

The Wild Times

A Newsletter from Wild Things Sanctuary • vol. 1, no. 2, Autumn/Winter 2010

Why wildlife rehabilitation?

On the surface the answer to the question "Why rehabilitate wild animals?" is fairly straightforward and simple: No living creature deserves to suffer if they can be helped, every creature deserves humane treatment. But wildlife rehabilitation, what it entails and what it represents, is much more multifaceted than the mere humane treatment of our fellow creatures. It is about more than compassion and loving animals. Wildlife rehabilitation requires a steadfastness and fortitude that are beyond what is required by most other professions; and there is no lucrative incentive that balances the time, commitment and emotional toll that wildlife rehabilitators experience on a daily basis. So, *why* rehabilitate wild animals? *Why* save injured, sick or orphaned wildlife? *Why* is wildlife rehabilitation needed? This article will examine several of the answers to these questions.

Wildlife rehabilitators provide a public service and help keep the public safe

Science rarely considers individual animals, but the fate and well being of individual animals needs to be addressed when the public is involved. Government agencies rarely accept injured wildlife even though it is not uncommon for members of the public to come across wildlife in trouble, but in most places it is illegal for a member of the public to possess wildlife without a permit or rehabilitation license. These guidelines are in place to ensure animals receive the care that they need from trained professionals and to help keep the public safe. Wildlife rehabilitators provide the public with both a place to bring distressed wildlife and with a humane and legal way of helping wild animals. Rehabilitators are trained to handle wildlife who can cause physical injury and carry parasites and diseases.

A lot of people do not realize that some diseases can be passed from animals (both domestic and wild) to humans and vice versa. These are called zoonotic diseases. There are probably hundreds of zoonotic diseases. In the United States, some of the more publicized zoonoses include Lyme disease, Giardia, Ringworm, Salmonella, West Nile Virus, *E. coli*, Toxoplasmosis and Rabies. More exotic zoonoses are Cholera, Bilharzia, Dengue fever, Anthrax and Ebola. In addition



Victoria Campbell, the founder of Wild Things Sanctuary, and the Wild Things Rescue Mobile

to zoonotic diseases, almost all wild animals carry ticks, lice, fleas and intestinal worms; these can all be transmitted to humans and their pets. As licensed professionals, wildlife rehabilitators know how to determine whether an animal may be sick and, accordingly, can offer medical treatment.

Wild animals also have sharp teeth, claws and talons and will not hesitate to use them if they feel threatened. Rehabilitators know how to handle these animals and offer a place for the public to bring wildlife so that individuals do not try to keep the animals putting themselves at risk. If not offered an alternative, well meaning members of the public may try to raise a wild animal at home, endangering the health of themselves, their families and pets.

Additionally, wildlife rehabilitators know how to raise wildlife so that the young animals grow up healthy, are kept wild and don't end up becoming a menace to members of the public. Even the most well intentioned member of the public may not be aware of all of the needs of an animal. Poor infant diets can cause a multitude of health problems, and incorrect behavioral training can ultimately result in the death of an animal. For instance, plenty of people think it is great to raise a little fawn, but once that little spotted cutie grows up into an overly socialized buck it will not fear humans and will come after them if threatened. Overly socialized wild animals pose a real risk to people that they encounter and often have to be put down.

Wildlife rehabilitators help keep disease out of the public's home, and offer medical assistance to wildlife that is sick. By providing this public service, rehabilitators help keep the public safe and are able to offer wildlife the best possible care in order to get the animals ready to return to their wild habitats.

Being at the forefront of helping distressed wildlife, wildlife rehabilitators may also be the first to notice disease outbreaks or the emergence of new diseases. For example, in the early 2000's, rehabilitators were among the first individuals to discover when the rapidly spreading West Nile Virus invaded a previously healthy area. Presently, wildlife rehabilitators are indispensable in monitoring the course of White Nose Syndrome in bats; a condition which is pushing some species of bats rapidly towards extinction.

Wildlife rehabilitators help with conservation efforts & public education

Wildlife rehabilitation lies at the intersection of wildlife wellness, habitat conservation and the public. This means that wildlife rehabilitators are poised to observe and to monitor threats to native wildlife and the health of the earth's habitats, and to educate the public and foster an awareness of conservation issues.

