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Sharing Space with Beavers: APFA Can Help!

Marcy Potter, WRNBC Treasurer, APFA Office and Database Administrator



As we all know, there are countless wildlife-related issues. The Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals (APFA) is involved with many of these issues that are crucial not only in B.C., but across North America. Wildlife rehabilitators should be aware of when – and how – APFA can help.

APFA is a non-profit which deals with fur for fashion, suffering of wildlife from trapping, the dog and cat fur trade, and wildlife conflict resolution. The biggest wildlife conflict Fur-Bearers deals with is between humans and beavers.

Many people perceive beavers to be a nuisance. This is troubling as they are intelligent, family-oriented and invaluable for ecosystems. Landowners and municipalities can become frustrated with the flooding and tree damage they can cause. Unfortunately, people decide to take drastic or lethal measures, while there are inexpensive and humane solutions, to deter them from this “damaging” behaviour.

Even getting a permit to relocate is not a fair practice for the beaver as it can separate families and move beavers into another territory causing massive disturbance for all beavers involved, as they are very territorial. Plus, it just invites others to move into that old territory.

APFA exists to help wildlife, and will come out and build and/or train people how to build deterrent devices for only a donation for the cost of materials. These solutions are proven, long-term, humane and cheaper than hiring trappers.

For flooding, issues are resolved with various flow devices. Depending on the situation, a device can be built to keep water level – and no flooding will occur, even with a dam in place; or a culvert can have an apparatus built around it, where water and fish and debris flow through, but beavers will not be able to dam.



Models of devices provided by Sherri Tippie

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For chewing trees, wrapping them with heavy-gauge wire mesh around each tree stops them. This is very easy to do and inexpensive.

Beavers are a keystone species because they are essential to creating biodiversity. Many species rely either partly or entirely on beaver wetlands, and a lot of these species are threatened or endangered. Beavers also remove pollutants from groundwater, replenish water aquifers, produce food for other marine life, maintain flow of rivers and streams, and are, of course, beautiful creatures to watch!



Fortunately, municipalities and property owners around Canada are starting to understand. APFA has helped set up all these devices across Ontario and in B.C., sites in Langley, Mission, Abbotsford, Pender Harbour and Bowen Island.

Rehabilitators get calls about these issues all the time. When you do, feel free to give out the phone number or website for APFA to your callers, and we are more than happy to help. APFA defends wildlife, and wants both the public and wildlife to benefit from proper ecosystem management. It is what we are here for.

For more information on coexisting with beavers:

www.furbearerdefenders.com/what-we-do/living-with-wildlife/beavers/what-is-our-solution
www.furbearerdefenders.com/downloads/PDFs/Beaver_Non_Lethal_Alternatives.pdf

To contact Fur-Bearers:

www.furbearerdefenders.com

604.435.1850

Training Opportunities for Volunteers

In consideration of the BC Employment Standards Act definitions and requirements regarding paid internships (see www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb/igm/esa-part-1/igm-esa-s1-work.htm for specific details), WRNBC member organizations have been exploring a variety of options for offering training opportunities for volunteers interested in gaining experience in the field of wildlife rehabilitation.

This season, the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (www.theiwrc.org) has launched a pilot project offering accreditation for educational practicum programs offered by wildlife rehabilitation centres. Two centres (Vancouver Aquarium's Marine Mammal Rescue Centre and BC SPCA Wild ARC) are currently hosting practicum participants this summer through the new IWRC program.

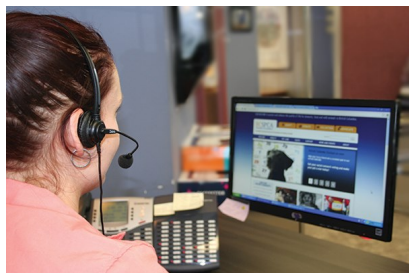
Registration in the Practicum Accreditation program is through IWRC, but it is contingent on participants first being accepted at the facility offering the practicum. If your rehabilitation centre is interested in participating in this program, contact IWRC Executive Director Kai Williams at director@theiwrc.org for more information.



A second option for university students interested in gaining hands-on experience at a wildlife rehabilitation centre while earning course credit is through the University of British Columbia Applied Biology program. They offer a 6-credit practicum (APBI 496 – Applied Animal Biology Practicum), a course that is transferrable for credit at other universities as well if students coordinate with program advisers.

BC SPCA Call Centre Update

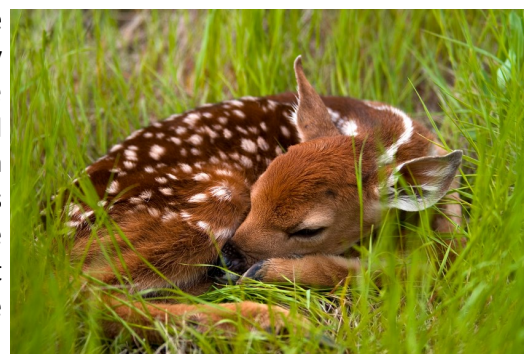
Heather Schmitt, WRNBC Director, BC SPCA Wild ARC Assistant Manager



The new BC SPCA Provincial Call Centre celebrated their first year in operation this spring! This small and dedicated team of operators helps members of the public from across the province address concerns involving domestic, farm and wild animals, and helps coordinate investigations into cruelty complaints. In addition, Call Centre staff help field questions from the public on a wide range of wildlife situations, and provide assessments and information on how best to help wildlife in distress.

