

# TO THE RESCUE

NEWSLETTER

*Wildlife Rescue*  
ASSOCIATION

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*Baby Sandhill Crane Rescued in Prince George – Page 8*



**Co-Executive Directors**  
**Linda Bakker & Coleen Doucette**

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

With Thanksgiving right around the corner, we'd like to express our gratitude to each of you for your wonderful support, especially during the ongoing challenges of the past two years. You are all amazing individuals and are such an essential part of the Wildlife Rescue community.

Over this past summer, staff and volunteers have been working hard amid extraordinary weather events to give every animal their best chance of returning to the wild. Like health care workers on the front line, wildlife rehabilitators experience emotional exhaustion from the

stress of trying to save every animal possible. Yet the many success stories we are able to share with you make it all worthwhile.

This issue of To The Rescue includes articles on working with communities across BC, the impacts of climate change on wildlife rehabilitation, and the many ways people like you are helping wild animals. We hope these stories inspire you as they have us and further your belief that, together, a better life for wildlife is possible.

As the end of 2021 draws near, it is clear that the demand for Wildlife Rescue's services is only continuing to rise. This means our work of rescuing and rehabilitating wildlife, while continuing education and public awareness efforts to alleviate harm in the wild, is more urgently needed than ever. And yet, the work cannot stop there.

To continue to meet the current and future needs of wildlife, Wildlife Rescue is expanding its infrastructure. This includes increasing our response and rescue capacities, adding animal care staff, and most importantly, expanding our care facilities.

Your passion for wildlife is the driving force behind all we do at Wildlife Rescue. You are the partner we depend on the most to achieve the high standards of care all wildlife deserve!

Thank you for reading this newsletter and staying current with Wildlife Rescue's activities.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Coleen Doucette".

Coleen Doucette  
Co-Executive Director  
Wildlife Rescue Association of BC

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Linda Bakker".

Linda Bakker  
Co-Executive Director,  
Wildlife Rescue Association of BC





When heatwaves and forest fires sweep across BC, your gifts are at work saving thousands of animals in need each year!

## THIS FALL, WILDLIFE ARE DEPENDING ON SUPPORTERS LIKE YOU!

As we look forward to coming together with family and friends and celebrating Thanksgiving, birds are gathering for another reason: their annual migration south. However, with hundreds of wildfires raging across the west coast this summer, we expect more animals to be in need of rescue and rehabilitation over the fall.

Migratory birds take to the skies by the millions to make their journey along the Pacific Flyway. These animals travel all the way from Alaska to California and sometimes even further south. Unfortunately, wildfires have devastated their migration habitats, rest stops, and food sources.

Wildfires and the destruction they leave behind force birds off their usual migration path and into

urban landscapes. Unfamiliar with the dangers of cars and buildings, many birds come to us with life-threatening head injuries or broken bones due to window and vehicle strikes.

This fall, more animals will be in urgent need of critical care and are relying on your help. Consider sending in a special Thanksgiving gift that could save hundreds of wild lives. You'll help migratory birds regain their strength, return to the wild, and continue the journey to their southern wintering grounds.

**Provide life-saving support to our wild patients by giving today!**





Barred Owl.

## CLIMATE CHANGE:

# New Challenges for Wildlife

### *And You're Making A Difference!*

Every year, the world is seeing more extreme and life-threatening weather events. Even in British Columbia, with typically mild weather compared to the rest of Canada, extended dry spells and increased temperatures are leading to catastrophic forest fires and droughts across the province. This is having profound impacts on wildlife, which we see at the hospital every day.

During the heat dome at the end of June, close to 300 animals were brought in, suffering from heat exhaustion, dehydration, and injuries from escaping the intense temperatures. This number was almost triple that of an ordinary five-day period. Animals can adapt when change happens slowly. But when severe weather events rapidly change their environment, wildlife don't have a chance to react.

Climate change affects more than individual animals though; it impacts entire populations by disrupting reproduction and migratory behaviours, depleting food and water resources, and destroying vast swathes of habitat. Wildlife Rescue is on the front line in helping to save animal populations through a widely recognized initiative in wildlife rehabilitation called One Health.

One Health is motivated by the maxim that the health and well-being of wildlife, domestic animals, people, and the environment are inextricably linked. A big part of Wildlife Rescue's mission is helping people recognize that interconnectedness. By encouraging people to consider how we impact wildlife in our daily lives, we can minimize those impacts and even enhance the environment around us to help wildlife thrive.