Injured, sick patients and a little bit of rehabilitation detective work, can reveal environmental and conservation threats and trespasses.

For example, wildlife rehabilitators were among the first people to witness the devastating effects of lead poisoning. Additionally, when high numbers of lead-poisoned waterfowl and raptors were arriving at wildlife clinics, rehabilitators were at the forefront of supporting the ban on lead shot at federal wildlife refuges. In 2008, after seven condors, one-fifth of the entire Southern California population, died from ingesting lead shot, wildlife rehabilitators joined conservation groups pushing for (and achieving) a ban on lead shot in endangered California condor territory.¹ Rehabilitators have also been instrumental in getting certain products banned, such as Rid-a-Bird, when they noticed high numbers of non-target victims arriving into their clinics.^{2,3} Finally, rehabilitators can help monitor environmental violations. For example, if numerous poisoned or shot birds arrive at a wildlife clinic from a specific area, wildlife rehabilitators may discover violations of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Wildlife rehabilitation can also help endangered species.

Though some find it hard to justify saving the life of an animal of a common species (see "The Starfish Argument" below), in the case of endangered animals every individual of a species does count if the goal is to keep the species from extinction. Wildlife rehabilitators have a positive impact on endangered or threatened species conservation as the release of a healthy individual may lead to successful breeding adult in the wild. Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, Osprey and Whooping Cranes have all been brought back from the brink of extinction, but their numbers are still closely watched to maintain healthy, functioning populations. Other species, like cranes and the California condor are still very close to extinction. If any of these endangered animals are hurt, wildlife rehabilitators can help them heal and condition them to succeed in the wild. Also, it should be noted that rehabilitators are poised and ready to handle threatened species because of the constant intake of common species entering rehabilitation facilities.

Wildlife rehabilitation educates and fosters awareness of conservation issues.

Many people have taken science classes, read about the environment, and been to the zoo. However, coming across an injured, sick or orphaned wild animal suddenly gives the member of the public a tangible link with their fellow creatures and our shared environment. It is often the closest they will ever get to a wild animal. When they find a local rehabilitator, the rehabilitator is in a position to educate the finder about the injured animal and its habitat. Rehabilitators serve as an educational resource on topics such as natural history, wildlife biology, animal behavior and disease; and can help the public understand and feel connected to the natural world by showing them that wildlife is worth caring for, that all species are to be valued and that wildlife plays an essential role in preserving our shared natural heritage. By advocating understanding and awareness that we all share the world and are in it

Letter from the President

To all wildlife lovers,

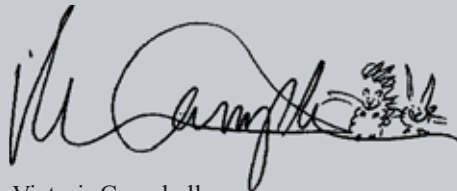
Welcome to the 2010 autumn/winter issue of *The Wild Times*, a biannual newsletter from Wild Things Sanctuary.

The Wild Times aims to educate readers on different aspects of wildlife and wildlife rehabilitation. Many people have asked me and my colleagues why we are wildlife rehabilitators. They look at our bandaged bites, our droopy sleep-deprived eyes, all the formula covered clothes, window screens chewed up by newly released squirrels trying to get back inside for a snack, etc. Why do we put up with all of this? Most of us don't even get paid! This issue covers the important question: Why do wildlife rehabilitation? Is it useful? Is it worth it? Read on and find out!

The Wild Times will also be starting a column called "Species Highlight," where different species will be featured in every issue. Every species presents unique behavior that wildlife rehabilitators are fortunate enough to experience on a first hand basis, and this column is aimed at sharing some interesting species facts with our readers. In this issue we are covering Jumping Mice, an unusual handful of species that Wild Things Sanctuary had the good fortune and fun to learn about first hand.

We had great feedback on the first issue of *The Wild Times* and we welcome more! Please let us know if you have any special wildlife questions or are interested in certain topics, and don't forget to check out the WTS website for more information: www.wildthingssanctuary.org.

The Wild Times is wishing everyone a great 2010 holiday season, and send a big thank you to all the volunteers and supporters who helped Wild Things Sanctuary through another year. Happy Holidays!



