

# To The Rescue

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## WRA To The Rescue: The Tale of the “Knotty” Raccoon

By Devin Manky, Wildlife Rehabilitator



March 30, 2006

**10:45am** – A concerned member of the public calls WRA about a raccoon that appears to be stuck in a tree in downtown Vancouver.

**11:00am** – Vancouver SPCA calls to inform WRA that a raccoon is stuck in a knothole of a tree in Vancouver and needs help.

**11:10am** – The Vancouver Police Department calls to ask for WRA’s help with a raccoon stuck in a tree in the West End of Vancouver.

**11:50am** – A WRA team arrives on scene at Jervis and Davie in Vancouver to assess the situation. Yes, the raccoon is definitely stuck! Curious onlookers have gathered, the police are on the scene, and television media are arriving to cover the story.

**12:00pm** – The raccoon is sedated and the WRA team attempts to remove her from the knothole.

**1:00pm** – An hour later, the team has exhausted all options, but removal techniques successfully utilized in other rescues are not working this time. The raccoon is simply wedged too tightly into the knothole.

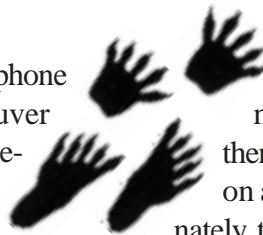
**2:00pm** – After many phone calls to City of Vancouver officials, and much indecision about whether to cut part of the beautiful tree, everyone finally agrees that the unfortunate raccoon must be rescued.

**2:15pm** – The decision is made to cut the entire tree branch containing the raccoon.

**2:45pm** – A City arborist skillfully extricates the lodged raccoon from the tree knot. Seeing the poor raccoon freed at last, the crowd cheers and applauds.

**2:55pm** – WRA Rehabilitators return to WRA’s Care Centre with the injured raccoon.

By now you have probably guessed that March 30<sup>th</sup> was not a typical day at the Wildlife Rescue Association of BC. Rescue missions of the scale and difficulty of that day, carried out before the watchful eyes of media and a growing crowd, add a degree of pressure not usually present at wildlife rescue scenes.



The female raccoon had entered a small opening near the base of the tree and then tried to exit via a knothole on a higher branch. Unfortunately, the hole she picked was too small for her abdomen to fit through. By the time the raccoon realized her error she was already stuck firmly in place. Her struggles only compounded the problem as her stomach began to swell from bruising.

*Continued on page 10*

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## To The Rescue

Spring/Summer 2006

Vol. 27- No. 2

To The Rescue is the newsletter of WRA Wildlife Rescue Association of BC and is produced three times a year.

WRA Wildlife Rescue Association of BC provides leadership in the care and rehabilitation of injured, orphaned and pollution damaged wildlife, primarily in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.

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# Editor's Message

## A Healing Season

By Janice Dickie, Executive Director

Birds are singing, flowers are blooming, and the whirlwind of busy season has begun at the Wildlife Rescue Association. Costs will rise dramatically in the months ahead, but I will not fret this year. Somehow, donations and gifts of food and supplies always arrive when needed the most.

During March and April, staff and volunteers at WRA readied the Care Centre to meet the demands of spring – or “baby bird season,” as we call it. Almost two thirds of our average, annual caseload of 3,000 patients will be admitted in the next four months. The patient's health conditions at arrival will vary, but all will face the long journey back to fitness.

I succumbed to a nasty bout of flu a few weeks ago, and thus gained fresh insight into what it must be like to be an injured wild animal – sick, exhausted, and likely hungry. Add to these challenges the frightening experience of being handled by humans if rescued, and then introduced to unfamiliar living quarters at a wildlife rehabilitation facility.



The lowly flu virus, encountered in the comfort and security of one's own home, is nothing compared to these animals' struggles. Yet, most of them will somehow tolerate the

fear of short-term captivity. With surprising resilience, they will endure examinations, loss of conditioning, and changes in diet – and their

spirit of survival will inspire us, as will their remarkable stories of release back to the wild.

As I tolerated my own bit of suffering a few weeks ago, I had only enough energy to look out the window

into my little garden. For three days, I watched an array of colourful songbirds arrive hour after hour to drink from our birdbath. With your help, WRA heals many of these tiny birds each spring. This time, however, they helped heal me.

