

# To The Rescue



Winter 2005 | Vol. 26 No.1 | Wildlife Rescue Association of BC | ISSN 11188-5106

## WRA Rehabilitators Undergo Crisis Response Training

By Jackie Ward

Autumn is traditionally a quieter time at the Wildlife Rescue Association of BC, but this year a variety of activities kept us hopping. In addition to cleaning, repairing and painting the entire rehabilitation centre, 70 keen volunteers and employees made time in their busy November schedules to attend a full day course in Oiled Wildlife Emergency Response Training.

The course was lead by Lana Emo and Chris Bataglia of FOCUS Wildlife Consultants Ltd. Lana and Chris are skilled wildlife rehabilitation consultants who have

worked with the International Bird Rescue Research Center in California, the premier oiled wildlife response organization in the world. Course topics ranged from the risks associated with managing spilled chemicals to the methods used for search and collection of contaminated birds.

WRA has traditionally worked closely with industry, government, and other environmental agencies to treat wildlife impacted by major pollution damage events. WRA

rehabilitators also regularly treat wildlife patients that are admitted to our care centre after landing in grease reservoirs at restaurants or flying into puddles of oil or sticky glue traps. Pollution damaged wildlife require specialized care, as the afflicted animals' potential for sur-



*oiled scaups in a drying pen after a bath*

vival diminishes rapidly if they are not contained promptly and treated appropriately.

Advanced training in oiled wildlife response techniques is essential to WRA's goal of providing organized leadership during complex rescue missions. It ensures that staff and volunteers are skilled in the recovery, cleaning and treatment of afflicted animals, thereby reducing the number of wildlife casualties that succumb from improper or prolonged handling.

Over the last decade, the incidences of pollution damage have increased as human activities continue to expand into wildlife habitat areas. The Lower Mainland of British Columbia bears a special responsibility to protect the incredible diversity of breeding birds that travel through the region - in some cases, more than 80 percent of the world's population of a specific species. A major pollution spill during migration could have the potential to devastate the entire population of these species, and this potential is very real considering that the region lies adjacent to one of Canada's largest and busiest ports.

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## To The Rescue

Winter 2005 - Vol. 26 - No. 1

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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## President's Message

Cynthia Picker with  
Dirk Haack, Endowment Fund  
Committee Chair

Have you considered remembering WRA in your will? Over the last 25 years, generous bequests and gifts from supporters have enabled WRA to assist over 35,000 injured, orphaned and pollution damaged wildlife. Like most wildlife rehabilitators in BC, WRA operates without core government funding, and thus we could not carry out this work without public support.

Through the generous bequests of two long-term supporters, WRA has created endowment funds that will support a diversity of wildlife rehabilitation and education projects in the years ahead. These endowment funds, called the **Flora Alexandra Gray Fund** and **Lucy Grace Davies Fund**, provide income for annual special projects and initiatives at WRA. Through the growth and stewardship of these Funds, WRA will ensure a perpetual means of advancement in education programming and the rehabilitation of wildlife impacted by urban growth and pollution.

This year, income from the **Flora Alexandra Gray Fund** will be



used to replace and update aging computers at WRA's office. An essential requirement for our daily work, the new computers will help us better manage the "behind the scenes work" that facilitates our wildlife rehabilitation and education programs.

Income from the **Lucy Grace Davies Fund** will be used to update WRA's education library in 2005. The new books and resources will give WRA employees and volunteers access to the latest research on wildlife rehabilitation topics, animal identification and medical and veterinary issues.

To learn how you can leave a legacy to the wildlife of BC, please contact our office at 604-526-2747 and request a copy of WRA's *A Matter of Will* brochure.

## Annual General Meeting

Please join us on:

Wednesday, June 1, 2005, at 7:00 pm

At WRA, 5216 Glencarin Drive, Burnaby, BC

*Refreshments will be served*

# Giving Orphaned Black Bear Cubs a Second Chance

By Roy Teo

WRA received an unusually high number of bear-related calls from the public last fall season. While black bear encounters are fairly common in outlying regions of the Lower Mainland, public inquiries concerned sightings of orphaned black bear cubs. The reason for this occurrence is unknown, but it certainly placed increased demands on the services of local wildlife rehabilitators and bear network groups.