Victoria Campbell
President, *Wild Things Sanctuary*

Mission Statement

Wild Things Sanctuary (WTS) is dedicated to helping native wildlife through rescuing and rehabilitating debilitated and orphaned/displaced animals until they are ready for release back into the wild. Eventually, WTS is also aiming to provide a sanctuary for non-releasable native animals.

WTS is also committed to improving the well-being of wildlife through public education; focusing on how humans can safely and peacefully coexist with native wildlife, and on wildlife's importance to man and the environment.

together, rehabilitators serve as a bridge connecting humans and animals, and show the public that as individuals, every one of us can make a difference to wildlife and to the environment.

One rehabber writes that,

Sometimes the global situation can be so disheartening that providing small individual, local actions can help keep apathy at bay. [Rehabilitators can teach the public the importance of] creating backyard habitat with native plants that produce food and shelter for wildlife, keeping cats inside and dogs on leashes, avoiding the use of barbed wire or making it more visible, making windows safer for birds, eliminating the use of pesticides or herbicides, restricting pruning and landscaping to the non-nesting season ... there are many individual actions that can be taken that add up to respecting the needs of, leaving room for, and learning to live with wildlife.

This can open people's eyes to the bigger picture of how their actions affect the natural world and leads to the important conservation idea of "think globally, act locally".⁴

Wildlife rehabilitators help raise the public's awareness of wildlife and its habitats, thereby promoting and spreading conservation values, and helping reduce the number of human-wildlife conflicts. Rehabilitators teach understanding, acceptance, and tolerance of the natural world around each of us, which helps others find harmony with their wild neighbors. Raising awareness of the delicate balance of nature and of what we, as humans, can do to help keep and respect this balance, global conservation efforts grow stronger. By learning the value of wildlife in their own backyard and that they can make positive changes to help their wild neighbors, people become empowered to work towards conservation goals. In this way, helping a small bird or squirrel in one's immediate environment can lead to a greater understanding and outlook on our world's conservation needs. As the human population continues to expand into wildlife habitat, this awareness becomes increasingly important in improving the lives of both humans and animals. Wildlife rehabilitation coupled with other conservation efforts helps restore the Earth's biodiversity one animal, one acre, at a time.

Simple reason: Because we can

Why do rehab? Because we can. Suffering has no intrinsic value and, if it can be helped, there is no reason why an animal has to suffer. As humans, when presented with the decision to leave an injured animal or to go to its aid, we can choose to help it. We can bring the injured being to a wildlife rehabilitator. And wildlife rehabilitators really can help animals. Wildlife rehabilitators and their veterinarians provide effective medical care to wild patients, be it an adult with a broken wing or a malnourished orphan.

Our ethical responsibility; Our humanity

Over 90% of the animals arriving at Wild Things Sanctuary are orphaned, sick or injured due to human activities. They and/or their mothers have been hit by cars, injured by pets, run over by lawn-mowers, trapped in fishing line, displaced by cutting down trees and knocked unconscious after flying into windows. They have been used as target practice, directly or indirectly poisoned, trapped in houses, trapped in traps, almost drowned in swimming pools, and the list goes on. Wild Things even admitted a young bunny that had fallen into a bubblebath. Many species of animals have been pushed towards and to extinction by the human race. With all the possible ways that wild animals can get into trouble due to human related activities, the question should not be "Why DO wildlife rehabilitation?" but "How can the human race NOT do wildlife rehabilitation?" Ethically, morally, empathically compassionately, how is it possible to deny these fellow creatures, put in jeopardy by our human activities, human aid to recover?

The ethics of wildlife rehabilitation in the face of objections

Survival of the fittest and natural selection. Objections are raised to wildlife rehabilitation claiming that rehabilitation meddles with nature; that instead of letting nature take its course, rehabilitators interfere with "survival of the fittest" and put unfit animals back into the wild. The truth

is that wildlife rehabilitators stand by nature's course and its laws, but rehabilitators rarely receive genetically compromised animals (who usually die very young) or animals that have been injured in natural predator/prey situations. And a *natural* predator/prey interaction *does not* involve cats or dogs. In North America, these beloved pet companions are also introduced invasive predatory species against which many wild animals stand little chance of survival. Wild Things occasionally receives a young predator who is not hunting well enough to survive, and we do give them a second chance. If the animal is genetically weaker it is unlikely that a second chance will help, meaning that the animal will not live long enough to reproduce and spread its poor genes. However, Wild Things prefers to err on the side of caution: the animal may be hunting poorly not because it has a genetic fault, but because it was orphaned and did not have the benefit of a parent's hunting instruction.

