

# **Taylor Swift Goes Wild**

### It's Mission Accomplished for Operation Taylor

**By Yolanda Brooks** 

**Communications Coordinator** 

Lost, cold and left behind, life was fraught for this white-throated swift (Aeronautes saxatalis) when it was picked up off a sidewalk in Coquitlam in November. It was in the wrong place at the wrong time and without help it would have perished.

White-throated swifts are summer visitors to British Columbia and prefer hot dry climates – think of the southern Okanagan or Similkameen Valley. It's also rare to see them in the province after September. By the time this lost bird was found, it had been two months since the last flocks had left.

It was suffering from Central Nervous System (CNS) trauma and was underweight. As white-throated swifts only eat while in flight, it needed to be hand-fed at regular intervals by Care Centre staff. It required relatively straightforward medical treatment and after ten days, it was ready to be conditioned for release back to the wild.

A complication-free rehabilitation however was to be followed by a lengthy release protocol. Releasing the swift into the environs of a chilly Vancouver would be a death sentence as it required a release site with a milder winter climate, more abundant food sources and the company of other white-throated swifts.

Sebastopol, a city in central California was deemed the best option. Not only is it home to wintering flocks of white-throated swifts, the city is home to



After 101 days of solitude, this white-throated swift made it to California.

Native Songbird Care and Conservation, a wildlife rescue organization willing and able to acclimatize and release the swift.

To ensure that it received optimal care in transit, WRA rehab staff decided that it would be best to drive rather than fly down to Sebastopol which is 52km north of San Francisco. Instead of being in a cold, noisy cargo hold, the swift would get regular feeds in a quiet and warm environment.

But before they could start the journey, staff needed wildlife permits from government departments on both sides of the border, veterinary clearance and lab tests to ensure the bird was free from various diseases including avian flu. While staff waited for the permits to arrive, the WRA launched the Operation Taylor (a play on the name of the singer Taylor Swift) appeal to help raise the money for the cost of the trip.

When animals are in care for a long

period of time, they take up lots of extra time and resources. When the costs of the road trip which included gas for a 3,000 km round trip, accommodation and food, plus wildlife permits, veterinary and testing fees were factored in, the costs

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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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#### **BOARD** of DIRECTORS' **MESSAGE**

## Wildlife Act Creates Second Class Species

**WRA Board of Directors** 

"All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others."

~ George Orwell, Animal Farm

The Wildlife Rescue Association and all rehabilitation groups in B.C., are faced with an impending change that will have a significant and devastating impact on the work we do and the animals we strive to treat and protect.

All wildlife in B.C. is owned by the provincial government with the exception of migratory bird species, which are regulated on behalf of the federal government by the Canadian Wildlife Service.

The terms and conditions of the province's regulatory powers are set out in the provincial Wildlife Act (1996), whose provisions include the issuance of annual permits for wildlife rehabilitation. The Wildlife Act also allows wildlife species to be grouped into different classes or schedules, including Schedule "C", which includes species such as rock doves (pigeons), house sparrows, opossums and grey squirrels, among other animals that can be killed without licence anywhere and at any time in B.C.

Late in 2013, the provincial Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO) issued a final decision on the rehabilitation of Schedule "C" wildlife after years of official discussions with the Wildlife Rehabilitators' Network of BC (WRNBC) of which the WRA is a founding member. The MFLNRO has informed the WRNBC that it is excluding Schedule "C" wildlife from all new rehabilitation permits issued in 2014.

As a result, wildlife shelters accepting these animals into care will not be allowed to rehabilitate and release them back into the wild, and will be expected instead to euthanize the animals on behalf of the Province.

In response to a request for membership feedback by the WRNBC Board of Directors, the WRA has strongly disagreed with the Ministry's decision on this issue – we are not willing to turn away wildlife in need or the public seeking assistance, and we have asked the WRNBC to lead the rehabilitation community in opposing this decision through a process of public education and outreach.

The WRNBC has recently corresponded to confirm that its members concur with this position, and so we anticipate further news and developments in the coming weeks and months. In the meantime, we ask the WRA's members and supporters, whom we serve and represent, to be aware of this ongoing issue as it progresses and we ask for your understanding and future support on behalf of all wild animals.

#### **Notice of WRA AGM**

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday, June 21 and proposed changes to by-laws will be reviewed.

