

# The Wild Times

A newsletter from Wild Things Sanctuary, Inc. • Winter 2018

## Wild Things Sanctuary Celebrates 10 Years!

Happy Holidays to one and all! We have a lot to celebrate this year: 10 years of helping wild things! The stories could fill hundreds of pages—with laughter and tears, tragedies and triumphs. Fainting fawns, bats in toilets, baby squirrels stuck together with tree sap, “roadkill” come back to life, baby owls raised in baskets, an opossum mother who stuffed orphans into her pouch, jumping mice knocking the lids off cages with their “popcorning,” and even a weasel who stole all the toys from the other patients.

As of this past fall we’ve looked after about 1,100 wild patients of approximately 70 species. Wild Things Sanctuary started

specializing in bat care in 2012, but check out the stories inside to see some of the other species we’ve worked with over the years.

Together we have built a place for wild things to get better and feel safe. For this year’s newsletter I wanted to include the voices of people who have been part of our wild family over the years—supporters, volunteers, and colleagues. I am truly grateful to share this journey with all of you!

*Victoria Campbell*  
Victoria Campbell, President & Founder



2008 was our first holiday season at Wild Things Sanctuary. The sign has since broken, the tree has fallen down, but I’m still standing, thanks to all of your support!



**Finding a home:** A dilapidated, poorly constructed room with a leaking roof was transformed into the hospital room in 2009. Last winter it was a hibernacula for 96 bat patients with temperature maintained between 45-50° Fahrenheit, and kept at 60-80 percent humidity, to try to mimic a cave setting.



**The ups & downs:** In 2011, Lowell Garner constructed a fantastic outdoor cage to house a fawn who had narcolepsy and needed to be kept outdoors in a safe place until he outgrew the condition. It was a great addition and was used for lots of other animals as well until it collapsed under heavy snow in 2014. We were just as crushed as the cage until Jake Hill volunteered to build the wonderful “bat palace”—a flight cage for the bat patients to learn how to fly after recovering from injuries, or learning as pups for the first time.

# REFLECTIONS ON 10 YEARS OF WILD THINGS SANCTUARY

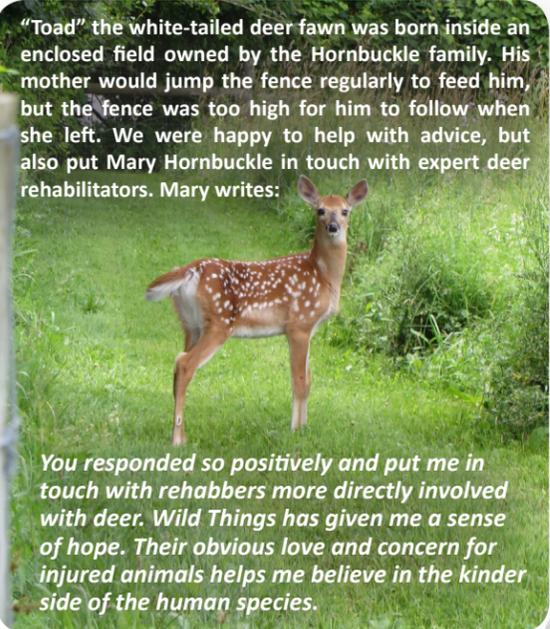


Ithaca, New York, is home to the famous Cornell Bird Cams **Red-tailed Hawks**. In 2014 when **E3**, one of the year's chicks, was injured, Wild Things was able to help get him to the Cornell Wildlife Clinic. He is now a hawk ambassador at Cornell's Raptor Center. We are grateful that many of his fans have helped support our work. As **Barbara Hodges** writes from Florida:

*I learned of Wild Things Sanctuary when you rescued E3. Since then, I am a steadfast fan!*

**Cindy and Karel Sedlacek** watch the hawks all year and monitor their well-being. Cindy writes:

*We've sought advice about pigeons to hawks and Victoria takes the utmost care with each case. Wild Things is the first place we call when we find an animal in distress, and we are very proud to support this organization.*



"Toad" the white-tailed deer fawn was born inside an enclosed field owned by the Hornbuckle family. His mother would jump the fence regularly to feed him, but the fence was too high for him to follow when she left. We were happy to help with advice, but also put Mary Hornbuckle in touch with expert deer rehabilitators. Mary writes:

*You responded so positively and put me in touch with rehabbers more directly involved with deer. Wild Things has given me a sense of hope. Their obvious love and concern for injured animals helps me believe in the kinder side of the human species.*



