

Back in the Hunt

Rare owl overcomes vision loss for successful return to the wild

By Yolanda Brooks

Communications Coordinator

A rare Western screech owl (*Otus kennicottii*) which lost the sight in one eye after colliding with a car has made a remarkable recovery thanks to the WRA.

The young female owl was injured in late April after she flew into a car window on a remote road near the community of Mount Currie north of Whistler.

The driver of the car scooped up the stunned bird and kept it overnight before transferring it to the WRA.

While the owl suffered no broken bones, her right eye was damaged with the pupil unresponsive to light and the interior of the eye left cloudy and filled with blood.

With rest in an indoor enclosure the condition of the eye stabilized. But without the availability of specialist ophthalmic equipment, Care Centre staff were unable to perform a full optic exam to evaluate the extent of the injuries and establish a long-term prognosis.

After getting in touch with Marnie Ford, Ph.D., DVM, of the West Coast Veterinary Eye Specialists in New Westminster, who donated her services for free, the seriousness of the injuries were revealed.

Damage included partial retinal detachment, swelling in the middle of



Photo: Paul Steeves

Western screech owl survival will help boost dwindling populations

the eye and partial paralysis of the lower eyelid which left the eyeball exposed.

These injuries left the otherwise healthy young owl unable to adjust to changing light levels and the inability to judge distances. Without these essential skills rehabilitation staff feared the bird would be unable to hunt and survive in the wild.

However, with evidence that screech owls with limited vision can successfully fend for themselves, staff believed rehabilitation was a realistic goal. Owls have an acute sense of hearing and they rely more on their excellent auditory senses rather than their sight to locate

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TO THE RESCUE

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WRA Wildlife Rescue Association of BC provides leadership in rehabilitating wildlife and in promoting the welfare of wild animals in the urban environment.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Hurry up and Slow Down!

By Glenn Boyle, Ph.D.
WRA Executive Director

One of the great bonuses of working at WRA is coming to our lovely location nestled in Burnaby Lake Regional Park. It's an idyllic spot that provides a veritable oasis for local wildlife in an area surrounded on all sides by bustling urban activity and development.

I have been lucky to see a wide range of wild animals on my frequent trips to and from WRA, including beavers, coyotes, deer, eagles, hawks, herons, raccoons, snakes, skunks and turtles. More often than not, I have spied these animals either on or nearby the road, and on many occasions, their proximity to traffic is cause for concern.

At the beginning of each year, I review WRA's annual permit reports to the provincial and federal regulatory agencies that issue our rehabilitation permits.

Each year, the statistics tell me that most wild animals coming to WRA have suffered because of something humans have (or have not) done to prevent them from harm. Consistently in recent years, the leading cause of admissions to



the Care Centre has been "hit by car". In 2011, 711 animals (21% of admissions) came in for this reason alone.

A few weeks ago, when running an errand in my car, I had to avoid a pair of mallards that emerged suddenly from the verge along Glencarin Drive. Their attention on each other erred momentarily, before they beat a retreat back into the safety of the long grass. This close call reminded me that no driver is immune from the unexpected and we can all take better care when behind the wheel.

Research studies have clearly demonstrated the reduced likelihood and severity of road traffic accidents when people drive slower and without distraction. Our increasingly busy lifestyles often push us into rushing from one thing to another and multitasking on route, which is not a good thing when driving a lethal weapon. So, the next time you drive, please think about what you can do to help save lives and know that we can all make a difference for wildlife if we just hurry up and slow down! 🐦

info

Stay in touch with everything that's happening at the WRA on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/WildlifeRescue, our blog *Wild Things* which features posts from staff and volunteers at wrabc.wordpress.com and our E-Newsletter *The Tweet* which you can receive direct to your inbox by sending your email address to communications@wildliferescue.ca



Making plastic fantastic

Averaging 60 wing beats per second, and 120 beats for courtship displays, our local rufous hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) and Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*) expend much of their energy flying. Providing a nectar feeder is a great way to supplement these energetic little birds. Here's an easy way to use materials at home and a fun family project to make your own nectar feeder.

