

To The Rescue

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Winter Wildlife Woes

By Devin Manky, Wildlife Rehabilitator

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Wildlife rehabilitators gain an intimate understanding of the vulnerability of life as we work to give injured animals a second chance in the wild. Over the years, we have found that every patient is facing a unique set of circumstances in its struggle to survive. Any injury, even a mild one, can mean the difference between life and death depending on what environmental conditions the animal faces after the trauma. The harsh winter months often present the greatest challenge to animals in distress.

the rehabilitator faces an uphill battle in healing patients in such poor condition.

gions of Canada. This December, we admitted a Pacific Loon from Manitoba and a Western Grebe from Alberta. Both birds had sustained head trauma after landing on the ground rather than in water. Because of their injuries, the birds missed their normal migration west to the sea. If successfully rehabilitated at WRA, they could be released near the Pacific Ocean to join others of their kind.



Photographed By Paul Steeves

Western Grebe

Some of rehabilitators' toughest cases emerge in the late fall and winter when temperatures plummet and food becomes scarce. In the warmer months, if an injured animal can escape predation, chances are it will be able to stay warm and find food. By contrast, in the colder winter months, patients will often arrive at WRA's Care Centre not only injured, but also weak and emaciated because they have expended energy and fat reserves to remain alive. As their immune systems weaken under stress, the poor animals also become more susceptible to high loads of internal parasites. As you can imagine,

Winter delivers additional hardships for injured birds. Many birds must migrate to another area to improve their chances of survival, usually because its climate provides a better environment for feeding, or especially for rearing young. They likely won't make it if injured right before the migration period. However, there is hope for these birds if they can be found and rehabilitated.

Each winter, WRA normally receives a number of injured migratory birds transported to us from wildlife rehabilitators in colder re-

Injured mammals are also no strangers to the hardships of winter. Some mammals go into winter dormancy when food is scarce and temperatures plummet. Bats actually undergo a metabolic shift and enter a hibernation state.

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To The Rescue

Winter 2006 - Vol. 27 - 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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Editor's Message

Helping Hands Grow WRA

By Janice Dickie, Executive Director

Few things can match the beauty of a little girl's glowing smile as she gently hands you the money she raised through a neighbourhood bake sale to help injured wildlife. Her gift reminded all of us that success lies not only in the wild animals we save but also in touching the hearts and minds of children.

One of the joyous things about working at Wildlife Rescue is that we regularly get to witness others' demonstrations of compassion and giving. Helping hands emerge from every corner of the region we serve, and there are more examples than can be presented in this short column. However, I would like to mention a few that reveal how people connect to grow an organization and a community.

Last summer, a group of hard-working HSBC Bank employees donated their time to a variety of projects around WRA, one of which was to clear debris from the site of a planned outdoor aviary. WRA is the largest rehabilitator of



injured songbirds in British Columbia, and we urgently need new caging to accommodate the growing numbers of small bird patients. With a cleared site and a plan in place, the future construction of this new aviary would soon be made possible through grants from Vancouver Foundation and Chevron Canada.

A few months later, a volunteer's spouse who works with Cossette Communication Group helped link WRA to Hemlock Printers. Hemlock, in turn, generously agreed to print over 20,000 wildlife postcards for WRA. The images for these cards were supplied by none other than Devin Manky, staff member, and Paul Steeves, long-time volunteer.

Continued on next page...



Annual General Meeting

Please join us on:

Wednesday, June 21, 2006 @ 7:00pm
WRA, 5216 Glencarin Drive, Burnaby, BC

Refreshments will be served



The postcards have helped WRA not only educate the public about wildlife issues but also raise funds to support our wildlife rehabilitation program.

Even more funds would be raised for the animals when another community-minded company, Colourtime Printing and Digital Imaging, donated printing for our annual mail campaign. Responding to these cam-

paigns were WRA's most generous supporters, our **Circle of Friends**, as well as many other caring people who celebrated the holiday season by supporting wildlife. Your names are mentioned in the pages ahead.

During 2005, nearly one hundred volunteers continued to transport animals to WRA, to care for the patients, or to help improve our site, garden, and office. Other individuals brought food and supplies for the patients. We were thrilled when the Burnaby Rhododendron and Gardens Society purchased a much-needed refractometer and pediatric stethoscope for the Care Centre.

As you can imagine, wildlife rehabilitators experience much trauma in their everyday work with injured wildlife. Although they

know that not every animal can be saved, the ongoing losses are heart-breaking and often frustrating, es-

pecially when the animal's injuries were caused by human impacts. One of the mysteries of being human, however, is that the experience of loss can deepen appreciation for life and reinvigorate hope. It can strengthen our commitment and connection with others who care.

You, our supporters, are these "others" who care. With your support in 2005, we treated over 2,900 animals representing 140 species, and taught thousands of people how to value and safeguard the wildlife around them.



