

Newsletter

About Us

The Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary was founded in April 2005. We were incorporated as a not-for-profit organization on June 21, 2005 and received our registered charitable status (Charitable Registration # 82731 7744 RR0001), retroactive as of January 1, 2006. We are the only Authorized Wildlife Custodian for small mammals and rabies-vector species (raccoons, skunks, foxes) serving the Ottawa area. We do not receive any government funding and rely solely on donations and community volunteers to continue our wildlife care.

Our mission is to care for injured or orphaned wildlife and return them to the wild. We also plan to provide educational materials to improve the knowledge and understanding of wildlife and to prevent and solve wildlife problems in our community.

You can reach us at:
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URL: <http://www.rideauwildlife.org> ❖



Spring Update

Over the winter, we cared for the 19 fall-born squirrels who could not be released last year and took in several sick or injured raccoons and groundhogs.

With winter mostly behind us, preparations for spring are in full swing. Our volunteer recruitment campaign has been a huge success. Through our website, word-of-mouth and Volunteer Canada, we have over 30 Animal Care Assistants for 2006, over 10 foster homes and more than 10 cage builders. See the Volunteer Recognition section for more success stories

While we have the volunteer base to take in many more animals than last year, we do not have the funds to expand our facilities because of an administrative delay in receiving our charitable status. This challenge has meant that we have had to be creative in finding additional physical space to house the animals. Our immediate goal is to secure temporary facilities for 2006 (e.g., a construction trailer), while we raise funds during the year to contribute to a new, expanded facility in 2007.

Although it is still early in the season, baby season is already upon us. On March 18, we received our first, less than one-week old squirrels because the mother was "evicted" from the house and attempts to reunite the young with their mother were unsuccessful. Public education can mean that more young wildlife can be reunited with their mothers, who do a much better job of raising their young than we do. We encourage our readers to become acquainted with the dos and don'ts of wildlife rescue and conflict resolution by reading the section on Wildlife Education.

We have several events planned for this year and hope to meet all of our supporters.

With spring comes restoration, rejuvenation and rebirth. We wish everyone a beautiful spring and thank-you for all of your support.

Linda Laurus
President ❖

Charitable Status Approved!

We are pleased to announce that our charitable registration was approved, retroactive as of January 1, 2006. As an official charity, we can now issue tax-deductible receipts for memberships and donations.

See the last page of this newsletter for ways in which you can help the animals. Memberships start at \$15.00! ❖

Volunteer Recognition

Y's Owl Maclure Co-Operative Centre

The Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary is proud to be working with Scott Nickerson and Mario Renaud from Y's Owl Maclure Co-Operative Centre, who are building nesting boxes and squirrel cages. The Co-Operative Centre is a non-profit charitable organization, which provides day supports and services to adults with disabilities living in Ottawa. Originally established as a vocational center, the agency now offers a full range of day supports and services: vocational, supported employment, recreation and leisure, and community outreach. Y's Owl Maclure currently serves over 300 individuals with disabilities in both community-based and center-based programs. For more information, visit <http://www.ysoowlmaclure.org>. ❖



Scott (left) and Mario (right)

Volunteer Ottawa

We became a member of Volunteer Ottawa (<http://www.volunteerottawa.ca>) in January 2006. Volunteer Ottawa is a bilingual agency committed to building the capacity of our community through strong leadership and quality services. Volunteer Ottawa provides leadership, education, training and consultation, technology and special projects, community relations and a resource centre. Through their recruitment and referral services, we have received several applications from volunteers. Some of the workshops we have attended include Fundamental

Principles of Managing Volunteers, and Screening Volunteers: Protecting Clients, Staff and the Community Organizer.

Our Board of Directors has also adopted Volunteer Canada's Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement the Safe Steps Screening Program. Volunteer Canada is the national voice for volunteerism in Canada. ❖

Rabies Training Course

Under the Ministry of Natural Resources' new regulations, anyone who cares for rabies-vector species (raccoons, skunks, foxes, bats) from the high-risk area must first take a one-day rabies course and pass an exam. The first course was held on March 4 in Kemptville and covered topics such as the history of rabies control in Ontario, the roles of the Rabies Research Unit, Canadian Food Inspection Agency and municipal Public Health Units, as well as rabies and wildlife rehabilitation. Twenty of the 26 participants at this first Rabies Course were volunteers from the Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary! ❖

Volunteer Spotlight

Special thanks go to our volunteers this winter. Chris prepared the animal intake room for spring, helped to care for the squirrels and groundhogs, and developed detailed CAD drawings of our cage plans. Thanks also to Angelo and Adam for helping with the squirrels and preparing the intake room, Rain for researching foundation grants and Brooks for cage building. A special appreciation goes to Christina for increasing our community presence by posting our wish list on various internet forums, collecting and delivering carloads of donations from all across the city and even paying for some items out of her own pocket. ❖