Materials Needed

Small clear plastic container with lid
Plastic water or juice bottle (750ml size) with lid
String
Scissors or hole puncher
White glue or glue gun
Crayons or plastic flowers from a lei
Sugar
Water

1. Trace the bottle lid onto the lid of the plastic container and cut the circle out. The bottle top should be able to go into the hole and its lid screwed on, leaving the bottle securely attached to the plastic container.
2. Poke a small hole in the bottle lid with some scissors to allow the sugar-water to drip out.
3. Remove the plastic container lid and punch four small holes around it with scissors or a hole puncher. The hummingbirds will drink from these holes.
4. Make four red flowers by colouring in some paper or plastic with crayons, or taking apart a plastic lei and using flowers from them. Punch holes with a hole puncher in the centres of your flowers and secure them over the container lid holes using white glue or a glue gun.



Photo: Paul Steeves



Photo: Yolanda Brooks

5. Decorate the water bottle however you like, keeping in mind that tempera paints will wash off outdoors!
6. Fill the bottle with a sugar-water mixture of four parts water to one part sugar.
7. Attach the water bottle to the plastic container and allow the bottle to fill the container with sugar-water. The bottle should still have some sugar-water remaining in it after the container is full.
8. Use string to make some loops around the neck of the bottle, taping them at the bottle's middle with enough left over at the top to hang the feeder.
9. Put the feeder outside and get ready for some bird watching!
10. Clean your feeder with a 10% bleach solution about three times a week and refill with the sugar-water mixture to ensure a healthy feeder. 🐦



Photo: Linda Bakker

Clean bill of health In late January, a red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) was admitted to the WRA with a tail that was not so red. After running into trouble, the hawk's feathers became soiled with mechanic grease and oil, leaving its normally red tail black.

At intake, the adult hawk was subdued, dehydrated and thin. Blood tests revealed that it was suffering from anemia and rehabilitation staff administered medication and began fluid therapy.

The grease and oil were thickly layered on the hawk's critical flight feathers, its primaries and retrices, and although it was in need of an oil-spill bath, the procedure was put on hold until the hawk's overall condition improved. To minimize further damage, the Care Centre staff worked to remove as much of the excess grease from the feathers as they could using mineral oil and gauze. Twice a day, they carefully cleaned each of the soiled feathers removing thick chunks of the sticky substance.

At first, the hawk was quiet and reluctant to eat but it quickly perked up and began devouring its meals and its condition rapidly improved.

It was finally ready for an oil-spill bath and, although it was a lengthy and stressful process, it was a big success. The hawk recovered and its feathers were once again clean and waterproof.

The hawk was then moved to an outside aviary to practice flight and increase stamina. Soon after, red-tailed and flying strong, it was released.

By Karen Becker Wildlife Rehabilitator



Photo: Linda Bakker

Left-wing bias This green-winged teal (*Anas carolinensis*) which crashed into a window in North Vancouver, was one of the first patients to benefit from the new onsite digital X-ray machine.

When she first arrived at the Care Centre, the adult female teal was able to walk but she had a drooping left wing and was extremely stressed out. An X-ray revealed that she had broken her coracoid bone in her shoulder making it extremely painful and difficult for her to fly. To allow the fracture to heal, staff applied a whole-body wrap.

After five days, the wrap was removed and the coracoid was once again stable. The wings were uneven when the duck flapped so she was put in an enclosure with a pool for some aquatic physiotherapy. Within a couple of days, the teal was strong enough to evade staff when they tried to capture her for examination.

After 2 ½ weeks, her full flight motion was restored and she was released at a waterside park in North Vancouver.

By Yolanda Brooks Communications Coordinator



Virginia opossums are the only marsupial in North America. Like kangaroos, they raise their young inside a pouch. Opossums have 13 nipples - 12 in a circle with one in the centre and give birth to as many as 20 "bee-sized" offspring. This nocturnal opossum is an omnivore and eats a wide range of fruits, berries, plants, insects and even small mammals. When scared, opossums sometimes display an involuntary reflex that makes them appear dead hence the phrase "playing possum". Their body becomes rigid, they bare their teeth, their anal glands release a foul smell and hopefully predators steer clear. This catatonic state can last for up to four hours.

