



ANNUAL REPORT

2016

Wildlife Rehabilitation
Society of Edmonton





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PRESIDENT'S REPORT, Jan - Dec 2016

Rhonda Skinner

First I would like to thank the volunteers, the staff and the board, our veterinarians, interns, students, donors, partners, and members for contributing to WRSE's success in 2016. It takes a dedicated team to care for our patients, educate the public, and keep the day-to-day operations running smoothly.

Given the state of Alberta's economy, securing operational funding was a challenge, but we prevailed and our staff and volunteers continued to serve the community and provided quality care for 2554 injured and orphaned birds and animals.

Over the past year the board and staff have been busy updating the strategic plan and vision. Our focus is on establishing sustainable funding with a long-term goal of building a new facility. We have also created a new mission statement that more accurately reflects what we do and increases our fundraising potential. Our new mission statement is "To deliver services to people of Northern Alberta with wildlife-related concerns by providing compassionate care to injured and orphaned wildlife and by educating our communities about humanely coexisting with wildlife." Our vision is "To provide world-class care for wildlife in need and to become Alberta's champion and resource for a respectful co-existence between people and wildlife."

We have another exciting change to announce. Although our corporate name will remain the Wildlife Rehabilitation Society of Edmonton, we are branding ourselves as Wild North. We are the northernmost wildlife rehabilitation centre in Alberta and the only one north of Red Deer. It's time we promote ourselves as such and gain the support of additional partners and funders.

We encourage you to spread the word about our new brand name and use Wild North any time you are referring to our organization.

In addition to these changes, staff are introducing a rescue program and expanding our education program. The board is grateful for the hard-working staff who continue to make our organization better and stronger every year and for our volunteers, partners, funders and members who support our efforts.

Thank you for coming tonight and for your continued support.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT, Jan - Dec 2016

Graham Currie

This past year was one of transition and change for the Wildlife Rehabilitation Society of Edmonton. I began as the Executive Director on March 2nd 2016 just as the busy season for WRSE was beginning. As I stepped into this role, I had the challenging task of analyzing the ins and outs of the organization, defining my role as E.D., and rolling out a plan of action to achieve our strategic vision.

STRATEGIC VISION

I spent my first few months getting to know the staff, the board, volunteers/supporters, and external stakeholders to help further my understanding of why WRSE was important to the community. From there, we (the board and the staff) agreed that we needed to clarify and revise our strategic plan and vision. During the summer, we held a few extensive meetings and reached consensus on many crucial high-level items. All strategic goals will work towards serving all of the communities of Northern Alberta to the fullest extent within our mandate of providing compassionate care for injured and orphaned wildlife. We intend to lead the way in defining what it means to provide world class wildlife rescue and rehabilitation services.

We are positioning ourselves to be key stakeholders with respective authorities in decisions and dialogues pertaining to wildlife management in the communities we serve. By engaging with other stakeholders, policy makers, and enforcement officers, we are working towards the goal of broadening our scope of capabilities under our permitting. We are also looking to broaden the services and educational outlets we are able to provide to Northern Alberta individuals, organizations, and communities.

In order to realize this vision of fully serving Northern Alberta as industry leaders, our staff must continuously train and understand industry best practices and trends, we must be well connected to various communities in strategic locations, and we must have proper equipment and facilities. Of course, to maintain these objectives, sustainable funding is critical and therefore will be a key focus going forward.

WORKING TOWARDS OUR VISION IN 2016

In working towards the updated strategic vision we identified various needs and implemented plans to achieve objectives. One of the primary needs identified was staffing. We redefined/restructured a few roles and added a few others:

First, the new roles:

Senior Rehabilitator: In April 2016 we hired Kristen King as our full-time senior rehabilitator. Kristen has proven crucial in providing professional wildlife care and supervisory duties for relief staff and interns, allowing our Director of Wildlife Services, Kim Blomme, to focus on strategy and program development. Kristen recently completed her basic and advanced wildlife rehabilitation certifications.

Office Administrator: Kasia Brytan (who is now our Events and Activities Coordinator) initially took on this role in May 2016. Since October, Jade Murphy has taken on this position. Jade has been instrumental in keeping our administration organized and compliant. She also provided much needed administrative support and leadership for virtually all initiatives and projects.