One perfect example of this is Anna's Hummingbirds. This tiny species is migratory, yet in recent years has remained on the Pacific Coast. Why is this? As our winters become milder and humans provide sustenance in the form of bird feeders through fall and winter, their biological cues to fly south are lessening. Even urban gardens play a role, with non-native plants extending the flowering season and providing food sources "*out of season*".

But what happens when winter strikes back? The last few years, our typically mild West Coast winters were struck by sudden freezing temperatures. In just a single week, hummingbirds by the hundreds were brought into Wildlife Rescue, suffering from hypothermia and starvation, with untold numbers dying in the wild. The nectar feeders put out by humans were all frozen and other wild food sources were in winter dormancy. Needing to feed every 15 minutes, the hummingbirds were literally starving and their tiny bodies couldn't keep warm in the icy temperatures.

This is where Wildlife Rescue's rehabilitation efforts intersect with population survival. Wildlife Rescue quickly rallied its wildlife technicians and hospital volunteers to revive the stream of tiny birds arriving at the hospital, hand-feeding them and carefully warming them with heating pads and incubators. They were then kept at our rehabilitation centre until warmer temperatures arrived and they could be released.

Wildlife Rescue also mobilized our education channels, rapidly pushing out messages through mainstream media, the support centre helpline, website, and social media. These efforts reached hundreds of thousands of people across the province, letting them know about this wildlife emergency and what they could do—right then—to prevent more deaths.

When climate change and human habits converge like this, it can cause unintentional

and wide-reaching harm. Wildlife Rescue plays an important role in ensuring the survival of wildlife populations by educating the public on what they can do to prevent injuries or death, and how to interact with wildlife in a safe and sustainable manner.

Of course, the driving force behind Wildlife Rescue's mission is its rehabilitation efforts. Each year, Wildlife Rescue saves thousands of animals of many different species. Every single time an animal is successfully rehabilitated and returned to the wild, they once again have the opportunity to reproduce and contribute to the sustainability and health of their species. This is critical for population survival, especially for species that are listed as endangered or threatened, as every individual increases the genetic diversity and resilience of a population.

Think about that for a moment. By being a part of the Wildlife Rescue community, you're not only helping individual animals in need, you're also contributing to the survival of vulnerable wildlife populations.

Over time, Wildlife Rescue has seen a profound shift in the public's awareness of the interconnectedness between nature, humans, and urban wildlife. Making simple changes in our everyday choices can have a positive impact on the environment, which helps wildlife and contributes to our personal well-being. We truly are all connected. And together, we can make a positive difference for wildlife even in the face of these changing times.

**Help rehabilitate wildlife and promote the welfare of wild animals with a gift today.**



# CAPTURING THE MANY WAYS

## Supporters Help BC's Wildlife

Wildlife Rescue's community is made up of incredible supporters who contribute in many different and important ways. From bringing an injured animal into our hospital, to contributing donations towards their care and rehabilitation, there is a way for everyone to get involved!



Volunteers in the hospital sift through sawdust for mealworms, ensuring animals receive a nutritional, species-specific diet.



285 trained volunteers helped wildlife in 2020 by answering calls in our support centre, transporting injured animals, providing care in the hospital, and so much more!



In 2020, \$15,000 of your gifts were matched by employers. Imagine how many more animals could be saved if your gift was multiplied today!

## DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT! DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT!



Ask your employer if they will match your donation!

