

The Picture-Perfect Release!

Releasing a creature back into the wild is the best part of wildlife rehabilitation. It is the ultimate goal, and the culmination of all the days, weeks or even months of treatment and care that we have provided for an injured or orphaned animal. It is wonderful to watch an emaciated owl with a badly injured wing gradually recover until it is flying strongly back and forth in our enclosures, or see a tiny, weak, infant Douglas Squirrel grow into a rambunctious youngster that zooms around the enclosure, leaping nimbly from branch to branch. Yeah! We have done our job and given these animals a second chance for life in the wild.

Because releasing these animals is the high point of the whole process, it is tempting to have a rosy picture of that perfect moment. We can imagine opening the door, the animal stepping out, then pausing for the perfect photo, before walking or flying off into the sunset. In reality, rehabbers know that this picture-perfect moment rarely plays out. Instead, one of two things often happens. Either we open the door of the transport carrier with a flourish, cameras poised to record this important moment, and absolutely nothing happens. The animal is crouched at the back of the carrier thinking “I’m not coming out while you’re there” **OR** there is a blur of movement and the animal is gone before anyone has a chance to focus their camera.

There are also many ways that things can go spectacularly wrong after the animal has left the carrier and is running or flying off. We put a lot of effort into preparing these animals behaviorally and physically, then choosing the right place and time to give each creature the best possible chance of smoothly moving back into its natural habitat. But sometimes they don’t get the message. On one occasion we were releasing 3 juvenile Bald Eagles that had been with us for several months. We carefully chose a large open area with big trees

around the edges and a river nearby where salmon were running. A perfect eagle release site! The three transport carriers were lined up and several of our animal transport volunteers were standing behind so that the young eagles had a wide-open space to take off into. There was even a TV camera poised to record the sight of these majestic



Juv Bald Eagle just after release

birds returning to the wild. The doors were opened, the first eagle stepped out, spread its wings, and flew strongly out across the field. Picture-perfect! Then the second bird came out, took off, did a quick U-turn and flew low over the heads of the volunteers, making everyone duck for cover. Seconds later the third eagle exited its carrier, took a sharp right turn, flapped over to the nearest trees and made a very clumsy landing in the highest branches. Thankfully, the TV camera crew couldn’t look in three directions at once, so they missed the less-than-

majestic antics of the last 2 eagles.

It’s not just birds that can mess up the wonderful spectacle of release into the wild. Mammals are pretty good at that too. A few years ago, three River Otter kits were brought to the rehab center at various times in early summer. By late fall they were grown up, were catching

River Otters checking out the beach after release



fish and crabs and were ready to take on the world. Some of the people who had originally reported the orphaned kits joined staff and volunteers to watch these young otters have their first taste of life in the wild. They couldn’t wait to take video of these sleek young otters splashing into the water. The carriers were set on the shore a few feet from the water’s edge. The doors were opened, and the otters peeked their noses out before slipping out of the carriers and **running up the beach to disappear into the bushes.** What!

It was all over in a few seconds and all the audience got to experience was rustling in the bushes.

Releasing an animal back into the wild is still the best part, but rarely picture-perfect.

Memorable Releases

You've heard how releasing an animal can be less than perfect, but occasionally everything goes according to plan, and we thoroughly enjoy the moment. Our rehab staff, Penny Harner and Elizabeth Bukovec, share these stories of memorable releases.



Penny – Red Fox

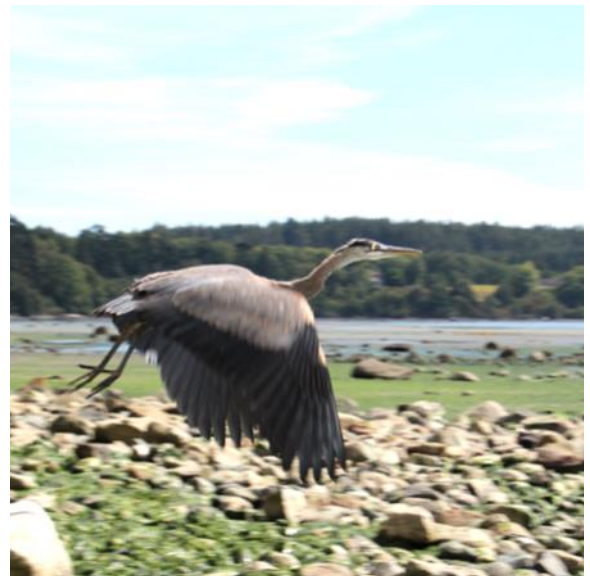
The first young fox burst from the transport carrier as soon as the door was opened and ran off, but the second fox was still in its carrier. Staff and volunteers held their breath. What would happen next? Rather than disappearing into the woods, the first young fox stopped, turned around and waited for what seemed like ages, till the second youngster emerged and ran up the trail to join it. Then they both went off together. Aaah! We all breathed a sigh of relief. The whole scene lasted about 30 seconds, but it was touching to see the young foxes' dedication to each other. They had grown up together throughout the summer and had shared an enclosure ever since they arrived as tiny kits back in May. They had different characters - one was shy and timid, while the other was bolder and more curious, but they played together and learned to forage and hunt mice together. Now they are back in their natural habitat, and we hope they stay together to face the challenges of adapting to life in the wild.