Often, the public's concerns can be easily addressed by following simple "bear aware" solutions to mitigate conflicts. However, in cases of problematic bears, conservation officers were called to the scene. Despite their best attempts to relocate all animals, this option was not always successful or feasible. Consequently, the Wildlife Rehabilitators' Network of British Columbia (WRNBC) approached the Ministry of Water, Land, and Air Protection (WLAP) to see if local rehabilitators could assist with the problem.

Until recently, wildlife rehabilitators in the Lower Mainland were not licensed to rehabilitate black bears. This past summer, however, a pilot project on bear cub rehabilitation was initiated by WRNBC and tentatively approved by WLAP. This new venture represents a significant step forward for local wildlife rehabilitators. It opens the doors to exciting new challenges, but also brings with it added

responsibilities.

To ensure proper guidelines were established for the project, WRNBC consulted with various bear experts. Since the efficacy of black bear rehabilitation has long been a contentious issue among wildlife rehabilitators, biologists, and government officials, it was important to consider the various points of view. Ultimately, the project's success will depend on the participation and cooperation of all stakeholders. It was WRNBC's goal to develop a comprehensive program that will provide the best chances of rehabilitative success without compromising the safety of the bears or the personnel involved.

Besides the immediate challenges of capturing, housing, and feeding the orphaned cubs, deeper, more fundamental issues also had to be addressed. Stakeholders needed to develop assessment protocols to determine which cubs were fit for rehabilitation. In many instances, the animal in question may not even require any intervention. Once the decision is made to place a bear



Photo courtesy of Meghann Cant & Critter Care

Black bear cub

into care, the rehabilitator must also implement protocols that will ensure the bear does not become habituated to human presence. Otherwise, the animal could become a potential public danger after release. Finally, decision makers had to identify appropriate future release sites for the bears.

All of these tasks require meticulous advance planning to avoid haphazard decisions. As responsible rehabilitators, we must always consider the long-term consequences of our actions, despite the understandable public concerns about the bears' future. Ultimately, the best interest of the animals must come first.

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## Calling All Anna's Hummingbirds

WRA is participating in a hummingbird monitoring program. If you have seen any Anna's hummingbirds in your yard or visiting your feeders **this winter**, please call Roy at 604-526-7275 or email him at [roy@wildliferescue.ca](mailto:roy@wildliferescue.ca).



# Circle of Friends

Thank you to all new members of WRA's **Circle of Friends**, and to our many anonymous friends.  
Your special year-end contributions will help us rehabilitate over 3,000 wild animals in 2005.

Anne Linburg	Marilyn Willman
Anthony Webb	Mary Bruneau
Cecilia Cheung	Mary Howie
Claudette Fleming	Merle Mills
Denise Mara	Michael McKay
Harold Steenson	Mirja Pekovich
John Donovan	Richard & Jacquelynn Torry
John Sims	Ruby Arnold
Joyce Price	Sharon Mitchell
K. B. Williams	Valerie Campbell
Kathleen Simas	Vancouver Condominium
Lonetree Enterprises	



*A northern flicker in care*

# Thank you for Celebrating Wildlife

Thank you to all our friends who helped wildlife this holiday season by donating to WRA's **Celebrate** campaign.

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*Meister Piano  
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## Changes to Hbc Rewards Points

If you have recently visited the Bay, Zellers or Home Outfitters and donated your Hbc Rewards points to WRA, you may have already learned that the Community Rewards Program has changed. The Hbc Rewards key tags are no longer accepted.

Instead, donors are invited to link their Hbc Rewards account directly to the charity (or charities) of their choice. Donors can specify if they want all or only a portion of their points donated to a particular charity. If you are already an Hbc Rewards member, signing up for the program is easy. Visit our web site at [www.wildliferescue.ca](http://www.wildliferescue.ca) to link up via the web or call Pam at 604-526-2747 to have an Hbc Community Rewards Program donation form mailed to you.



*Varied thrush*

### A Special Thanks to:

Diane Alsop - kennel cabs  
 Elena Zhukova - graphic design  
 Gail Forbes - scanner  
 Linda Saunders - restaurant  
 quality fridge  
 Lora & Hal Finan - plywood &  
 paint  
 Lorne Wickerson - oil spill training  
 funding  
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 raw dog food  
 Roberge Trucking - sand & gravel  
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 Teekay Shipping (Jackie Hesketh)  
 HP network printer