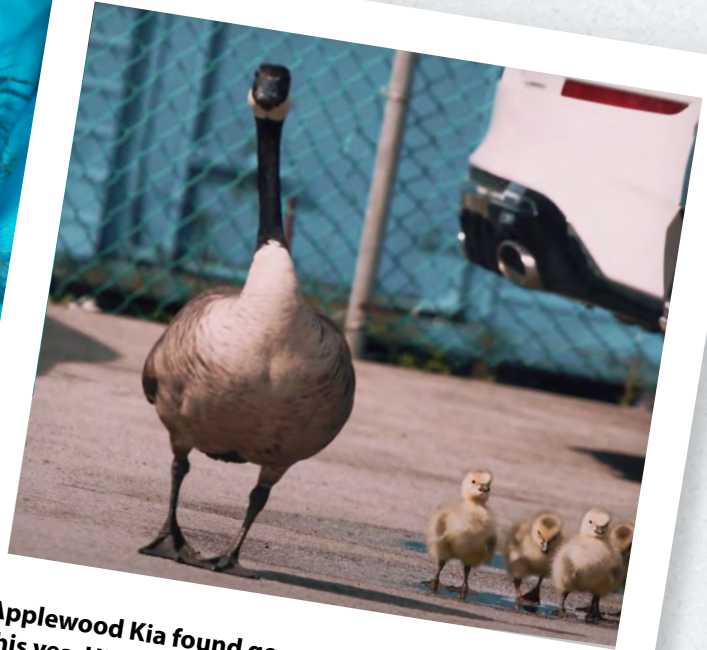
305 gifts were matched by employers in 2020! Employer matching doubles, or even triples, the value of your gift for wildlife!

\*Photography in this Newsletter has been generously donated and provided by Paul Steeves





**375 Freedom Partners make monthly gifts to wildlife care, helping prepare our hospital for unpredictable emergencies like BC's wildfires and heatwaves.**



**Applewood Kia found geese nesting in its dealership this year! We relocated mama goose and her goslings to Brydon Lagoon.**



**Inspired by their rescue experience, Applewood Kia generously donated \$5,000 towards the Outdoor Spaces Project!**

Interested in more ways to give?  
Visit [wildliferescue.ca/give](https://wildliferescue.ca/give).

You can also learn about  
volunteer opportunities  
by emailing us at  
[volunteer@wildliferescue.ca](mailto:volunteer@wildliferescue.ca)



Thanks to your generosity, this baby Sandhill Crane is growing stronger every day!

A photograph of a young Sandhill Crane chick standing on a grassy area. The chick has long, thin legs, a long neck, and a long, straight beak. Its feathers are a mix of brown and white, appearing fluffy. The background is slightly blurred, showing some foliage and a dark structure.

## A NEW FIRST *At Wildlife Rescue*

Coming Together To Save  
A Baby Sandhill Crane

A car flew by on the road in front of her house, breaking Denise's concentration. As she glanced up from her yard work, something unfamiliar caught her eye. A tall, fuzzy chick was walking across the street on long stilt-like legs. It was a baby Sandhill Crane—but its parents were nowhere in sight.

Worried that the young bird might be struck by a passing car, Denise cautiously approached him and contained him in a crate. She then grabbed her cell phone to call a local wildlife rehabilitator in Prince George, who then contacted Wildlife Rescue because of our specialization in aquatic bird rehabilitation.



The team lead for Wildlife Rescue's Support Centre, Jackie, talked with Denise over the course of the next several hours, providing guidance as Denise tried to reunite the chick with its parents. The parents were nowhere to be found though, and time was running out. Quick action had to be taken to ensure the baby's survival.

*"Denise had good instincts. She reached out right away and didn't try to care for the baby on her own, which could have been fatal for the chick. She contained it in a safe place, giving the young crane its best chance of survival,"* said Jackie.

Jackie contacted Pacific Coastal Airlines, a long-time supporter of Wildlife Rescue, who agreed to fly the baby crane to Vancouver at no charge!

When the baby crane arrived at Wildlife Rescue's hospital, staff were worried. The young chick was dehydrated and emaciated, weighing only 400 grams—a healthy crane at two-weeks-old should be closer to 600 grams.

That wasn't their only challenge. Wildlife Rescue has cared for a number of Sandhill Cranes over the years, but this was their first baby! For rehabilitators who see hundreds of the same species, caring for a new one, especially a baby, is very exciting!

*"Before the baby even arrived at the hospital",* recounted Janelle, Wildlife Rescue's hospital manager, *"we consulted reference books and contacted rehab centres in the US who have raised this species before."*

At first the young crane was very quiet. Sandhill Cranes normally sleep under their mother's wings for the first month of their life, so it wasn't a surprise that this poor baby tried to make itself smaller and was lonely when he first arrived.

*"Wild animals are highly sensitive to stress in captivity which can result in physiological distress*

*and even death. This is why it's so important to have the right environment and materials to minimize these risks,"* said Janelle.

