



Notes from the Heronry

Snowy Owls Arriving in Record Numbers

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Thank you so much for your support in 2015, and we wish you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas!

How to get involved:

Volunteer: Please check our website for ways to volunteer. We rely on your commitment of time to successfully rehabilitate our wildlife patients.

Donate: You can donate on a one time basis or become a scheduled donor. Go to our website & click on CanadaHelps link or go to CanadaHelps.org. Donate \$25 a month & become a scheduled donor to ensure WRSE sustainability.

In Kind Donations: WRSE is always in need of household and food items. Please visit our Facebook page every Wednesday for an updated list or see our Sunday Drive on the 1st Sunday in the month to assist with our yearly goals.

Staff was alerted to the unusual situation when three Snowy Owls (SNOWs*) arrived in one day! The first two were trauma victims – one with a broken wing, the other, a broken leg. Both birds have since undergone surgery and are recovering gradually from their injuries. The third arrived on a private plane from the Fort McMurray area – weak, thin and sadly, did not survive the night. Since then, eight more owls have been admitted with injuries ranging from barbed wire entanglement to starvation. One has been released so far, and unfortunately five more have passed away, some within hours of arrival at the centre.

Once the birds are admitted, they undergo a full physical exam. They are weighed, and bloodwork & X-rays are done. The results are assessed and a plan is put in to place to address dehydration, starvation, fracture repair and nursing care.

Each bird seems to have its own personality, they often resent handling but do their best to tolerate the strange new situation they find themselves in. We noticed that many of the owls did not seem comfortable on the branches we provided for them, or they didn't use them at all! Since trees are scarce in the Arctic, it clicked that these young owls were not used to trees, so we switched the branches out for rocks and they seem to be much more comfortable.

It is not uncommon to have "irruptions" of SNOWs in the Edmonton area, but this year has been unusual in the numbers and the earliness of their arrival.

Why is this happening?

SNOWs are vulnerable to the normal fluctuations of their prey populations such as lemmings – their main food in the Arctic. If it has been a good year for lemmings, higher numbers of owl eggs are laid, hatched and fledged. Higher numbers of owls means higher competition for food. They must then start moving south to find more food. The habitat

*SNOW is the Bird Banding Laboratory's short form for Snowy Owl



WRSE SNOW Release by Henry Sanders

starts to change and the birds soon encounter the boreal forest – a huge expanse of trees difficult to hunt in when they are used to vast open spaces of the Arctic. Their body reserves can almost be depleted by the time they get past the forest.

Other hazards for these owls that may never have seen urbanization before are vehicles, barbed wire, power lines, buildings, and other wildlife and domestic animals. The young owls are learning to survive in in this new environment.

Unlike most owls, SNOWs are diurnal (active during the day) so keep an eye out for them in the daylight hours especially in large, open, snow-covered fields. **WRSE is open 7 days per week to accept Snowy Owls in need of treatment, please call the Wildlife Hotline (780-914-4118) or see wildlife-edm.ca for advice!**

N.B. Data such as age, sex, weight and feather samples are shared with institutions & individuals that research these wonderful birds.





Lloyd the Eagle Follow-up

In the last newsletter there was an article about the GoFundMe campaign for 'Lloyd' the Bald Eagle.

There was \$1650 raised to pay for Lloyd's care! Thank you for your help.

Lloyd was found near Lloydminster in June. Fortunately, he was found by some good samaritans and was brought to WRSE. When he came into our care, he was unable to stand and was unaware of

his surroundings. Staff suspected he got into something that poisoned his system.

In October, after 4 months of intensive care, he regained strength & flight conditioning. He was ready for release!

He was released at Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park, a beautiful wild area, near St. Albert.

Kristen, our volunteer coordinator was at the release & said, "He was a

challenging patient – very stressed out in captivity and needed quite intensive care, so it was so great to see him go!"

Lloyd gave us one last challenge the day he was released - he surprisingly last-minute grabbed his falconry hood and flew off with it, dropping it into the tall grass as he flew away!

Good luck Lloyd!

Thank you to everyone who assisted in Lloyd's recovery.

<http://globalnews.ca/news/2267280/bald-eagle-found-comatose-gets-new-lease-on-life/>

WRSE hosts Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation Course

At the end of November, WRSE hosted the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council's (IWRC) Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation Course.

The IWRC's mission is to provide science-based education & resources on wildlife rehab to promote wildlife conservation and welfare worldwide. The basic course is an

introduction for those just starting out in the field.