# Success Stories

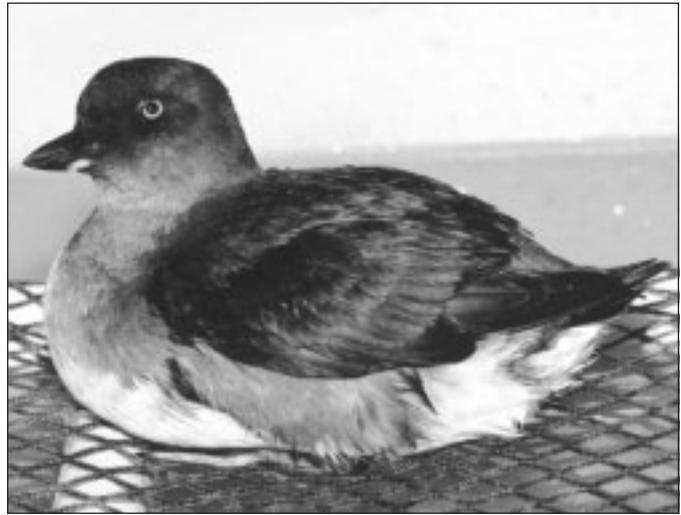
## Cassin's Auklet

By Gail Telfer

On December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2004, a Cassin's auklet (*Ptychoramphus aleuticus*) was admitted to WRA after landing on the deck of a ship during a windstorm. When flying at night, birds will often mistake wet surfaces on roads and decks for bodies of water. Auklets, like grebes, have legs positioned quite far back on their bodies, which makes it extremely difficult to take off from dry land.

The auklet arrived at WRA in a paper bag, soiled, emaciated, and in respiratory distress. The bird was treated with antibiotic and antifungal medications, tube-fed twice a day, and given an oil spill bath.

After several days, the bird was ready for release as it had gained weight and restored the waterproofing to its previously soiled feathers.



On December 28<sup>th</sup>, the auklet was transferred by helicopter to Wild ARC, a rehabilitation centre in Victoria. Within 24 hours, the bird was released at Taylor's Beach in the Metchosin area of Vancouver Island where there is an existing

colony of Cassin's auklets. Auklets are small diving birds that spend much of their lives in the open ocean, only coming onto land to breed.

## Trumpeter Swans

By Devin Manky

On December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2004, two immature trumpeter swans (*Cygnus buccinator*) were brought to our Care Centre within hours of one another - both from the Kitsilano area. They were weak, thin, and dehydrated and one had abrasions and swelling to its wrist.

Since infection was present, the swans were administered a general course of antibiotics, and iron was given to one bird as it showed signs of anemia. A day later, staff also began tube-feeding one of the birds that was not eating. After only a couple of days, the birds were moved into an outdoor enclosure,

where they could swim in a pool. Here, they spent the next month regaining their weight and strength.

The swans were released on January 30<sup>th</sup> near the Reifel Bird Sanctuary in Delta. A flock of over a hundred swans was gathered nearby, and it was hoped that the rehabilitated pair would join up with them. Once out of their transport



cages, the pair swam out into the water channel together, got their bearings and took flight into the fog and directly towards the larger gathering of swans.

## Red-tailed Hawk

By Devin Manky

On December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2004, a juvenile red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) was found in Maple Ridge and admitted into care at WRA. The hawk had burn wounds to its wing and face, indicating that it had been electrocuted. The injuries were not fresh, however, an infection had already set in.

Over the following weeks, the hawk's wounds were cleaned daily and ointments were applied to encourage skin growth. Slowly, the wounds began to heal. After this recuperation period, the hawk was moved into the Raptor Pen, our largest outdoor aviary, where it

could exercise its newly healed wing and re-adapt to the weather after spending so much time indoors. While in the Raptor Pen, the hawk honed his hunting skills by keeping the area clear of unwary rodents.

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, the fully recovered hawk was released at Colony Farms. Watch for red-tailed hawks and other raptors the next time you drive down the highway. These predators will often sit for hours by the roadside, since it is



cleared of trees, and when they spot a mammal, they move with lightning efficiency to make their kill.

## Ruffed Grouse

By Devin Manky

If you are out walking or hiking in BC's southern mountains, you may occasionally hear a drumming sound, which is reminiscent of a car motor trying to start-up. What you may be hearing is the mating call of a ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*). The males will strut and claw on fallen logs, calling out to the females with a low reverberating beat.

On December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004, a male ruffed grouse was brought to WRA from Coquitlam, where he was found limping and unable to evade capture. While no leg injuries were found, the grouse was very thin and weak. Staff treated the grouse for

internal parasites and put him on a schedule of tube-feedings to improve his weight. After a week of being tube-fed, the grouse began to eat on his own and gain weight without our intervention.