To help the young crane adjust and gain confidence, staff put a large mirror in his enclosure to mimic the company of another crane. They also played recordings of Sandhill Cranes which had the baby perking up and becoming more active right away!

***"Denise had good instincts. She reached out right away and didn't try to care for the baby on her own, which could have been fatal for the chick." — JACKIE***

In the wild, young chicks follow their parents around, pecking food from their beaks. To mimic this feeding practice and prevent human imprinting, staff created a crane-like puppet from scratch and used large gowns to disguise their bodies. The team were elated when the baby took notice right away and ran over to start eating!

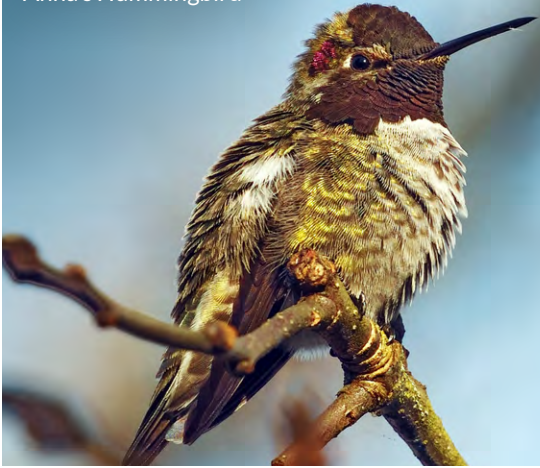
With feedings every few hours of smelt, krill, bloodworms, insects, and other age-appropriate nutrition, the chick began to gain weight quickly. He also began exploring his enclosure and adopting instinctive foraging behaviours like scratching for insects and berries in the dirt that staff had strategically placed.

Ultimately, the opportunity to save this young crane from likely death was a result of Denise's quick thinking and action. *"The whole experience was an adrenaline rush,"* said Denise. *"I was thrilled to have the chance to help save a wild animal."*

**Donate online to help more baby wild animals!**



Anna's Hummingbird



## LET YOUR LEGACY *BE WILD*

For over 42 years, we have cared for the largest number of injured animals in Canada! Please include Wildlife Rescue in your estate planning.

Give wildlife a second chance at a natural life.

(604) 526 - 2747, ext 502 | [giving@wildliferescue.ca](mailto:giving@wildliferescue.ca)

## ON THE BLOG



Varied Thrush

## HELP PREVENT WINDOW STRIKES

Fall is a dangerous time for migrating birds, but you can help them survive their journey.

As migratory birds fly through urban areas on their way to their wintering grounds, the number of fatal window collisions skyrockets. Every fall, Wildlife Rescue admits hundreds of birds that mistake a glass window for a flight path. Birds do not perceive glass as we humans do, all they see is the sky or greenery reflected back at them, appearing like a safe route. We can help mitigate these collisions by using decals or stickers placed strategically on the glass to alert birds of the obstacle.



## CHARITY CAR PROGRAM

*Supports Wildlife Rescue Association of BC*

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

You will receive a minimum \$100 tax-deductible receipt for the assessed value of your car and net proceeds donated to Wildlife Rescue.

AA Wong's Towing will also donate their administrative fee so that 100% of the proceeds go to Wildlife Rescue.

Call the donation hotline at (604) 321-2277  
or visit [charitycarprogram.ca](http://charitycarprogram.ca)

## Follow Wildlife Rescue!

For patient updates, tips, and education on co-existing with wildlife.





# WILDLIFE EMERGENCIES CAN HAPPEN AT ANY TIME.

*Help Wildlife Rescue  
be prepared.*

Douglas Squirrel

## BECOME A MONTHLY FREEDOM PARTNER

42 years ago, a group of people just like you, who value wildlife, took action to help injured and orphaned animals who needed a helping hand. Today, your wildlife hospital is a leader in rehabilitation in North America.

Wildlife Rescue's goal is to carry on our important work for the next 40 years and beyond. This means strengthening sustainable capacity.

### Join the Monthly Freedom Partners!

As little as \$20 a month helps provide complete care for one animal through release. Choose an amount that works with your monthly budget.

**IT'S EASY, AND YOU ARE SAVING LIVES EVERY SINGLE DAY!**



**VISIT**

[wildliferescue.ca/give](https://wildliferescue.ca/give)



**EMAIL**

[giving@wildliferescue.ca](mailto:giving@wildliferescue.ca)



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