

# Cat birth-control group captures elusive East Vancouver marmot

BY CLARE OGILVIE, THE PROVINCE JUNE 27, 2010



A marmot believed to be a yellow-bellied marmot hangs out in a drainage pipe under a driveway in the alley north of the 5500-block Broadway, Burnaby, BC, Wednesday, June 16, 2010.

**Photograph by:** Gerry Kahrmann, PNG

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The lure of sweet, sticky, fresh peanut butter was just too much for the hungry East Van Marmot.

It's pungent aroma lured the critter from his recent concrete jungle home into an animal rescue trap and now he is awaiting transportation to a more natural environment.

His rescue is all thanks to Maria Soroski and her colleagues at the Vancouver Orphan Kitten Rescue Association, which captures, spays or neuters feral cats, and then releases them.

"We got the elusive Vancouver marmot that you have been writing stories about," said Soroski, explaining that he was caught near Hebb and Renfrew streets.

"Really there is not much grass there, it is mostly concrete. (One of the Association's volunteers) noticed what she thought was a great big gopher, the size of a cat, so she called me and said: 'What shall I do? He is eating out of my hand.'

"I got there and sure enough it was the elusive East Van Marmot."

Soroski came with traps and a large jar of Jif peanut butter, apparently a favourite treat for the rodent most commonly found living in steppes, meadows and other open areas away from humans.

The Vancouver Island marmot is Canada's most endangered species with a wild population of less than 90. It has a distinctive white nose, which the marmot in Vancouver does not have.

"He went in right away into the trap," Soroski said, adding that she had already called the SPCA to confirm that she should try to catch the critter.

The SPCA picked him up and took him to the Vancouver Animal Emergency Clinic, where he was checked for injuries.

Soroski said the marmot was doing well, although he was extremely hungry.

He has since been transferred to the Wildlife Rescue Association, which has been in touch with the Ministry of Environment -- the organization in charge of releasing animals back into the wild.

Marmots that turn up in urban areas have likely caught rides on transport trailers, then end up stranded.

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