The grouse was moved to an outside aviary at the end of December, where he spent close to a month exercising his flight muscles and getting ready for release.



On January 25<sup>th</sup>, he was returned to the wild near the site where he was found.

## Wish List

- ✍ Refractometer
- ✍ Walkie talkies
- ✍ Pet Dryers
- ✍ Garden hose caddies
- ✍ Sisal rope (all thicknesses)
- ✍ Full spectrum fluorescent tubes
- ✍ Oven mitts
- ✍ Staple guns
- ✍ Mortar & pestle (small)
- ✍ Dawn dish soap
- ✍ Cotton swabs
- ✍ Recycling bin (large, for cardboard)
- ✍ Cleaning products (environmentally friendly)
- ✍ White boards
- ✍ Toys (call first)
- ✍ Head lamp
- ✍ Digital thermometer
- ✍ Unscented laundry soap
- ✍ Bleach
- ✍ Indoor/outdoor carpeting

## In Memory of:

Bart  
Betty Bruyea  
Charlie  
Cinders  
Dot Kingscote  
Frances Franklin  
Hella  
Jean Simpson  
John Glover  
John Scholefield  
Peter Remnant  
Sally Hornsby  
Sandra Sawatsky  
Sharon Beech  
Stan Vandervoort  
Tubby  
Valerie Verschueren



*Red-breasted sapsucker*

*AAA Wildlife  
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Vancouver Symphony Orchestra  
Veneto's Cakes & Pastries  
Vertical Reality Climbing Gym

# Volunteer Corner

## Open Hearts, Healing Hands

By Diane Haynes, Volunteer

The cry for help cut through the music and the voices of 150 happy partygoers. I turned to find two women lowering a gray-faced man to the floor. Heart attack. I grabbed my cell phone and punched 9-1-1.

Most of us who attended the WRA's Volunteer Recognition and Halloween Party last fall would probably say that this was the moment when the event ended. But looking back now, I see that it had just begun.

Ever heard the old one about how many volunteers it takes to rehabilitate an injured robin? Well, there's one to take the call, one to drive the transport vehicle, one to contain the animal, one to assist staff with assessment and medication, one to set up the caging, one to make the diet, one to do its laundry, a few to tend the garden where apples and berries come from in the summer, a good dozen to run the board that oversees it all, and another crew to do it all again the next day, and the next. Crazy punch line, eh? But it takes more than 20,000 volunteer hours - over and above staff time - to care for the 3,500 injured, orphaned and pollution-damaged animals that come through the WRA's doors each year. At minimum wage, that's an annual donation of \$140,000. Factor in our passion for the animals, our dedication and skills, and those numbers barely begin to tell the story.

And so last October 23<sup>rd</sup>, in a room festooned with streamers and balloons and lined with food-covered tables, WRA staff took time to recognize every single volunteer in front of the group, and to give every volunteer a specially chosen gift they had spent weeks collecting by donation.

As the presentations ended, the guest band, The Lonesome Coyotes launched into a Celtic reel. It was time to pile on the food, head to the bar, grab a partner and hit the dance floor. At 8:42 pm the party was in full swing. At 8:43, it was over. And something else had begun.

I reached a 9-1-1 operator only to learn that I was one of five calling about our friend and fellow volunteer. One stayed on the line as a woman I didn't recognize crossed the length of the room to kneel beside the unconscious man. Not a WRA member at all, but rather a guest, she had completed her third-level first aid training just two weeks before, and quickly and confidently began to administer CPR.

As she fought to keep our friend's heart beating and his vital signs strong, volunteers cleared the floor around him, and the stairs, and headed into the chill October night to greet emergency crews. Three times, paramedics used the



*The author and two of her "healing hands" friends dressed as injured robins for the Volunteer Recognition/Halloween Party*

defibrillators to start and then steady the man's heart before he was stable enough to be transported to hospital.

As this life came and went and came back again, three times, before our eyes, I became aware that the hundred who stood gathered around him were not just observing, but actively participating in something. There was a level of presence, attention and focus - some may call it prayer - emanating from the group that was palpable, almost visible. I have never been so proud to be a WRA volunteer as I was in that moment. I understood with sudden clarity that this is what we do - folding laundry, driving transport, preparing food, administering medication, tending the garden. We offer our unconditional, undistracted presence in the service of healing.