## Thank You!

Special thanks to the City of Burnaby for a generous grant of \$5,500, awarded May 2006

## Thank You!

Chevron Canada  
Two Grants Toward a  
New Songbird Aviary

# Raffle for Wildlife - 2006

Help support WRA! Purchase *Raffle for Wildlife* tickets at WRA or by telephoning 604.526.2747.



Tickets are available from June 19, until October 2, 2006.

Ticket prices are \$4 each or 3/\$10. A maximum of 4,000 tickets will be sold.

## GRAND PRIZE: Douglas Charles - "Mouse" Painting Prize Package (Value \$700)

- Original artwork
- Signed by artist
- Framed (20" x 25")



## Get Spoiled Prize Package (Value \$756)

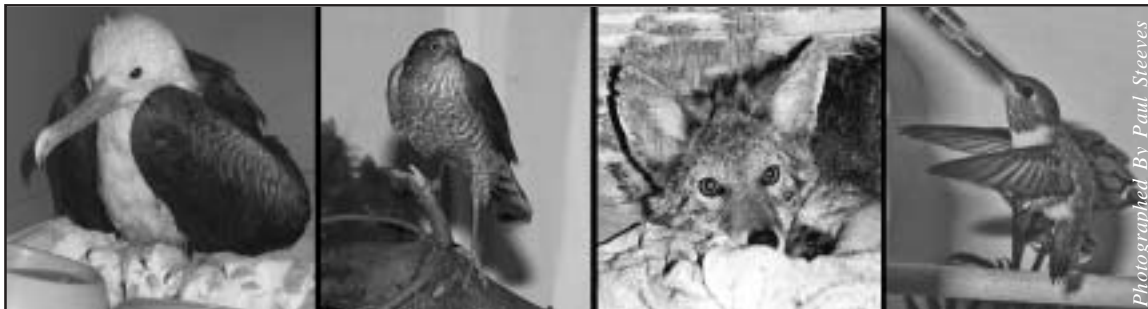
- Wellness Package (massage, chiropractic and naturopathic gift certificates)
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- \$100 Gift Certificate for the Sutton Hotel Chocolate Buffet
- 1 year *Alive* Magazine subscription
- Grouse Mountain Family Annual Pass

## Golf Prize Package (Value \$735)

- Four rounds of golf at Rivershore Golf Course in Kamloops
- Golf balls and golf bag
- Practice putter set
- Golf jacket, shirt and hat

## Night on the Town Prize Package (Value \$550)

- One night stay including breakfast for two at the Hyatt Regency Vancouver
- \$100 gift certificate to the Arts Club Theatre
- \$150 gift certificate to Il Giardino Restaurant



The draw will be held on Wednesday, October 18, 2006 at WRA. Attendance is not required at the draw to win. All winners will be contacted by telephone. Winner's names will also be published in the Winter 2007 edition of the "To The Rescue" newsletter and on our website.

Rules of play are available at the WRA Administration Office.  
BC Gaming Event Licence No.: TR-RG26307

*Know your limit, play within it. For Help: 1.888.795.6111 or [www.bcreponsiblegambling.ca](http://www.bcreponsiblegambling.ca)*

# Tune into Wildlife Weekly on Shaw TV



Jackie Ward

Every week, co-hosts Jackie Ward and Devin Manky profile two animals undergoing treatment at WRA. See what it takes to rehabilitate wildlife, and learn about the natural histories of a wide variety of species. Jackie and Devin also offer tips on how to successfully coexist with urban wildlife.

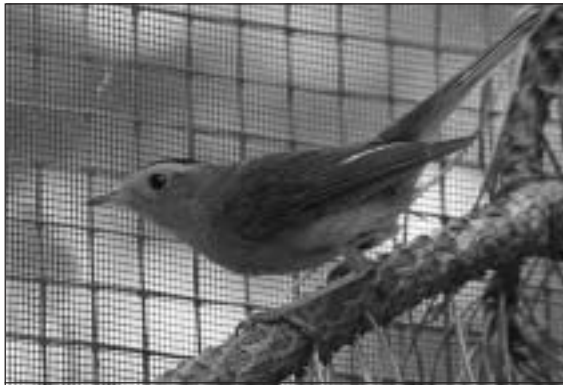


Devin Manky

Interested in a “behind the scenes” glimpse of the wild animals in care at WRA? Tune into Wildlife Weekly on Shaw TV, Cable 4. WRA’s special feature airs each Wednesday at 6:00pm during *The Express* and repeats at 8:00pm and 10:30pm.