Sticky situation Sticky-tape fly traps are great for catching flies but can be lethal to wildlife. With the flies highly visible on the white tape, birds and bats land on the tape expecting an easy meal but get stuck instead.

In early May, the WRA treated a big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*) that came to grief at an elementary school in Abbotsford after it got stuck on a fly-tape trap. Teachers at the school managed to rescue the animal using tongs and initially planned to send it to a local vet who would likely have euthanized the animal.

Luckily, we were able to dispatch a transport volunteer to the school within the hour and the bat was delivered to the Care Centre with the tape still stuck to its body.

Because bats can transmit rabies, rehabilitation staff have to take extra precautions when one is admitted to the Care Centre. Only staff who

Awesome opossum Staff at the WRA Care Centre had to call on all of their expertise and experience to save the life of this adult male Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*) which had multiple injuries to his tail and body.

The long-term patient, which was found in the back of a trailer at a construction recycling yard in Richmond, spent 89 days at the Care Centre, giving him the record for the longest in-patient stay at the WRA in at least two years.

Opossums have a lower body temperature than many mammals making them more susceptible to frostbite. Their low body temperature also slows down the healing process making recovery from injuries slower and more challenging.

As well as cuts to his nose and paws, the opossum had a partially severed toe and severe frostbite on his tail. The tip of the tail and toe had to be amputated and required several multiple over several weeks. While the surgeries went well, it took time for the wounds to heal.

To further complicate matters, the opossum broke a canine tooth and had to have root canal surgery which was carried out by a local vet specializing in dental care.

After almost three months in care, this awesome opossum had recovered, gained lots of weight and was successfully released on a mild spring evening in late April.

By Crystal Simmons Care Centre Liaison



Read about our latest patients, check out new photos and keep up with the latest WRA news at www.facebook.com/WildlifeRescue

have been vaccinated can be present in the exam room and they must wear a visor as well as rubber gloves underneath heavy-duty leather gloves.

With their safety gear on, staff removed the tape but the bat was left with soiled fur and inflamed skin on its back. The residue also coated the tiny hairs on its wing membranes which hindered its flying and gliding ability.

Using cotton buds, gauze and water, Care Centre staff carefully removed dirt from its wings, and placed it in an incubator to dry before repeating the delicate process. After a final grooming session with a toothbrush, the bat was given another flight test and its flying and gliding had noticeably improved.

After three days in care, the bat was released in Abbotsford.

By Yolanda Brooks Communications Coordinator

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Catch and Carry During the spring and summer months at Wildlife Rescue, thousands of calls are received in the Care Centre about injured and orphaned animals. With the increase in calls comes an increase in the need for a large network of volunteer transporters to assist the public in getting animals to our facility, as not all callers have their own means to bring an animal in for care.

Wildlife Rescue has over 120 on-call Transport Volunteers who generously donate their time, their vehicles, and their own fuel costs to pick up animals at businesses, private residences, parks, and anywhere else there are animals in need. These volunteers travel all over the Lower Mainland and beyond – from Squamish to Richmond, from Vancouver to Hope.

In the peak of summer the Care Centre staff dispatch over 50 calls per week including transferring animals to other facilities and supply pick-ups. Without

Transport Volunteers, the WRA would not be able to provide care for as many animals, nor would they have enough human-power to complete seemingly simple supply pick-ups.

They are a crucial part of the WRA's success in rehabilitating animals – so much so that many other wildlife rehabilitation facilities throughout North America are very interested in starting their own transport volunteer programs modeled after WRA's.

Currently, Wildlife Rescue is in need of Transport Volunteers within the Richmond and Surrey areas. Becoming a Transport Volunteer is not difficult – fill out an online application form on the Wildlife Rescue website, and attend a Volunteer Information Session.

No further training is required – however you must have your own vehicle, and a valid driver's licence. You will also need to follow some simple rules in



Photo: Yolanda Brooks

WRA volunteer Danielle Dagenais transports a bird for release.

order to keep an animal (and yourself) safe. If you are interested in becoming a Transport Volunteer, or have any questions about the Transport Volunteer program, please contact the Volunteer Program Assistant, Marcy Potter, at marcy@wildliferescue.ca.

