Still, staff take precautions to prevent being bitten. Once the beaver is fully recovered, she will go back into a stream or river near the area where she was found. She is now grooming herself and eating, but her hind limbs are still a bit weak.

"She should be OK at this point," Ward said about reintroducing the beaver into the wild. "Going back into the same area, she will be able to recognize things." With her sense of smell, the beaver will be able to locate familiar surroundings, and perhaps family.

"They are very social creatures," Ward said. "At two years, they become independent. They are sent off to find a new territory."

Formed in 1979, the Wildlife Rescue Association of B.C. provides leadership in the care and rehabilitation of injured, orphaned and pollution-damaged wildlife.