Manager of Donor Relations and Rescue Operations: Dale Gienow brings a wealth of experience to both aspects of this dual portfolio. While technically hired in 2017, we have been working closely with Dale as a consultant for various components of our organization since November. Dale has already demonstrated his ability to engage donors and sponsors in meaningful ways and is ready to roll out our new formalized rescue program this spring.

Redefined/Restructured Roles:

Volunteer and Events Coordinator: Following our most successful Run Wild for Wildlife ever, under the direction of our previous volunteer coordinator, Kristen Trudeau, I decided to expand the role to include the "events" component. The position is now held by Kasia Brytan, who fortunately is experienced and formally trained in stage management and therefore has lead various large event projects. Kasia and Kristen T. worked very effectively together ensuring a smooth transition as Kasia moved into the role in September.

Educational Programming Manager: Carly Stenhouse is excelling in her newly defined position. In September, Carly transitioned from being our education coordinator to her current role. Previously, Carly's role was largely focused on conducting presentations to students under the CCCU collaboration, JWAP. Seeing the potential for expansion of our education program as a way to reach larger audiences, as well generate revenue, Carly's focus is now program development and supervising education program staff and volunteers. As such, Jade Murphy now conducts a large portion of in class presentations in addition to her administrative duties.

Technology:

Over the course of the year, we made various improvements to our file management and communications through software and hardware improvements. As a non-profit, we are eligible for many tech related resources to improve our workflow and file management. Improved administrative technology might not be the most exciting update, however, it has been vital to improving our organizational capabilities.

First, we upgraded our internal email system to Microsoft Office 365 which boasts numerous capabilities in internal communications, project management, file management, presentation creation, and online Microsoft Office applications to name a few. This also allows us to more easily manage email accounts and retain corporate memory.

We received a donation of much needed desktops and laptops through Alberta Computers for Schools. ACFS provides donations of computers and computer accessories to schools and non-profits throughout Alberta.



We also made a change to our member/donor management software. We are now using Sumac donor management software to manage our lists of members, supporters, donors, and stakeholders. Previously, we did not have professional software to fulfill this purpose which made communicating with our members and supporters challenging. We had significant challenges earlier this year when our Microsoft Access software (where this information was previously stored) crashed. The recovery of information process was lengthy and challenging and therefore warranted a systems improvement to avoid a similar circumstance going forward. Now, with Sumac, we have been issuing monthly and quarterly newsletters for the past few months as well as other critical information. The recovery of information may have not recovered all contacts, so if you have not been receiving communications please notify our staff.

GOING FORWARD

Much of what we have been working towards in 2016 will or has come to fruition in 2017.

Rescue Program:

Under the direction of our new Manager of Rescue Operations, Dale Gienow, our formalized rescue program is ready to launch this spring. Providing formalized rescue services, working closely with municipal authorities, is an integral component to fulfilling our mission and working towards our strategic vision.

Donorship/Sponsorship:

Also under the direction Dale Gienow, our Donorship and Sponsorship strategy is well under way. Focusing on our three branding streams, Rescue, Rehabilitation, and Education, we are taking big strides and developing partnerships with businesses and communities to generate targeted revenue. Ultimately, this revenue will be filtered to one or more of these areas. as they are relevant/important to the particular targeted organization or individuals.

Remote Locations:

Over the course of 2017, we will be looking to formalize relationships in key areas in Northern Alberta to provide more efficient services to areas that are currently remote to our head office in the capital region. We have already established many relationships with clinics throughout Northern Alberta and we will now look to begin the process of formalizing these relationships and establishing a system of protocol and procedures to properly respond to injured and orphaned wildlife in those regions.

Communications:

We will continue to make improvements to our internal and external communications and develop formal communication practices. In terms of external communications, we are now working closely with a public relations firm to ensure appropriate media coverage to spread our message and highlight important activities. We will also be launching our new website in the very near future. It is near completion and we are just working out the final edits.

Education Programs:

Our Educational Programming Manager, Carly Stenhouse, has developed two new programs designed to engage youth in proper stewardship for wildlife as well as to generate a consistent stream of funding. This summer we will be launching WILD Camp, a summer day camp at Rainbow Valley campground (and other locations within the nearby trail system).

In October, we will be launching the WILD Kids Club, that will run weekly activities at Ridgewood Community Hall. Jade Murphy will be instructing both of these programs. We will be releasing detailed information in the coming weeks.

