

# TO THE RESCUE

NEWSLETTER

*Wildlife Rescue*  
ASSOCIATION

VOL. 45 NO. 3

WILDLIFERESCUE.CA | SUMMER 2024



**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

*45 Years of Rescue, Rehabilitation, and Release!*

# A MESSAGE FROM THE CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS



Dear Wildlife Supporter,

We are overjoyed to share this 45th anniversary edition of *To The Rescue* with you. This remarkable milestone is a testament to the dedication and contributions of thousands of wildlife heroes like you, who deeply value the well-being of BC's beloved wildlife. **Thank you for being an integral part of this amazing community!**

In this special edition, we look back at almost half a century of wildlife rehabilitation. What began in 1979 as a small group of passionate individuals, has blossomed into the widely recognized and well-established association it is today, making a difference for thousands of animals every year. We are proud to have close to 30 dedicated staff members and around 200 passionate, hard-working volunteers who make a difference for wildlife every single day, and many, many more supporters in the community who make all of this possible.



Reflecting on our journey together so far, we acknowledge the challenges we've faced, from severe storm damage and financial hurdles, to navigating a global pandemic. Despite these obstacles, we have persevered and celebrated incredible successes together. Over the past 45 years, the world has changed drastically; urban spaces have expanded, human-wildlife interactions have increased, and changing weather patterns are affecting wild animals globally. Through it all, our mission has remained steadfast: to promote the welfare of local urban wildlife, together.

Your unwavering support is the cornerstone of our success. Your dedication has enabled the rescue, rehabilitation, and release of hundreds of thousands of animals back into their natural habitats, ensuring they can continue to thrive for generations to come. Thanks to your ongoing commitment, countless animals have found a safe haven in times of need.

As we celebrate this milestone, we look forward to the future with hope and determination. Together, we will continue to make a difference for wildlife, giving them a voice and a chance to flourish.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Linda Bakker & Coleen Doucette  
Co-Executive Directors

*Linda Bakker*  
*Coleen Doucette*

## Wildlife Rescue Association of BC 2024 Annual Supporter Survey included!

We invite you to share your opinion with us. With the included survey we hope to understand more about you, hear what matters most to you when it comes to supporting wildlife, and gather your thoughts on Wildlife Rescue.

Your feedback will help us ensure that your generosity is making the biggest impact and allow us to connect with you in more meaningful ways.

# The Past 45 Years, Your Impact Helped...

**140,000** Patients *or an average of 259 patients per month!*



Red Crossbill



Western Toad



Pygmy Owl



Trumpeter Swan



Common Loon



Pacific-slope Flycatcher

## Merganser Meanders Back to the Wild

A Maple Ridge resident was surprised to discover a Common Merganser **trapped inside her chimney** upon returning from a three-day trip. While it was unclear how the diving duck ended up there or exactly how long she was trapped, it was immediately evident that the bird's feathers were **covered in soot** and she was in need of rescuing.

Once at Wildlife Rescue's Hospital, the medical staff promptly cleaned the merganser and **tested her waterproofing**, which, thankfully, was still in good condition. Given that mergansers are sensitive birds designed for life on the water, she was provided with a pool to swim in while she recovered.

After a few days of rest and recuperation, the beautiful bird was released into a nearby river, ready to **return to foraging for fish**.



Encountering a wild animal in distress can be a heart-stopping moment. What if, instead of feeling helpless, you could be the hero that makes a difference?

Our **FREE** eBook equips you with essential tools and knowledge to take swift, safe action during wildlife emergencies.

**SCAN HERE  
TO DOWNLOAD!**



# WILDLIFE RESCUE THROUGH THE YEARS



## 1979:

Members of the public have limited options if they come across a wild animal in distress. Recognizing this need, a group of individuals form the Lower Mainland Wildlife Rescue Association. Some of the founders include Liz Thunstrom, Dan Mulligan, Jeff Lawson, David Jackson, Joley Aldam-Switzer, Linda Chandler and Rose McGavin.

## 1980:

The Lower Mainland Wildlife Rescue Association opens its doors at the Nature House on the north shore of Burnaby Lake for the summer months, with three part-time staff and several volunteers. The number of animals admitted for care is less than 200.

## 1987:

Wildlife Rescue relocates to its current site on Glencarin Drive. Patients are initially housed in the administration building. The hospital building, and first aviaries are subsequently built.