When we took in a **fawn** with narcolepsy, the young deer needed an outdoor area so he wouldn't acclimate to humans, but he also needed a soft floor in case he fell over. **Lowell Garner** dropped everything to build an enclosure, where the fawn was safe until he grew out of his condition. This is just one of many times Lowell has stepped up to help us. We are very grateful to know him. He writes:

*For those of us who care deeply about animals, having Wild Things Sanctuary in our community is a rare treasure. Every being they are able to save and reunite with the natural world—or better yet with a mother or mate—somehow evens the score against mankind's disregard for other living beings. Our community has no idea how fortunate we are to have Victoria and her Wild Things. She works so hard; tough when you also have to keep up with a day job to pay bills. We owe her our deepest gratitude.*



**Bob McGuire** is a sound recordist who chronicles wildlife. He writes:

*My fondest memory was being allowed to record the sound of a baby raccoon purring while it was being fed. I bet it is the only one in the world!*

*Victoria has put together an amazing operation and kept it running all these years. I am especially proud that Wild Things Sanctuary has taken on the rehab of bats. The social media postings of cases is an extremely important educational tool to help people realize that bats should be appreciated.*



The **Gregorys** supported Wild Things Sanctuary before it was even an official rehabilitation center. **Nerys** writes:

*Peter and I first met Victoria one very cold and miserable day at Thanksgiving many years ago, before she even opened Wild Things! We called many places for help, as we were very concerned that a **Purple Finch** was in distress.*

*Victoria arrived with a net in hand, swooped the little creature up and put him in a box. An impossible feat for us! After treatment for conjunctivitis, she returned him to us and he was released*

*from our deck and back into our neighborhood. How wonderful. Without this help he would have surely died a slow death. Wild Things is the very best organization for stranded, sick, or injured animals.*



We couldn't have made it through last winter without **Meghan Roblee**! Wild Things ended up overwintering 96 bat patients, and there were some nights we worked until midnight caring for all the animals. Meghan moved to Colorado last spring to work at Ethos Diagnostic Science. We miss her, but are very happy to hear she is hoping to pursue wildlife rehabilitation in her new state. I also owe her many thanks for teaching me some useful diagnostic procedures.

*Volunteering at Wild Things Sanctuary as a rabies-licensed wildlife rehabilitator opened up a new world to me of working with animals that have a strong instinct to hibernate. "Prog" (pictured above) was a special bat to me, and was extremely resistant in wanting to eat and gain weight after being rescued, so every week we would wake him up, warm him, and patiently feed him mealworms so that he could maintain an acceptable weight throughout the winter. I think this shows how much care WTS puts into each individual in their care.*

On New Year's Eve 2011, I got a call from New York City about an injured bird. **Jayanthi Kallum** had found an injured American Woodcock right in the city and I helped her find a place to bring it for care. Within six months she had left her corporate position in NYC and moved to the Finger Lakes to learn organic farming and wildlife rehabilitation. She volunteered at Wild Things in 2012 and in 2015 moved to Bangalore, India, and opened the **Avian and Reptile Rehabilitation Trust**, which treats more than 2,000 animals a year. Here's what she shares about her experience with Wild Things:



*Volunteering at WTS helped me understand the intricacies of wildlife rehabilitation and laid the foundation for my wildlife rehabilitation career. The two things about WTS that stood out for me were Victoria's determined efforts to pursue continuous research on white-nose syndrome by keeping herself abreast of latest developments on the topic, and her passion towards raising awareness about the importance of bat conservation.*

*I strongly believe that wildlife rehabilitation can act as a gateway towards conservation by educating the general public, who are usually able to connect with individual animals, about the broader issues that wildlife species face and the remedial actions that they can take. Victoria constantly strives to do that by educating herself and spreading awareness.*

*It brings me great joy to know that she went on to specialize on bats and continues to advocate for them. I wish Victoria and the Wild Things Sanctuary, all the very best in all their future endeavors.*

**Duncan Yandell** volunteered at Wild Things a decade ago as an undergraduate at Cornell. Since then he's juggled work as a scientist and a musician (he is quite a wild thing on the fiddle!), but is always on the lookout for wildlife in trouble. We are grateful that he comes back from time to time to help out.

