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**WILDLIFE
REHABILITATORS'
NETWORK**
Of British Columbia

*Meet
Your Neighbours!*

Elizabeth's Wildlife Center

By Marcy Potter, WRNBC Treasurer and Membership Secretary



Meet Elizabeth Melnick, a lone warrior in Abbotsford, BC. Since 1986, Elizabeth has run her wildlife rehabilitation center from her home, 11 of those years as a full-time nurse. Now retired from nursing, she continues to rehabilitate wildlife. With approximately 40 volunteers and 13 veterinarians to refer to, Elizabeth runs her center on an acre of land, which houses a clinic, a nursery and pre-release cages. Her property and buildings border a wooded area known as Downes Bowl, a natural environment advantageous for rehabilitation.

Elizabeth's Wildlife Center covers much of the Lower Mainland, from Hope to Langley and beyond. Elizabeth herself admits an average of 1,000 animals per year, answers 4,000 yearly phone calls and does all the vet runs and all the pick ups. She is truly a one woman show.

Taking in all small mammals and birds (except raptors), Elizabeth admits an abundance of opossums, rabbits, squirrels and songbirds. Due to huge areas of development in Abbotsford, this year has been particularly difficult for orphans and late litters. At the time of this writing in mid-October, Elizabeth is still bottle feeding many squirrels, bunnies and some very small opossums.

When asked which has been her most unusual case, there were quite a few to pick from! One highlight was a mallard that came to the center on a Christmas Day. The finder hit the duck with their car and, assuming at that speed the mallard must have died, they continued on. After reaching their destination and a few hours later, they looked out the house window to find the mallard stuck in the grill of the car, alive. Remarkably, the duck sustained a minor wing injury and was eventually released.

In addition to rehabilitation, Elizabeth's Wildlife Center runs an education program, which involves going to schools and other community groups to speak about wildlife, the hazards they face and how to help reduce those hazards.

She has also generously offered to showcase her center for the 2011 WRNBC AGM! Elizabeth is well known and respected in Abbotsford and the Lower Mainland by her community and fellow rehabilitators, so come meet her and view her facility on February 18th to 20th. You will leave having met one of the kindest women in our community.



Elizabeth and Dr. Chris Taylor at Abbotsford Veterinary Hospital, performing surgery on a Canada goose in 2006.

Keep up the good work, Elizabeth! To learn more about Elizabeth's Wildlife Center, visit www.elizabethswildlifecenter.org.

WRNBC Member Marine Mammal Rescue Assists with BP Oil Spill

By Coleen Doucette, Oiled Wildlife Society, WRNBC Vice President

The BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill, situated 40 miles southeast of the Louisiana coast, is now considered the largest offshore spill in US history. Even though the leak has been capped, the effects of the oil that spewed into the Gulf of Mexico will last for decades to come.

In response to an urgent call to help save sea turtles and marine mammals along the oil-ridden coast of Louisiana, the Vancouver Aquarium sent four of its veterinary technicians to assist in the man-made disaster.

Chelsea DeColle, Shanie Fradette, Kate Cooper and Lindsay Akhurst travelled to New Orleans, Louisiana to join the Louisiana Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Rescue Program (LMMSTRP), coordinated by the Audubon Aquarium of the Americas. The crew of technicians volunteered almost 600 hours in the relief effort. Their daily duties included feeding and medicating animals, wound care, taking blood samples and radiographs, and assisting the veterinarian with daily management of oiled turtles and dolphins.



MMR RAHT Lindsay Akhurst with a sea turtle.



MMR RAHTs with a Bottlenose dolphin.

Over 200 animals were rescued and treated by Audubon's staff and volunteers. The greatest number of animals affected was Kemp's Ridley sea turtles. Kemp's are the most critically endangered sea turtle in the gulf, and were migrating to the beaches of Mexico to nest when the spill occurred. Loggerhead, Hawksbill and Green sea turtles were also admitted to the centre, along with two Bottlenose dolphins.

For more information on the oil spill, go to www.restorethegulf.gov/.

Skunk-ster Solution?

By Marcy Potter, WRNBC Treasurer and Membership Secretary

Many think striped skunks are trouble for humans, when in fact they can get into much more trouble for themselves. Every fall, kits and adult skunks go in search of new food. In addition to natural food sources, they go exploring our unsecured garbage and dumpsters, often with tragic consequences. When following the scents of a tasty morsel, poking their little heads into the drain holes of dumpsters, their jaw shape will not allow them to pull back out. That is where rehabilitators are called in. (I'm sure we have all had this fun call, with the exception of our Vancouver Island counterparts who do not get the pleasure of working with this potent, perfume-y patient.)