Our Director of Wildlife Services Kim B., Wildlife Tech Patti B., and Education Coordinator Carly S. assisted with the course over the weekend.

WRSE's goal with hosting these events is to build the skills of those who will be assisting with the care of

wildlife, whether staff or volunteers.

WRSE does plan on hosting the basic course again in the future, as well as the Advanced Wildlife Rehabilitation Course.

Thank you to Lisa Tretiak for teaching the course, who had a wealth of information for new rehabbers.

Quick look: 2014 – 2015 Comparisons

2015 has been the busiest year yet for all our programs!

There was a **72% increase** in the number of volunteers orientated, interviewed & trained during spring recruitment.

Educational opportunities were given to **1000 more** kids and adults in 2015!

In 2015, there was a **57% increase** in Facebook

likes, **24% increase** in Twitter followers, and a **126% increase** in Instagram followers!

We've seen a **12% increase** in hotline calls so far in 2015 (nearly 5400 calls total).

So far, wildlife patient numbers have **increased by 16%** (2140 animals as of December 19).

Wildlife Patient Groups



- Passerines
- Waterfowl
- Mammals
- Raptors
- Gulls
- Shorebird
- Gamebird
- Reptiles
- Amphibian





Notes from the Heronry

Message from the Executive Director – Tamie Perryment

As we wind up the year at WRSE I am pleased at what we have accomplished. This year has been full of increased numbers for our intake of wildlife (over 2000), our hotline calls (over 5000), the number of intakes per day (30-40) and the number of wildlife in one day (400) at one of our facilities, the Rehabilitation Centre. This has been a year of stretching our capacity in compassionately caring for wildlife and doing this with limited funds. This past year we struggled with funding due to a decrease in donations and a lack of sustainable funding.

This fall, the City of Edmonton assisted us with bridge funding of \$60,000 in October. I was able to make a presentation to the Community Services Committee at City Hall. The discussion went from our present needs to ongoing funding and how to provide a sustainable service to the City of Edmonton. At WRSE we have over 5000 people call a year asking for

information and assistance with injured or orphaned wildlife and 75% of those calls are from the City of Edmonton area. The time and care put into each call is very important.

In November I attended another Community Services Committee meeting where the Community Standards branch requested support for ongoing funding for \$100,000 for WRSE. This was passed by Council in December. I cannot say enough thanks to all the people who worked with me on this, in the Community Standards Branch and the support from the Community Services Committee. This is a huge achievement for WRSE and for the City of Edmonton residents in educating the public about, and caring for, injured and orphaned wildlife.

In September I wrote a letter on behalf of WRSE requesting again bridge funding from the Province. There are gaps in the work that is being done environmentally, and the Province regulates the

Wildlife Act. In October we learned they had approved this funding as well.

Regardless of the short term and long term funding, WRSE is still reliant largely on donations. Without your donations and in kind support we would not have made it through the year.

At this time of year what I want to leave people with is hope. WRSE has a lot of work to do to become fully sustainable, however we are on the right path. We continue as a team to give the best care to injured and orphaned wildlife. When we were threatened with severe funding shortages, the staff all committed to working through this difficult time together. The passion, curiosity, and hope for a community with wildlife we can all enjoy are shared by staff and Board alike.

Special thanks to Councillor Esslinger in Ward 2 for all her support and guidance.

Thank you all for your support in the past year.

Wishing you Peace on Earth at this time!



Compassionate Care for Injured and Orphaned Wildlife



The Wildlife Rehabilitation Society of Edmonton's mission is to provide compassionate care for injured and orphaned wildlife and to educate the public on the importance of wildlife in the community.

Staff Profile:

Kristen, Volunteer Coordinator/Wildlife Tech

Kristen T. has been with WRSE for over 2 years. She started as a summer intern in 2013, then was hired on as the Logistics & Administrative Support staff when WRSE and International Bird Rescue were handling the 2013 oil spill from Cold Lake.

She did an amazing job & brought many skills to creating the much needed Volunteer Coordinator

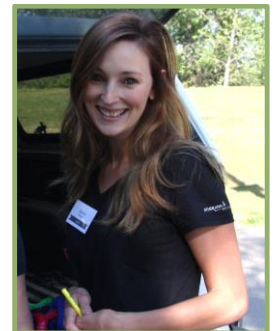
services. Kristen's skill in working with people combined with her knowledge of wildlife is a true asset and gift for the organization.

