

Wildlife Tips Issue

Even with the late spring, the Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary (RVWS) is caring for hundreds of orphaned and injured wildlife. These young and vulnerable creatures have no hope except for the caring public who find them and generously support RVWS' mission to provide life-saving care and return them to the wild.

Most injured and orphaned wildlife are the innocent victims of some form of human activity, sometimes deliberate but most often times accidental or unintentional. This is why RVWS works hard to educate the public and provide advice on ways to humanely and cost-effectively prevent and solve wildlife problems.

For example, in the case of baby wildlife, it may be normal for some wild mothers to leave their young alone or there may be ways to reunite babies with their mother. In other cases, there are signs of illness or injury that mean an animal needs rescuing.

In still other cases, wildlife may have entered your home through unscreened vents or chimneys, loose or rotten soffits, or roofs in disrepair to seek out a warm, dry den to give birth to and raise their young. You can deal with most wildlife situations in a humane and cost-effective way by learning about natural animal behaviours, deciding your tolerance limits and, if necessary, taking sensible steps to humanely persuade wildlife to move out on their own.

This newsletter is full of tips designed to help you identify when wildlife needs your help, and offer simple ways to peacefully co-exist with your wildlife neighbours. As always, RVWS is here to provide advice on your specific situation.

Enjoy our spring newsletter and we hope to see you at our annual Open House on June 14!



2014 Open House – June 14

Join us at our annual Open House, Saturday, June 14, 2014, from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm, rain or shine.

There will be sanctuary tours (with one-way viewing windows) where you can see wildlife being fed, a silent auction, craft sale, bake sale, three bands, barbecue and kids' activities.

Please register via our website. The event is free and your registration helps us plan to have enough food and drinks.

Donations are greatly appreciated towards the care of injured and orphaned wild mammals and turtles. Donations from our wishlist on our website (www.rideauwildlife.org) are also greatly appreciated.

About Us

The Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary is a not-for-profit corporation and registered charity (# 82731 7744 RR0001) based in North Gower, Ontario.

RVWS' mission is to care for injured, sick or orphaned wildlife and return them to the wild. RVWS also offers advice on co-existing peacefully with wildlife and humane, cost-effective ways to prevent or solve wildlife problems.

RVWS is the only authorized wildlife rehabilitation centre for wild mammals and turtles in the Ottawa region. RVWS has cared for more than 3,200 animals since 2005, and relies entirely on donations and grants to continue its work.

Wild Patients

This little chipmunk was found alone in a backyard, eyes not yet open. He is thriving in our care, and will soon be moved into a larger outdoor enclosure with his new littermate, a female chipmunk discovered in the same neighbourhood.



These four raccoons were rescued by a compassionate passerby who heard their cries after they were sealed in a cardboard box and left by a dumpster. Emaciated and dehydrated, it is likely that they had been separated from their mom for several days. Now in our care, they are healthy and have doubled in weight since their arrival just two weeks ago.



Bonnie and Clyde, two orphaned raccoons, came into our care after their mother was evicted from an attic. The animal control company placed the babies in a heated box outside the home, but the mother never returned to retrieve them. They were one of our first raccoon litters of the season and are the picture of health, tipping the scales at 1.5 kg each at just two months old.



Many know the story of Morgan the Blanding's turtle, who arrived at the Sanctuary last spring pregnant and sporting a GPS transmitter. Her eggs, which she laid in our care, were successfully incubated and hatched. The eight little Blanding's turtles were released back into the wild. This is an exciting achievement, as Blanding's turtles are one of Ontario's seven turtle species at risk.



Georgina the Least Weasel was discovered in the basement of a home. At just three weeks old, she is the youngest weasel to be admitted to RVWS.



Wildlife Tips

Live-Trapping is NOT humane!

Although once a popular answer to wildlife problems, live-trapping and relocating wildlife is not humane. Here are some reasons why trapping and relocating wildlife is not a solution:

- in Ontario, it is illegal to relocate wildlife more than one kilometre
- animals can suffer stress, injuries and even death trying to escape from traps
- baited traps can attract domestic pets or untargeted wildlife (skunks!)
- relocated wildlife can spread diseases and parasites to other areas
- relocated animals may not survive because of competition with native wildlife and the inability to find appropriate nesting places, food and water
- removing mothers will leave orphaned babies behind to suffer a slow death from dehydration and starvation
- removing animals will create vacant territory for other wildlife to move in

Instead of trapping and relocating, please call us for advice.



Is this Animal *really* Orphaned?

Some wildlife are mistakenly “kidnapped” by well-meaning people who do not know that it is normal for some wildlife to leave their young alone during the day or who later find them when they do get lost (see article on Common encounters with wildlife). If you’ve taken a wild baby and it doesn’t have any signs of needing rescuing (see below), put it back and leave the area—the mother will likely return to collect it given the opportunity. If the mother does not collect the baby within several hours, it might need rescuing.

