

The Wild Times

A newsletter from Wild Things Sanctuary, Inc. • Winter 2019

Happy Holidays Wild Things Community!

Happy Holidays to one and all! I can't believe another year has come and gone—time flies when there is a non-stop revolving door of patients to look after, and rescues to coordinate. What's been really neat to see in 2019 is how the Wild Things Sanctuary community has taken shape, making it possible to help more people and animals than ever before.

When you look up the word "community" in the dictionary, the first definition is "a unified body of individuals" (Merriam Webster). I love that idea—it sounds so powerful and secure. But as you read through the definitions, the word loses its strength, ending up with the third and final definition: "society at large."

Wild Things has always had a great support network, and has been firmly fixed somewhere in the middle of these definitions, a community having a "common character" (definition 2c). One thing that we all have in common is a love of animals and desire to help them. And it's been amazing how much that love has accomplished.

But something changed this year. It was like a switch was turned on that boosted us right into definition number one, and we have become a unified body, working together to save so many special little lives.

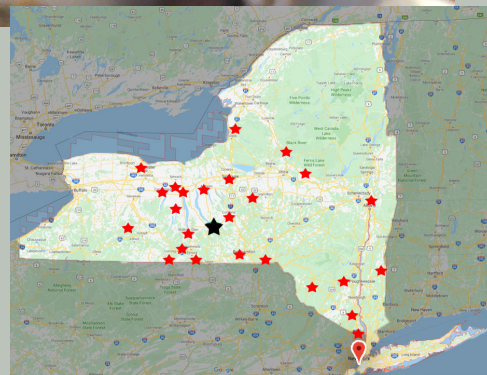
From the people who find animals in trouble, the batmobile rescue drivers who help with bat rescue transport, Tompkins County Health Department and local wildlife workers who help educate and assist, fellow wildlife rehabilitators, and veterinarians who volunteer their expertise, it has been remarkable to see what we can achieve when we all come together!

Quite apart from the 200 or so bat patients who were treated this year at Wild Things, I'm seeing a trend in our area of people becoming more

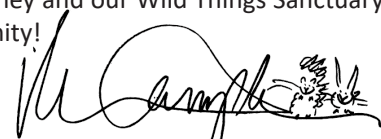
and more bat friendly and aware of how their actions can make a big difference. This year more local homeowners, and even big institutions like Cornell University, reached out to learn about humane solutions to keep bats out of buildings. More veterinarians and vet students have asked to learn about bat care, and groups have asked for talks to learn about bats.



Varick the Eastern red bat, curled up in his "butt blanket," was found on the ground in Downtown Manhattan on a cold November day. Thanks to volunteer batmobile drivers, he was brought to Wild Things Sanctuary to spend the winter. Red stars on the New York's state map mark rescue pick-up locations, the black star is Wild Things. Efforts are made to return the animal to where it was found when possible. Photo by Helena Hauck de Oliveira, map modified from Google Maps.



Exciting, batty times ahead! Thank you for extending our reach, and being part of the journey and our Wild Things Sanctuary community!