One of the most important tasks for anyone fielding wildlife calls is determining whether the animal in question is in fact in need of assistance! Particularly at this time of year, when so many young animals are starting to make their way in the world (fledgling songbirds not yet able to fly, deer fawns left on their own while mum forages for food, nests of cottontails discovered by enterprising gardeners), well-intentioned but unnecessary ‘wildlife-nappings’ occur frequently by concerned members of the public.

Having the time and resources to adequately assess and address these situations can be challenging – particularly in the middle of busy baby season at wildlife centres, where keeping all those mouths fed takes more hours than there seem to be in a day! Keep in mind that the BC SPCA Call Centre is another resource to direct callers toward; it is staffed 7 days a week, and the main hotline number is 1.855.6BC.SPCA. The call centre is also keen to ensure that they are providing the most useful and accurate information for callers from your region, so rehabilitators are most welcome to contact Call Centre Manager Stephanie Sheffield (through the main line above) with any questions.



For rehabilitators looking for more information on successful reuniting tips and tricks, and to contribute their knowledge and experience, another fantastic resource in development is Reunite Wildlife: www.reunitewildlife.org. This association, founded and directed by licensed wildlife rehabilitators across North America, aims to provide peer-reviewed information and training on best practices for reuniting wild animals that have become separated from their parents. Currently providing excellent online information on reuniting raptor species, we are looking forward to information available here on reuniting mammals and songbirds as well.

BC SPCA Call Centre Stats

With more than a year of call-fielding experience under their belt, BC SPCA Call Centre staff have been getting a lot of practice assisting the public with wildlife questions and situations. Here is a brief overview of the call breakdowns (volume and wildlife percentage) for their first season of operation.

2013	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Total # of calls	599	969	1,900	2,484	2,934	2,096	1,584	1,521	1,489	1,467
% cruelty	91.0	90.0	72.4	57.0	63.6	66.6	73.6	56.1	55.8	60.2
% wildlife	9.0	10.0	27.6	43.0	36.4	33.4	26.4	25.8	20.2	15.4
% general inquiry	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	18.1	24.0	24.4

Newsletter Content Coordinator: Heather Schmitt Newsletter Editing: Kimberly Reid
 Newsletter Layout and Design: Meghann Cant Newsletter Mailing: Marcy Potter

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Free Education at Your Fingertips!

Meghann Cant, WRNBC Director, BC SPCA Animal Welfare Educator

Education plays such an important role in wildlife rehabilitation – for the public as well as for rehabilitators. However, with time and money so often in short supply, professional development can understandably take a backseat.

Now imagine being able to attend classes on virtually any subject that interests you, all without having to leave the house or pay tuition fees. Thanks to organizations like Coursera, you can do just that! Coursera is an education platform that partners with top universities and organizations worldwide to offer courses online for anyone to take, for free. That means you can sign up for as many classes as you want, when you want. Some courses that may be of interest to wildlife rehabilitators include:

Animal Behaviour, University of Melbourne: This course will help you understand the remarkable behaviours of wild animals from an evolutionary perspective.

Marine Megafauna, Duke University: An introduction to the basics of marine science and conservation, brought to you with the help of sea turtles, marine mammals, seabirds and many more of the most compelling creatures in the ocean.

Content Strategy for Professionals, Northwestern University: This course is for professionals at all levels of a for-profit, non-profit, volunteer or government organization who want to significantly improve their abilities to understand audiences and develop strategic words, pictures, graphics and videos to convey their organization's most important goals.

Visit www.coursera.org for details. Happy learning!



Do you have a great rehabilitation case study to share?



Tips and tricks on better practices for a particular species?

Share your expert knowledge with us! We would love to feature your submission in our quarterly newsletter. Email your contribution to info@wrnbc.org for our next issue.

Distribution

January

April

July

October

Submission Deadlines

Winter – December 15

Spring – March 15

Summer – June 15

Fall – September 15

Resources for WRNBC Members

Remember to check out the members-only section of the WRNBC website! You can catch up on government communications and chat with fellow wildlife rehabilitators about patient care, caging and other important topics.

www.wrnbc.org/members-only

Need access to the site? Email info@wrnbc.org for the password.

Board of Directors

Angelika Langen, President - angelika.langen@wrnbc.org

Marcy Potter, Treasurer & Membership - marcy.potter@wrnbc.org

Meghann Cant, Director-at-Large - meghann.cant@wrnbc.org

Marina Langland, Director-at-Large - marina.langland@wrnbc.org

Heather Schmitt, Director-at-Large - heather.schmitt@wrnbc.org

Kimberly Reid, Vice President - kimberly.reid@wrnbc.org

Christina Carrières, Secretary - christina.carrieres@wrnbc.org

Melanie Gordon, Director-at-Large - melanie.gordon@wrnbc.org

Lindsaye Akhurst, Director-at-Large - lindsaye.akhurst@wrnbc.org

What has your Board of Directors been up to?

- Communicating with MFLNRO on permitting and Schedule C wildlife issues
- Planning your 2015 BC Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference!
- Responding to the Second Intentions Paper for Land Based Spill Preparedness and Response in B.C. as part of the MOE consultation period

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@wrnbc.org.