By Stefanie Broad Volunteer Coordinator

CARE CENTRE NEWS

Spring Clean-Up The arrival of the breeding season means a Care Centre make-over is required. With up to 1,800 nestling and fledgling birds expected, staff and volunteers have to make many seasonal adjustments and preparations to ensure that everything runs smoothly during the busiest time of the year.

Batches of nestling food are made months in advance and stocked in the freezer. A special formula is prepared that meets all nutritional requirements of the nestlings. Incubators for the newly hatched and nestling songbirds are cleaned and checked.

The isolation room is transformed into a baby bird unit and supplies such as housing and bedding materials are brought in from our off-site storage POD (see more details on page 11).

Ducklings have their own specific requirements and are moved through different enclosures during their stay at Wildlife Rescue. They start out inside with heat lamps, then move to an outdoor brooder



Photo: Paul Steeves

These fledgling wrens were amongst the first orphaned birds to arrive this spring.

with heat lamps during the night. During the day they have a 'play pen' out on the grass so they can nibble on bugs and grass. In the next stage they are provided with a pool large enough to swim in and practice their foraging skills.

It will have been eight months since we've had many baby birds in the Care Centre, so we host summer refresher courses on the care of ducklings and goslings and the different food and housing they require during their different life stages.

With so many more mouths to feed, the cupboards and fridges have to be kept well-stocked with food. Not only are our shopping lists longer, deliveries of produce have to come in more regularly. We have great donors such as Quest, Bosley's Pet Food Plus and Rabbit River Farms to provide us with a weekly supply of lettuce and other produce.

We also need to be ready to assist the public who will be experiencing more wildlife encounters. Providing advice via the wildlife helpline helps us to identify the animals in need and prevent unnecessary human intervention by identifying those that just need to be left alone.

By Linda Bakker WRA Team Supervisor

The start of 2012 has been one of the busiest of the last few years, and at the time of going to press the WRA Care Centre had already received 1,207 animals. The spike in admission rates is partly due to a winter salmonella outbreak that was affecting pine siskins.

IN Memory

Our donors remember those who have had special meaning in their lives with a special tribute.

Hannelore Frohloff
Samuel Graham
Brenda Victoria Nobes
Eric Peel
Jeffrey Pump
Gordon F. Randle
Frances Gertrude Thomas
Elaine Tyler

Faithful friends

Our donors say a fond farewell to the companion animals that have a special place in their hearts.

Zoro Haga
Snoopy Klimec
Sophie Scott



WRA staff showed their appreciation for the great work that volunteers do during Volunteer Appreciation Week in April.

Donor

Thanks

Janice Adachi: Donated sunflower seeds and peanuts in bulk.

Lisa Crowe on behalf of the Hop and Vine Pub in Burnaby: Regular coin collections.

Don Stacheruk: Donated garden greenery.

Kerr Wood Leidal: Cash donations.

Linda Matuska: Blueberries,

niger thistle, sunflower seeds, and gardening equipment.

Cintas: Quarterly donation of towels.

Safety Pickering: Donation of oxygen tanks.

Greater Vancouver

Foodbank: Ongoing donations of food.

RBC Foundation: \$2,500 grant.

Walmart: Donation of towels

WISH LIST

Food Supplies

- Berries (frozen or fresh)
- Gift cards for local grocery stores
- Canadian Tire money
- Distilled water (jugs)
- Vitamin B1, B-complex tabs

Outdoor Supplies

- Hose nozzles
- Greenery (evergreen, cedar is best)
- Perennial plants & live trees
- Soaker hoses
- 55-gallon water barrel (2)
- Tarps
- Floating pool thermometer
- Astroturf perch covers
- Live traps

Household items

- Plastic laundry baskets
- Face cloths
- Chlorine bleach - 5 litre size (we use one 5L jug per day, on average)
- Unscented laundry soap

- Heat lamp bulbs (ceramic)
- Garbage bags (industrial size)
- Mop heads (large industrial size)