WRA Members are invited to the AGM to be held at 3pm on Saturday, June 21, 2014, at the Burnaby Lake Rowing Pavilion, 6871 Roberts Street, Burnaby.



# Year of the Flicker

The year 2013 turned out to be another record-breaking year at the WRA but the leap in admissions was more modest compared to recent years. In total, 4,131 animals were admitted to the Care Centre, a 1.4% increase over the previous year. Around 90% were birds, almost 10% were mammals and there were a handful of amphibians and reptiles.

It was fitting that the final animal through the door of the Care Centre on New Year's Eve was a Northern flicker as 2013 turned out to be the year of the flicker at the WRA. We see a large number of these woodpeckers every year, but in 2013 we treated a total of 204, that was 33 more than the previous year. As mentioned in the last issue of *To the Rescue*, many of the intakes were nestling flickers that arrived during the summer months. We don't usually see a lot of newly hatched flickers but this year we admitted three separate nests



and 50 individual nestling birds that each needed intensive care.

We also saw a higher number of small owl species with staff treating more Northern pygmy owls (four) in the last 12 months than they saw in the previous three years. Staff also treated four Northern saw-whet owls, as well as barred owls, a great-horned owl and a couple of snowy owls.

We cared for 402 mammals in 2013. Beavers, bats, bushy-tailed woodrats, coyotes, douglas and grey squirrels, pacific jumping mice, raccoons, snowshoe hares, opossums, harvest mice and a rare spotted skunk were among the tally.

The case of the spotted skunk was particularly heartbreaking. It was rescued in West Vancouver with a

large trap on its paw. While striped skunks are very common in urban and suburban neighbourhoods, spotted skunks are much rarer in the Lower Mainland and there have been few sightings since the 80s. Unfortunately, the wounds caused by the trap did not heal and the skunk had to be humanely euthanized.

We dealt with birds covered in vegetable oil, chewing gum and fuel, a gosling that was left with a fractured leg after an attack, wildlife that were kept as pets, waterfowl suffering the effects of fish-hook puncture wounds and entanglement, bats and birds caught in sticky traps, and dozens of animals that were hit by a car, collided with windows or were rescued from a cat attack.

Staff were able to accommodate and care for the multitude of cases and handle the growing number of animals thanks to the magnificent support of transport, animal care and husbandry volunteers. The introduction of a team of wildlife helpline volunteers in 2013 also made a huge difference to the smooth running of the Care Centre.

By Linda Bakker Team Leader of Wildlife Rehabilitation

#### **EDUCATION** CORNER



## SIGN UP FOR SUMMER CAMPS

The WRA will be hosting summer camps this year for a record four days a week in July and August. Registration is now open for these camps that promise lots of outdoor fun while learning about local wildlife. Each theme week, campers will explore Burnaby Lake and make something to help our furry and feathered friends. The education team is working hard to make this summer a great one full of new crafts, themes and activities. Camps fees start at \$35 for a single day session up to \$120 for a fourday week. Wild Child club members receive a discount. For more information on camp themes and registration, please visit www.wildliferescue.ca, email: educate@wildliferescue.ca or call 604-526-2747.

The all-new WRA website is now up and running. When you visit the site at www.wildliferescue.ca, you can stay updated with WRA news, make a donation, register for this cannot all and the state of the

make a donation, register for kids camps, check out photogalleries, browse the wish list and much, much more.

The WRA would like to thank the Vancouver Foundation whose grant enabled the redevelopment of the website and web design company Forge and Smith.

#### **SUCCESS** STORIES



This loon was saved after a daring rescue mission on ice that included members of South Cariboo Search and Rescue.

**Free at Last** It was a week before Christmas when this common loon (*Gavia immer*) was discovered stuck in the middle of a frozen lake with a bald eagle circling overhead. The situation was grim for the diving bird but thanks to efforts of the local community, the bird's life was saved.

The loon was one of a pair stuck in the middle of Horsefly Lake (72km north east of Williams Lake) as the ice encroached. Most of the loons in the area had already flown to the coast in search of milder temperatures but for reasons unknown, these juveniles got left behind.

Loons need clear water to take flight and

sitting on hard surfaces for any period of time causes lesions and limits their ability to fly.

