

**SANDY
PINES**

**WILDLIFE
CENTRE**

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On the Wild Side

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SPRING 2021

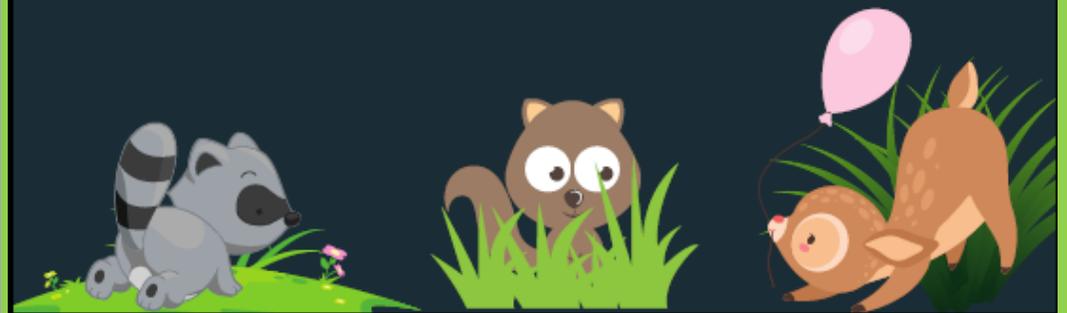


CALLING ALL PARTY ANIMALS! JOIN US
MAY 7TH - 10TH, 2021

SPWC VIRTUAL BABY SHOWER



*Live Tour of SPWC with Sue Meech, Baby Feeds,
Videos, Online Auction, Jewellery Sale and more...*



Director's Editorial



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Spring newsletter.

It looks like it is going to be another virtual year of fundraisers. We do miss the fun and food of the live events but it has to be done this way to keep everyone safe. Hopefully our lives will return to normal soon.

The lockdowns have not affected the wildlife at all, they are just doing their own things as usual except for the bats who are trying to hibernate but are getting rudely awoken by renovations going on in the community! All the staff at Sandy Pines have done a great job adapting to the lock down regulations and keeping safe at home so that they can keep the animals safe at work.

We will miss the influx of international students again this year, but thankfully our volunteers are stepping up to the plate and doing a great job.

A special thanks to our staff and volunteers who are essential workers. At this time of year, with baby season just around the corner, we need all the help we can get. New staff and volunteers are getting tested to be safe.

Our Baby Shower will be virtual again this year with a full walk around the Centre with Jess our Education Coordinator.

Check out our new on-line store!

Stay safe,

Sue Meech

Sue Meech, Founder & President
Sandy Pines Wildlife Centre

New Videos and a New Presentation for the Education Program

Our ‘Love Wildlife’ Education program is in full swing! Since September 2020, we have delivered over 190 virtual presentations, teaching more than 3,500 children how they can be kinder to wildlife in their neighbourhood.

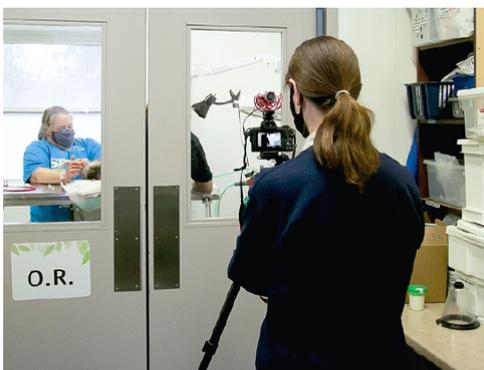
Thanks to funding from TD Friends of the Environment foundation for a camera, we have created several behind-the-scenes videos for our school-group presentations. Janet Fenton, our Wildlife Educator has seen the value of these videos firsthand, stating:

“I love hearing the excitement and awe when we show the videos, because many of the animals we get in, kids don’t get to see. I’d like to think maybe they will realize how animals feel when they see injured animals. It’s all about making connections. Without connections, why would we think that people would want to help wildlife?”

Thank you Sandy Pines for coming to our virtual classroom to teach us about wild animals and the animal hospital. We drew you some pictures of wild animals we have seen in our neighbourhoods.
From: Ms. Smith & Mrs. Thompson's class



Kindergarten students share their artwork after a virtual presentation. March 2021.



Education Coordinator Jess Pelow filming an opossum surgery. March 2021.

Using this footage, we’ve added a new virtual presentation to our roster called **‘Working with Wildlife’** for Grade 7-12. Students watch interviews with our staff and try their hand at assessing and treating a patient through an interactive activity.

Our latest filming project was for National Wildlife Week in April 2021, where we created five special videos that highlighted how our community can support patients in care. Watch these videos on our Facebook and Instagram pages.

This winter, we were grateful to have Maryrose Littlewood complete their teacher candidate placement with us through

Queen’s University. Maryrose did a fabulous job delivering our virtual presentations and developing learning resources on turtles!

We are also thankful to the donors and sponsors who have supported our education program. This includes Kawartha Credit Union, the Community Foundation for Kingston and Area, Trailhead Kingston, and Animated Coffee.

