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Expanding Wildlife Rehabilitation Training Worldwide

Christina Carrières, Secretary, WRNBC Board of Directors

Wildlife rehabilitation is an evolving field where the standards of care are constantly improving. Wildlife rehabilitation professionals develop new techniques and practices as they gain experience working with various species. Following those new developments, protocols and guidelines are created and, finally, standards of care are established. Sharing this knowledge is crucial to advance this field and ensure that wild animals around the world receive adequate care while recuperating from injuries or while growing up as orphaned youngsters.

The International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (IWRC) has been focusing on supporting wildlife rehabilitation professionals for the past 40 years, providing training courses, science-based resources and networking opportunities. So far, more than 16,000 wildlife rehabilitation enthusiasts have taken advantage of this great organization to grow in this life-changing field.



On November 21 and 22, 2015, the IWRC Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation course was offered for the second time in South Africa. Christina Carrières, Senior Wildlife Rehabilitator at BC SPCA Wild ARC and IWRC instructor, had the unique opportunity to teach the course in Johannesburg and meet amazing people who dedicate countless hours to rescue and care for South African wildlife. Barbed wire, poaching, vehicle collisions, poisoning and many more challenges must be overcome to survive as a wild animal in the interface between

humans and wildlife in South Africa. For wildlife rehabilitators, wildlife conflict management and finding safe and protected release sites are daily struggles. Ensuring that wild animals have a specialized facility where professional veterinary care is provided and where enclosures are species-specifically designed to meet their natural history requirements is essential to successfully rehabilitate wildlife.

IWRC is grateful for this opportunity to help and work with the local wildlife rehabilitation community to give South Africa's wildlife the best chance to return and thrive in the wild. So far, IWRC has offered the course in 11 different countries – one thing that these places all have in common is the number of passionate people who dedicate part of their lives to their local wildlife. South Africa is no exception!



OWT Members Participate in Kinder Morgan Oil Spill Exercise

Linda Bakker, President, Oiled Wildlife Society of BC

On October 29, 2015, Kinder Morgan organized a full scale oil spill exercise at a hotel in Burnaby. Several representatives from the Oiled Wildlife Trust (OWT) were present. Member organizations of the OWT are non-governmental organizations that have been involved in wildlife response and preparedness in British Columbia. These members are the BC SPCA, Oiled Wildlife Society of BC, Vancouver Aquarium Marine Mammal Rescue Centre, Wildlife Rescue Association of BC and WRNBC.

The exercise included a table-top drill of an oil spill using the Incident Command System (ICS). At the same time, equipment was being deployed in Burrard Inlet to exercise this aspect of oil spill response.

It is very good to see that Kinder Morgan takes the responsibility to include wildlife and invite the different organizations to their exercise. ICS is used worldwide in emergencies and can work well in an oil spill situation.

In the ICS model, Wildlife Response is situated within the Wildlife Branch under the pillar of Operations. Decisions are made in the Planning section and communicated down to Operations. Through OWT, we had representatives from OWS, WRA, BC SPCA and MMR participate in this drill. They were involved in the Wildlife Branch, the Joint Information Centre and Truth (a section that exists only in drills, where participants make decisions on the specific circumstances of the drill such as where the oil is going and whether wildlife is impacted). Several member organizations also had the opportunity to participate in the VIP tour that gave them an impression of the exercise at both locations.

What we took away from this exercise is a practical insight of how the Incident Command System works, with the flow of information and the paperwork involved. The exercise was in real time so it only included the 8 hours we were at the hotel. The spill supposedly happened sometime during the night. The first day is crucial for the actual containment and clean-up of the product or oil, but wildlife response usually has different timelines. By the time the first oiled animal is spotted or even collected, 24 hours have easily passed. Therefore, there was not that much to do for the Wildlife Branch besides getting ready and organizing a boat to start monitoring in the field.

The most exciting thing that happened was a whale that was swimming in the direction of the spill. We managed to contact the marine mammal coordinator of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, using contacts that were a part of the exercise and walking around in the same room. Using these connections is very useful to solve problems so this is definitely something to apply in a real spill. Another lesson learned is that communication both going up to Planning and down to Operations can be perceived as Chinese whispers: not all the information gets through as clearly and accurately as possible. For me, being on top of communications, repeating and replay back will be on my mind in an actual spill.



A Sad Farewell: Maj Birch

Angelika Langen, President, WRNBC Board of Directors



It is with great sadness that we have to report the passing of one of BC's most dedicated wildlife rehabilitators. Maj Birch was an icon in our field, a wealth of compassion and information, both of which she shared readily. Maj began rehabilitating in 1987 and founded Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society (MARS) together with her husband. Maj was an avid supporter of WRNBC and for years ran our election process. Maj will be missed for many reasons, but we as a Board will most miss her fun laughter and her solid advice!

WRNBC Connects with Vets!

Marcy Potter, Treasurer and Membership Secretary, WRNBC Board of Directors

WRNBC was privileged to have the opportunity to talk at a lunch-and-learn at the Canadian Medical Veterinary Association Conference in Vancouver this November. WRNBC Treasurer Marcy Potter presented on wildlife basics and what to do when wildlife comes through the door. She discussed the huge difference between wildlife and domestic animals, outlined various things veterinarians need to watch for and emphasized getting wildlife to a wildlife rehabilitator. She also covered other special issues including the ongoing Schedule C subject.

The conference was an ideal opportunity to connect the rehabilitation community with veterinarians, and WRNBC was very well received. Quite a few veterinarians approached Marcy afterwards to discuss specifics, as well as Schedule C.



WRNBC will also have an article printed in the next CVMA magazine on wildlife rehabilitation, written by WRNBC Director Lindsay Akhurst and WRNBC President Angelika Langen. All around, this networking opportunity was very successful for everyone involved.

Brochures specially made for veterinarians and wildlife, originally created by the Wildlife Rescue Association of BC, were distributed. This included the Veterinary Guide for Dealing with Wildlife, Basic Care and Special Cases handouts. Note these are available from WRNBC to email to facilities or veterinarians. Please contact info@wrnbc.org for copies to give to your veterinarian.

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2016 WRNBC Conference and AGM

We're excited to announce that WRNBC's 2016 Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference and AGM will be held on March 4-6 in Burnaby, in conjunction with the Wildlife Rescue Association of BC (WRA). The weekend will feature an exciting lineup of speakers and roundtables, refresher and skill-building workshops, a behind-the-scenes tour of WRA and a local field trip! This year's conference will also provide the opportunity to participate in First Responders Training, hosted by the Oiled Wildlife Society of BC.

Stay tuned for more details and registration information:

<http://www.wrnbc.org/conference>.



Join the Team!

Every year, WRNBC invites passionate and dynamic people interested in making a difference for wild animals in need and in supporting the wildlife rehabilitation community in British Columbia to join its Board of Directors. If this resonates with you, we would like to hear from you!

Whether you have specific skills or interests that would benefit the organization, or whether you would like to join one of our existing committees, we would be happy to have you on board! For more information or to submit your candidature, contact us at info@wrnbc.org.



We'd love to hear from you!



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'd love to feature your submission in our quarterly newsletter. Email your contribution to info@wrnbc.org for inclusion in 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

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What has your Board of Directors been up to?

- Preparing submissions to the Environmental Appeal Board in ongoing Schedule C wildlife negotiations
- Planning your 2016 BC Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference
- Updating the Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation, and developing new Wildlife Transportation Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation

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.