Elizabeth – Great Blue Heron

The shadow of a Great Blue Heron flying overhead on a sunny day could be mistaken for a silent plane taking flight. Their huge wingspan, trailing legs, and slow flight pattern is captivating when they're in the sky, but a grounded Great Blue Heron is a much less majestic sight. Their gangly stature combined with raspy squawks is reminiscent of an awkward dinosaur.

Last summer, we received one of these grounded pseudo-dinosaurs. Radiographs showed a broken bone in one of its wings. It took weeks of immobilization and physical therapy, then flight conditioning in an outdoor enclosure until he was back in fighting shape and, with lots of squawking, let us know he was ready to go home.

We brought the heron out to the shore and set the kennel on the rocky beach, removed the cage cover, opened the door, and barely had enough time to hit the record button on the video camera before he had taken off. Expertly dodging the slippery rocks, with a few flaps of his (well-healed) wings, the heron was sky high again. He circled around the bay before choosing his path and flying off into the distance. It was hard to look away as the once-grounded-prehistoric-airplane was back in the sky where he belonged.



Can you help?

End of year fundraising is upon us.
We have a match of \$30,000 on the table for donations received in December.

Can you donate? Can you offer a match?

I would be delighted to hear from you!

Chanda Stone,
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wolfhollowwildlife.org/lend-a-hand/donations/

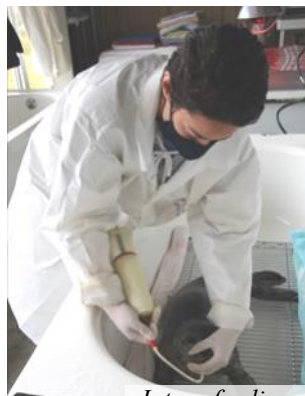
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Wolf Hollow Internships

Our interns are an essential part of the rehab team throughout the busy summer months (April-Oct) when we receive over 80% of the animals we care for each year. Each intern lives and works at Wolf Hollow for 8-9 weeks and gains hands-on experience working with a variety of local wild creatures. If you know a young person (18 or over) who is interested, there is up-to-date information and application instructions on our web site wolfhollowwildlife.org/education/internships/



Intern feeding a Harbor Seal pup

Summer is the busiest time of year for our education outreach program too, so we are also looking for an Education Intern to assist our Education Coordinator with the many presentations, activities and events that go on throughout the summer. This internship provides the opportunity to learn about local wildlife and to gain experience working with children's groups and the general public. Applicants should be 18 or over and live within our region so that they can easily come to Wolf Hollow for an onsite interview. Interested in further details? Please send an email to Shona, our Education Coordinator, saitken@wolfhollowwildlife.org.

Our Statistics Explained

You'll notice a difference in the way our statistics are shown this time around. Instead of listing one category - Euthanized, we have broken this down into EOA (Euthanized on Arrival) and Euthanized (during treatment, if an animal's condition worsens). This more accurately reflects the effectiveness of our treatment and care.

Ideally, every animal that came into rehab would be successfully treated and released. Unfortunately, this is nowhere near possible. Wild animals are often in extremely bad shape before people can catch them, and they must be in excellent condition to have a good chance of survival back in the wild. That reduces the number of animals that can be effectively rehabilitated and shows the difficult challenges faced by wildlife rehabilitators.

Some animals are in such poor condition that they pass away before they even get to the rehab center, (DOA). Others have such severe injuries that the only humane course of action is to end their suffering by euthanizing them as soon as possible. (EOA). This is not the outcome we would wish for, but euthanasia is an essential part of the service we provide. We always want to give an animal the chance to recover and live free again, but when that is not possible, we have the responsibility to relieve its suffering.