Natural Selection. Others complain that rehabilitators are compromising natural selection, decreasing a species' ability to learn how to survive in a human filled world. Is there any truth in this? No. Natural selection, which involves genetic changes, usually takes place over thousands of generations. Human changes to the environment happen within the course of a generation, meaning that there is no possible way for the genes to "catch up" with constant anthropomorphic change. This evolutionary "genetic lag" even occurs in our species. For example, more people are scared of snakes than they are of driving in cars, despite the fact that hundreds of thousands more people are killed in cars than are killed by snakes. In the United States, 2004 saw almost 43000 fatalities in traffic accidents and only 12 due to snakes.^{5,6} The human genetic code has yet to catch up with the advent of cars and how dangerous they can be to our well-being, whereas snakes have been a threat to humans for millions of years. Our genes have encoded the fact that snakes may be deadly and we need to beware, but they are still ignorant to the peril of cars. In the same way, an animal may be mortally scared of its natural enemies, but has not come to recognize that some fences may have an electric charge. If an animal lives long enough it may learn about human imposed dangers, but as most of these dangers are fatal the animal usually does not have a chance to accumulate knowledge in its lifetime.

Save a rabbit, starve a fox. Finally, one last objection is that wildlife rehabilitators take food away from wild predators. Yet in reality, even when our patients number into the thousands, most rehabilitators make little difference to specific population numbers. There are still plenty of more rabbits out there for the fox. The same cannot be said for domestic cats, who kill over a billion small birds and mammals every year, reducing prey availability for native predators, but that is another topic!

Wildlife rehabilitation and our humanity

Scientists often argue that humans are the only species to show empathy and compassion. I don't know that I agree. However, if indeed these traits are hallmarks of being human, then it follows that showing empathy and compassion towards all forms of life is when we are at our most human.

Rehabilitators have made a difference to millions of individual animals and rehabilitation facilities exist is an affirmation to members of the public that as humans, we need to be responsible and help our fellow creatures who are often in trouble due to our human activities.

Dominion vs. Stewardship

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. ~Genesis 1:26, (The Holy Bible: King James Version)

Often I am thrown the Biblical reason from Genesis 1:26 for why man is justified in harming and not caring for animals: man has been given dominion over all creatures on earth. But is this really the sentiment expressed in The Bible?

The Bible was written by multiple authors over thousands of years. The original Old Testament was written in Hebrew and Aramaic. The

PATIENT NEWS

A day old Canada Gosling

This little gosling came to Wild Things when it was just a day old. A



local couple had been watching its parents nest behind their house and one morning were happy to find the nest full of new born fluffy goslings. But hours later a crow picked up one of the fluffy newborns and flew off with the little one in its beak...until oops! It was dropped. The couple brought the little dehydrated and cold gosling to Wild Things. It was touch and go for the first 24 hours, but it slowly fluffed back up and was ready to go. Goslings can "imprint" easily, believing that whoever raises them is their same species. In order to avoid imprinting, the little gosling was kept in a veiled cage with lots of mirrors so that it would not imprint on humans. I even wore a mask when I fed it so it wouldn't see my face! After about 10 days I found a foster goose family nearby and brought the gosling to their pond. The little one swam right out to the foster family and was last seen snuggling up to its foster parent after a swim with its new family.

The little traveling Grey Squirrel

One of the hardest things about rehabilitation is that babies need to be fed throughout the day. This means that if the rehabilitator needs to go anywhere, the babies come along as well. Lil'Girl the 3 week old little grey squirrel arrived with her two brothers in October, late in the birthing season when I thought that I had seen the last of any babies. Every October the New York State wildlife rehabilitators hold a conference which is a great place to learn and to network and I had to go...but what to do with the little squirrels? Take them along! I had plenty of willing babysitters if I had to attend a lecture and the little ones behaved very well. At press time, this little threesome is settling into the Wild Things woods and will be supported with food as needed throughout the winter.