## 1992 – 1996:

A volunteer building crew constructs several animal care buildings with the generous support from donors in the community. Wildlife Rescue's facility expands to include a two-story flight pen, a waterfowl rehabilitation pen, a swan pen, and a mammal pen.

## 2015:

531 garter snakes are rescued from their winter den at a Delta, BC construction site and brought to Wildlife Rescue. Three different subspecies are identified during further examinations. 14 snakes need medical treatment, whilst the others are kept in hibernation until they are ready to be tagged by provincial biologists and released back to the wild.

## 2016:

- › The 30-year old hospital succumbs to heavy snow and rainfall. The resultant wood rot and water damage forces staff to close the building. Support from the community enables staff to renovate and convert other animal care units to serve as a medical exam unit, indoor rehabilitation unit, and other essential animal care operations.
- › Over the course of two weeks, Wildlife Rescue staff and volunteers rehabilitate 62 gulls covered in tofu byproduct after the birds entered a vat of the product in East Vancouver.

## 2020:

New systems and safety measures are put in place at the hospital to continue helping injured and orphaned animals while COVID-19 takes over the world. A no-contact drop-off space is created for the public to deliver animals in distress and ensure they continue to receive the best care available, while protecting the safety of Wildlife Rescue's personnel and the public.

## 2021:

- › Wildlife Rescue sees a 67% increase in patients in January compared to the year before, as human-wildlife interactions increase significantly during the latter months of the pandemic.
- › A large number of Pine Siskins are admitted in January, suffering from Salmonella.

# Timeline 1979 - 2024

**1982:**

As word spreads, more people turn to Wildlife Rescue when they find animals in distress. The annual caseload increases to 800 animals, of which a large proportion are birds.

**1985:**

- › The Association's name changes to Wildlife Rescue Association of B.C. and the organization remains open year-round.
- › Wildlife Rescue treats 52 oiled birds, representing the organization's first oil spill rehabilitation response.

**2007:**

After a damaged pipeline in Burnaby spills 224,000 liters of oil into the Burrard inlet, Focus Wildlife carries out the oiled wildlife response. Wildlife Rescue staff and volunteers are heavily involved with the cleaning and rehabilitation of 20 oiled birds.



*Soiled goose being cleaned*

**2017:**

The Support Centre is established in response to the growing need for public assistance with wildlife encounters and inquiries. The team assesses wildlife situations and provides scenario specific advice to tens of thousands of callers per year.

**Wildlife Rescue reaches an animal care milestone:  
100,000 animal patients treated since 1979!**



*Volunteers rescuing the gulls*

**2023:**

Thanks to the generous support from sponsor Acuitas Therapeutics, custom designed Waterfowl Pools are installed. These multi-chamber enclosures allow baby waterbirds to grow up with access to dry land and clean pools, and provide a safe space for the recovery of sensitive adult diving birds. Other donations allow for the restoration of the Flight Pen roof after it was damaged due to a winter storm the year before.

**2024:**

**Wildlife Rescue celebrates 45 years of care!**



# WILDLIFE RESCUE REWIND:

## Magnificent Frigatebird

Wildlife Rescue's Hospital has cared for 140,000 patients over the past 45 years, addressing human-wildlife conflicts like pollution incidents, window strikes, and car collisions.

One of the most memorable patients for Jackie McQuillan, Wildlife Rescue's Support Centre Manager, during her lengthy history with the organization, was a juvenile Magnificent Frigatebird. In 2004, struggling to survive, this majestic bird took refuge on a ferry in Hecate Strait. A winter storm may have diverted the young frigatebird from their typical tropical habitat.

*"To receive a call about one was mind-blowing, and then to end up with one at the facility was pretty incredible."*

The bird was dehydrated, incredibly thin, anemic, and covered in parasites. The Wildlife Rescue team collaborated with rehab organizations worldwide to provide the best care possible for this unique patient. Gradually, the seabird regained their strength and weight but needed to be released further south. The International Bird Rescue Research Center in San Pedro, California, became the frigatebird's next destination. The wildlife passenger was flown to Los Angeles and eventually released off the coast of the California/Mexico border.