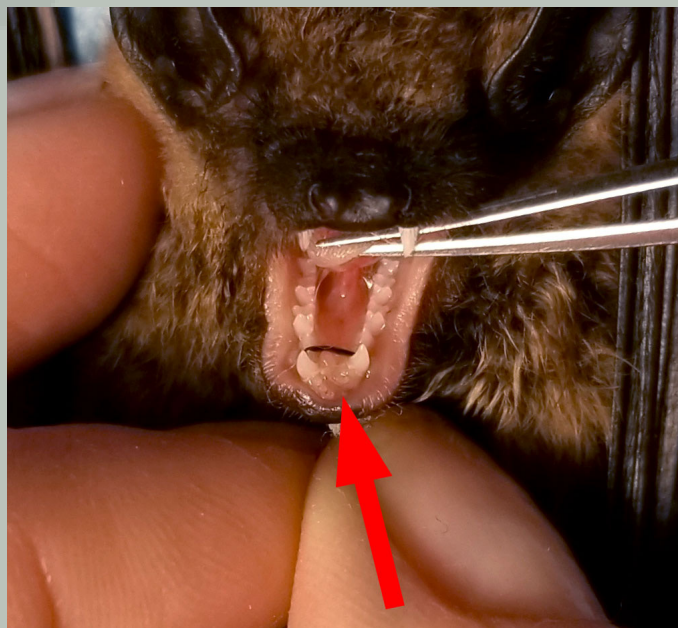

Victoria Campbell, President & Founder

All In a Day's Work: Tough Cases in 2019

Running a wildlife rehabilitation center means that you never know what each hour is going to bring—every phone call or email may totally change the course of the day. You have to get very good at thinking on your feet, mental and physical juggling, and keeping any "OMG, HOW THE HECK AM I GOING TO DEAL WITH THIS???" thoughts well in control. This year a few tough cases also ignited a lot of creative thinking to get patients better and back to the skies.

When **Jawbone the Big brown bat** arrived during the winter he looked in decent shape, probably just a bat who got stuck outside in the cold. When he was settled in, I got ready to feed him his first meal, and he dug in ravenously, but something was strange. His tiny jaw was all over the place and the food was going everywhere. This little guy had a broken lower jaw. How do you fix that? Thanks to Dr. Brian Collins who suggested using the same technique that veterinarians use for pets—but instead of a wire, I used a thin suture to sew Jawbone's mandible back in place. He was given a soft diet, plus pain medication. Within two months he was back on solid food and a member of the Clean Plate Club. He was released this spring. Go, Jawbone!

Moosewood the Big brown bat arrived with an awful looking broken wing, possibly hit by a car. The first thing I did was to remind myself: "Don't freak out! THINK." The break was fresh and was not



Jawbone's surgery was a success. It was a great day when I saw his plate totally empty! Arrow points to the break.

NB: Bats should always be handled with gloves, but this was such a tiny surgery that full dexterity was required! Jawbone was under anesthesia and fast asleep when this photo was taken.



Before: Luckily, the break was in the middle of the radius (forearm bone).



After: 3 months later it was almost impossible to tell the wing had been injured.



A body wrap kept the wrist and elbow from rotating.



The radius pinned with a thin, sterile needle.

on a joint, but midway along the bone: this was fixable.

After cleaning and stabilizing the wing, I waited for a few days to make sure he was in good shape and no longer in shock. Thanks to Dr. Bridget Barry and Cornerstone Veterinary Hospital for letting me use their X-ray and getting me very long, thin, sterile syringes that could be used to pin such a small bone (arrow points to the pin in the X-ray image). He was given antibiotics, pain and anti-inflammatory medication, and put in a body wrap for almost two months. I was thrilled that the bone healed so well. He is still undergoing physical therapy to get his wing strong enough for release.

Your year-end gift makes a BIG difference to Wild Things!

Wild Things Sanctuary, Inc. is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization, EIN#: 68-0573815.

All donations are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

Please send to: **Wild Things Sanctuary, Inc., P.O. Box 713, Ithaca, NY 14851**

You can also donate online at www.wildthingssanctuary.org

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____



Some patients need special diets. When Jawbone's jaw was healing we designed a special "bat shake" that was full of all the nutrients he needed, but soft, so no chewing was required. Your donation ensures that all the wild things here have full bellies regardless of their special needs.



I'm excited to be giving a talk for the Cornell vet student **Zoo and Wildlife Society (ZAWS)** next month. Even if students never see a bat, bat rehabilitation has taught me a lot about animal care, diagnostics, and creative medical solutions, and I am excited to share my knowledge. And one day, if they do get an injured bat in their practice, hopefully this will get them prepared and empowered to help!

Also, thanks to the **Susquehanna Valley Audubon Society** for hosting a talk this year. Interested in a talk? Let us know, we love spreading the batty word!



In the News

A big thanks to the **Ithaca Journal** for featuring Wild Things Sanctuary on the front page this October! "Crow," a Big brown bat with a broken wing was the cover star.

Also, thank you to **Susan Lustick** for hosting Wild Things on her radio show.



Photo by Susan Newman.



Peanut the Gray Fox

Before Wild Things specialized in bats, we had quite a few gray fox patients, and still have a release cage in the woods that was built for this species. So, when a call came from a friend that a late-born gray fox kit was found all alone with no sign of a mama around, we were happy to help!