The mysterious White Footed Mouse



Patrick the white footed mouse arrived at Wild Things Sanctuary last year under rather mysterious circumstances. After a 6 hour road trip I arrived home, opened the trunk to pull out my suitcase, and there was little Patrick, about a week and a half old, squeaking away. I have no idea where he came from. He was so tiny and dehydrated; I didn't know if I would be able to keep him alive. But flash forward 3 weeks and here you have a picture of Patrick all grown up! And now? Patrick was accidentally released by a volunteer in my rehabilitation room, which is a part of my house. He and his descendants have happily settled in and I am working on relocating them to nearby brush piles. Due to this incident, and respecting my housemate's wishes, all white-footed mouse rehabilitation has been put on hold for the time being!

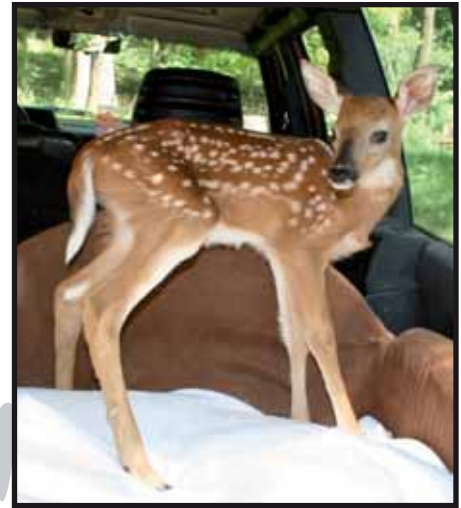
The chubby Virginia Opossum

A lot of people don't like opossums. They think they are ugly with naked tails and lots of teeth. Peter the Opossum changed a lot of people's minds. Peter was hit by a car last November and broke a leg and a few teeth. He would take a few months to heal, but would have to stay at Wild Things for about 5 months, over the winter. He did really well, so well in fact that he had to be put on a diet as he got a little chubby. He never showed any sign of aggression, and during exercise time would happily walk around Wild Things sniffing out grapes. He loved crawling inside his double-layered towel and using it like a sleeping bag. On a lovely early spring evening he was released into the Wild Things Woods. I never saw him again but I think I heard him some nights shuffling around in the leaves.



The little blind Fawn

Every year I receive countless calls about "orphaned" White Tailed Deer fawns. Most of them are not orphaned; they have been left in a quiet spot while their mothers go off and feed for a few hours. But when I got a call about Radar,



something sounded wrong. He was wandering around, crying, no mother in sight, and appeared to be disorientated. The finders brought him to Wild Things and while he seemed to be in OK shape, there was something wrong. His eyes were slightly cloudy and not responding to light. A medical exam confirmed that he was blind. This can happen for various reasons; it is sometimes caused by malnutrition when young. I have heard stories that blind deer can actually survive and do well in the wild, but as a baby, with no mother to lead him and teach him the ways of the world, Radar would not do well. However, with a few phone calls, I found a great place for Radar to live, a deer sanctuary not too far away. Radar was companioned with a little fawn who had irreparably injured her jaw. Her name is CookieDoe and they are now best of friends.

5 Woodland Jumping Mice

When I got a call about "5 little things, we don't know what they are, they are orangey and they have long tails," I was intrigued. The finders had been gardening and had unearthed these little ones. They tried to put them back, but the neighborhood cats kept showing an unhealthy interest in the little ones. They turned out to be Woodland Jumping Mice and were about a week old when they arrived with closed eyes and a lovely coat of orange fur. I called several well seasoned rehabilitators to ask advice about raising the little ones, but no one I spoke to had ever had taken care of them. It turns out that they are hardly ever seen and as they grew I felt so privileged to witness their crazy jumping abilities. They are so different from the white-footed mice that are so often seen in and around houses. Jumping mice are usually hibernating by October, but these five were not big enough for hibernation, so they will spend the winter at Wild Things and be released as soon as spring arrives.



