



RIDEAU VALLEY
WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Newsletter

Fall 2013

Fall Update

Thanks to our supporters, the Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary (RVWS) has been able to help almost 720 injured or orphaned wildlife so far in 2013, compared to about 480 in all of 2012.

The increase in intakes is mostly due to our increased capacity to admit more animals. RVWS was able to build more treatment rooms and outdoor enclosures this year, thanks to donated construction materials and volunteer labour, and a grant from the Community Foundation of Ottawa.

Thanks to your generosity, RVWS was able to hire more full-time interns, who work for small stipend and the rare chance to work in a wildlife rehabilitation centre.

But the season is far from over. The second litter of squirrels was very late this year, which means we'll be busy formula feeding and getting these animals ready for life back in the wild well into October. We are still caring for more than 150 larger mammals, such as raccoons and skunks, who are packing on extra weight to give them a headstart in the wild. Many mammals and recuperating turtles will need to spend the winter at the sanctuary to continue their healing, with eventual release planned for next spring.

More animals means higher costs for food, caging, staffing and veterinary care. There are many ways to help give wildlife a second chance. Animal lovers can make a tax-deductible donation online (www.rideauwildlife.org) or by using the form on the back of this newsletter, direct their United Way donations or donate items on our wishlist. Thank you for your continued support.



United Way Campaign

The United Way Ottawa campaign kicked off on September 26, 2013, and runs until mid-November. You can donate to RVWS by using the standard form, and providing our name and charitable registration number (82731 7744 RR0001). Thank you for helping the animals!

Rural Release Sites Needed

Do you have a large rural property with a mature forest that you can share with our furry friends? Please call us at 613-258-9480 or complete the Release Caregiver application form on our website (www.rideauwildlife.org/volunteer).

Our Wild Patients

Sera the porcupine arrived at the Sanctuary when he was just a few days old, orphaned and hungry. He quickly became the picture of health, and is now housed in a large outdoor enclosure, fully fitted with trees and branches for climbing. He's become quite the adept climber, and will be released back into the wild in the coming weeks.



Three orphaned Eastern Cottontail rabbits were brought to the sanctuary after construction disturbed their nest. The finders attempted to reunite them with their mother, but she did not return. They were successfully rehabilitated and released back into the wild at about four weeks old, the age when cottontails become self sufficient.



Duckie, an Eastern Grey Squirrel, was without mom for some time. This photo shows how tiny and emaciated he was. Now healthy, fattened up and with buddies, he's almost ready for outdoors.



These weasels are Ontario's smallest carnivores. Fairly young when they are self-sufficient, these twins were successfully released mid-summer. Northern populations of weasels molt to a white winter coat.



Henry, a 10 kg Snapping Turtle, arrived early in the season after being hit by a car. He sustained a large fracture on his carapace, or upper shell. He will have to spend the winter at RVWS to allow his shell more time to heal and will be released back into the wild next spring. Snapping turtles are the only turtles that cannot protect themselves by retracting their limbs into their shells. Hence, their seemingly aggressive nature when threatened. As with most wildlife, snappers will flee and avoid any sort of confrontation if given the chance.



Penelope (pictured below) and Icarus, two orphaned flying squirrels, were extremely dehydrated and emaciated when recently admitted. Now, they are almost ready for their outdoor “flight cage” where they will start practising their gliding skills.



This Striped Skunk, one in an unusually large litter of nine babies, was orphaned when something happened to mom. The homeowners watched over the babies, who were nesting under a shed in their backyard, for several days until it was confirmed that the mother was not coming back for them. They were then brought to RVWS to spend the summer.



Harriet the Red Squirrel was discovered lying alone and cold on someone’s driveway. Attempts at reunification with mom were not successful so she was brought to RVWS. Harriet was released in mid-September back where she was found.



It’s hard to believe that these orphaned raccoons weighed only several hundred grams when admitted in April, and topped the scales at more than 10 kg when released in mid-September.



Blanding's Turtle Blues

by Kristen Dolenko

Easily identified by its domed shell and bright yellow markings, the Blanding's Turtle is one of three turtle species most common in the Ottawa area. It is also considered a threatened and protected species at risk because of road mortality and the loss of wetland habitat in Ontario. Urbanization is at the heart of the Blanding's Turtle blues.

RVWS has taken in and cared for 59 turtles so far in 2013, almost double those admitted in 2012. Most of these have been hit by vehicles as they cross roads.

When Terry Fox Drive extension (between Second Line and Richardson Side Road) was first proposed, an environmental assessment raised concerns about the potential impact of the road on the South March Highlands Blanding's Turtle population. So the City of Ottawa added measures to its design and development plans to mitigate negative consequences of the road on the natural habitat.