Local residents alerted Central Cariboo Search and Rescue and a rescue party with kayaks, dry suits and salmon nets set off across the lake to try and catch the birds. One of the loons disappeared under the ice and its fate was uncertain but the second loon was rescued and taken to the Animal Care Hospital in Williams Lake.

Although it did not seem to be suffering any ill effects from its icy ordeal, it did have a puncture wound in its neck and staff at the hospital made arrangements for the loon to be flown to Vancouver by Pacific Coastal Airlines

who provided the flight for free.

On close examination of the loon, WRA staff found a swelling the size of a golf ball pushing against its esophagus. The puncture wound on its neck also penetrated its esophagus and the mass was the result of an infection.

The bird was highly stressed upon arrival and staff gave it a few days to settle before performing surgery. The procedure went well and staff spent the next few days and weeks managing a delicate recovery process. Time on the water had to be minimized due to water-proofing and wound-management issues, but the water was also the most comfortable place for the loon to recover.

When it was out of the water, it was placed on a "donut" and dressed in booties to protect its keel and feet from damage.

Once its wound had healed sufficiently and preening improved its waterproofing, the loon remained in an outdoor pool with lesser scaups for company. After four weeks in care, the wound had completely healed, the feathers on its neck had grown back and it was released on the coast near Vancouver.

By Yolanda Brooks Communications Coordinator

New Bird in the Flock When this young sandhill crane (*Grus canadensis*) was found in Oliver in the Okanagan in late October, it had abrasions on its wing and swelling and bruising around its shoulders. With no suitable rehabilitation facility close by, it was driven to the WRA by David Hancock, founder of the Hancock Wildlife Foundation.

As well as the bruising and missing feathers, the crane's breathing was irregular and the waterproofing of its feathers poor. The bird was initially kept indoors without access to water to give it the opportunity to preen and improve its waterproofing.

Staff dressed the wounds and applied "bumper pads" to its wrists to help prevent further injury while the crane was in care. Like many animals receiving medical attention, it did not appreciate the additional padding on its body and staff had to maintain vigilance and reapply dressings when they had been removed.

After three weeks in care, all of its wounds were finally healed and the crane was released at the Reifel bird sanctuary in Delta into the company of a group of migratory sandhill cranes.

**Bv Yolanda Brooks** Communications Coordinator



Wildlife Rescue



**One-eyed Bandit** Adult raccoons (*Procyon lotor*) are usually a handful to treat and when they arrive at the WRA Care Centre, it often takes several staff members to get them safely to the exam table. When this young, male raccoon was picked up in North Vancouver in November, it was timid and lethargic.

An injury to its right eye likely caused constant pain which could explain its subdued behaviour. The puncture wound in his eye left it dried and shrivelled. With its vision extremely limited or non-existent, rehabilitation staff decided to remove the eye. Because the raccoon was still young and it had good reflexes and good body condition, staff members were

confident that it would still have the necessary survival skills even with the loss of an eye.

Within days of the procedure, his demeanour changed dramatically, he ate more, became more active in his enclosure and was much less willing to be handled and examined.

Once the eye area and other minor injuries had healed, he was monitored to ensure that he could negotiate his surroundings with just his left eye. Obstacles were moved around and food hidden in different locations and at different heights to encourage it to explore, climb and forage for food. His sleeping area was also raised to ensure that he got regular climbing practice.

After two weeks, he was climbing and walking well, he demonstrated good agility and coordination and the eye area had healed well showing no signs of swelling or infection. He was released in the Mount Seymour area after a month in care.

By Yolanda Brooks Communications Coordinator

**Road Casualties** Lesser scaups (*Aythya affinis*) are tricky birds to rehabilitate. They need round-the-clock access to water and they find captivity particularly stressful so staff must keep human contact to a minimum while ensuring the birds are still monitored regularly.

However, lesser scaups do like company and will happily co-exist with other waterfowl. So when this scaup (bird on the left) arrived at the Care Centre in early January, it spent its recuperation time in the company of the loon (pictured on p4) and another scaup that had a broken keel.

This particular scaup was found stuck in the middle of a suburban road in Vancouver. It had mistaken the slick road surface for water, landed on the hard surface and become stranded. This was the same fate that befell



its companion with the broken keel. The scaup was spotted by a passerby who managed to hustle it to the side of the road before dashing home for a box to transport it in.