A very sick little Raccoon

When Wobbles the raccoon arrived at Wild Things she was in terrible shape. She was about 3-4 weeks old, emaciated, dehydrated and full of parasites, with maggots in every orifice. There were bite wounds around her neck. She had to be kept in isolation from the other little raccoons because she was so sick, and though uncommon, any animal arriving at WTS with bite injuries is kept in isolation to make sure they did not contract a disease via their attacker. Within two weeks Wobbles was doing great. But then, she began to wobble. Usually at the first sign of central nervous disorders in raccoons everyone cries rabies. But contrary to rabies symptoms, she seemed fully coherent, just wobbly. The vet and I thought that she might have either contracted toxoplasmosis, or perhaps one of the maggots had died within her head and had become infected. We started her on antibiotics. I did not hold out much hope for her recovery. But after two weeks she began to wobble a bit less. And after a month she was climbing and playing, and acting just like a proper little raccoon. She did really well after this and put on a lot of weight for winter. She has since been released and is hopefully doing well out in the woods.



English versions that we use today are often rewrites of translations of rewrites of translations, etc... And each translation made its own changes to the original text. One of the most translated and a rewritten versions of the Bible is called "The Wycliffe Bible." John Wycliffe began putting together this version of the Bible in 1382 with the idea of translating the Bible into the vernacular and thereby making it accessible to more people. Historians believe that Wycliffe is the man responsible for the "dominion" verse. *Dominion* as defined by Merriam Webster means "supreme authority" and "absolute ownership." But going back to the original language in which the Bible was written, a closer translation to the original Bible reads: "Man has been given stewardship over the creatures of the world." *Stewardship* is defined as "the conducting, supervising, or managing of something; especially: the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care."⁷

Therefore, contrary to what some believe, even The Bible tells us that we are responsible for the lives and well-being of our animal neighbors. To the best of their ability, wildlife rehabilitators offer every member of the native wildlife community a place to come when they are sick, injured and orphaned. At rehabilitation centers, wild animals can heal with their time, keep their dignity, and return home to the wild once they are ready.^{8,9}

The Starfish argument: Can you justify saving one life of a common species?

Most wildlife news centers on conservation. Conservation is incredibly important in helping animals and saving habitat, but it doesn't leave much room for the significance of the lives of individuals of a species, unless the species is endangered or threatened. Wildlife is commonly viewed as populations, not as individuals, and I often get the question: "Why save one squirrel when there are so many out there?"

This question, as posed by a human, is always curious to me. Human beings have overpopulated our planet to the point of devastation, yet our entire medical and social system focuses on the health of *the individual*. If a child came to you with an eye gorged out by a feral cat, or a broken leg after a tree fell on and decimated its house, would you shrug and say "Sad, but survival of the fittest, and you don't really matter, there's plenty more of you". Yet that's what many people think when they see injured wildlife.

In Loren Eiseley's wonderful essay *The Star Thrower* the protagonist comes across a man saving stranded starfish by throwing them back into the sea. "One can help them," the star thrower says. Our man walks away from the "mad" star thrower with "the hardened indifference of maturity" leaving only bitter remarks in his wake. But, later, he is startled at finding the star thrower's empathy in his own soul. He talks about the seeming rift between humanity's compassion and humanity's

pragmatism and writes,

...I had come full upon one of the last great rifts in nature [...] But no, it was not a rift but a joining: the expression of love projected beyond the species boundary [...] I had seen the star thrower cross that rift and, in doing, he had reasserted the human right to define his own frontier. He had moved to the utmost edge of natural being, if not across its boundaries. It was as though at some point the supernatural had touched hesitantly, for an instant, upon the natural (pg.182).¹⁰

The man returns to the beach and joins the star thrower, throwing the starfish back into the sea.

[...] The task was not to be assumed lightly, for it was men as well as starfish that we sought to save. [...] We had lost our way, I thought, but we had kept, some of us, the memory of the perfect circle of compassion from life to death and back again to life—the completion of the rainbow of existence.

[...] I flung myself as forfeit, for the first time, into some unknown dimension of existence. From Darwin's tangled bank of unceasing struggle, selfishness, and death, had arisen, incomprehensibly, the thrower who loved not man, but life. It was the subtle cleft in nature before which biological thinking had faltered. [...] man cannot exist spiritually without life, his brother, even if he slays" (pgs.184-185).¹⁰

All too often, in modern society, we humans are out of touch with the natural world and have lost our way. Wildlife rehabilitation and the rehabilitators who work tirelessly to help our wild neighbors can help point us back towards the most important attributes of being human: empathy, compassion, and the ability to choose which path to take.