Upcoming Events

National Capital Region Wildlife Festival

The Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary will have an information booth at this year's NCR Wildlife Festival (<http://www.ncrwildlifefestival.org>). The Festival is taking place at Billings Bridge Shopping Centre on April 7 (9:30 am to 9:00 pm), April 8 (9:30 am to 6:00 pm) and April 9 (11 am to 5:00 pm). This year's slogan is "Watersheds ...more than just water...explore yours," which will help visitors to understand the importance of preserving our fast-eroding watershed environments. ❖

Summer Garden Party

Although we were hoping to have an open house this spring, we will not have animal care facilities this year that will be accessible to the public. However, we still want to meet all of our supporters and share our plans for expansion in 2007. So in place of the open house, we are planning a Summer Garden Party in June or July to take advantage of the warm weather, abundant gardens, and open spaces to hold an event that is complete with tea and auctions for the adults and fun and games for the kids. We will be sure to give you advance notice. If you want to visit us before then, please just give us a call to book an appointment. ❖



Squirrel Release Sites Needed

We are looking for release sites for the 19 squirrels we overwintered this year. They will be ready to go when the tree buds start blooming and there is an adequate food supply. Because regulations require us to release the squirrels within 15 kilometers of where they were found, we are looking for appropriate release sites in or near the following neighbourhoods:

- Carlingwood
- Bells Corners
- Barrhaven
- Island Park
- Sandy Hill
- Bank/Albion
- Mountain or South Mountain

We will need even more release sites throughout the city for 2006 so please call us for further information if you are interested. ❖

Wildlife Education

Co-existing with our Wild Neighbours

As spring turns the corner, thousands of wild mothers will be giving birth, fulfilling the cycle of nature. But it is a well-known fact that wildlife are impacted by urbanization and other human activities, such as vehicle collisions, deliberate shooting, trapping and illegal relocation, environmental toxins and attacks by family pets.

However, some of our wild neighbours are resourceful at adapting to our world. They take advantage of the food we leave out for them (garbage, gardens, bird feeders) and the shelters we invite them to inhabit (attics, sheds, porches). While preventing access to potential den sites in our homes is key to preventing wildlife problems, now is not the time to do that because wildlife are already giving birth. Evicting adult wildlife from your home at this time of year can mean orphans left behind. If you think there are squirrels in your attic or skunks under your shed, the best, most humane approach is to wait until the young have grown and moved out in early summer. You can then seal up the entrances to prevent other wildlife from moving in. Call us or visit our website for tips on dealing with wildlife problems.



Is this Animal Really Orphaned?

Spring is a time when small mammals can be orphaned because the mother has been killed. However, statistics show that over 80% of orphaned wildlife are mistakenly taken by well-meaning but uninformed people who do not know that it is normal for wild mothers to leave their young alone from time to time. If you've taken a wild baby, 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. The trick is in knowing how to recognize a true, orphaned wild animal and what to do if you find one. ❖

When does a Small Mammal need Rescuing?

Start by assessing whether the wild animal really needs help and is truly orphaned. Generally, if you have to “chase” an animal to capture it, it does not need any help. An animal needs rescuing when it:

- is cold (this might be a temporary rescue);
- is bleeding, injured or very weak;
- is gasping for breath or has rasping or clicking sounds when breathing;
- has visible parasites crawling all over the body;

- has fluid discharging or bubbling from the nostrils or mouth;
- has a sunken abdomen or looks emaciated;
- has been attacked by a cat or dog;
- is lying near the road or an adult is dead nearby; or
- is vocalizing and following people around.

Give us a call if you are unsure whether a wild animal needs rescuing or you need tips on trying to reunite orphaned young with their mother. ❖



Found an Orphaned, Sick or Injured Small Mammal?

Wild animals need specialized care that only a trained and licenced rehabilitator can provide. It is illegal for the public to care for wildlife.

In many cases, it is not appropriate for the public to capture and handle a wild animal—there are risks in handling wild animals, even if they may appear to be young, small or "safe." A seemingly injured wild animal can suddenly spring to life and inflict a serious bite or injury. Wildlife can also carry parasites and diseases that are transmissible

to humans and pets. You should not pick up any wild animal without heavy gloves and never attempt to pick up rabies-vector species (raccoons, skunks, foxes, bats) or any adult wildlife yourself. Contact a wildlife rehabilitator, wildlife agency or animal control officer for recommendations.

If you have found a truly orphaned animal, use a shovel or board to help get them into a small box or pet carrier lined with a ravel-free cloth. Cover the animal with another cloth. Loosely pack the box with towels or paper so the animal is not injured by freely bouncing around during transport. Make sure the box is well secured—even sick and injured wild animals can escape. Provide supplemental heat by placing a hot water bottle or soda bottle filled with hot water, wrapped in a towel, inside the carrier and tuck it securely into a corner of the box away from the animal.

NEVER give any food, water, milk or formula to a wild animal. Feeding the wrong thing at the wrong time in the wrong way can result in its death. Most wild animals that need rescuing are dehydrated and in shock and feeding them anything in this condition can be life-threatening. Even providing water can result in aspiration (breathing fluid into the lungs—drowning) or hypothermia if it becomes wet. In addition, handling and feeding wild animals increases the risk to humans.