Medical Supplies

- Endotracheal tubes without cuffs
- Hand-held blood chemistry analyzer
- Veterinary ultrasound machine
- Lactated Ringer's Solution (sterile, unopened)

Miscellaneous

- Bird Puppets (e.g. gull, mallard, goose)
- Digital precision scale
- Roladex
- Whiteboard grid & art tape
- Duct tape
- Baking/cooking timers
- Single-sided business cards
- Wing rule - 30cm
- Egg candle
- Cable ties (AKA as zap straps or zip ties)
- Chainmail lined gloves



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IN PRAISE OF UNSUNG HEROES

At the beginning of May, our Care Centre Liaison, Crystal Simmons, received information about a gull whose wing was impaled on a spike on the top of a retail and office complex in downtown Vancouver. The injured gull was spotted by financial advisors in a building that overlooked the roof.

The gull languished for two days and neither the WRA nor the BCSPCA were in a position to carry out such a precarious rescue. After numerous phone calls, help came in the form of Michael French from the company Courtesy Window Cleaners.

"He was in a really weird spot and it was very hard to get to, but when I'm up here I live with these birds and I was happy that I was able to do something to help," said Michael after the rescue.

With his safety gear on, he clambered across the roof to the bird whose wing was impaled on a razor-sharp lightning rod. It did not put up too much resistance and Michael was able to remove it, place it in a box and deliver it personally to the WRA Care Centre. Sadly, the injuries sustained by the gull were severe and it was humanely euthanized.

However, if the staff from Canaccord Wealth Management had ignored the plight of the gull, and Michael French had not offered to carry out the rescue, there is no doubt that this bird would have suffered a lingering death.

In February, two trumpeter swans were spotted in a field in Delta. Both had wing damage and were unable to fly. After several individuals failed to catch them, the WRA pulled together a rescue party to round up the swans. On a wet, windy and thoroughly disagreeable Saturday morning, 25 people including WRA volunteers, staff and local wildlife enthusiasts arrived to catch the ailing swans.

With fields all around and a canal nearby there were plenty of escape routes and lots of opportunity for a drawn-out chase. But with an expertly devised plan, the group split up with



Photo: Yolanda Brooks

bed sheets in hand and headed in different directions across the muddy field. Over the course of 30 minutes, the circle of people tightened until the geese had no option but to waddle into a temporary corral that had been built for the purpose.

Like the gull stuck high above Vancouver, the trumpeter swans' injuries were just too severe to treat. They were malnourished and their ravaged wings had exposed bone and necrotic tissue. Left to their own devices, the pair would have been stranded without the ability to take care of themselves when the rest of the flock headed north for the spring

Left: A rescue team in Delta corral two injured trumpeter swans. Below: The city rooftop from which the gull was rescued.



Photo: Cameron Currie

migration just a few weeks away.

"We can't always expect a happy ending, but these incidents show that there are people who are ready to go above and beyond to help animals that are in distress," says the WRA's Executive Director, Glenn Boyle. "Often it's the bad news that makes the headlines but at times like these, it's good to take a moment to recognize and appreciate such acts of kindness." 🐦

By Yolanda Brooks Communications Coordinator



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Gifts from Thrifty

Over the past year Thrifty Foods has become a major supporter of the WRA. Not only has the Thrifty Foods store in Sapperton, New Westminster, agreed to provide free food at several WRA events over the next two years, the Thrifty Foods company has just re-launched the Smile Card program to raise funds for the WRA.

All you need to do to participate is pick up a Smile Card from the WRA administration office. When you go to the store, load up your card before you shop at the Customer Service desk or at the checkout BEFORE you pay for your groceries. You can load any amount you want, and pay with cash, debit or credit card.

Thrifty will then donate 5% of the value of the Smile Card directly to the WRA. When the card runs low, you can top it up again and another 5% donation will be made. The card can be used in any Thrifty Foods store and there are eight locations in the Lower Mainland including New Westminster, Coquitlam, Port Moody and North Vancouver.

This fantastic fundraising program won't cost you a cent but could raise thousands of dollars for the WRA. When we ran the Thrifty Smile Card campaign in 2009/2010, the money raised paid towards the cost of a much needed walk-in cooler.