Little Peanut arrived a few weeks before baby bat season began, so I knew I'd have time to care for her and get her all set up and ready to live in the Wild Things woods. Fox need special formula and lots of enrichment so they will be successful as independent wild things. Peanut also received vaccinations for distemper and rabies to help keep her safe.

A few weeks after she was allowed to run outside, she started bringing prey back to her "den" (the open release cage), and I knew she'd do great! She is now living at large in the woods and I don't see her, but I have seen some small fox footprints in the snow this month!



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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.wildthingssanctuary.org, or
www.bats911.org



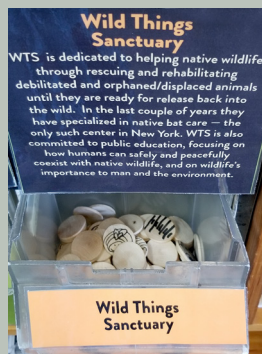
This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.
Enjoy and share!

Thanks to the Wild Things Community!

Special thanks to our 2019 volunteers and batmobile drivers: Z. Babbit; L. Bowen; L. Brown; J. Fan; L. Garner; R. Guttridge; H. Hauck de Oliveira; J. Hermanson; M. Hermanson; J. Johnson; A. Kelly; L. Lassiter; S. Kowalczyk; P. Leonard; J. McKenzie; A. Michaelson; M. Monast; C. Mosher; S. Newman; A. Palmer; V. Perez; C. Persons; L. Richter; A. Roy; J. Safran; N. Smith; S. Snyder; M. Usery; A. Venuti; A. Verahrami; J. Watiker; G. Whitman; D. Yandell. Hope I remembered everyone!

Our wonderful veterinarians: B. Barry, B. Collins, E. Davies, L. Donato & Radnor staff, the team at the Cornell Animal Diagnostic Center, staff at the Cornerstone Veterinary Clinic.

Also: S. Stronsick at the Pennsylvania Bat Rescue; Wildlife Resolutions; the Tompkins County Health Department; C. Herzog at the NYSDEC; D. Wohlgenuth at Wildlife Wishing Well; J. Soprano at Kindred Kingdoms; R. McMahon at the Wild Bird Fund; T. Volke at The Nature's Way; H. Powell and colleagues at my Cornell University "day" job for supporting my work with WTS.



Ithaca's **Greenstar** chose Wild Things as a charity for their Bring Your Own Bag program: Each customer gets a token worth 5 cents when they bring their own shopping bag to the market. We received over \$800 in donations! WOW, that means that over 16,100 tokens were put in our box, almost 180 tokens a day!

The **Ithaca post office** and my postman get a BIG thank you for always making sure the mealworms for the bats arrive rain, shine, or snow...and sorry about the leaking worms!



"Little Bat" Update

It's always exciting to see one of the smaller *Myotis* species of bats—these are the species that have drastically declined due to white-nose syndrome.

This year we hosted a juvenile **Northern long-eared bat**, and had four **Eastern small-footed bats**! In the previous 6 years we had only received 2 small-footed, so this was a surprise! Sadly two had fatal injuries, but one young female did great and was released, and one little male, "Heathcliff," will be staying at Wild Things this winter after being disturbed in hibernation. They are one of the smallest bats in North America. Heathcliff is about 6.5 grams, about the weight of 3 dimes.



Heathcliff is about four months old.

HELP, there's a bat in my house!!

- 1) Don't freak out: the little bat is much more terrified than you!
- 2) Keep your eyes on the bat so you know where it is in case it needs to be caught and released.
- 3) Open windows so it can get out on its own, or when it lands, carefully catch like you would a big insect. Wear gloves to be safe. Do NOT use a net.
- 4) During the winter, call a wildlife rehabilitator—it may be too cold to release a bat outside.
- 5) Bats do not carry rabies, they get sick and die like other animals. Rabies is very rare—less than 1% of wild bats are sick, but you still want to be safe. The virus is in saliva, so is usually transmitted by a bite. Do not handle the bat (or any unknown animal) with bare hands. Call your local health department if you are worried about rabies exposure.
- 6) Find humane bat exclusion experts to help determine how to keep bats out of your home—only use people with experience, knowledge about bat behavior, and a proven positive track record.



Find out more on
www.bats911.org