In summary

Wildlife rehabilitation can be hard. It is emotionally exhausting constantly handling animals that are suffering. With those that die there is great sadness, self rebuke and self-doubt, and a feeling of loss of what might have been. For the animals that are released, there is a constant worry for their health and safety. The profession has really bad hours and usually requires at least an 80 hour work week. In the spring and summer that can go up to 120+ hours a week. Members of the public can yell and be obnoxious. Word to the public: Be nice. At Wild Things Sanctuary and many other rehabilitation centers there is no staff to help with the hundreds of phone calls received every year. Most people and organizations work alone or with a few volunteers, and cannot always offer a pick-up service. Rehabilitators are not state or federally funded and rehabilitate as a public service. In most cases there is no salary and all funds to help the animals are either out of pocket or from donations.

Like other professions, wildlife rehabilitation is a calling that comes with a tremendous amount of faith that the work is important and necessary, serving both humans and animals. At one time many considered that the best course of action to take with an injured animal was to shoot it on the spot. But times have changed. Wildlife rehabilitation helps millions of animals a year, eases their suffering, and returns many to the wild. Though rehabilitation probably makes little statistical difference to the numbers of most species' populations, rehabilitators play an important role in conservation efforts, educating hundreds of thousands of people a year about animals, conservation, and environmental issues. Wildlife rehabilitation helps keep the public safe and creates a wave of positive change by reaching beyond what is presently tangible, inspiring compassion and motivating future actions that will help the earth and its inhabitants. One rehabilitator writes, "We cannot count the good that comes from fostering the idea of caring for a living being that you also have the power to destroy."¹¹

It is my hope that in addition to healing animals in distress, Wild Things Sanctuary serves as an affirmation to the public that caring about wildlife is important. As humans, we can give back to the Earth, help it heal, restore biodiversity, and educate others to do the same. We have the choice to nurture or to destroy the earth and its inhabitants. Make the right choice. Be thoughtful. Be stewards.

For Bibliography please see www.wildthingsanctuary.org

Stella's Corner

Everyone can be a guardian angel to wildlife!

Humanity has not had deep enough roots. It has not found sustenance and fresh impetus, because the ethical code on which it was based was too narrow and did not have a deep foundation. It has concerned itself only with human beings. It has given only a passing nod to our relationship with other living creatures, looking upon it as a nice bit of sentimentality, quite innocuous but of no great significance. But it did have significance. For only if we have an ethical attitude in our thinking about all living creatures does our humanity have deep roots and a rich flowering that cannot wither.

~Albert Schweitzer



Species Highlight: Jumping Mice

By Adrian Williams

Jumping mice are handsome little mammals seldom observed by the casual ambler outside. We seldom see jumping mice because they are small and inconspicuous, their habits are nocturnal, and they hibernate half the year. As such, although these little rodents are quite common, it takes some work to get to know them.



One week old Woodland Jumping Mouse

Two species of jumping mice are found in the Finger Lakes region: the Meadow Jumping Mouse (*Zapus hudsonius*) and its close cousin the Woodland Jumping Mouse (*Napaeozapus insignis*). Small in size (their bodies 3-4" long) with a general mousy appearance, jumping mice have large hind feet and extremely long tails.

As their names suggest, their habitats help distinguish the two species. The Woodland Jumping Mouse is also slightly larger, has a more yellowish body and sports a white tip on its tail, and the Meadow Jumping Mouse is the only mammal, except for the strange primate the Aye-Aye, to have eighteen teeth, with a single set of upper-only premolars.

Their long tails and large hind feet make them well-adapted for jumping. They are reported to leap as far as 10-12 feet, probably doing so when avoiding predators (such as screech owls, weasels, and skunks). Usually, though, jumping mice content themselves with short hops when getting where they need to go.

Where they need to go are low, damp places, such as meadows or

along small wooded streams, where they feed on seeds, fungi, and insects. Both species seem to have a predilection for the habitat (and seeds) of jewelweed, a.k.a. impatiens.

Jumping mice live in nests or burrows. Nests are made of leaves, reeds and grasses and are found in hollow logs or under tree roots or rocks. Burrows have multiple chambers with different functions: a chamber for sleeping, one for food storage, and even a nursery chamber for raising their young.