*"We had to jump through enormous hoops to get permission to allow the bird to be transported across the border. There are quite stringent regulations to transport any kind of bird across international boundaries, even though they fly across them all the time."*

Jackie has been an invaluable member of Wildlife Rescue for the past few decades. While pursuing a background in biology, she signed up as a volunteer in June 1997 without knowing much about wildlife rehabilitation.

*"Being able to make a difference in many individual wild lives, and at a community level, helping to reach people with information so they can also make a difference in the lives of the wildlife around them is what fuels me."*

The world of wildlife rehabilitation has evolved greatly. Having access to a wide audience online has significantly improved the ability to share information to prevent urban wildlife conflicts.

*"When I first started, it was a single phone with a physical answering machine. Now, we have a very sophisticated system that helps us with the enormous volume of inquiries that our Support Centre receives every day."*

**Together with the support from the community, Wildlife Rescue continues to grow and protect the wildlife that enriches our communities. As we celebrate 45 years of wildlife rehabilitation, we are reminded that every effort, big or small, contributes to the larger mission of wildlife conservation. Here's to many more years of compassion, care, and commitment to our wild neighbours!**

Dive into the past  
with Support  
Centre Manager  
Jackie McQuillan!



# ALMOST HALF A CENTURY POWERED BY VOLUNTEERS

On behalf of Wildlife Rescue, we want to express our deepest gratitude to all our dedicated, hard-working volunteers, both old and new, who have been the backbone of the organization for an incredible 45 years. **This is all possible thanks to you!**

Your unwavering dedication and tireless efforts have been instrumental in every aspect of our mission, from rescuing and transporting injured animals and providing critical care, to raising awareness in the community. Your passion and commitment are inspiring and have made an **immeasurable difference** in the lives of countless animals.

Thank you for embodying **the spirit of compassion and stewardship** that defines Wildlife Rescue. Here's to celebrating our shared achievements and to many more years of collaboration in protecting and preserving our precious wildlife.

- Fernanda and Anna, the Volunteer Program Team

Do you want to support wildlife as a volunteer?

Head to [wildliferescue.ca/what-we-do/volunteering](https://wildliferescue.ca/what-we-do/volunteering) or scan the QR code to learn more.



## In Memoriam: Norm Snihur

With profound sadness and heartfelt gratitude, Wildlife Rescue staff and volunteers honour the memory of Norm Snihur. Norm dedicated decades of unparalleled service to rescuing and transporting wildlife by air, leaving an indelible mark on Wildlife Rescue, other local wildlife rehabilitation centers in the area, and the countless animals he helped.

Norm loved to share his joy of flying. With more than 1,500 helicopter trips, almost 3,000 flight hours rescuing and transporting wildlife, and close to 2,000 wildlife patients transported, including songbirds, raptors, mammals, and marine mammals, Norm had an invaluable impact on local wildlife. He would help any animal that fit into his helicopter.

Norm, your legacy will live on in the lives of the countless animals you've saved and the hearts of all those who had the privilege of working alongside you. Your incredible dedication and compassion will never be forgotten.

- The Wildlife Rescue Team

*Transport Volunteer Extraordinaire*





**We are delighted to announce Acuitas Therapeutics, Inc. has renewed their partnership with Wildlife Rescue, generously providing funds for our Wildlife Wisdom initiative!**

This funding will enhance public understanding and coexistence with urban wildlife through educational content. The project includes installing outdoor enclosure cameras, creating video content, and sharing educational materials online.

Supporting Wildlife Rescue since 2022, Acuitas Therapeutics' continued commitment will enable us to create a digital education series showcasing patient cases and promoting wildlife welfare.

**Thank you, Acuitas Therapeutics, for your invaluable support!**

join  
**FREEDOM  
PARTNERS**  
today!



You can ensure the needs of wildlife are met all year round with a sustainable monthly donation. For the price of your favourite streaming service, you can help injured, orphaned and pollution impacted animals when they need you most.

Simply head to [wildliferescue.ca/give](https://wildliferescue.ca/give) to set up your monthly gift.



**Let your legacy  
be wild!**

For over 45 years, the compassion of legacy donors has alleviated the suffering of 140,000 wild animals, giving them a second chance to thrive. Please give generously to the next 140,000 animals in your will planning.

(604) 526-2747, ext 517 | [giftplanning@wildliferescue.ca](mailto:giftplanning@wildliferescue.ca)