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**Wildlife Rehabilitation
Society of Edmonton**
Compassionate Care of Injured and Orphaned Wildlife



Notes from the Heronry

Congratulations!

From Cheryl Feldstein, Executive Director

This has been a very fun and memorable summer filled with the excitement of moving into a new facility, working with terrific volunteers, summer students and staff, and caring for all sorts of interesting patients. But the highlight of everyone's summer was July 28th when WRSE received a call announcing the birth of Kristin and Chris Arnot's beautiful daughter Robyn Christine! Congratulations and best of luck to the new family from everyone here at WRSE! I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our volunteer intern and all of our summer students and volunteers. Each one of you has made a huge difference in this organization. Thank you.

Wild Summer

By Stephanie May

Whew! We can all breathe a little easier with baby season coming to a close. I don't know about you guys, but I'm exhausted! The shelter received a total of 640 babies this summer from over 40 species of wildlife. Some of the highest numbers included 174 assorted ducklings, 97 American Robins, 48 American Crows, 37 Red Squirrels, 35 Black-billed Magpies, and 22 goslings. The list of unique babies from this summer includes Northern Flickers that sounded like pinball machines, baby beavers that threw temper tantrums, baby foxes that were singed from a grass fire and acted as tough as lions, young Swainson's Hawks that just couldn't get enough of that quail meat, the princess Purple Finch, young grebes that learned a dry landing is a bad thing and the list goes on. That doesn't even include the many adult patients brought in this summer. I could write a novel based on the experiences from the past four months, but I will tell you about just one of them. We received a gosling with head trauma,

twisting his head to one side. We were very worried about him, but after a week of medical attention the little guy recuperated. He would hide behind his plastic adult goose when we went in to feed or clean his cage. I found him a foster family the day he was ready to go. If you're having a bad day and need something to cheer you up, fostering a goose is the absolute best 'pick-me-up' I have ever experienced! Krista and I took the gosling out to the pond where the family was hanging out close to shore. We let him out of his carrier and he began peeping hysterically when he saw the goose family. He ran into the water flapping his stubby wings and stamping his feet making a huge splashing display and immediately swam to the middle of the group. The other goslings, surprised by the arrival of this little maniac, hissed for two seconds and then went back to following the parents. The little guy fit right in as part of the family and was still there the following week when I went back to do a head count. What a happy ending!



**Kristin, Director of
Wildlife Services, and
Robyn Christine Arnot**

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A Whirl of a Squirrel

I became a volunteer at the Wildlife Rehabilitation Society of Edmonton two years ago. After hearing about the experiences my friend had at WRSE, I knew right then and there it was something I wanted to do too. My love for animals and nature is very strong, so the decision to volunteer was a no-brainer for me. I booked an orientation date and signed up in the fall of 2007.



Young Red Squirrel being hand fed a special formula

Springtime is always the busiest time: injured and orphaned birds and mammals of many different species are brought to the shelter. That spring I had the opportunity to feed baby robins,

baby magpies and some Cedar Waxwings. I was shocked at how much baby birds eat. The saying "you eat like a bird" did not seem appropriate when I saw how ravenous these little birds were.

I was also interested in becoming a squirrel nanny. Baby squirrels need to be fed every three hours, so nannies bring them home overnight. Anyone rehabbing mammals for WRSE needs to be immunized for rabies, so last fall I had a series of three rabies immunization shots. In June, I jumped at the chance to take a turn at being a squirrel nanny. I was so excited I could hardly wait to pick him up. This little fella was a three-week-old Red Squirrel. His eyes were still closed and he weighed in at 40 grams. He was in a little box lined with fleece and a heating pad. I was given syringes and a mixture of zoologic and esbilac which is the formula they are fed. I was very nervous, but for being so tiny and fragile, this little fella was strong. He would hold the syringe with his little feet and would calm right down when he was feeding. After drinking two cc's of formula, he needed to be stimulated to pee. This was done by rubbing a warm, wet piece of paper towel on his penis until little urine droplets dripped out. This mimics what the mother would do to the baby to get

him to pee. It was an awesome experience to feed a wild baby animal and an evening I will never forget. The next morning, I took him back to the shelter and then drove to work.

In the 46 days he was rehabbed, he was fed more than 168 times. On the morning of his 11th day at the shelter, his eyes opened. On the 17th day he was drinking and eating from a dish, and on his 33rd day he was moved outside to a climber cage. His solid food consisted of nuts, broccoli, cob corn and rodent chow. He gained more than 100 grams in weight. When the Red Squirrel started "stashing" food, we knew he was ready to be released.

One of the staff called to ask if I was interested in releasing him, and again I jumped at the chance. Catching him and moving him from his climber cage into a cat crate for transport was a challenge as he had become a strong, active squirrel. I took him up to North Buck Lake, which was close to where he was found. I put the crate on a table in the bush next to a huge poplar tree. I opened up his cage and after coming out and scurrying back in five times, he finally took off into the thick bush. I heard him chatter over the weekend, and the following weekend I went back up to the lake. He was nearby making lots of noise, but this time he had two friends with him.