**Wildlife Weekly on...  
The Express**  
Wednesday @ 6pm  
Repeats @  
8pm & 10:30pm

Please let Shaw TV know that you support wildlife programming! You can reach Shaw online at <http://vancouver.shawtv.com> and by clicking on “Contacts”.



Wilson's Warbler

## Special Thanks

### Government of Canada

- *Summer Career Placement Program* -  
a wage subsidy grant that enables 6 career-related summer jobs for students

### Bill Siskay, MP (Burnaby-Douglas)

Extraordinary support of WRA's application to the Summer Career Placement program

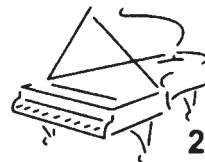
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# 2006 NWRA Symposium

## Wildlife Rehabilitators Not Only Teach...They Learn Too!

By Jackie Ward, Care Centre Team Leader

I feel incredibly fortunate to be employed at the Wildlife Rescue Association of BC. I enjoy working with a knowledgeable and fun team of people – six staff members and about a hundred volunteers. I also get to rehabilitate a remarkable diversity of wild creatures, from tiny hummingbirds and little brown bats to magnificent bald eagles and even a feisty wolverine. Moreover, I am able to learn constantly, which is an opportunity that has always been extremely important to me.

The wildlife rehabilitation conferences held each year in both Canada and the United States are among the most significant learning experiences of my career. The National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association's (NWRA) annual symposium in March is particularly outstanding. This American conference is the largest of its kind in North America, offering hundreds of educational workshops over a five-day period. It is an amazing opportunity for rehabilitators, educators and

veterinarians to network and share information on a multitude of wildlife topics.

With at least four sessions running concurrently, my only challenge is choosing what workshops to attend. A typical program includes wildlife care and rehabilitation techniques, veterinary medicine, behavior and natural history, caging, habitat enrichment, education tools, and administration ideas. WRA admits such a large and diverse number of patients that we could almost certainly apply all of the above knowledge at some point in the year. As a consequence, I have become both an accomplished multi-tasker and a fast walker at these conferences! I always return home feeling somewhat overwhelmed and yet extremely excited about the new skills and techniques I have learned.

When treating wild animals recovering from injury or illness, WRA rehabilitators make every effort to employ the latest rehabilitation techniques in a comfortable and stress-free environment for the animal. Our goal is to return healed animals to their natural habitats as quickly as possible. The NWRA symposium presents one of the best opportunities to learn about advance-



ments in medicines, treatments and care procedures for different species. As WRA staff put these advancements into practice, our success rate grows, and we experience fewer delays or setbacks in the rehabilitation process.

I am lucky to be one of the few - sometimes the only - British Columbia rehabilitators who are able to attend conferences in the United States. The Canadian contingent is also a very small group. Thus, with laptop in hand, I try to take in as much as possible. My goal is to share new information not only with WRA's staff and volunteers but also with other members of the local rehabilitation community.

This year's symposium, held in Costa Mesa, California, had many highlights, including multiple sessions on water bird care and an excellent workshop on avian blood analysis. At the end of the conference, I left for home feeling a refreshed enthusiasm for my work with wildlife, and a renewed commitment to continually improve the care of each patient at the Wildlife Rescue Association.



Photographed By Erin Smith

# Success Stories

## Striped Skunk

By Juliet Mohlmann, Volunteer

The Vancouver SPCA brought an adult striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*) to WRA's Care Centre in early April. The skunk had been caught in a rat trap and had unfortunately ingested poison meant for the rats.

Staff gave the skunk vitamin K to counteract the poison, and then treated him for dehydration and dry eyes. By the next day, the skunk was much more active and alert.

Over the next few days, staff closely monitored the skunk for signs of internal bleeding (the sus-

pected poison can cause hemorrhaging). The skunk remained alert, strong and feisty – with no signs of relapse. Staff then moved him to an outdoor pen in preparation for release.