Thanks to all of you who leant a helping hand. We are excited about completing a beautiful new aviary in 2006, and look forward to your continuing interest in our work with wildlife.



Northern "Red-Shafted" Flicker

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 construction of a new
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 - Rella Taylor -

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 - Rehana Budhwani -

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 - Stanley Paulus -

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Thank you to all members of WRA's Circle of Friends. Your generous contributions will help to rehabilitate over 3,000 animals in 2006.

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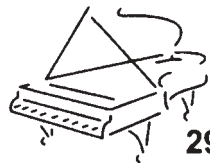
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Thanks to everyone who helped wildlife this past holiday season by donating to WRA's Celebrate campaign.



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Success Stories

Coastal Black-tailed Deer

By Devin Manky, Wildlife Rehabilitator

On December 17th, 2005, a biologist from Bowen Island brought in a juvenile female coastal black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus columbianus*). Several hours earlier, the deer had been hit by a car on the island and was found on the side of the road, stunned and bleeding from the nostrils. When staff examined the young deer, it was determined that she was in shock and had a slight concussion. Fortunately, she escaped any serious harm.

The biggest challenge to WRA was handling and providing adequate caging for this highly stressed ani-

mal whose weight neared 80 pounds! Staff created a suitable habitat in WRA's raptor pen, our largest outdoor aviary. The deer rested peacefully and ate well during her time in care.

One week later, on Christmas Eve, a staff member drove the recovered deer back to Bowen Island and she was released in parkland near the site where she had been found. She was last seen bounding energetically

away from the release crew. What a Christmas present for all of us!



Varied Thrush

By Marcy Potter, Volunteer

The eerie, vibrating song of the varied thrush is heard most frequently at dawn, dusk, or after one of the frequent rains in its common forest habitat of the Pacific Coast. This striking, robin-like bird has a dark breast band, orange eye stripe, and orange wing bars.

In late 2005, a resident in North Vancouver discovered a varied thrush that had hit a window of his home. He placed the thrush in a box, brought the bird inside where it was warm and monitored it for a few hours. When it wasn't showing signs of recovery, he brought the bird to Wildlife Rescue.

The bird was suffering from central nervous system (CNS) damage caused by the impact. He had a swollen eye, slow reflexes, a weak grip, and was gasping for air. The bird was given medication to help him recover from the CNS trauma.

After completing his medical treatment, the thrush was moved to an outside aviary to regain flying strength through regular exercise. He was released along with the

hermit thrush also mentioned in this newsletter. The varied thrush is a shy and retiring bird on its breeding grounds, where its colour and pattern blend in with the surroundings.



Hermit Thrush

By Marcy Potter, Volunteer

In October, a Burnaby resident entered his home's washroom and was shocked to discover that a hermit thrush had just escaped the cat's mouth. The concerned individual put the little bird into a box, and brought it to the Care Centre at Wildlife Rescue.

Examination of the thrush revealed a puncture wound and an abrasion on one wing. Whenever a cat bite is suspected, an injured bird should always be brought in promptly to a facility for treatment. The wound can easily become infected from the bacteria that occur naturally in a cat's mouth. Rehabilitators will

thoroughly clean and suture the wound, and administer oral antibiotics to fight infection.

During the first few days in care, the injured wing was very weak and drooping. However, the wounds healed quickly and the little bird was released to the wild in November. Hermit thrushes reside in forests where their distinctive songs make them more often heard than seen.

Photographed By Paul Steeves



Raccoon Love

By Gail Telfer, Volunteer Coordinator

On November 14th, a WRA volunteer rescued an injured raccoon that had been hanging around her Coquitlam yard. The juvenile male had a badly bitten tail as well as puncture wounds on its back and paws. The tissue surrounding several wounds had already died and thus staff had to surgically remove the tail, a portion of a toe, and one claw.

After completing a course of medication, the young male had healed enough to be moved to WRA's outdoor racoon house. A few weeks later, an adult female raccoon was moved to the adjacent

pen after being treated for shock and weakness due to an impact injury.

The juvenile male showed great interest in his new neighbour. The next morning, a staff member was startled to find a gaping hole in the wire mesh dividing the pens, and the two raccoons sleeping peacefully together. In the days ahead, they continued to move back and forth between the pens.



Photographed By Paul Steeves

On January 2nd, the raccoons were released together in a heavily wooded area in Coquitlam. Three days later, the fickle male showed up in our volunteer's backyard but sadly had ditched his girlfriend somewhere along the way!