We will also be looking to hold a handful of workshops/classes geared towards adults interested in learning about wildlife.

Re-Brand:

This AGM marks the official announcement of an important decision made by the WRSE board. I worked closely with staff, particularly our founder/director of Wildlife Services, Kim Blomme, and our Manager of Donor Relations and Wildlife Services, Dale Gienow, over the last several months in a major re-brand initiative. The incorporated name of the organization will remain Wildlife Rehabilitation Society of Edmonton, however, effective immediately, the forward facing trade-name of the organization will be WILD NORTH Wildlife Rehabilitation or simply WILD NORTH in short form.

We are very excited to formally announce this change and will be integrating the new branding in all of our communications and imagery. With this change we will also be introducing a rebrand to our three streams, now named WILD CARE (wildlife rehab services); WILD RESCUE (rescue program); and WILD ED (educational programming). We believe that this is a crucial step in moving forward in realizing our vision and reaching our goals.

It has been a very exciting year for myself personally and for this organization. Our board chair, Rhonda Skinner, and the rest of the board have worked effectively in moving WILD NORTH forward by providing direction and support to myself and the rest of the staff. The Staff at WILD NORTH are passionate, skilled and dedicated to our mission and will no doubt be instrumental in moving the organization towards its goals. Few workplaces have the chemistry and passion that I have witnessed in the year that I have served here. Our founder Kim Blomme, is an incredible woman who, with her visionary foresight in founding this organization, continues to improve the communities of Northern Alberta by encouraging progressive change and adapting to an ever evolving Northern Alberta. Of course I need to acknowledge our many volunteers, members and supporters for seeing the value in what we do and working with us to push forward in our mission. Thank you to everyone for a successful year and I look forward setting new milestones in 2017!



ANIMAL CARE PROGRAM, Jan - Dec 2016

Kim Blomme, RVT, CWR - Director, Wildlife Services

Reflecting on the past year, there have been many areas of growth within WRSE which have increased not only our capacity to assist wildlife but also to increase our visibility within the community and beyond. Being the most northerly rehabilitation facility in Alberta means we connect with communities as far away as High Level, Grande Prairie, Cold Lake and Fort McMurray to name a few. Our “high-tech tools” (high-tech for me that is!) allow us to assist in identification of wildlife through pictures sent by text message or email. One caller from the north told us he had found four baby loon chicks by themselves running around. We thought this a bit odd as Loons rarely leave their young and they are rarely off water. He sent us a picture and we could identify them as Goldeneye chicks! Once he knew what to look for, he quickly found the female on a nearby pond with several other babies and could easily reunite them! Babies saved from hundreds of kilometers away! We can also assist clinics in more remote places. Animals can be rapidly identified and treated based on rapid availability of Xrays through digital technology and picture texts! When I think of the changes that have occurred in the 28 years we have been providing care to injured and orphaned wildlife, not only in the above examples but also in the improvement of baby formulas and assisted feeding formulas, I can’t help but feel these advancements have allowed us to save more wildlife.

Our staff are committed to staying abreast of changes, ideas and strategies and I’m excited to be part of this dynamic team! Our fearless leader, Graham Currie provides insight, energy and ideas in all areas of the organization – some you will be seeing soon!! His ready smile and positive attitude invigorates. Elizabeth Malta took a quick trip to California to attend the State rehabilitators conference and came back renewed and ready. She continues to modify and upgrade the rehabilitation facility to meet the needs of the patients and every year brings new challenges depending on the critters. This year, we had our first American Badger as a patient. Elizabeth accepted the challenge with zest and created comfortable housing for this special needs patient while it recovered. We are happy to report it was successfully released a few months later! We hired Senior Wildlife Technician, Kristen King, early in the year. Kristen is a registered veterinary technologist with a passion for wildlife. Kristen has been taking on many tasks relating to the hospital (developing standard operating procedures; updating animal care protocols) as well as day-to-day animal care. Though we had to say goodbye to a good friend and passionate employee, Kristen Trudeau, and wish her well as she forges her future in BC, we welcomed Jade Murphy and Kasia Brytan to the team. Jade in a newly created administrative assistant role and Kasia filling the dual role of Volunteer Co-ordinator and Special Events. Carly Stenhouse has been working diligently creating and expanding our education programming to reach broader audiences and keeping up with our social media messaging, Instagram and Twitter.