In the meantime, give us a call if you are unsure whether a wild animal needs rescuing or need tips on trying to reunite orphaned young with their mother.

When a Small Mammal needs Rescuing

A wild mammal needs rescuing if it:

- appears friendly, is vocalizing, or following people or pets
- shows neurological symptoms, such as seizures, head tilting, losing balance, walking in circles
- is weak or non-responsive
- is cold, wet or shivering
- suffers from fur loss, is bleeding, or there are visible wounds
- has breathing problems
- has discharge from the eyes, nose or mouth
- is emaciated or dehydrated (sunken eyes or abdomen)
- has bugs or flies on its body
- was handled by a cat or dog even if there are no obvious wounds
- is near dead adults or siblings
- is in imminent danger, such as near a road or predators
- has not been reunited with its mother after a few hours

What to do When an Animal Needs Rescuing

If you need to handle an animal, we suggest you always wear heavy gloves to protect yourself. You can also use a towel to scoop up a baby animal. We do not recommend that you handle any adult wildlife yourself—contact a wildlife rehabilitator or animal shelter for advice. If it is safe to do so, you can try to corral the animal into a pet carrier.

After you have made sure that an animal is truly orphaned, place the animal in a covered box or pet carrier with ventilation. You can use an old t-shirt or other ravel-free material as bedding. Do not use towels and make sure there are no holes or loose threads.

Leave the carrier in a warm, dark and quiet place indoors, away from pets and people. Wildlife see people as predators and are not comforted by voices or petting.

Baby animals always need extra warmth. Put the carrier half-on and half-off a heating pad set to low, so that the animal can move to the non-heated side if it is too warm. Never place an animal directly on a heating pad. You can also fill a soda bottle with hot water, wrap it in a towel, and brace it inside the box.

Please do not give the animal any food, milk, formula or even water until you have talked to a wildlife rehabilitator. Feeding the wrong thing, at the wrong time, in the wrong way can be very harmful to the animal.

To reduce stress on the animal during transportation, please turn the radio off and leave your children and pets at home.

Does that baby need help?

Rabbits

Rabbits make their nests in burrows, a depression in a garden and even in the middle of a lawn. The nest is usually covered with dried grass and bits of the mother's fur. Mothers leave the nest during the day to draw attention away from the young. The mother usually only returns when dark, at dusk and dawn, to nurse the bunnies so it is not unusual to never see the mother.

Rabbits are extremely difficult to rehabilitate. The stress of human handling can cause shock and even death. If the animal shows no signs of illness or injury, it is always best to leave a nest where you found it.

Cottontail bunnies are on their own at about three to four weeks of age and when they are about 4 inches long. Their best chance for survival is to let the mother raise them, so keep children and pets away from them for this short time. If you need to let a pet out during the day, you can protect the nest by covering it temporarily with a laundry basket with a rock on top.

If you find or uncover a nest of cottontails and they show no signs of illness or injury, put the babies back where you found them and cover them up with the nesting material. Moving a rabbit's nest is not recommended. To be sure the mother is coming back to feed them, place several twigs on top of the whole nest in a checkerboard fashion. If the twigs have been moved after the next feeding time (dawn or dusk), the mother returned to feed them.



Squirrels

If a baby squirrel is following people or pets, or crawls up your leg, it is looking for food and needs rescuing.

Sometimes a baby squirrel will fall out of its nest. Usually, the mother will retrieve it as long as the baby is warm and healthy.

To try to reunite a squirrel baby with its mother, put it in a small box it cannot climb out of, and attach it to the trunk of the tree a few feet off the ground. Do not cover the baby with any bedding. It is very important to keep the baby warm as the mother will not retrieve a cold baby. You can fill a small soda pop bottle with hot water, wrap it in a towel, and brace it inside the box. Leave the area and monitor from a distance—the mother will not return if there are people or pets around. If the mother has not retrieved the baby within a couple of hours, it might need rescuing. Never leave a baby squirrel out overnight since the mother will not retrieve it after dark. Bring the squirrel inside for the night to keep warm and put the box back outside first thing in the morning.

If you recently excluded a squirrel from your attic and found babies left behind, immediately put the babies in a small box as close as possible to where you found them. The mom will almost always find them and move them to another nest.



Raccoons

Raccoons that are old enough to be playing together are often under their mother's supervision. Before disturbing them, observe from a distance to see if the mother is indeed watching over them.

Raccoon babies that are smaller than the length of your hand and have closed eyes are usually orphaned and need rescuing.

If you found a single baby raccoon that shows no signs of illness or injury, try to reunite the baby with its mother for at least one night. Put the baby in a box it cannot climb out of (e.g. a recycle bin), and place the box as close as possible to where you found it. It is very important to keep the baby warm as the mother will not retrieve a cold baby. You can fill a soda bottle with hot water, wrap it in a towel and brace it inside the box so that it does not roll on the animal. Leave the area and monitor every few hours. As long as the baby is warm and not in imminent danger, leave it out during the first night since the mother will usually retrieve it only after

nightfall.