They are excellent diggers and the Meadow Jumping Mouse is also reported to be a decent swimmer, using the water to escape from predators. These little creatures have also been observed to dive; a maximum depth of four feet has been recorded!

You'll be hard-pressed to find the tracks or trails of jumping mice, for they do not use runways or tunnels like meadow voles, and they are deep in hibernation by the time it snows. In October the jumping mouse makes a dry flimsy nest a foot or two below the ground and with its tail curled round its body lies dormant there until April, though they may wake every few weeks to go to the bathroom and eat from their food stashes. Body temperature drops from 99°F to 36°F, and some estimate that only 1/3 of mice going into hibernation survive; 2/3 are eaten by predators or die of hypothermia.

At Wild Things Sanctuary, the brood of Woodland Jumping Mice has displayed extraordinary acrobatic abilities, leaping about and crawling upside-down on cover of the cage. They came to the sanctuary in late summer and will be staying through the winter as they did not put on enough weight in time to survive their long hibernation.

Stay tuned...

Bats are in trouble!

A devastating syndrome is threatening bat populations. Since its appearance in 2006, White Nose Syndrome (WNS) has been implicated in the deaths of more than a million bats in the eastern United States, with over half of that number perishing in the last year. WNS is possibly the most devastating wildlife disease to hit North America in recorded history, threatening several species of bats, and its etiology is still uncertain. The Little Brown Bat, once one of the most populous predators in North America, is facing extinction within the next 16 years. Bats are an essential part of our environment and without them and their appetite for insects we face severe crop damage and ecological disaster. Join The Wild Times spring/summer 2011 edition to learn more about these fascinating flying mammals and the frightening disease threatening them.

I'd like to help Wild Things Sanctuary!

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

You can also donate with a credit card online at: www.wildthingsanctuary.org

Please make cheques payable to **Wild Things Sanctuary** and send to:
Wild Things Sanctuary, P.O. Box 713, Ithaca, NY 14851.





Dear Wild Times,

I couldn't believe it: I had 5 babies this year! It's hard enough trying to raise 3 by yourself, but 5 is really tough! As you know, raccoon babies are especially vocal and demanding and are constantly crying for food and attention. With 5 little ones to mind I was hardly ever able to get out and feed myself! A few times I had to go out during the day to hunt for something to eat. Some humans saw me and chased me away and appeared to be very agitated. I wasn't interested in them and wished they had just let me alone so I could find food and go back to my babies. We usually try to be out at night and avoid humans, but why won't they let us share the daytime with them from time to time??

Thanks for helping!

Mrs. Ringo Raccoon

Dear Mrs. Raccoon,

Humans believe that raccoons are purely nocturnal animals that never come out during the day. When people see raccoons in the day they assume that they have rabies. We all know that this isn't necessarily true and that sometimes you all just have to wake up "early" or stay up later to find something to eat. This is especially true of young raccoons or nursing mothers. Humans, don't be alarmed if you see a nocturnal animal out during the day unless they are behaving strangely or obviously injured. In that case, call a wildlife rehabilitator!

Good luck with your 5 little ones,

The Wild One

Dear Wild One,

Why don't people like me? I had been living under a deck for several years, catching lots of yummy mice and insects and was very happy living there. But then new people came to live in the house and they had me trapped and removed. It made me sad.

Hope you can give me some input,

Skunky

Dear Skunky,

You are right; most people do not like skunks. This is very misguided because skunks are a gentle species and provide a great service to humans by catching mice and other pesky critters like insects and snakes. It is my understanding that most people don't like skunks because you can spray and that is really smelly. However, they should know that you will only spray if they feel truly threatened. Skunks don't see very well and if something or someone suddenly appears in their face it scares them. Humans, if you see a skunk make sure that it knows you are present by talking and moving slowly, so that it won't spray. Skunks will spray an overly energetic in-your-face dog, which is another reason why it is important to keep an eye on your pets when they go outside. Be grateful if you have a skunk living nearby: it will provide pest removal service free of charge!

All the best in your new home,

The Wild One

**For more information on all of these topics, see
www.wildthingssanctuary.org or call Wild Things Sanctuary
for advice: (607) 200 4100**

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