All of our staff are pulled into service for the animals during the busy spring and summer and it is not uncommon to see staff bringing animals home to be fed overnight or hand feeding baby birds while answering the busy hotline! I’m also excited to be welcoming and working with Dale Gienow who has extensive experience in wildlife care, handling and rescue. Dale has already proved himself an integral part of our team! We are excited to unveil our expanded rescue program in 2017.

We have hosted the International Wildlife Rehabilitators Council (IWRC) Basic Skills workshops three times in the last three years which means all our current animal care staff have this important designation. In addition, I challenged the IWRC’s Certified Wildlife Rehabilitator exam early this year and passed and am now able to add “CWR” behind my name!

Our hearts went out to the people and animals of Fort McMurray during the terrible fires. We anxiously anticipated the arrival of damaged wildlife however, though we were ready, none came in. It was a forceful and humbling reminder of the power of Mother Nature. We wish all the residents of Fort McMurray a speedy recovery to “normal” again.

It’s all about the animals – our urban wildlife need us! With Edmonton now close to 1 million inhabitants and the expectation for that number to double in the next 30 years, wildlife needs us more than ever. We are committed to continuing to speak for the wildlife that share the city with us. Not only do we help the injured and orphaned but we take every opportunity we can to engage the public and encourage them to see through the eyes of the animal. Not every squirrel needs to be moved. Coyotes can co-exist with us. Magpies can be loved! We can open our hearts and minds to these wonderful animals that give us a glimpse into their world and the world of nature!

Cheers!



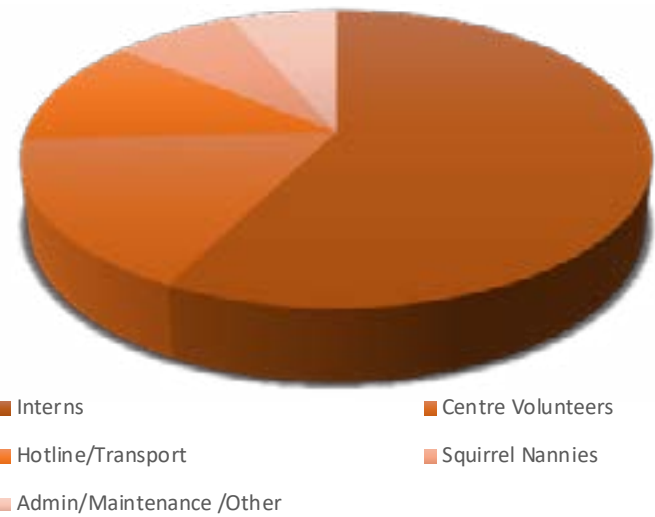
Numbers of Common Wildlife Species:





Volunteers

Volunteer Hours (2016)



Some numbers:

- Our most popular volunteer role, Centre Volunteer, gained even more popularity in 2016, bringing in over 2656 volunteer hours.
- Transport and Hotline volunteer hours increased from 1300 hours in 2015 to over 1800 hours in 2016!
- A few new volunteer roles were officially introduced in 2016, which includes Administrative Support and Wildlife Facilities & Maintenance. The combined hours of these roles, along with volunteer hours put into outreach events, came to 1034 hours.