Enter Dillon Consulting Limited (Dillon). Dillon was contracted by the City of Ottawa to design the new Terry Fox Drive extension. During the design process, several wildlife passages were added, consisting of wet and dry concrete culverts, and associated fencing and walls to help guide wildlife safely under the road.

In addition, the City contracted Dillon to undertake a four-year study of the Blanding's Turtle in the area. Radio transmitters were attached to several turtles to help identify the most important nesting and over-wintering zones. Based on radio telemetry, Dillon suspects that turtles are using the culverts regularly to pass safely under the road.

However, it seems that Morgan, a female Blanding's Turtle fitted with a radio transmitter, did not read the crossing signs. In early June, a Dillon employee found a turtle (pictured here) just after it had been hit by a car. Kevin Robinson quickly assessed the turtle's injuries and brought it directly to RVWS for treatment. The sanctuary treats injured and orphaned wild mammals and turtles, and returns them to the wild once healed.



Although the turtle's skin between its hind legs and bridge were torn, and both bridges slightly cracked, a veterinarian stitched up its injuries and it successfully recuperated at the sanctuary over the summer. Fortunately, Morgan was released back into the South March Highland area on Tuesday, August 27, 2013.

Ironically, Morgan's injuries and resulting captivity during the summer may mean a better chance of survival for the turtle's offspring. Morgan was gravid, or carrying eggs, upon arrival at the sanctuary and laid 15 eggs while recuperating. Thanks to incubation in a temperature and humidity-controlled environment, nine babies have hatched. Given less than one percent of Blanding's turtle eggs survive to maturity at between 16 and 25 years, the sanctuary hopes these hatchlings will have a good head start back in the wild.



Sadly, many turtles aren't so lucky.

Internal injuries are the leading cause of turtle road mortality. Other injuries, while treatable, are costly. Veterinarian services, x-rays, pain medications, antibiotics, subcutaneous fluids, and special equipment account for just the initial expenditures required to save a turtle's life. Because the healing process takes time, the sanctuary must not only give of their own time, but also provide food and shelter, often up to a full year, to enable a turtle to fully recover.

The good news: even cracked shells can heal. But the sanctuary relies entirely on donations from the public to make it possible. Animal lovers can consider making a donation by phone (613-258-9480) on-line (www.rideauwildlife.org) or by mailing a cheque to P.O. Box 266, North Gower, ON K0A 2T0.

To find out more about the Blanding's Turtle and its special connection with the South March Highlands, you can read Dillon's interim report, Blanding's Turtle Conservation Needs Assessment, on the City's website (http://ottawa.ca/sites/ottawa.ca/files/smh_blandingsassessment_final_report.pdf).

2013 Open House

The RVWS Open House was originally hosted by our friend, the late Earl McRae, in 2009 as the Grand Opening of our new wildlife rehabilitation centre. Now, it has become an annual event where we thank our friends by providing an afternoon of sanctuary tours, a barbecue, entertainment and activities. On June 13, 2013, we welcomed almost 200 people, as evidenced by the parked cars lining the street.

The highlight, by far, is always the tour of the wildlife rehabilitation centre where visitors can see wildlife baby feedings through one-way viewing windows. To keep the “wild” in wildlife, RVWS needs to restrict wildlife contact with humans, whether through sight, sound or smell. But our one-way viewing windows, where visitors can see into treatment rooms but wildlife cannot see out, provide an opportunity for visitors to see the baby squirrels, raccoons, skunks and turtles up-close. Our volunteer tour guides provide information on our services and operations throughout the tours, and answer the myriad of questions people have.

Visitors also enjoyed the silent auction items donated by local businesses, a bake sale with everything from gluten-free cookies to animal-themed cake pops, and a craft sale with artwork, and home-made soaps and candles.

Activities included our favourite folk band, the Grateful We’re Not Dead (appropriate, yes?), a carnivorous plant demonstration, face painting by Doogie and Kim, kids’ games and activities, a turtle demonstration by Ray’s Reptile Zoo, and a fantastic barbecue hosted by the Cumberland Lions Club.