Our friend lived. And he recovered. Last I saw him, he and his wife were reassembling the care room after the floor had been painted. You may notice I haven't mentioned his name. Those of us who were there know it well enough.

*(continued on page 10)*

## Bears

*(continued from page 3)*

WRNBC's pilot project represents a unique opportunity to learn more about black bears and bear rehabilitation. During this process, it has become quite evident that many questions still remained unanswered. Was 2004 simply an unusual year for black bear encounters? Was the long, dry summer, and a poor berry crop, responsible for driving more bears into residential areas in search for food? Or were these incidences an indication of some underlying trend resulting from human encroachment and habitat loss? This project represents one small step to better understanding the situation. It is my hope that it will also open new doors into further research on the subject. Only with proper knowledge can we take steps to more effectively protect our local wildlife.



## Helping Hands

*(continued from page 9)*

Those who were not, likely know that a name isn't what matters here. What does matter - to each of the 100 of us, and to all those who care about the WRA - is that we are part of a committed company of individuals who have thousands of hours of practice keeping our hearts open and our lights shining in dark times. And that we are all healing this world we live in together, one creature at a time.



***This is an abridged version.  
For the complete story visit  
our web site at  
[www.wildliferescue.ca](http://www.wildliferescue.ca).***

## Response Training

*(continued from page 1)*

WRA rehabilitators regularly update emergency response protocols and procedures, but still require ongoing training to ensure that our skills remain current. Specialized training is costly, and thus we are particularly grateful to Neptune Bulk Terminals (Canada) Ltd., Mountain Equipment Co-op, and Lorne Wickerson who contributed a portion of the cost of the recent training sessions. We also thank our many wonderful volunteers who not only committed their time, but also paid a fee to take the course.



*Bathing a soiled barred owl*

If you would like to assist our ongoing efforts to train and equip a qualified oiled wildlife response team, please consider making a donation to the WRA Oiled Wildlife Fund. ***To direct your donation to the Oiled Wildlife Fund, just specify the fund name in the "Comment" section of the WRA donation form.***

*Wild Birds Unlimited  
Advertisement*

# Foster Fur and Feathers



*Northern pygmy owl*

As a wildlife fosterer your donations go directly to saving an injured bird or mammal that is either currently in care or has recently been released. Each sponsor receives a Foster Certificate with a picture taken here at WRA. You also receive a brief case history of the sponsored animal describing its injury and the rehabilitative treatment it received.

## My contribution to foster care:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Chickadee, junco, swallow                              | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Raccoon                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Robin, thrush, crow, grosbeak, pigeon, starling or jay | <input type="checkbox"/> \$150 Heron                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Squirrel   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$200 Owl                                       |
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|  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Oil spill                                  |

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**Name(s) on certificate:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Postal code:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Visa**     **Mastercard**     **Cheque**     **Cash**

**Card #:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Expiry:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total amount:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheques payable to: Wildlife Rescue Association of BC, 5216 Glencarin Drive, Burnaby, BC V5B 3C1, Admin t: 604-526-2747  
Registered charity # 131373490RR0001

## Foster Me!

Last year, on August 11<sup>th</sup>, a juvenile male black-headed grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) was brought to WRA from a local animal hospital. He had blood in his mouth, a fractured keel, puncture wounds to both the head and back, and substantial bruising over his body - all classic signs of a predator attack. Staff removed infected scabbing from the puncture wounds, cleaned them, and sutured them shut. He was also put on a general course of antibiotics to prevent infection.

He was a young bird and thus required hand-feeding by staff and volunteers for the first few days.

Very quickly, however, he was eating more than his fill and the challenge switched to one of ensuring he did not become obese!

Unfortunately, the grosbeak missed migrating to Mexico for the winter due to his injuries. Therefore, WRA is over-wintering the bird in an outdoor aviary until he can be released this summer.



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



## Yes, I want to support the WRA

**I wish to make a donation:**

One time.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Monthly.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(post dated cheques/credit card)

**Membership Requested:**

- Individual - \$25/year
- Family/couple - \$35/year
- Senior/student - \$15/year
- Life - \$250
- Business - \$250/year
- Business life - \$1,000
  - New
  - Renewal
  - Gift membership

The Wildlife Rescue Association of BC respects the support of all our donors; we do not trade or sell our donors' names.  
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**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Comment:** \_\_\_\_\_

My cheque for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed or

Please charge my:  Visa  Mastercard

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry date: \_\_\_\_\_

Total amount: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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 t: 604-526-2747

I would like information on:

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