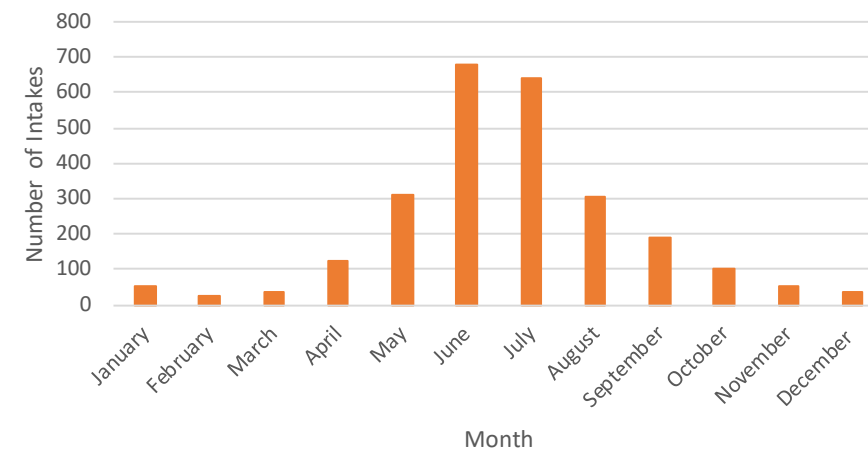
Animal care

Animals

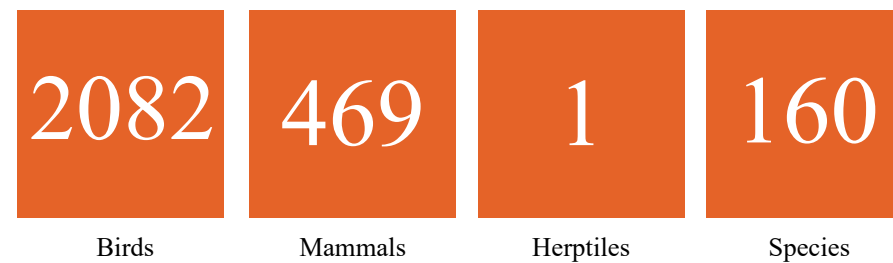
In 2015, we admitted 2164 animals, and in 2016, we admitted 2554 animals-- an 18% increase.

In June and July we had admitted 1323 patients, which was approximately 52% of our yearly intake.

Number of Intakes Per Month (2016)



INTAKES
up by 18%
from 2015 to 2016



827
Animals Released (2016)



We had some wonderful and amazing people join our volunteer team in 2016, and they have already proved themselves to be invaluable. Our volunteers keep going above and beyond what's expected, and for that we thank you. We couldn't do this without you and are proud to consider all of you wildlife savers!



Noteworthy

- 9 Double-crested cormorants (none admitted in 2015)
- 2 Snowy Owls (14 admitted in 2015)
- 1 Osprey admitted (none admitted in 2015)
- 1 Long-tailed Weasel (none admitted in 2015)
- 1 American Badger (the first adult badger ever admitted!)

Education

Educational opportunities were given to over 4000 children and adults in 2016 (approximately 150 presentations). Participants learn about the importance of wildlife in the community and gain the knowledge to empower them to do their part in the community. Junior Wildlife Ambassador Programs (JWAP) are curriculum-specific, and are offered free of charge thanks to funding from Capital City Cleanup. Students who participate in JWAP also learn how their school curriculum ties to their life and actions.

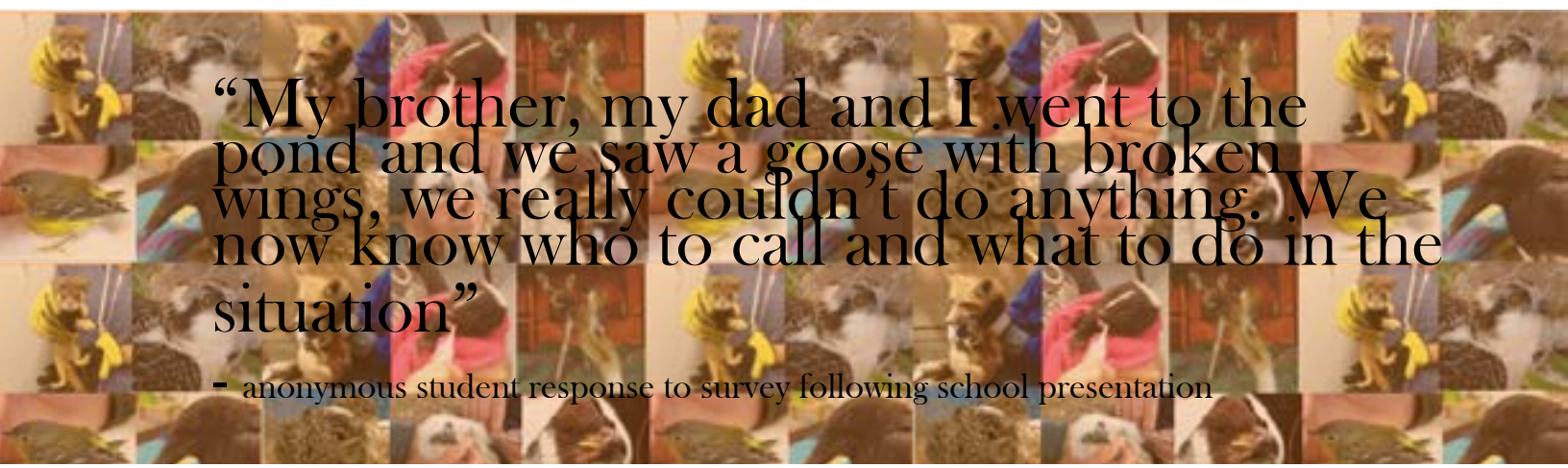
Comments from teachers:

- The kids have become vigilant about how we dispose of plastic in the school and have been working hard to keep the school yard clean. They have often come to me with bits of garbage and an explanation of the wildlife trauma that could have prevailed if they had not picked it up. It's been a change in their behaviour that is due to the presentation, for sure. And it's adorable. We will also be holding a fundraiser for the Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre as the kids want to help the animals in some way. The photos and stories they saw and heard were so inspiring for them.
- They learned that small school activities, like the schoolyard cleanup, not only beautifies the community but also helps keep our wildlife safe.
- They were made aware/reminded of what we can do to prevent injury to our friends in nature and that there is a place to contact if they find an injured animal.



Wildlife Hotline

The WRSE's wildlife hotline is often at the frontline of many wildlife-human interactions. Hotline advisors talk to members of the public about their wildlife questions. Advisors don't just tell people where to bring injured wildlife – they encourage tolerance of species often considered nuisances, they inform people about regular wildlife behaviour, suggest humane deterrents for wildlife species considered nuisances, inform callers about wildlife attractants (feeding pets in backyard)... the list goes on. This one-on-one interaction with members of the public is extremely useful for providing educational information, both preventative and reactive. Hotline advisors can assess the situation the caller is describing about wildlife and give advice specific to what they are dealing with to assist in the appropriate action.



“My brother, my dad and I went to the pond and we saw a goose with broken wings, we really couldn't do anything. We now know who to call and what to do in the situation”

- anonymous student response to survey following school presentation



“WRSE's wildlife hotline is often at the frontline of many wildlife-human interactions.”

WRSE's educational initiatives expanded in 2016. New programs in 2017 will include:

- WILDKids & Youth Day Camp
- WILDKids Club
- Senior's Education Program
- Adult Education Speaker Series
- Community League Education Program – Healthy Backyards



WRSE provides education through social media; Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, as well as our website. Social media is used to disperse information about WRSE's programs, as well as common wildlife concerns and issues in the Capital Region and what members of the public can do to help.



Reason for Call: Wildlife Concern
(30%: Patient update requests, inquiries from vet clinics, inquiries about donations/volunteering/education, etc.)



Location of call: Edmonton
(20%: Strathcona County, Parkland County, Sturgeon County, and Northern Alberta)



Partners/Funders

Thank you to all those who support, fund and give their time to WRSE to help wildlife.

Key Funders/Supporters

- City of Edmonton
- Capital City Clean Up
- Government of Canada
- Government of Alberta
- Alberta Wildlife Rehabilitators' Association
- Edmonton Association of Small Animal Veterinarians
- Edmonton Community Foundation
- Parkland County
- Roni's Ride
- Shell Scotford
- Imperial Oil
- Up 99.3

Run Sponsors

- Running Room
- John Janzen Nature Centre
- CTV
- Up 99.3

EVENT: 17th ANNUAL RUN
WILD FOR WILDLIFE &
MIGRATORY BIRD FEST

350+ Runners
\$21,000 Raised



RELEASE

Funds raised by the annual Run help to make rehabilitation and releases like this possible.



Board Members (2016)

Rhonda Skinner
Elizabeth Disman
Kate McKenzie
Christine Bubac
Kay McCormack
Sarah Batchelor
Al Stewart
Scott Wilson
Chantal Theroux

A special thank you to all of our donors, who make caring for wildlife possible.



THE WILDLIFE REHABILITATION SOCIETY OF EDMONTON

The Wildlife Rehabilitation Society of Edmonton (WRSE) is a non-partisan charitable organization. We recognize the important role we play in conserving Alberta's native species through the services and programs we provide to the community. WRSE is Edmonton's only wildlife shelter and the only organization providing care for wild animals north of Red Deer.

Mission

Provide compassionate care for injured and orphaned wildlife and to educate the public on the importance of wildlife in the community.

Vision

Preserving and protecting wildlife populations.