Most of the time, sedation, ice packs, lubrication and pulling using gauze harnesses can work. Some of the time, though, fire departments are called in to cut away the reinforced steel around the skunk. This involves hours of sweating and hoping they do not cut the skunk. Either way, it is stressful for the skunk and the rehabilitators; and time consuming for all involved.



Photo credit: Vancouver Sun.

In fact, there are bylaws in place all over Canada and the United States that prohibit those very drain holes. In the

Lower Mainland alone, North Vancouver, Vancouver, Coquitlam and Burnaby all have bylaws stating that there cannot be holes larger than 1 cm in commercial waste containers, with some not allowing any. These bylaws have been put in place specifically for the safety of humans and wildlife.

Some progressive waste companies have moved to newer bins, where there are no drain holes. In some situations, the holes are elevated or located beneath the dumpster so skunks cannot reach them. But many are still causing trouble. Through personal experience working at the Wildlife Rescue Association of BC, years of going on these calls, years of calling waste companies (and at times getting laughed at), we finally called in the press to raise awareness.



Solution? Call the waste company when you notice a drain hole open. Most have plugs available that have simply been left off. When that doesn't work? Call your city's bylaw department and report the company. There are fines associated with disobeying bylaws, and some areas have significant fines that escalate daily. Unfortunately, sometimes money is the only way to get the attention of the offender.

2011 WRNBC AGM Update

Our 2011 AGM will be held **February 18th to 20th** in Abbotsford, BC, hosted in conjunction with Elizabeth's Wildlife Center.

This year's AGM will be held at the **brand new** Abbotsford Sandman Hotel & Suites. Centrally located, this facility also boasts a Denny's Restaurant and Moxie's Classic Grill.

Invitation for Speakers

Our AGM is built upon members sharing expertise, ideas and information, and we are now looking for speakers! If you are interested in giving a short presentation, please contact Kimberly Reid at kimberly78@shaw.ca.

Bursaries Available

Applications are available for download at www.wrn.bc.ca/activities_&_events.htm.

Travel Bursary: **\$300** to help a member, organization or individual attend the AGM

Educational Bursary: **\$500** to help a post-secondary student with wildlife rehabilitation experience pursue a course of study in an area that benefits wildlife



Accommodations

Please see the attached registration form for information on booking at the Abbotsford Sandman. Elizabeth has also kindly offered her home to those who may be interested in staying in one of her six empty bedrooms for the weekend – for **FREE!** If you are interested (it will be a lot of fun!), contact Elizabeth by email at elizmelnick@shaw.ca or by phone at (604) 852-9173.

Fill out the enclosed registration form and return it by **January 31st, 2011**. It's going to be an amazing event!

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Upcoming Conferences

WRNBC Annual General Meeting

Abbotsford, BC

February 18-20, 2011



www.wrn.bc.ca

NWRA Symposium 2011

Albany, NY

February 22-26, 2011



www.nwrawildlife.org

The 29th Annual National Wildlife Rehabilitators' Association Symposium is being hosted by North Country Wild Care, a network of home-based wildlife rehabilitators operating out of a nine county area around and north of Albany, New York. In recognition of the difficult economic times, NWRA has found a beautiful hotel with eating options, airport and transit nearby, and is making a special effort to hold down fees this year.

Advancing Bear Care 2011

Banff, AB

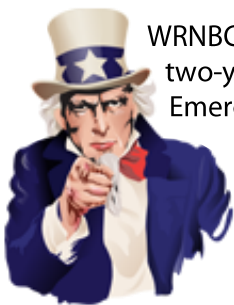
October 6-9, 2011



www.bearcaregroup.org

During the conference, bear biologists and naturalists will lead hikes into bear habitat and interpret for delegates how bears use the components of the ecosystem to express their daily and seasonal routines. This information will then be brought back into workshops and applied towards improving captive bear husbandry. A three-day trip to visit Northern Lights Wildlife Society in Smithers, BC is also planned.

WRNBC Wants YOU!



WRNBC is currently accepting applications for the Board of Directors starting in 2011. Directors serve two-year terms on committees (AGM, Elections, Newsletter, Fundraising, Education, Website, Emergency Preparedness and others) and on the executive team of WRNBC. Board members can serve from all communities across the province but must be available to teleconference for meetings.

For more information, please contact Angelika Langen at angelika@wildlifeshelter.com.

Current Board Members

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Help us save paper and reduce costs! If you would prefer to receive your newsletter by *email only*, please contact our Membership Secretary, Marcy Potter, at marcy.potter@gmail.com.