Despite excellent care, this skunk did not appreciate being in captivity. Staff observed the spirited animal trying to climb the walls of his outdoor pen. Given his renewed strength, and to prevent the possibility of any new injuries, staff

released the lucky skunk that very night.



Photographed By Devin Munky



## Common Raven

By Marcy Potter, Volunteer

A common raven (*Corvus corax*) was admitted in March from the Granville Island area, where he was found in a severely lethargic state, and covered from beak to tail in cement dust from a nearby factory. The adult bird was weak and dehydrated because the dust had drawn moisture from his body. The bird had also ingested some of the cement while trying to preen his feathers.

After several hours of receiving IV fluids, the raven perked up considerably. He was also tubed with a charcoal mixture that helped flush his digestive system and prevent poisoning. The next day, staff

rinsed the raven with water to remove the cement dust.

As the raven progressively improved in care he also became more noticeably active. Ravens are known to be one of the more intelligent species of birds and staff ensured that this adult's habitat contained an assortment of interesting objects to stimulate and promote activity and reduce boredom. Nevertheless this clever bird still attempted to dismantle perches and "remodel" his aviary.

Over the course of a month, the raven made a complete recovery, and he was released in North Vancouver.



Photographed By Paul Steeves



## Great Blue Heron

By Devin Manky, Wildlife Rehabilitator

Staff members of the Vancouver Aquarium in Stanley Park brought an injured great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*) to WRA on April 26<sup>th</sup>. Nicknamed, 'Harriet', this Heron has been seen around the aquarium's grounds for over five years, and therefore has a fond place in many of the staff member's hearts.

The heron was suffering from a minor concussion brought on by an accidental collision with a stairwell. She had also ripped out one of her primary blood feathers. Blood feathers are the newly emerging feathers on birds' wings that, due to size and growth patterns, have

their own blood supply attached. When one is lost in an accident, considerable bleeding can result.

Staff stemmed the blood flow from the wing and placed the bird on medications for her concussion. After only a week in care, she was able to fly again and ready for release. She was then returned to the trees near the Aquarium where, hopefully, she will be spotted for many years to come.



Photographed By Erin Smith



## Oregon Junco

By Juliet Mohlmann, Volunteer

On March 19<sup>th</sup>, a Vancouver couple brought in a dark-eyed junco (*Junco hyemalis var. Oregonus*) that they had found stuck to a polyurethane deck membrane on their house deck. The little bird's feet and feathers were coated in silicone.

Staff removed the silicone with a mixture of mineral oil and soapy water. They then gently plucked the few remaining primary feathers, as they were broken and not salvageable. The primary feathers are the longest wing feathers, farthest from the body, and are essential for flight.

After three weeks in care, during which the bird was also treated for

abrasions on his wrist and keel, the feathers were growing back quickly. The bird was moved to a larger cage to practice flying. He flew very low to the ground initially, but even with his limited flying prowess, he still proved a capable escape artist, getting past staff and volunteers on several occasions.

After just over a month, with a now-complete set of flight feathers, the junco was released back into the wild.



Photographed By Paul Steeves



# HELP! I've found a baby bird!



Photographed By Paul Steeves

*Fledgling Cedar Waxwing*

Wild baby birds should be with their parents. They do a better job of raising them than we do. Here is how to determine whether the baby bird needs a helping hand or not. If you should have any doubts or questions, please call WRA at 604.526.7275.

◆ **IS THERE AN OBVIOUS INJURY?** The baby bird definitely needs help if there is an obvious injury such as blood, open wounds, limping, dragging a wing or unconsciousness. Please contact WRA immediately and arrange for the bird to be brought into care.

◆ **IS THE BIRD A FLEDGLING OR A NESTLING?** A **nestling** bird is one which is naked, or partially feathered. A nestling will also be unable to stand or keep itself warm and must be in the nest in order to survive. A **fledgling** bird is well-feathered, able to stand on its own and hop around, but is not able to fly well. It is perfectly normal for a fledgling bird to be on the ground, as its parents will be teaching it to fly and feed from this location. If you have found a fledgling bird, please try and determine if the adult birds are nearby.