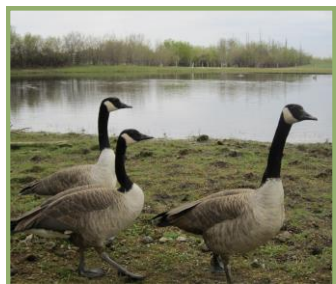
Through ongoing professional development and hard work, Kristen has plans for an even more successful year in 2016! "I want to focus on improving communication with our current volunteers and

make sure they get the support and appreciation that they deserve!"

One of Kristen's favourite parts of her job is when she gets to interact with all the amazing volunteers here to support WRSE.

Kristen works 4 days per week, Tuesday – Friday. To contact Kristen, e-mail volunteer@wildlife-edm.ca





Wildlife Rehabilitation Society of Edmonton
12515-128 Street
Edmonton AB T5L 1C9

Hotline: 780-914-4118
Admin Line: 780-433-0884
ED: 780-756-7856
Volunteer & Education Coordinator: 780-756-7855

E-mail: info@wildlife-edm.ca
Website: wildlife-edm.ca

Wild Goose Chases

Canada Geese (CAGOs) have adapted to living in our urbanized environment and are thriving. For many people, the return of the CAGO's 'V' in the sky signal the start of spring & new life!

While many people enjoy & appreciate the presence of these birds, they also have a number of concerns about their health and wellbeing.

In the spring and summer, people are concerned about the location of CAGO nests. Male CAGOs can be vigorous in defense of their nest and young and may rush at people in shopping malls or business lots. CAGOs also like to nest in locations such as balconies or rooftops. The female may settle into a planter and remain for a month or more until the eggs hatch. It is not unusual for CAGOs to choose a high elevation site for nesting. In a more 'wild' setting, the goslings jump from the nest and generally land safely. In the 'concrete jungle' of urban areas, the concern is that goslings are now landing on roads and sidewalks.

In the fall, people are concerned about geese that are unable to fly due to injuries sustained earlier in the year or during the hunting season.

Our goals are to: rehabilitate the injured geese, educate and respond to community concerns, respect the terms of our legal permits, and ensure the safety of our staff and volunteers.

Before proceeding with a rescue & capture program,

we needed to contact the Canadian Wildlife Service and ensure our permit could include active capture of CAGOs.

The CAGO is a federally protected migratory bird. Once the nesting process has begun, it is illegal to move the nest or remove the eggs. We work with the City of Edmonton, other agencies & veterinary clinics to provide education on how to prevent geese from nesting in unwanted locations.

In the fall, we can legally only attempt a capture if we have a strong likelihood of success. We know that repeated capture attempts only make the birds more wary and difficult to catch. The reality is that these birds do not understand that we are trying to help them!

The idiom 'Wild Goose Chase' means a hopeless pursuit. CAGOs are a difficult bird to catch, even when injured and when they have access to open water, they are nearly impossible to catch. WRSE staff wait until the water has frozen before we attempt capture to make sure that this is a safe process for both the bird and the rescuers.

Though we don't have an 'official rescue team', this is a special circumstance and we put together staff and volunteers to assist in a rescue. This depends on where the bird(s) are and what the situation is and who is available to help.

To organize the rescues of thirty or more geese (and

some ducks) this summer took time. One rescue can take up to 2-3 hours. Calls are logged into the master 'Goose Rescue List', along with caller information and location. Specific questions are asked during each call to determine the nature of the injury, the logistics of the location, and the well-being of the goose. Volunteer scouts are sent out to assess the situation. A plan is then put in place.

Rescue requests are not only from the Edmonton area but the Capital Region as well. WRSE fields hundreds of calls about Canada Geese starting in March and going straight through until the end of November. We are helping resident breeding birds as well as migratory geese from further north. People might not know that there are seven subspecies of Canada geese, many of which migrate through our area.

We have been able to team up with other agencies such as private wildlife control companies and some municipal agencies to assist with a capture. Slowly but surely WRSE staff have made their way through the list of CAGOs this fall!

Once the bird is captured, it is brought in for a thorough physical exam, blood work and X-rays, and each bird is assessed for rehabilitation and potential for release.

We will continue to work on this much needed program to improve our messaging to the public, provide education and provide the best possible care for injured wildlife!

*CAGO is the Bird Banding Laboratory's short form for Canada Goose

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