If you wish to support our education program, you can make a donation by finding us on CanadaHelps and selecting “Education Outreach Program ‘Love Wildlife’” from the dropdown menu. If you have any questions about our education program, please email educationspwc@gmail.com.



TD Friends of the Environment Foundation



Community Foundation for Kingston & Area

Good News for Turtles

By Mabyn Armstrong

There is a section of Highway 2 on the West end of Kingston Ontario near Westbrook, where a main road crosses over a swampy area with water on both sides. For many years it has been a blood bath for turtles trying to cross the road to lay their eggs. As urban sprawl expands into rural areas, traffic increases and mortality rates have been climbing yearly. At Sandy Pines Wildlife Centre we have received many dead or dying turtles that have been injured on this section of the highway. Many long evenings have been spent harvesting the eggs from the dead turtles to place in incubation. Thanks to the work of several activists, the installation of the mitigation fence at the Westbrook Wetland is soon to begin! Kingston City Council voted unanimously in January of this year to support the proposal for the implementation of mitigation measures (exclusion fencing, eco passages and alternate nesting sites) at the Westbrook Wetland located on Route #2 (Princess St.) between Collins Bay and Westbrook Roads at the western edge of the city. The work will begin in May before nesting season and be completed by the Fall.

The mitigation of the Westbrook Wetland, has always been the primary goal for TURTLES KINGSTON. We thank Councilor's Lisa Osanic and Simon Chapelle for their unwavering support and Kari Gunson the Road Ecologist at Eko-care for donating her time. Adrianna Nystedt, a Queen's student launched her petition in support of the initiative which was signed by more than 1,200 people and presented to Council last January.

Finally, a tremendous THANK YOU to the 4,000 TURTLES KINGSTON Facebook supporters, many of whom sent emails to City Council in support of the proposal. A win for the environment .



Mabyn Armstrong on turtle patrol

(photo by Elliot Ferguson from the Whig Standard)

Turtle Room

By Susan Irving

The Turtle Room has recently had some important electrical upgrades. With the addition of 6 additional amp breakers, 3 additional timers and 48 more electrical plugs, we are ready to care for this season's turtles with greatly enhanced safety and efficiency. When the hospital building was originally envisaged, who could have imagined how much electricity would be needed to care for and rehabilitate our reptiles and amphibians? This was a very large undertaking and we are so very appreciative and grateful to electrician Mark Leonard and his apprentices who donated many, many hours of labour at no cost to us. Thank you Mark!

Spring is in the air, as people say. The wetlands are awakening and the Turtle Room is in good shape to receive this season's admissions. Last season, we had relatively fewer eggs in our incubators that came from injured or deceased turtles. We don't know for sure if there were fewer vehicles on the road because of COVID – or if a larger number of turtles were saved by passersby who helped move them off the roadways to safety – or whether this represented a sad loss of our turtle population overall. Hopefully, one or both of the first two. Nonetheless, our incubation programme was again very successful and we said “hello” to 135 new baby turtles who were incubated and cared for by our expert team until they were ready to be released.



A Big Girl Going Home!



Keeping them safe while crossing the road!

Bat rehabilitation

By Julia Evoy

Orphaned bats are very difficult to rehabilitate due to their delicate nature, stress levels and husbandry requirements. Infant bats are called *pups*, and are born furless and completely dependent on their mother. Pups are usually born in June and July.

Our first single pup was an infant, approximately 10 days old, weighing only 5g. She had been found on a kitchen countertop, dehydrated, thin, and suffering from a foot injury.

The first few days were crucial and intricate. Fluid therapy was started once she was warmed, along with medication. Once hydrated, special bat milk was provided to ensure she was getting proper nutrition. She responded well to treatments and we were hopeful she would pull through.



Housing requirements for bats is unique. Infant bats in particular are very susceptible to dehydration. They require a warm, humid environment to maintain hydration levels. Incubators are often used, however since we didn't have one, we created the proper conditions using what we had; keeping the temperature and humidity at appropriate levels in order for her maintain hydration and body condition.

We received two more Big Brown Bat pups within a couple weeks. Both were orphaned and approximately 10-14 days old. Luckily no injuries were sustained even though one had been found after having fallen down a chimney. Since our methods and treatment had worked well for our first pup we were hopeful that this pair would respond equally as well.

Bats require very special feeding techniques to ensure they don't aspirate formula while nursing or develop any digestive problems. The milk we feed them is specially formulated for bats, and once they reach a few weeks old they also begin receiving bat slurry which includes insects and vital nutrients for proper nutrition. From here they gradually wean off of milk and transition from the slurry to mealworms.

Every pup develops and weans themselves at their own pace, so feeding schedules are individually tailored. Just like their personalities, each individual is different and matures at their own pace.

Within a couple weeks in care all three bat pups were thriving and we now knew we needed to consider our next steps. Because they were infants when they came into care, they would need a flight enclosure where they could gain flight strength, and learn to hunt on the fly!

Funding wasn't in our favour for a completely new enclosure to be built, so after some brainstorming we decided to renovate an existing pen that wasn't getting full use. It had some of the building requirements necessary and we could design it to what we needed. Lots of work was required to achieve our vision, but in the end we were able to complete the project.