◆ **IS THE NEST STILL INTACT?** If you have found a nestling bird, please try and return the bird to its nest. If you spot the nest nearby and it is accessible, gently pick up the nestling and place it back in the nest. Unlike mammals, birds will not reject the baby if you have handled it. If the nest has been destroyed, and the parents are still nearby, you may rebuild the nest with handy materials, or even a small box. If there is no sign of the nest or parents, please contact WRA to have the bird brought into care.

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*Photographed By Paul Steeves*

*Young Killdeer*

# Volunteer Corner

## On-Call Volunteer Transporters: Helping Us Help the Animals

By Janice Dickie, Executive Director and Gail Telfer, Volunteer Coordinator

Signs of baby bird season are everywhere at WRA – the public inquiry line is ringing nonstop, Care Centre admissions are growing exponentially, and so too are the requests for emergency transportation of injured wildlife. Calling all volunteers! We need reliable drivers to help bring injured wildlife from the public to our facility.

Each year, on-call transportation volunteers deliver over 700 patients to WRA. We are especially reliant upon their support during the busy spring and summer months. Although we ask the finders of injured wildlife to deliver the animals to our facility, it is not always possible if

the finder does not have transportation available. Without volunteer support, we would struggle to provide many creatures the emergency care that they need.

If you have access to a vehicle and possess a valid BC driver's license, you can help! Volunteers drive to locations throughout the Lower Mainland to pick up injured wildlife that have been restrained in secure containers, and deliver them to our Care Centre located at Burnaby Lake. Volunteers have a choice of routes and the times they wish to be available. Drivers also receive an annual tax receipt for total kilometers traveled on



Photographed By Paul Steeves

WRA business.

Think you have the makings of a first-class transportation volunteer? Please visit the "Volunteers Corner" section of WRA's website, and fill out and send to us a transport application form. Thanks for helping us help wildlife!



Photographed By Paul Steeves

Lesser Scaup

### Special Thanks

Starbucks - Brentwood Mall  
Special Education West Vancouver School  
District, (Mary Osberg Retirement)  
Brigeeta Bartnik  
Bob Smith  
Richard & Jacquelynn Torry  
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## Hollywood Raccoon *(Continued from page 1)*

Before WRA arrived on the scene, an unfortunate member of the public tried to help the poor animal and received a nasty bite to the hand. WRA normally advises people to avoid approaching trapped wild animals because they can be dangerous when feeling cornered and afraid. A wildlife rehabilitator possesses training and experience in animal handling techniques, and also carries the necessary equipment and medications.

In the past year, WRA has rescued several skunks that somehow trapped their heads in the small drainage holes at the bottom of dumpsters while foraging for scraps. Once the animals were sedated, a careful application of water-based lubricant helped ease their heads out of the hole.

Unfortunately, no amount of lubricant and gentle pressure were go-

ing to remove this raccoon. It was the worst case of a stuck mammal that we had ever encountered. Thus, everyone was happy to see a crew from the Vancouver Parks Board approach the scene with a bucket truck and power saws. The limb containing the raccoon had to be cut down if we were to save her.

Our appreciation grew as the severed tree branch was lowered to the ground and a member of the crew began the difficult work of sawing the remaining wood from around the raccoon's body. I held her head and hoped the crew member's saw would stop before it reached her head and my hand!

Finally, with a rousing cheer from the crowd, the sedated raccoon was freed and we quickly returned with her to WRA's Care Centre. Staff examined her and found intense swelling around her abdominal area, but no other obvious injuries. However, we knew she would be very sore after waking from the sedation.

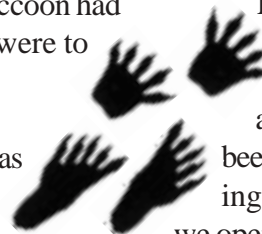
Over the next couple of days the raccoon was hesitant to eat and did not pass any feces – a sure sign that she had internal trauma. We gave her anti-inflammatory medication to help reduce the swelling, and some Metamucil to help food pass more easily through her stomach.

After a couple of weeks of treatment the female was moving more

easily and the swelling had subsided. She was almost ready for release. Dozens of concerned citizens who had observed the raccoon's rescue were calling WRA to inquire about her progress.

Late in the evening of April 12<sup>th</sup>, we transported the raccoon to a wooded area near where she had been found. After a short waiting period to calm her down, we opened the door to her kennel and she ambled off into the nighttime forest with only a brief backward glance.