The crash landing left the diving bird with lesions on both feet and a tendon exposed. Staff

sutured the lesions and despite its injuries, it was still able to swim and dive. It took 10 days for the wounds to heal and it was released together with the loon near Indian Arm.

By Yolanda Brooks Communications Coordinator









# Charity Car Program Supports WRA in BC!

Donate your old vehicle and AA-Wayne's Towing will recycle it for you.

**You will receive** a minimum \$50 tax-deductible receipt for the assessed value of your car and net proceeds are donated to **WRA**.

**AA Wayne's Towing will also donate** their administrative fee so that 100% of the proceeds go to **WRA**.

Call the Donation Hotline at 604.321-2277



www.charitycarprogram.ca

#### **WISH LIST**

#### **Household Supplies**

- Bleach
- Handsoap
- Towels (any size, no holes)
- Face cloths
- Light-coloured sheets
- Batteries (AA, AAA)
- White Board markers
- Dish soap
- Laundry detergent
- Masking tape
- · Distilled water
- Garbage bags (industrial size)
- Q-tips

#### **Gift Certificates for**

 Local grocery stores, drug stores, DIY stores & pet stores

#### **Other Household Supplies**

- Penlights
- Digital timers
- Battery testers
- Scissors
- Brooms & dustpans
- Bandaids
- Epsom Salt

- Blender
- Plastic spray bottles
- Cable ties
- Rectangular laundry baskets
- Small/medium mirrors
- Mop heads (large industrial size)
- Head lamp
- Small hummingbird feeders
- Portable air conditioner

#### **Outdoor Supplies**

- ¾" plywood
- Lumber (2x4, 4x4, 2x2)
- Hammers
- Tarps
- Soaker hoses
- · Hose splitters and nozzles

#### **Food Supplies**

- Fresh or frozen berries (blueberries, blackberries, raspberries)
- Produce (apples, potatoes, yam, cornon-the-cob, romaine lettuce, grapes, carrots)
- Frozen mixed vegetables
- Eggs
- Nuts: unsalted, raw, shelled or

A full list of items is available online at: wildliferescue.ca/donate/wra-wish-list



#### **Glamour and Grunt Work**

After a wildly successful evening at the WRA's first Wild Winter Gala, our volunteer gala committee can now take a breath and reflect on how incredible their accomplishments were. Their contributions of time, sweat, and quite possibly blood and tears (though we certainly hope not), raised \$28,000 to help the injured and orphaned wildlife the WRA treats and cares for each day.

For context, that is 14,000 bottles of antibiotics, fish for 140 blue herons, or enough propane to heat the water required to treat over 50 aquatic birds.

Wildlife Rescue wants to formally thank the gala committee for donating thousands of hours over the course of a year to make it happen. We also wish to say a special thank you to Gala Chair, Marcy Potter, who despite twists, turns and setbacks in the plotline, took this gala to a level WRA didn't dream possible. Everyone on the committee did an incredible job, and success and positive feedback from the event is a glowing endorsement of our WRA volunteers.

Our next Wild Winter Gala will be held in 2015 and



Gala committee volunteers and WRA staff take a moment before the start of the 2013 Wild Winter Gala which raised \$28,000.

later this year we will be calling on new volunteers to join our Gala Committee to help with the the second event. We are calling on individuals who are ready to use their existing professional skills to make an even bigger impact for wildlife.

Gala Committee volunteers are charged with a variety of tasks (by forming sub-committees who meet approximately once per month) ranging from arranging prizes for silent and live auctions, decorations, logistics, entertainment, and market-

ing. Volunteers are also needed to chair the event and manage the sub-committees. They will leave no detail untouched for WRA's largest fundraising event of the year.

If you would like to get involved, please contact Stefanie Broad, the WRA's Volunteer Coordinator by emailing volunteer@wildliferescue.ca. This opportunity is a remarkable way to help wildlife and a way to use your existing skills to help the unfortunate wild animals who come through our door.

#### **FUNDRAISING FOCUS**

#### **Free Financial Planning**

Join the WRA for a free session on wills and estate planning on Saturday, April 12, at Douglas College in Coquitlam.

The event is part of the successful *Life as a Journey* legacy series hosted by the WRA in partnership with the Douglas College Foundation.