*I began volunteering at Wild Things as an undergraduate, and it quickly became as much a sanctuary for me as it is for the patients. Over the years Victoria has tutored me in various aspects of the organization, from patient care and facility management to social media engagement, and I continue to draw upon those experiences throughout my life. As an organization, WTS provides an essential service through being a local interface for human-wildlife interaction; as a person, Victoria is a selfless champion for every wild thing she meets.*



**Melissa Icaza** volunteered as an undergraduate in 2011. This year she graduated from Tufts veterinary school and is currently doing postdoctoral work at M.I.T. *Thank you for the great opportunity you provided me, I was an extremely inexperienced, awkward volunteer and in hindsight I was likely more trouble than I was worth. However, by giving me the opportunity that you did, I was able to find the experience, motivation, and inspiration I needed to pursue my career. Since then, I've worked in zoo settings and in sea turtle rehabilitation and conservation. I'm now in vet school, looking to work with wildlife to further my potential contributions to the field. Your tireless efforts were and still are a source of inspiration for me. I hope that you continue give students the same chance you gave me, and one day I hope to be able to do the same.*



**Emma Clausen** was a young teenager when she volunteered at Wild Things. Now, she works at a cancer research lab and is applying to medical school. What does she remember about her time here?



*The time I spent at Wild Things was so much fun and honestly one of the most memorable experiences of my life. The most memorable patients for me were a group of baby **opossums** that had been orphaned. Before this I don't think I had ever seen an opossum let alone interacted with one. I was really surprised by how cute and gentle they were. I think my favorite thing about Wild Things was just how dedicated [it is] to caring for patients and educating volunteers (and the public) about wildlife. It was very inspiring and motivating. I have always loved animals and Wild Things gave me a truly unique opportunity to help care for the creatures that need it most.*



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## Mission Statement

Wild Things Sanctuary, Inc. (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.

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.

WTS specializes in caring for native bats, a beneficial group of animals in desperate need of care as numbers continue to decline due to disease and misunderstanding.



Keep up with us on Facebook,  
[www.wildthingsanctuary.org](http://www.wildthingsanctuary.org), or  
[www.bats911.org](http://www.bats911.org)



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Enjoy and share!



One of the Northern long-eared patients at WTS.

## Winged hope

When our third **Northern long-eared bat** arrived within a year—a species on the Endangered Species list due to white-nose syndrome—the state biologist told us that we get more of this species than anywhere in New York, even

though they account for less than 3% of Wild Things' patients. Releasing two healthy females this year gives hope to a crashing species.

*Wildlife rehabilitators often specialize in one type of wildlife to ensure that they can provide the safest and most successful chance of rehabilitation to the animals they care for. Even then, every year rehabilitators still lose some of their rescues, and they have to say goodbye to the successful rescues. It's emotional work no matter the outcome.*

*Wild Things Sanctuary is unique in that it is the only bat rehabilitation facility for a large area in New York. If WTS is unable to accept a bat due to space, distance, funding, or any other reason, there is no other local option. As bat populations are still struggling to recover from white-nose syndrome, each bat that cannot be accepted is an additional loss to a struggling species. Imagine being a rescue in this position. -C.M.*

**Special thanks to our 2018 volunteers and batmobile drivers:** Jan Beal, Lacey Brown, Jennifer Fan, Helena Hauck de Oliveira, Emmy Hirsch, Loren Lassiter, Pat Leonard, Max Hermanson, Alexandra Prado, Amanda Michelson, Victoria Perez, Lexie Richter, Megan Roblee, Jan Safran, Richard Sidhom, Julie Watiker, Duncan Yandell, and our vets: Bridget Barry and Brian Collins.

## First healthy Little brown in a decade

Eight grams of joy arrived this fall: the first healthy **Little brown bat** to come to WTS in 10 years! This male is a youngster, about 4–5 months old when he arrived. He was found hanging on the side of a building in the freezing cold. He was a good weight, indicating he was hunting well, but he hadn't quite mastered the art of finding a hibernation spot. He will overwinter at Wild Things, safe from white-nose syndrome. Thanks to **John Hatfield** at **Wildlife Resolutions** for his rescue.



Little brown bat in the cold.

## Did I make the right decision?

One of the toughest decisions over the last 10 years was choosing to specialize in bat care. My reasons were sound: populations were plummeting because of white-nose syndrome, thousands are killed because of fear and misinformation, and New York did not have any bat specialists.



Northern long-eared bat patient.

But, what about the other animals in need of help? What about the Wild Things supporters, would they feel let down? Five years on and I've never been sorry for making the choice. In 2018 alone I've cared for 167 so far—a good indication of the need for bat care—and people have been incredibly supportive. **Lexie Richter** is one such supporter. She writes:

*Wild Things spreads compassion to the community. I will forever have a special place in my heart for bats thanks to Wild Things Sanctuary, who made me realize just how truly incredible bats are. Bats all over the world are being threatened by humans and environmental factors. The world needs more places like Wild Things to help rehabilitate, educate, and advocate for the bats!*