All proceeds of the 2012/13 fundraising program will go towards the cost of the young bird and fledgling annex which will house orphaned birds during the busy summer season.

The Smile Card for Wildlife campaign will run until May 4, 2013. Please call the WRA administration line on 604 526 2747, or email info@wildliferescue.ca for information on how to get your Thrifty Foods Smile Card.



Photo: Yolanda Brooks

Ray Mattinson, Store Manager of Thrifty Foods in Sapperton, New Westminster, has initiated a number of fundraising projects in support of the WRA.

Volunteer Jackpot on the House



Photo: Yolanda Brooks

Daniel Lay has provided a double dose of good fortune to the WRA.

As the Assistant General Manager of Casino Operations at the River Rock Casino Resort in Richmond Daniel works shifts, so becoming a transport volunteer was the perfect way to fit in volunteering around his work commitments.

As well as supporting the cause of animal welfare on the road, he nominated the WRA as one of River Rock's designated charities. Every year, Great Canadian Gaming Corporation gives back to charity and community groups which do truly amazing work in our communities. Thanks to Daniel, the WRA received a cheque for \$3,000.

"On behalf of WRA I would like to thank Daniel and the Great Canadian Gaming Corporation for a wonderful, generous gift," says Anita Cymet, the WRA's Development Coordinator.

Take a Walk 4 Wildlife

Show your support for the WRA by signing up to Walk 4 Wildlife, the new family-friendly sponsored event owned and organized by the WRA. Hundreds of walkers are expected to turn out for the 5km walk at Burnaby Lake Regional Park that is set for Sunday, September 30, 2012.

Walkers of all ages are invited to sign up for the inaugural walk and gather pledges to raise money to support our wildlife rehabilitation and education mission. "This is our first Walk 4 Wildlife and we are very excited that we have a fundraising event that enables our supporters in the community to come out and show how much they care about urban wildlife," says Anita Cymet, the WRA's Development Coordinator.

As well as connecting with like-minded members of the community and raising money for the WRA, participants will be able to take in the scenery and wildlife of

Burnaby Lake, enjoy a post-walk barbecue and win prizes.

Individuals and teams can sign up for the event and all proceeds from Walk 4 Wildlife will go towards WRA operations and vital necessities for the Care Centre. "We want this to become an annual event on the WRA calendar, so please encourage your friends, families and co-workers to make a pledge, donate directly, or come out and walk for a great cause," says Anita Cymet.

Registration and sponsorship forms for participants will be available online at www.wildliferescue.ca at the end of June. For further details, contact Anita Cymet, on 604 526 2747 or email her at anita@wildliferescue.ca.

Walk 4 Wildlife
Time 9am-12pm
Sunday, September 30, 2012
Burnaby Lake Regional Park



The Box that Rocks

Storage space is at a premium at the WRA and until recently every nook and cranny was filled with stuff ranging from equipment, medicine and food, to teaching supplies, patient records and towels.

Now, thanks to the moving and storage company PODS, staff and volunteers no longer have to root around in dark and creepy crawl spaces to dig out supplies.

PODS in Burnaby has donated an 8x12 foot portable storage container for two years. With the POD stationed at the storage facility in Burnaby, we know supplies are safe and easily accessible.

Community-minded PODS also supplied a storage unit for use during EarthFest. In previous years, staff and volunteers spent many hours ferrying boxes of supplies from the office to the festival site and back again.

With PODS providing delivery and pick-up for free, set up and take down ran much more smoothly and everyone was able to go home within an hour of the event ending.

For Mellanie Siteman, Operation Manager at PODS, the opportunity to support the WRA was a chance to support a cause close to her heart.

"I am a huge animal lover and I believe wildlife is really important," she says. "If we don't rescue and save wildlife what would our planet look like? It is a small thing that we could do and we were happy to help."

By Yolanda Brooks Communications Coordinator

A Grand Effort



Congratulations to WRA Executive Director Glenn Boyle (pictured above) who successfully completed the 2011 Rubber Ducky Run at Burnaby Lake last October. With pledges from friends, family, co-workers and volunteers, he raised close to \$1,000 for the Association.