He has settled in nicely and likes to tease the dogs by baiting them. He sits at the base of a tree and squeaks, and when the dogs bark and scamper over he scurries up the tree and chatters at them—it's pretty funny. We call him "Chatty" because he's so vocal and sounds so happy. I am proud of, and deeply appreciate, everyone who participated in Chatty's survival, and I relish the idea of having him around in camp for many years to come.



Juvenile Red Squirrel released in 2009

King of Fishers

One of our extraordinary patients this summer was a striking female Belted Kingfisher. WRSE has not had the pleasure of accommodating a kingfisher since 2006. This one was sitting in someone's front yard in Sherwood Park, a strange place for a kingfisher to be found. The finder was so intrigued he called the Sherwood Park Newspaper to do a story on the stunning bird.

Belted Kingfishers live mainly near lakes and rivers where they defend fishing territory and nest in soil cliffs. They use their long, sharp bill to dig a tunnel in the earth to create a nest for the season. They also use their bill when skillfully diving into the water to catch unsuspecting fish. In Reader's Digest's *Book of North American Birds*, Belted Kingfishers are described as "aggressive loners for most of the year ... but then, for a few weeks, the mated pairs work together as well-disciplined teams."

Being done with the



Belted Kingfisher being put in her naturalized cage

breeding season, this kingfisher, one way or another, got herself into trouble. She came in with a fractured pelvis which made her little feet very weak. Dr. Heather Steele examined her and recommended three to four weeks of cage rest in the hope that the fracture would heal. We quickly grew nervous knowing that it would be a challenge to get this diving bird to eat any food.

I went to PJ's Pets on Calgary Trail and told them the story. The people there were so concerned they offered to donate feeder fish for the duration of her stay. We put in a few fish and

By Stephanie May

then crossed our fingers for good luck. A couple hours later, I peeked in to see if there had been any action. Sure enough, she was sitting on her perch just above the fish bowl, feathers glistening with droplets of water from dunking in and eating all of the fish. I was so excited! This meant we had a good chance at keeping her tummy full while she recovered. Unfortunately, food and rest were not enough to save this fine bird. She likely had extensive internal damage not visible to us, and sadly, she died of those injuries a day later.

Even though this story does not have a happy ending, it was amazing to see the reaction and awareness this one bird sparked in the community. I learn something new every day working at WRSE, and this day taught me that something as little as the two-day presence of one gorgeous wild bird can spread compassion throughout a community. And I thought Bald Eagles were powerful!

WRSE Fall Events

5th Annual Roni-Ride for Wildlife

Saturday, September 26
Nature lovers and horseback riders are raising money for WRSE in memory of a wonderful woman, Roni Irwin. For more information, email cljack@telusplanet.net



10th Annual Run Wild for Wildlife

Sunday, October 25th, 11:00 a.m. at Hawrelak Park
Please join us! Raise pledges to support WRSE and then walk or run in your favourite Halloween costume. Register today at wildlife-edm.ca



The WRSE would like to thank all of our participating veterinary clinics and community partners for their ongoing support in 2009!

WRSE would also like to thank:

- Alberta Lottery Fund
- Alberta SPCA
- Artist Response Team
- Canadian Natural Resources Ltd.
- City of Edmonton, Community Services
- CTV (Media sponsors for run)
- Delton Veterinary Hospital
- Edmonton Association of Small Animal Veterinarians
- Edmonton Veterinarians' Emergency Clinic
- EnCana Cares Foundation
- LRG Catering and Precision Drilling
- Sharks Club
- Solstice Canada Corporation
- Southside Animal Hospital and Dr. Heather Steele
- St. Albert Painters Guild
- Suncor Energy Foundation
- Syncrude Canada Ltd.
- TD Friends of the Environment Foundation
- TELUS
- The Wildbird General Store
- Town Centre Veterinary Hospital
- United Way

You Can Make A Difference!

▽ **YES! I would like to renew my membership today**

- \$50 Warbler (Family Membership)
- \$35 Red Squirrel (Single Membership)
- \$20 Volunteer Membership

▽ **Additional Donation** of \$ _____

(donations of \$20 or more are eligible for an official tax receipt. Additional donations are also accepted online at wildlife-edm.ca)

▽ **I would like more information on**

- How to leave a legacy through a bequest
- WRSE's monthly gift program (visit wildlife-edm.ca and sign up today)
- How I can fundraise on behalf of WRSE
- Doubling the amount of my gift through an employee matching program

Foster a Recovering Animal

Great gift idea! With a donation you can adopt a recovering animal. The gift recipient will receive a thank you card with a picture from a current or recent patient and its story of recovery and release.

- ▽ Bald Eagle (\$200)
- ▽ Red Fox (\$150)
- ▽ Great Horned Owl (\$100)
- ▽ Porcupine (\$75)
- ▽ American Robin (\$50)
- ▽ Red Squirrel (\$25)



Please send this gift to:

Name: _____

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Mail to WRSE: Box 66065, Heritage Postal Outlet, Edmonton, Alberta, T6J 6T4

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