Life as a Journey - Wills & Estate Planning, is an ideal opportunity for anyone who wants to know more about the financial and legal issues surrounding the topic but does not know where to start.

Independent financial planning experts and a legal professional will run the presentations featuring information that will allow you to start making decisions about your financial future. The speakers will

be available for post-presentation questions and all attendees will receive information packs.

The seminar *Wills and Estate Planning* will be held at **10am-11.30am, Saturday, April 12,** in the Boardroom, Douglas College (David Lam campus, Coguitlam), 250 Pinetree Way, Coguitlam, V3B 7X3.

Entry is free but advance registration is required. To register, please call the WRA administration line on 604 526 2747 or email: info@wildliferescue.ca.

Sign in for the event starts at 9.30am and the presentations start promptly at 10am.

To find out more about the seminar, including speaker information, visit the new WRA website at www.wildliferescue.ca/events

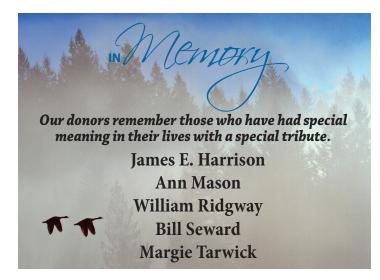
#### **URGENT DETERGENT**

Laundry detergent is a huge expense for the WRA, so we have launched a detergent drive to ensure supplies last throughout the summer.

If you can donate powder or liquid detergent, please drop it off at the WRA administration office.

If you know of a business or organization that would be willing to donate laundry detergent on a regular basis, please give us a call on 604 526 2747.





Faithful Friends

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

> Molly Pumpkin Nikki

Community

**AAA Wildlife Control Advanced Systems Integrators Ltd Ambleside Lions Club BC Waterfowl Society Burke Mountain Naturalists Society Burnaby NewsLeader Chevron Canada** City of Burnaby **CNR Employees Charity** Chest **Eden Conservation Trust** Elizabeth Grant Forest Lawn & Ocean View **Funeral Homes G&F Financial Group Go Concepts Greygates Foundation Human Resources & Skills Development Canada Imperial Oil Foundation** 

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(All donations \$500 plus)

Donor

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**Buy-Low Foods Burnaby** (Fairway, Burnaby) Fruit for Walk 4 Wildlife (W4W).

**Burnaby Sanitation** Department: Regular donation of garden greenery. Choices Market: \$25 gift voucher for Open House.

Cobs Bread (Brentwood) Bakery donation for W4W.

**Colourtime Printing &** Digital Imaging: Direct mail support.

Earls (Kingsway): \$50 gift card for VAE.

**Greater Vancouver** Foodbank: Ongoing donations of household supplies.

**Grouse Mountain:** Admission voucher for VAE.

**Lush Cosmetics**: Gift vouchers for VAE. **Maple Leaf Garden Centres:** Potted trees. Marketplace IGA (Metrotown) \$25 gift voucher for Open House.

North of Eleven Productions: DVD. **PODS Burnaby:** Free storage.

**PriceSmart Foods:** (Marine Way): \$300 worth of food for Open House. **Pickering Safety:** Ongoing donations of oxygen. **Rotary Club of Burnaby:** 

Volunteers for W4W and Open House.

Safeway (Kingsway **branch):** \$25 gift card for

Safeway (Lougheed Mall):

\$25 gift card for day camp program.

Save-on-Foods (Burnaby) \$25 gift card for W4W. Dr. Sun-yat-sen Classical

Chinese Garden: Admission tickets for VAE.

**Tim Hortons Community Cruiser:** Attendance at W4W. Tynehead Hatchery: Fish

Vancouver Aquarium:

Admission tickets for VAE. Vancouver Shuttle and **Charter:** Free shuttlebus service for Open House. **Westcoast Veterinary** 

Dental Services: Medical

supplies.

From May 1, 2014, WRA membership rates will increase. All membership renewals before that date will be set at existing rates.

#### **New rates**

Individual: \$35 Family/Couple: \$50

Senior/Student/Volunteer: \$20

Individual life: \$350 **Business: \$350 Business life: \$2,000** 

If you have any questions about the new rates, please contact the WRA administration office on 604 526 2747.