SUMMER CAMPS

with

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Our nature camps are open to kids aged 6 - 8 and 9 - 12. For a \$25 donation your child can enjoy a day at Burnaby Lake with our experienced educators.

THEME DAYS

A Day in the Life of a Wildlife Rescuer July 3/6

It's For the Birds July 10/12

Mammal Madness July 17/19

Night Nature July 24/26

Plant Paradise July 31/August 2

A Bug's Life August 7/9

Watery Wonders August 14/16

WILD Recycling August 21/23

To register: Tel: 604 526 2747 Email: educate@wildliferescue.ca www.wildliferescue.ca



Friends of the Earth



The sun shone and the crowds came out for WRA's Earth Day event, EarthFest, held at Burnaby Lake Rowing Pavilion at the end of April.

More than 1,100 people attended, close to 300 bee house and bird boxes were made and every canoe trip on the lake was fully booked.

The WRA would like to thank all of the sponsors who contributed donations ranging from grants, disposable plates and gifts for raffle prizes, to free food for volunteers, timber for bird and bee boxes and advertising space. Without their help and commitment to local wildlife and the local environment, we would not be unable to host such a great community event.

We would also like to extend our thanks to the enthusiastic team of volunteers who were on site before, during and after the event to ensure that everything ran smoothly.

And finally, we would like to acknowledge the contribution made by Care Centre volunteer Nel Aird who did a grand job as the EarthFest project manager.

Photos by: Paul Steeves

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Back in the Hunt

Continued from page 1

and capture prey.

At around two years old, the owl was also old enough to have established good hunting skills but still young enough to adapt to the loss of vision.

The owl proved to be an extremely resilient patient and following a course of steroids to clear up an infection in the eye, its condition rapidly improved.

On the critical list

Western screech owls are under threat in British Columbia and are a red-listed species. In British Columbia they prefer low-lying forests close to water and numbers are declining. Reasons include the disappearance of tree nesting sites lost to development and logging, predation by more successful owl species, and greater competition for prey from other mammals and birds.

"Although our work impacts individual animals, it can sometimes make a difference to species at risk," says Glenn Boyle, Ph.D., Executive Director at the WRA. "Western screech owl numbers are falling and even the survival of a single bird can be significant when local populations are small."

For the record

A blood sample has been sent to the Ministry of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations, to enable biologists to establish which of the local sub-species of Western screech owl it belongs to. One local species has as few as 100 individuals remaining in the wild.

The owl was also banded to enable conservationists to identify the bird should it come into contact with humans in the future.

"The owl has made an amazing recovery. Her manoeuvring is awesome and she is doing really, really well," says Mira Ziolo, DVM, one of the WRA's consulting veterinarians who worked closely with rehabilitation staff on the case. Initially we thought she had lost complete function in that eye but over the course of the summer she could regain some of it."

After a month in care and a week of rigorous flight and hunting tests, the owl was released back to the Pemberton Valley by the original finder. 🦉



Photo: Paul Steeves

Check out additional photos of the owl on the road to recovery on the Western screech owl gallery at www.facebook.com/wildliferescue

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WFO343 (10/2015)

Foster Me: Long-eared Owl

Injured predator becomes prey

By Yolanda Brooks

Communications Coordinator

After flying into a window and being attacked by crows, this long-eared owl (*Asio otus*) is making a good recovery in the WRA Care Centre.

The female owl was left dazed and defenceless after it flew into a window near the Port of Vancouver during an evening in late May. Seeing a predator in their midst, nearby crows attacked. The owl was saved from further injury when passersby intervened.

After rescuing the owl, they kept the bird overnight in a box. The next morning, the owl was much more active and they were ready to release it, but instead brought it to the WRA to ensure that it was fit for release.



Photo: Paul Steeves

The future looks good for this long-eared owl

Although the owl did not sustain any internal injuries when it hit the window, it did have a wound on its left talon and a cut on its right eye. Following treatment at the Care Centre the wounds are rapidly

improving and it is spending more time in an outdoor enclosure.

Once the wounds are completely healed, the owl will spend time in the raptor pen to regain its strength before being released.

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