



Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary Newsletter



(613) 258-9480

May 2010

URGENT APPEAL FOR HELP

The Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary (RVWS) is seeing an unprecedented number of orphaned wildlife this year. An early birthing season coupled with unseasonably warm weather may partly explain the exceptional influx of animals. As people take advantage of the weather by going for walks and doing other outdoor activities, they are more likely to come across injured or orphaned raccoons, groundhogs, squirrels and other small mammals. But we're also worried that people might be live-trapping and relocating nursing mothers. Please see the article on why live trapping is not a humane solution.

We have already admitted close to 200 animals and it's not even June, which is typically one of our busiest months, compared to 275 animals in all of 2009. There will also be a second litter of squirrels in late summer. We have an amazing team of volunteers and five volunteer interns this year, but unless we raise \$20,000 soon, we will not be able to accept any more animals as we do not have the funding to feed those we do have.

It always seems to be a struggle to raise funding to care for small wild mammals. We sense that many people feel that the wildlife we care for are "nuisance wildlife." This makes fundraising all the more difficult. But we have received press coverage from CTV, the Ottawa Sun and several community papers so we hope the word will spread that these small mammals need care. We are grateful to all of our loyal supporters who value these wildlife as an integral part of our natural environment. Thank you to our interns, volunteers and donors, without whom we could not continue to help these wild creatures.

Enjoy our newsletter and have a wonderful summer.



Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.
~ Margaret Mead



Join the Rideau Valley Wildlife
Sanctuary on *Facebook!*

Ideas to Help Wildlife

RVWS is holding a cage building/cleaning day on Saturday, June 19, 2010, from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. If you would like to join us for a few hours, please RVSP at info@rideauwildlife.org.

Thinking of raising funds to help wildlife? You and your friends can help by organizing a fundraising event on behalf of RVWS. You can organize a bake sale; garage sale; bike-a-thon; asking friends to donate to RVWS in your honour for your birthday, wedding or other special day; organize an employee challenge at work; organize a Loonie drive at your school; display donation boxes at your local businesses. Every penny adds up to help feed and care for injured and orphaned wildlife.

Thank you for helping us to help the animals!

Our Wild Patients



A baby Eastern Grey Squirrel, likely injured from a fall, came in with a cracked palate, lacerations and a severe infection.



One of our many orphaned raccoon kits. Raccoons are kept in quarantine for 30 days, and then bundled with other singles from the same area to make a litter of four to six raccoons.



George the Groundhog was found by a dog. He just weaned and moved to an outdoor enclosure to acclimatize to the environment, in preparation for release.



In most cases, we are able to reunite baby Cottontail Rabbits with their mother, but this one was handled by a cat and needed antibiotics. The rabbit was fostered to a quiet home and successfully released.



2010 Construction Plans

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.



In 2010, construction got off to an early start thanks to the warm weather, support from our volunteer construction team and 100% donations of supplies from construction companies. Plans for this season include additional rooms in Phase II to accommodate quarantined animals.

Work included installing flooring, installing exhaust fans, finishing the concrete floor, and framing and drywalling three new rooms. To date, we've worked over 300 hours over nine weekends.



We extend a huge thanks to our construction volunteers and the generous local business who continue to donate material and goods.

Our sincerest thank you and appreciation for all of their hard work goes to Bruce, Dave, Jessie, Steve, Donna, Greg, Kevin, Tracy, Haley and Sierra who have contributed many hours helping with construction.

Special mention goes to the following businesses for their generous donations:

Access Rigging Services
Aecon Buildings Ottawa
Armstrong Flooring
CRS – Contractors Rental Supply
DL Building Materials Inc.
Merlin Door Systems Ltd.
Piamonte Painting & Wallcovering
Piledriver Contracting Inc.
Sapacon Drywall Ltd.
Southgate Carpet

RVWS Volunteers Help Ducks Too!