# Giving thanks

It's time to honour the generosity of our Wildlife Circle members who answered our call for support and \*donated to the WRA's 2013 fall campaign. Without donations, the work of the WRA would not be possible. So please join us in celebrating their support and compassion for wildlife.

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We Can Because You Care





of rehabilitating and releasing the swift was going to be a considerable financial burden at a time of year when the WRA expects reduced outgoings. Thanks to the support of the local community, Operation Taylor raised the money needed to pay for most of the bird's

After weeks of waiting, the permits

arrived; the swift was given a clean bill of health and was prepared for the long journey south. It was finally on its way on February 4, but the trip ended abruptly when the border veterinarian asked for changes to the paperwork. After an extra week of phone calls, faxes, new tests and form stamping, the swift finally left the WRA on February 12, with wildlife

rehabilitator Chelsea Roberts on feeding duty and a friend at the wheel.

Linda Bakker, the WRA's Team Leader of Wildlife Rehabilitation expressed relief that the end of the swift saga was within sight. She said: "While we are all a little sad to see the swift leave, we celebrated the fact that it was healthy and more than ready to get back to the wild. It's been a long wait to get to this point but the feeding, indoor flight sessions, travel logistics and endless paperwork have all been worthwhile."

At the time of going to press, the swift had just arrived in California. To find out more, visit the new WRA website at www.wildliferescue.ca or check out our Facebook page at

www.facebook.comWildlifeRescue . 🔍



#### **Operation Taylor**

Total number of days in care: **101** Return-trip distance: 3,078km Number of mealworms eaten a day: 200 Price of mealworms: \$5.25 for 60

### Wildlife Rescue Opens up at EarthFest







Care Centre demonstrations, nest-box building and canoe rides are all part of this year's EarthFest.

EarthFest 2014 runs from 11am to 3pm at Burnaby Lake Rowing Pavilion, 6871 Roberts Street, Burnaby, V5B 3C1. Entry to EarthFest is free.

For more details on the event, visit: www.wildliferescue.ca/ events

Following the success of last fall's open house, the WRA has decided to incorporate a tour of the Care Centre into this year's EarthFest being held on Saturday, May 3.

Visitors who sign up for the interpretive trail walks will also enjoy a behind-thescenes tour of the Care Centre and take part in interactive presentations lead by WRA rehabilitation staff.

As well as the trails and tours, visitors to EarthFest will have the opportunity to build a black-capped chickadee, tree swallow or mason bee nest box to take home, sign up for a canoe ride on Burnaby Lake and meet local environmental community groups such as stream keepers and park associations.

While the guided trail walks and Care Centre tour are by donation, entrance to EarthFest and all other activities are free. **By Krystal Brennan** Education Coordinator



### **Foster Me: Canada Goose**



# Injured Goose Gets Back on its Feet

**By Yolanda Brooks**Communications Coordinator

When this Canada goose (*Branta canadensis*) sat in the same spot for 20 minutes on the walkway at Granville Island, a concerned member of the

public suspected something was not quite right. When the bird then flailed on its belly when startled, he knew it was time to help it out.

With its lack of mobility, and the assistance of a passing vet, he was able to bundle the bird up in a blanket and transport it to the WRA.

During its initial examination, staff found that the goose had fresh abrasions and swelling on both of its feet. While both feet were injured, it was the right foot that gave them the most reason for concern. It was obviously reluctant to put any weight on the foot and an X-ray later revealed that the foot had three fractures.

The goose was fitted with a cast moulded out of thermoplastic which was then wrapped in a booty that provided extra padding.

For the first few days, it was kept in a padded tub without water but as the abrasions began to heal and the bones callus, staff temporarily removed the dressing and re-introduced the goose to water for short periods of time.

The cast has now been removed and while the fractures are not completely healed, they are stable enough for the goose to walk comfortably on both legs without extra support.

It is now swimming for an hour at a time, it eats well and preens regularly - all good signs that the goose is on the mend.

The goose arrived just after the New Year and it is expected to be at the Care Centre for another few weeks before it is fully fit and ready for release.

The fledgling gull that was featured in the previous issue of *To the Rescue* was successfully released after a long recuperation at the Care Centre. The gull was originally found in New Westminster with a fish hook embedded in its mandible. While it was otherwise healthy, the puncture wound took 11 weeks to fully heal.

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