Many thanks to our visitors, organizers, volunteers and donors for making the Open House such a great success. You donated almost \$4,000 to help the animals! Many thanks to our silent auction and craft show donors:



44th Parallel Photography
 Andrea Sedgwick Photography
 Bark & Fitz Pet Store
 Big Rig
 Canadian Tire Kemptville
 Chris Dore, ScotiaMcLoad
 Coralie Lalonde
 Corina Bowering
 Devon Blomquist
 Eva Laurus
 Evelyn Nugent
 Fun Haven
 Gaby Lalonde
 Giant Tiger
 Godiva Chocolatiers
 Grey Hawk Golf Club
 Kit and Kaboodles Baskets
 Layne Mikoda, Steeped Tea

Lori Taverner
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 Morguard Investments Ltd.
 Margaret Mitchell
 Mount Pakenham
 Nickie Morgan
 Patty Maher
 Rama Lotus
 Sail Outdoor Store
 Susan Rabb
 Terra20
 The National Hotel and Suites
 The Table
 Tim Horton’s Ottawa
 Wild Willy’s Flowers
 Wilderness Tours
 Zen Kitchen

Local Businesses to the Rescue

With more than 150 raccoons and skunks on a staple diet of dog food, feeding upwards of 100 kg daily can be a major expense. We are grateful to local pet food stores for donating the bulk of dog food our hungry wildlife devour. Pet Valu Alta Vista and Pet Valu Hazledean also hosted RVWS several times during the year for charity days and food drives. Please help us thank the following business for their kindness and donations.

Billings Bridge Animal Hospital
 Cats R Us
 Global Pet Foods, Bank
 Global Pet Foods, Strandherd
 Global Pet Foods, Wellington
 Pet Valu, Alta Vista

Pet Valu, Beechwood
 Pet Valu, Greenbank
 Pet Valu, Hazeldean
 Pet Valu, Innes
 Pet Valu, Kanata Centrum

Pet Valu, Kemptville
 Pet Valu, Manotick
 Pet Valu, Richmond Rd
 Pet Valu, Rockland
 Richmond Animal Hospital

RVWS Intern Program

By Sarah Beauregard, RVWS Intern

Applying to be an intern at RVWS was, and continues to be, the best decision I have ever made for myself. As an English student, I'm not the ideal candidate, but my passion for animals and the environment drove me to apply and eventually to dedicate myself to the long hours caring for the wildlife at the sanctuary.

As an intern, the majority of my time is spent on direct patient care (and lots of cleaning... you wouldn't believe how much poo comes out of these little things!). We learn about all aspects of wild mammal and turtle rehabilitation, including caring for orphaned young and providing medical care to injured wildlife of all ages. It is a truly rewarding experience. So much so, that I returned for a second season.

My second year at RVWS has been an incredible one and I have had the opportunity to work with a group of amazing individuals. With the thirteen of us, we've admitted more than 700 animals, a record number of admits for RVWS. With internships ranging from three to six months between April and October, many of the interns have come and gone, but I am grateful that I have gotten the chance to know and love each and every one of them. Nothing brings people together better than staying at work past midnight to feed fussy baby squirrels, swapping poo jokes and having sing-alongs.

It's a blessing that we all get along so wonderfully, because coordinating the care of so many animals requires a lot of team work and long hours, many of which are stressful and repetitive. Everyone at RVWS cares so deeply about the wildlife in our care and is willing to work long, exhausting hours so that the animals receive the best care possible.



From L to R:Melissa, Jasmine, Maggie, Sarah C, Kass, Sarah B, Carlos, Sarah R, Chase, Michelle (manager), Diana. Not pictured is Emily.

Carlos is our amazing turtle man. He refined our turtle care protocols and provided the utmost love and care to all of the sanctuary's turtles as well as the other creatures.

Chase, our surfer boy, has nearly completed a degree in Biology at the University of Central Florida. He always brought his smile and good humour, and was our personal handyman.

Diana's fifteen years as a nurse prepared her for much of the medical aspect of the internship. She has been a wonderful asset due to both her big heart and her awesome pressure-washing skills!



From L to R: Tirth and Shawn

Emily just began a Biology program at Acadia University in Nova Scotia. Before beginning her internship, Emily was a weekly volunteer at RVWS. She too always came to work with a big smile (what can I say, we're a happy bunch of people!) and love for animals.

Jasmine is on her way to becoming a veterinary technician in her program at the University of Guelph, and was known to grace us with her beautiful singing. She spent hours staring at slides under the microscope after professing her love for parasitology!

Kass just began a Fish and Wildlife Technician program at Fleming College, and was always eager to spend time with our intensive-care patients who need a little extra attention.

Maggie is currently in a Biology program at the University of Guelph, and is best known for her big heart and intense love for both animals and veggie burgers.

Melissa is a Biology student at Carleton University, and RVWS's very own bunny whisperer. She has been known to disappear for hours at a time into the bunny room, a feat only for the gentlest and most patient of souls.