Our construction volunteers have really developed the wildlife rescue instinct. Recently, while on a construction site in downtown Ottawa, they found baby ducklings in a cofferdam, an enclosure used to help with construction. Momma duck was nearby but unable to get them out by herself.

Being volunteers at RVWS, they called us to get instructions on how to help, and we promptly referred them to the bird experts—the Wild Bird Care Centre in west-end Ottawa. With instructions in hand, Jesse, Ricky and Bruce rescued the ducklings with a net and placed them in a box. Mama duck followed Donna as she brought the box of ducklings to the nearby Rideau Canal, where Mom once again corralled her babies for a happy ending.



Wildlife Tips

Live-Trapping is NOT humane!

Although once a popular answer to wildlife problems, live-trapping and relocating wildlife is no longer considered a humane solution. Trapping and relocating adults may leave babies behind to die from starvation and dehydration, unless they are lucky enough to get to a wildlife rehabber.

Adult wildlife that are relocated may not survive because of competition with native wildlife and the inability to find appropriate nesting places, food and water. Here are some other 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
- removing animals will create vacant territory for other wildlife to move in

Instead of trapping and relocating, please visit our website or call us for advice.

Is this Animal *really* Orphaned?

Statistics show that many orphaned wildlife are mistakenly “kidnapped” by well-meaning but uninformed 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. 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. Following are some tips to help you identify if an animal is orphaned. If a young animal is not showing any of the above warning signs, there is a good chance you can reunite it with its mother.

When a Small Mammal needs Rescuing

It is common for many wildlife mothers to leave their young alone to feed or draw attention away from their babies. For example, cottontail rabbits only return to the nest to feed their young twice a day; deer often leave fawns alone in tall grass or by the side of a road and return only several times a day to nurse.

An animal needs rescuing when it:

- is vocalizing or following people or pets
- is cold to the touch (this might be a temporary rescue)
- is bleeding, injured, very weak or lethargic
- has fluid discharging or bubbling from the nostrils or mouth
- has a sunken abdomen, sunken eyes or looks emaciated
- is gasping for breath or has rasping or clicking sounds when breathing
- has visible parasites crawling all over the body
- has been handled by a cat or dog
- is found near a dead adult or sibling
- is wandering
- is in imminent danger (e.g., from predators, traffic)

If any of these conditions are present, please **contact a wildlife rehabilitator immediately** and follow the general instructions below.

What to do When an Animal Needs Rescuing

After you have made sure that an animal is truly orphaned, the following information provides basic guidance until you can find an authorized rehabilitator. 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.

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.

Youth Zone

Wild Ontario Photo Contest

If you are between the ages of five and fifteen, enter your photo to our 2010 *Wild Ontario* youth photo contest. The winning entry will be published in our fall newsletter, and displayed at the Sanctuary. The winners will also receive an RVWS t-shirt.



There are three photo categories:

- Ontario wildlife
- Ontario wildlife habitat
- Ontario wild plants.

Send your photos (no retouching please) by mail/email by August 31, 2010, with the following information:

- your name, hometown and contact information (in case you are the winner)
- permission from your parents to print and display your photo, name and hometown
- a description of your photo, and the date and location taken.

Emily the Dancing Groundhog

Find the right word from the list below to complete the story!

EXCITED HEAD DANCED SEASON BLOOMING WINTER GRASS
GROUNDHOG GREEN FRIENDS SHINING

It was early spring and the _____ chill had left the air. Emily, the dancing _____, woke from her long winter sleep (groundhogs are true hibernators) and decided to come out of her den and check things out. She poked her _____ out carefully to see if anyone was around. To her delight, the sun was _____; the grass was _____ and the flowers were _____. She was so _____ to be out of her burrow. She _____ around the blooming flowers and ran through the _____. “Spring is so lovely,” she told herself! “I am so happy for a new season and can’t wait to see my _____! Spring is my favorite _____!”

Did You Know?