If you recently excluded a raccoon from your attic or other area and found babies left behind, immediately put the babies outside in a small box as close as possible to where you found them. Follow the above instructions.



Skunks

Skunks often take older babies out for walks at night. If you see baby skunks at night, observe them from a distance to see if the mother is with them.

If you find a single baby skunk out during the day, it is usually orphaned and needs rescuing.

Chipmunks and groundhogs

It is very unusual to find a baby chipmunk or baby groundhog. If you find one, it is probably orphaned and needs rescuing.



Fawns

Fawns are often found lying quietly in a field or by the side of a road. Mothers leave the young during the day and come back several times a day to feed them. If you find a fawn and it is not crying, leave it there (leave quickly so it does not follow) and check back in four to eight hours. If it is injured or crying, then it needs help.

Turtle Recovery and Rehabilitation Project

The Community Foundation of Ottawa awarded RVWS a grant to provide emergency medical and rehabilitative care to injured mature turtles, supportive and rehabilitative care to turtle eggs and hatchlings, and upgraded rehabilitation and incubation equipment. The grant will help us increase our capacity to help injured turtles and incubate eggs.

The Community Foundation of Ottawa is a public, non-profit organization created by and for the people of Ottawa. It connects donors who care with causes that matter and serves as a trusted resource for addressing issues and leveraging opportunities in the community. It attracts and manages a growing endowment, the invested earnings of which provide grants to charitable organizations.

The Foundation's role is as neutral broker in support of all charitable causes that contribute to the community's quality of life. With a growing profile, the Community Foundation of Ottawa has built an enviable reputation for astute financial management, high-quality donor services, strategic grantmaking and innovative partnerships. For more information, visit www.cfo-fco.ca.



Ontario Trillium Foundation Grant

RVWS is grateful for a three-year grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to partially fund a Coordinator to increase the Sanctuary's capacity to recruit, train and manage volunteers. This investment will also strengthen the organization's administrative and fundraising capacity, which will increase wildlife preservation and ecosystem rehabilitation in the region.

One of the largest grantmakers in Canada, Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Ontario government, awards approximately 1,500 grants each year to community-based not-for-profits and charitable organizations in the arts, recreation, environment and human and social services sectors.

Our Wishlist

Thank you to all of our wishlist donors! We are always grateful for donations of new and gently-used supplies:

- receiving blankets, towels, sheets, fleece
- electric heating pads
- cat litter boxes
- tip-proof pet food dishes and water bowls
- striped sunflower seeds
- tissues, paper towels
- x-large trash bags
- dish soap, bleach, laundry detergent
- liquid hand sanitizer
- disposable and rubber gloves

Connect with us



@rideauwildlife

Turtle Treats

Seven of eight Ontario turtle species are at risk and every life matters. Thank you to **Dillon Consulting** and **PetValu Kemptville**, who teamed up to donate about \$2,000 worth of turtle equipment, including filters, heaters and lights.

This equipment is critical to improving aquatic habitats for turtles in our care and improving our efficiency so we can help even more.



Local Business Supporters

In June 2009, we celebrated the grand opening of Phase I of our new wildlife rehabilitation centre, thanks to generous donations from the Community Foundation of Ottawa and the public, and 100% volunteer labour. Since then, we have gradually built additional rooms, with the last touches finished this spring, allowing us to help even more wildlife in need. Special thanks to all of our building volunteers and local businesses that donated construction supplies this year.



Many thanks to Grant Jameson of Norton Rose Fulbright Canada LLP/S.E.N.C.R.L., s.r.l., for providing advice on our articles of continuance under the new Canada Not For Profit Act.

Foundation Supporters



An agency of the Government of Ontario.
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario.



For good...forever Le bien...toujours



Yes, I want to help orphaned, sick and injured wildlife today!

RVWS relies entirely on donations from the public, foundations and businesses to continue our work. Your support will help give wildlife a second chance at life.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone (optional): _____ Email (optional): _____

Sign me up for bi-monthly e-news updates on wildlife tips, animal updates and other news

Please accept my monthly gift of: \$ _____

Joining our monthly donor program allows us to plan ahead, knowing that your support will help wildlife year round. It also saves on administrative and mailing costs. Tax receipts are issued for the total donations made in a calendar year, or upon request.

I authorize the Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary to deduct the above amount from my credit card on the 15th of each month. I understand that I can cancel this arrangement at any time by notifying the Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary.

Visa Mastercard

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Name on Card: _____ Signature: _____

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Send your donation by mail to P.O. Box 266, North Gower, ON K0A 2T0,
by fax to 613-258-1113 or contact us by phone at 613-258-9480

To donate online, visit <http://rideauwildlife.org/donate.html>

www.rideauwildlife.org / info@rideauwildlife.org

Tax receipts are issued for donations over \$10.00 at the end of the calendar year or upon request.

Charitable Registration # 82731 7744 RR0001