When we look at the statistics, we see that only 32.5% of the animals that came to WH this year were released back into the wild. That sounds awfully low. But if we subtract the number that died before they got to us (DOA) and the number that were so badly hurt we had no choice but to euthanize them immediately (EOA), the picture is different. Of the 224 animals that we had any chance of treating, 134 (54%) were released.

The number of wild patients that are able to go back into the wild is often determined by the condition of the animals we receive for care. This varies widely from year to year. Some years we get many relatively healthy orphaned young animals that thrive in our care, while other years we receive lots of birds with badly broken wings or severe head injuries. We have no control over this, so we console ourselves with the knowledge that what we do is making a difference and that **without our help, and your support, none of these 134 animals would have survived.**

Statistics through October 2022

Number of Animals

Birds	255	61.9%
Mammals	153	37.1
Amphibians or Reptiles	4	1.0
Total	412	

Causes

Orphaned / Separated	105	25.5%
Cat Attack	64	15.5
Hit by Car	31	7.5
Dog Attack	20	4.9
Hit Window / building	17	4.1
Nest Destroyed	16	3.9
Fell From Nest	9	2.2
Human Interference	6	1.5
Unknown	97	23.5
Other	47	11.4
<i>(fishing gear, shot, glue trap, fence, oiled)</i>		

Results

Released	134	32.5%
Euthanized	27	6.6
Euthanized on Arrival	118	28.6
DOA	70	17.0
Died	56	13.6
Transferred	1	0.2
In treatment	6	1.5
Total	412	
(excluding DOA / EOA: 224)		

Wolf Hollow Staff

Chanda Stone – Executive Director
 Penny Harner – Wildlife Rehabilitator
 Elizabeth Bukovec – Seasonal Rehabilitator
 Shona Aitken – Education Coordinator
 Mark Billington – Facilities Manager
 Susan Waters – Volunteer Coordinator



Our Mission

To promote the well-being of wildlife and their habitats through rehabilitation of injured and orphaned wildlife, public education, and non-invasive research.

Wolf Hollow Board of Directors

Marc Brown, President
 Susan Waters, Vice President
 Bex Bishop, Secretary
 Chris Minney
 Cindy Hansen
 Sarah Boden
 Albert Barsocchini

New Orchard Cage Dedicated

This little Douglas Squirrel was the first creature to live in our new Orchard Cage after its completion this summer. The youngster spent a few weeks perfecting her climbing and leaping abilities before she was released.

This project was made possible by the many generous people who donated during the Orcas Community Foundation's Give Orcas campaign.

We have dedicated this important addition to our facilities in memory of two women who loved wildlife and had strong connections to Wolf Hollow; Linda Stromer who was a dedicated animal transport volunteer in Skagit County, and Brenda Oppenheim who was a long-time supporter. We will remember them every time we have an animal in this enclosure.



Wolf Hollow Wildlife Rehabilitation Center

284 Boyce Rd / PO Box 391
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(360) 378-5000

Address Service Requested

*39 Years
Caring for Wildlife*



Great Horned Owl fledgling

Wish List

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Storage bins – 12 quart with latching lids | <input type="checkbox"/> Rechargeable batteries (AA, AAA, C) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frozen meat and seafood (not pork) | <input type="checkbox"/> Load of crushed rock for driveway |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nuts-out of shells (almonds, pecans, walnuts, peanuts) | <input type="checkbox"/> Hand soap (not antibacterial) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pine Wood Shavings (for animal bedding) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sheets (flat, not fitted, flannel or smooth cotton) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Chips for paths | <input type="checkbox"/> Pillowcases (flannel or smooth cotton) |

Thank You Eileen

It was like Christmas all summer as packages with all kinds of items from our Amazon Wish List kept arriving. Big ones, small ones, light ones and heavy ones were delivered regularly, containing everything from shovels and rakes to dish soap and paper towels. We'd like to say a huge THANK YOU to Eileen Stauss for sending these essential items that kept us going throughout the busy summer season and will give us a great start on next season, too.

New Fox Shirts

This holiday season, Jenn Rigg of LOEA Design has generously produced new T-shirts and sweat shirts featuring her beautiful fox design. Take a look at our on-line store wolfhollowwildlife.org/wolf-hollow-store for these and other gifts, and don't forget our animal adoption packets wolfhollowwildlife.org/shop/adoption-program.

Each of these is a double gift, first to your friend or family member, and second to the injured and orphaned wild creatures we care for.

Happy Holidays from Wolf Hollow.