- Mammals are a group of vertebrates that includes about 5,000 species worldwide.
- Mammals are warm-blooded or 'endothermic' which means they generate their own internal heat.
- All mammals have hair covering at least part of their body at some time during their life.
- Of all mammal groups, the most diverse are the rodents, which include more than 1,700 species. More than one-third of mammals that live on land in Canada are rodents, such as mice, squirrels, beavers and porcupines.
- There are many species at risk in Ontario. However, the only mammals at risk in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Forest region, which includes Eastern Ontario, are the Grey Fox, Eastern Wolf, and Mountain Lion or Cougar.
- The largest mammal that has ever lived is the Blue Whale, which inhabits Canada’s coastline and is an endangered species. It weighs as much as 30 to 40 African elephants.

Word Search

C	O	X	T	C	H	A	R	I	T	Y	U	V	C	W	T	E	A	R	S
L	T	S	M	R	O	O	E	V	A	S	D	Y	L	I	T	T	E	R	P
O	T	Q	A	G	E	N	T	L	E	K	F	V	E	L	H	A	R	B	F
V	E	U	M	C	C	H	I	P	M	U	N	K	C	D	E	E	E	E	L
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I	S	L	A	M	I	N	A	X	L	O	V	E	D	X	O	F	P	R	S
B	D	M	G	A	Q	U	W	G	O	H	D	N	U	O	R	G	J	G	N
A	G	B	E	W	S	C	A	N	A	D	A	G	H	Q	S	Y	O	T	D
B	S	E	E	D	S	K	Y	E	L	L	A	V	U	A	E	D	I	R	M

ANIMALS
 BABIES
 BEAVER
 CAGE
 CANADA
 CHARITY
 CHIPMUNK
 CLOVER
 DEER
 EARS
 FLOWERS
 FOX
 FUR
 GENTLE
 GROUNDHOG
 HELP
 LITTER

LOVE
 MAMMAL
 MICE
 NOSE
 OTTAWA
 OTTER
 PAWS
 RACCOON
 RESCUE
 RIDEAU VALLEY
 SAVE
 SEEDS
 SKUNK
 SQUIRREL
 TOYS
 WATER
 WILDLIFE

Our Supporters

We are very grateful to all our sponsors, benefactors and volunteers for helping us to help the animals. The following foundations or local business contributed much-needed donations or supplies in 2010:

- Cactus Commerce
- Community Foundation of Ottawa
- Global Pet Foods
- HIVA Environmental Fund
- IceGreen Reusable Eco Bags (via 1% for the Planet)
- Natural Chemistry Inc.
- Peter Wilson, General Manager, Holiday Inn and Suites – Downtown Ottawa
- Rideau Valley Roller Girls
- TD Friends of the Environment Foundation



Our Wishlist

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, crocks, water bowls
- puppy/dog kibble
- striped sunflower seeds
- natural foods (walnuts, chestnuts, acorns, pinecones)
- fruits (apples, bananas, grapes, berries)
- vegetables (yams, broccoli, corn, leafy greens)
- video camera
- postage stamps
- paper, envelopes, etc.
- lumber (all sizes), plywood
- ½" and 1" welded wire mesh
- printing sponsor
- soap, bleach, laundry detergent, etc.
- liquid hand sanitizer
- disposable and rubber gloves
- kleenex, paper towels
- x-large trash bags

I would like to help injured, sick or orphaned wildlife!

Our work is made possible through the generous donations from the community, foundations and corporations. With your support, we can help give a second chance at life to even more animals.

Name:	
Address:	
City:	
Province: PC:	
Email:	
Phone:	Date:
Donation: \$	

Membership:

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

() Cheque () Cash:

For secure **Credit Card** payments, please visit our website at <http://www.rideauwildlife.org> or **CanadaHelps** at <http://www.canadahelps.org> and search for Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary.

Mail to:
Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary
P.O. Box 266
North Gower, Ontario K0A 2T0

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US TO HELP THE ANIMALS!

Tax-deductible receipts are issued for donations or memberships over \$10.00

(Charitable Registration # 82731 7744 RR0001)