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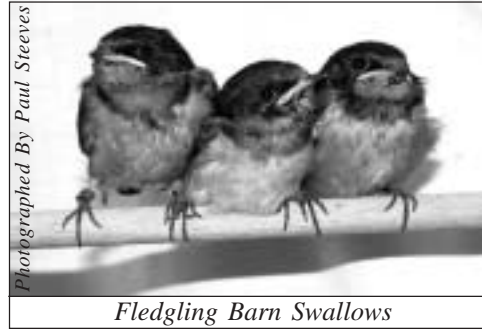
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VanCity Staff Community Building Grant

Canadian Tire \$\$ Update

WRA has recently used Canadian Tire dollars to purchase an answering machine, faucet, garden clippers, wall mounts for brooms and equipment, and sisal rope for the Care Centre.

THANK YOU!



Release of Coastal Black-tailed Deer



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Volunteer Corner

WRA's Volunteer Appreciation Night

By Gail Telfer, Volunteer Coordinator

Ever see a group of city people wearing their best "western" attire while trying not to appear silly? WRA's Volunteer Appreciation Night in November proved that you can get a group of eighty people to do almost anything if you promise good food, nifty prizes from big-hearted local businesses, and the music of the foot stomping bluegrass band, the Lonesome Coyotes. I am still getting over seeing our Team Leader of Wildlife Rehabilitation, normally clad in blue jeans and fleece, instead decked out in a frilly square dancing dress complete with lacy petticoat and western boots. She fit right in, however, when the Fraser Valley Square Dancers arrived to give

the crowd a spirited demonstration of reels and jigs.

Every fall, staff work hard to find original ways of saying thanks to the over one hundred volunteers who keep WRA alive. These hard working people transport wildlife to and from our Care Centre, feed and care for the patients, maintain our gardens and buildings, and keep operations and outreach programs running smoothly. We simply wouldn't be here without their support.

Last year, one of our most beloved volunteers gave us a scare when he collapsed in cardiac arrest at the volunteer

Photographed By Paul Steeves



party. In what seemed like an impossibly short time period, he had recovered and was again transporting injured animals into our care – travelling over 6,000 km in 2005! This year, his moving speech at the event reminded us that life is a precious gift worth cherishing. So true, I thought to myself, it's a lesson that we learn every day as we work to give injured animals another chance in the wild.



Thanks to all sponsors who helped make WRA's Volunteer Appreciation event a very special evening.

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Wild Bird Centre



Winter Wildlife Woes *(Continued from page 1)*

This winter, WRA admitted a male, little brown bat (*Myotis lucifungus*) that was awakened early from hibernation, likely due to an unsuccessful predator attack.

Because bats use most of their conserved energy stores while coming out of hibernation, it is unlikely that once awake they will successfully go back into a true hibernation. Without their normal insect food source in the wild, bats run the risk of starvation. Thus, we will keep this little fellow warm and well fed until the spring when the insects start to hatch once more.


The winter months ahead will keep us on our toes as new birds and mammals are admitted to the Care Centre in various states of crisis. At no other time of year are we more conscious that wildlife rehabilitation is a complex field. To be successful, we will need to blend knowledge not only of medicine and injury treatment but also of animal behaviour, biology, and environmental science. As you can imagine, it doesn't hurt if we are pretty good weather forecasters too!



Wish List

- Anchovies (undressed/raw)
- Battery Operated Calculators
- Binders 2" & 3"
- Black Pens
- Cable/Zip Ties
- Clamps, saws, small chainsaw
- Dawn Dish Soap (original)
- Dissecting Microscope
- Dolly
- Dry Erase Markers
- Extension Cords (outdoor)
- Face Cloths / Tea Towels
- Frozen Clams/Prawns
- Garden Clippers (large)
- Heating Pads
- Hummingbird Feeders
- Industrial Mop Tops
- Pet Dryers
- Pliers, wrenches
- Staple guns, mallets
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In Memory



- Aaron (Siamese Cat)
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- Charlotte Anders
- Desmond Turner
- Glyn Jenkins
- Hannelore Frohloff
- Hella
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- Jasmine
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Photographed By: Paul Steeves

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

Foster Me! Little Brown Bat

By Jackie Ward, Team Leader

Trapped in the doorway of a small business, a little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) was about to be swept away by an employee wielding a broom when a passerby intervened. The enterprising duo used the dustpan to lift the little bat into a covered box and it was promptly brought to the Wildlife Rescue Association.

An initial examination revealed minor punctures to the left wing and slight dehydration. The bat was likely disturbed from his

hibernation by a cat or other predator. Fortunately, the injuries were not severe and he needed only short-term supportive care.

This bat will be with us until the weather warms and insects are once again available for it to eat. Because bats employ an immense amount of energy to awaken from hibernation, it can be dangerous for them to re-enter hibernation a second time around. They may not have enough fat stores to wake up again. Hence, we will continue to give the bat a



Photographed By: Paul Steeves

comfortable and safe place to stay, with plenty of food to eat, until we are confident that sufficient insect prey is available in the spring.



Wildlife Rescue Association of BC
5216 Glencarin Drive
Burnaby BC
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- planned giving
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