Sadly, wild animals are injured or orphaned every day because of human activities and relentless urban development. Yet this raccoon's case illustrated that humans can also choose to help a fellow creature in need. Seeing the raccoon go free, I thought about the many people who participated in her rescue or supported her rehabilitation and care at WRA. Thanks to all of you for caring!



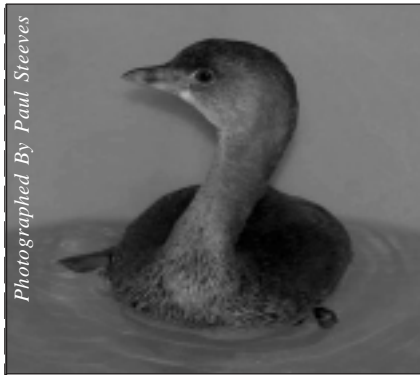
### Wish List

Dawn Dish Soap (original)  
Digital Bathroom Scales  
Digital Gram Scales  
- (1/10 of gram measure)  
Dish/Floor Scrub Brushes  
Dissecting Microscope  
Heating Pads  
Hummingbird Feeders  
Hydrogen Peroxide  
- (3%, 10 volume)  
Rectangular Mirrors  
- (free standing)  
Superstore Coupons  
- (Superbucks)  
Unscented Bleach  
Unscented Laundry Soap

### In Memory

Jim Eyers  
Grant Perry  
Putt Putt  
Sharon Ross  
Carol Todd

# Foster Fur & Feathers



Photographed By Paul Steeves

*Young Pied Billed Grebe*

As a wildlife fosterer, your donation helps to support the care of an injured bird or mammal. Each sponsor receives a Foster Certificate, which includes a picture of the patient and a brief case history describing the injury and rehabilitative treatment provided. Profiled below is one of the many patients that your contribution will help.



## My contribution to foster care:

- |                                                                                     |                                                                          |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Robin, thrush, crow, grosbeak, jay pigeon or starling | <input type="checkbox"/> \$150 Heron                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Squirrel                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> \$200 Owl                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Grebe, duck                                           | <input type="checkbox"/> \$300 Rare & unusual animals (call for details) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Oil spill                                             |                                                                          |



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*Please make cheques payable to: Wildlife Rescue Association of BC, 5216 Glenearin Drive, Burnaby BC, V5B 3C1, Admin: 604.526.2747*

## Foster Me! American Beaver

*By Marcy Potter, Volunteer*

In early April, two passersby noticed a beaver lying very still at Jericho Beach in Vancouver. Because beavers are fresh water animals, it was highly unusual to see one on a saltwater beach. The concerned individuals captured the beaver and brought it to WRA.

Unable to move and fighting for every breath, the beaver was in critical condition when she first arrived. This adult female was exhibiting all the classical symptoms of salt water toxicity. Fluids were ad-

ministered beneath the skin to help flush her kidneys of the salt. The beaver was also put into an oxygen chamber to aid her breathing.

Over the past few weeks, the beaver's health has been slowly improving. She is now in our mammal pen, and has been able to swim, dive, groom and eat. In fact, the beaver's tail striking the water when she has been approached has splashed many staff and volunteers! The only issue delaying this female's return to the wild is some lingering weakness in her hind legs.



Photographed By Paul Steeves

*American Beaver*

American beaver's are found along rivers, lakes, marshes, streams and ponds throughout British Columbia.



**Wildlife Rescue Association of BC**  
**5216 Glencarin Drive**  
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**V5B 3C1**



## Yes, I want to support WRA

### I wish to make a donation:

One time.....\$\_\_\_\_\_

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(post dated cheques/credit card)

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Registered charity # 131373490RR0001



### I wish to become a member:

- Individual - \$25/year
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- Senior/student - \$15/year
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Age:  16-20  21-29  30-59  60+

Donations/memberships are tax deductible. Please make cheque payable to:

*Wildlife Rescue Association of BC*, 5216 Glencarin Drive, Burnaby, BC V5B 3C1, Admin : 604.526.2747

Request for information: I would like information on:

- volunteer opportunities
- planned giving
- I have remembered the WRA in my will