Sarah C is studying Biology at the University of British Columbia, and never came to work without her bright smile. Sarah and I shared many conversations in porcupine-speak, a language in which we eventually became fluent.

Sarah R is passionate about animals and the environment, and quickly became our go-to skunk whisperer (which requires lots of patience and a calm, loving attitude!).

Shawn just began his internship, and has brought with him all of the skills he acquired in the Wildlife Rehabilitation Technician program at Northern College. I can already tell he's going to fit right in!

Tirth also recently began his internship, after completing a degree in Biology at the University of Guelph. He's wonderful to work with, and we're all patiently waiting for him to finally break out his dance moves.

When I began my internship, I entered more than just a workplace – I entered a family.

Increasing our Capacity

Thanks to the generosity of local organizations and a great group of volunteers, RVWS was able to increase its capacity in 2013. The number of animals we admitted (about 720 so far) increased by 50% over 2012.

With donated construction supplies from individuals and local businesses, RVWS completed the expansion of the wildlife rehabilitation centre by building two new treatment rooms, and installing plumbing and cupboards in a third. The rooms can also double as quarantine areas for sick animals.

A wonderful group of co-workers from the Ontario Disability Support Program spent a volunteer day at RVWS building four outdoor enclosures for skunks.

Under the expert leadership of Emery Lalonde, almost 30 people volunteered over two days to help build four 8x8x16' outdoor enclosures for climbing mammals. Funded through the Community Foundation of Ottawa, the cages can also be subdivided into eight smaller enclosures. Fitted with nesting ledges, trees and tire swings, all of the enclosures were filled within days with growing porcupines and raccoons.



Our Wishlist

Thank you to all of our wishlist donors! We are always grateful for donations of new and gently-used supplies. Please call or email for convenient drop-off locations throughout Ottawa.

Animal Care Supplies

- receiving blankets, towels, sheets, fleece
- electric heating pads without automatic shut-off
- extra-large plastic dog carriers, rabbit cages
- tip-proof pet food dishes and water bowls
- disposable gloves
- heavy-duty gloves, welding gloves
- remote surveillance system

Turtle Supplies

- x-large (200+ litre) Rubbermaid containers, rigid pond liners and plastic feeding troughs (no aquariums please)
- light timers and power bars
- aquarium thermometers
- aquarium heaters with plastic guards
- large aquarium filters
- clip-on lights
- UVB and full-spectrum light bulbs
- large, smooth aquarium gravel
- cuttlebones and Rep-Cal Herptivite
- fish, worms (earthworms, waxworms, blackworms), crickets, snails, crabs, crayfish, clams, freshwater mussels (year round)

Foods (April to October)

- striped sunflower seeds
- nuts in shell (almonds, filberts, walnuts, peanuts)
- dog food

Cleaning Products

- facial tissues, paper towels
- extra-large trash bags
- bleach, dish soap, laundry detergent
- liquid hand sanitizer
- brooms and dustpans

Veterinary Supplies

- stainless steel cage banks
- medium-sized scales
- disposable gloves
- syringes and needles (all sizes)
- lactated ringers, plasmalyte
- chlorhexidine, betadine, sterile saline
- vet wrap, gauze and cotton batting

Caging Materials

- lumber (all sizes), plywood
- ½" and 1" welded wire mesh
- 6 ft chain link

Services

- English to French translation
- construction and trades
- waste disposal
- website design and management



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

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

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____ Sign me up for e-news

Please accept my monthly gift of: \$ _____

Joining our monthly donor program allows us to plan ahead, knowing we can count on your support year round. It also helps us save on administrative and mailing costs. Tax receipts are issued for the full year's donations early in the next 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

Card #: Expiry Date (mm/yy): /

Name on Card: _____ Signature: _____

Please accept my single gift of: \$ _____

Donation: \$ _____ and/or Membership: Individual \$25/yr Family \$40/yr Student/Senior \$15/yr
 Life \$500 School \$35/yr Business \$100/yr Corporate \$1000/yr

Visa MasterCard Cheque/Money Order Cash

Card #: Expiry Date (mm/yy): /

Name on Card: _____ Signature: _____

This a tribute gift in honour / in memory of: _____

Personalized message _____

Send card to: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Mail to: Rideau Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, P.O. Box 266, North Gower, Ontario K0A 2T0
Tel (613) 258-9480 / www.rideauwildlife.org / info@rideauwildlife.org
To donate online, visit www.rideauwildlife.org

Tax receipts are issued for donations and memberships over \$10.00 at the end of the calendar year or upon request.
Charitable Registration # 82731 7744 RR0001

Thank you for helping native wildlife!