If you have found wildlife that needs rescuing, find the nearest wildlife rehabilitator. In the Ottawa area, contact the Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary (613-258-9480 or www.rideauwildlife.org) for small mammals; the Wild Bird Care Centre (613-828-2849) for birds; and Turtle S.H.E.L.L. Tortue (<http://www.turtleshellortue.org>) for turtles. For other wildlife, contact the Ministry of Natural Resources (613-258-8204) or visit www.tc.umn.edu/~devo0028/contact.htm. ❖



Wildlife Spotlight: Eastern Cottontail Rabbits

Found a Baby Rabbit?

Cottontails are extremely difficult to rehabilitate so it is best to reunite a baby with its mother if at all possible. Most young rabbits do not need rescuing. A young rabbit is on its own if it is the size of a fist (4" long), eyes open, ears standing (3-4 wks old). If the rabbit is younger, you can put it back in the nest and monitor the nest. If a rabbit was brought in by a dog or a cat, it is probably injured (although it may not appear to be) and needs to be brought to a wildlife rehabilitator. ❖

Found a Nest of Baby Rabbits?

Mothers leave the nest during the day and only return to nurse babies at dusk and dawn so the babies in the nest are probably not orphaned (you might not ever see the mother). Lay twigs or string over the nest in a cross-wise fashion. If the string/twigs have been moved the next morning, the mother has been to feed them. ❖



If A Rabbit's Nest is Disturbed or Moved

If a nest has been moved or disturbed, replace all of the fur inside the nest, cover it with dry grass and monitor the nest. The mother will likely return to care for her young. ❖

Did you Know?

Eastern Cottontails can have up to 5 litters per year with up to 9 young in each litter. Their gestation period is 28 days. Females mate again within hours of giving birth.

Our Wishlist

Rehabilitation Supplies

- towels, sheets, receiving blankets, fleece
- heating pads, hot water bottles
- small stuffed animals
- durable plastic kid's toys
- cat litter boxes, cat condos
- cages, x-pens, pet carriers, aquariums
- dog igloos
- winter hats, toques (for nesting)
- food storage containers, empty peanut butter jars
- pet food dishes, crocks and water bowls
- hamster water bottles
- heavy-duty gloves, welding gloves
- Esbilac powdered puppy formula
- rodent block
- striped sunflower seeds
- walnuts, peanuts, chestnuts, acorns
- apples, bananas, grapes
- yams, broccoli, corn
- leafy greens, dandelions

Office Supplies

- digital camera
- fax machine
- photo copier
- double-sided printer
- general office supplies

Cleaning Products

- soap, disinfectants, bleach, etc.
- tissues, paper towels, j-cloths
- brooms and dustpans
- mops and water buckets
- garbage cans
- trash bags

Services

- bookkeeping/accounting
- legal
- printing
- construction and trades (heating, electrical, plumbing, drywall, carpentry)

Veterinary Supplies

- digital gram scale
- gauze, cotton batting, vet wrap
- lactated ringers, normasol
- syringes
- lab coats, scrubs
- incubators, heat lamps

Construction/Caging Materials

- lumber (2x2, 2x3, 2x4)
- 1/2" plywood
- 1/2" and 1" welded wire mesh
- tin roofing
- snow fencing
- any fencing materials
- central air conditioner
- freezers (energy efficient)
- plumbing pipes and fittings
- drywall
- linoleum or other cleanable flooring
- fluorescent lighting
- full-spectrum lighting

Yes, I want to help injured, sick or orphaned wildlife!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____

Postal Code: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____ Date: _____



Membership

In addition to demonstrating your support of the work we do, our members receive our newsletter four times per year and advance notice of special events. Members are also invited to attend our Annual General Meeting.

- Individual \$25/year Life \$500 one time only Small Business \$100/year
 Student/Senior \$15/year School \$35/year Corporate \$1000/year
 Family \$40/year

I am attaching a cheque or money order, made payable to the Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary.

Please automatically renew my membership each January using my bank account. I have enclosed a void cheque. I authorize the Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary to arrange automatic withdrawals from my bank account. I may change or cancel at any time by contacting the Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary.

Donation

Please accept my one-time gift of \$ _____. I am attaching a cheque or money order made payable to the Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary.

Please accept my monthly gift of \$ _____. I have enclosed a void cheque. I authorize the Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary to arrange automatic withdrawals from my bank account on the _____ day of every month. I may change or cancel at any time by contacting the Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary.

Credit Card Payments

Currently, we accept credit card payments for memberships and donations through CanadaHelps.org. CanadaHelps, a public charitable foundation, is Canada's only donation portal that provides access to all of Canada's 80,000 charities. For donors, CanadaHelps.org simplifies the donating process, making it easy, quick and secure. Please visit <http://www.canadahelps.org> and search for Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary. This service should be available in early April.

Tax-deductible receipts are issued for memberships and donations over \$10.00
(Charitable Registration #: 82731 7744 RR0001).

Mail or fax to:
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THANK YOU for your support!