Due to the timing of the construction and the weather conditions, our three bat pups ended up spending the winter months in care. We hibernate all our healthy bats throughout the winter, waking them in two week intervals to examine them, feed and hydrate for a couple days, then returning them to hibernation. We have special refrigeration units with proper ventilation and humidity; this way they can hibernate peacefully and in proper conditions.

Once the nights are warm and insects are flying we will introduce them to the flight enclosure so they can obtain some flight strength and skills before being released. We will also provide flying insects in the enclosure so they can practise catching insects normally, on the fly.

This new flight enclosure also allows us to safely test fly bats as they come into care, and gives us the ability to provide bats with some flight time outside after recovering from an injury.

It's been a long journey for our three "pups" but we are extremely fortunate to have had a part in making it possible for them to be able to fly free!



Orphaned Virginia Opossums: The Journey from Pouch to Prosperity

By Martina Mileva

Very often, if not daily, we come across deceased wildlife on the roadside who have fallen victim to vehicle collisions. These deaths have become so normalized that it has reached the point where many of us don't think twice while swerving to avoid "roadkill". One increasingly common victim is North America's only marsupial, the Virginia Opossum.

Marsupials, unlike placental mammals, have a relatively short gestation period and give birth to babies who will be carried in a pouch by mom. In an almost embryonic state, the opossum young will latch onto mom's nipples inside of the pouch where they will continue to develop for approximately eight more weeks. After this, babies will begin leaving the pouch and clinging onto mom's back, as she provides them with food and shelter for up to two more months. This means that opossums who appear to be lifeless on the roadside are not a hopeless cause, since deceased mothers could have viable babies inside their pouch. We encourage concerned members of the public to check these victims for babies in the pouch if you are in a position to safely do so without endangering yourself or others. If babies are found in the pouch of a dead mom, their chances of survival are much higher when there is a plan in place.



In case you encounter this situation during baby season, I will explain the appropriate way to help. If mom is injured and alive with babies, call your closest wildlife rehab centre for advice. If mom is deceased, follow the advice below.

Quick and safe removal of the baby from mom's teat is especially important, to ensure that consumption of the deceased mother's milk is stopped. This milk spoils very quickly and can cause life-threatening infections in the young. To safely remove a baby, pinch the teat in front of the baby's nose to stop milk flow. After this, slowly slide the baby from the nipple, which is long and tube-like. Do this gently to avoid tearing the nipple. Place the babies in a small box or container with a heat source (e.g., hot water bottle, rice sock, etc.), then call your closest wildlife rehab centre to plan their transport. Please do not attempt to feed baby opossums. Incorrect diet or feeding methods can do a great deal of harm and hinder their likelihood of survival.

Without the antimicrobial properties naturally found in marsupial milk and secretions in mom's pouch, babies are at high risk of infection and sepsis (i.e., an extreme, life-threatening response to infection). Orphaned opossums who are admitted into care, all require a course of antibiotics.

Babies naturally ingest milk drop-by-drop through a tube-like teat that may reach their stomach, meaning that they do not suckle the same way that most young mammals do. Therefore, when in care, they must be tube-fed an opossum milk replacer. Depending on their age and body condition, they may require feeding and/or supplemental fluids as often as every two hours (day and night). Babies will begin to open their eyes at approximately eight weeks of age, at which point we begin to transition them to dish-feeding. They are offered a mix of formula, yogurt, kibble, and vegetables that is carefully balanced to meet their nutritional requirements. They are great learners and are often able to quickly transition from being tube-fed to eating from a dish all on their own.



Once they have put on some weight and grown a thick coat of fur, the young opossums can be moved into outdoor enclosures where they will adjust to the outside temperatures. Enclosures are set-up with plenty of natural climbing material and food is scattered throughout to encourage natural foraging behavior. At around 15 weeks of age the opossums are ready for release back where they were originally found!



Opossums fill an especially important niche in our natural community. These omnivores help regulate small insect and pest populations, including ticks. Let us help these marsupials thrive and our home gardens will thank us!

Fundraising at Sandy Pines Wildlife Centre

By Kelly Fraser

It has definitely been a challenging year for fundraising events and although we much prefer to see all of your faces at the events, we have created a few online events to help support our efforts.

Sandy Pines Wildlife Centre opened its very own online merchandise store at <https://sandy-pines-wildlife-centre-inc.myshopify.com/>. You can purchase t-shirts, sweatshirts, hoodies, hats etc. This is also where you would have found our 1st ever Online Jewellery Sale.

Our Annual Art & Jewellery Sale was held virtually this year and although it was a much smaller scale and only contained jewellery, it did very well. The four-day sale raised approximately \$2800. A huge thank you to Adrienne Shannon and Joy Innes for all their hard work to help make this event a success.

Sandy Pines National Wildlife Week Event immediately followed the jewellery sale. This week long event had a feature video posted to Facebook and Instagram daily. We had 3 Live With Leah feeds and a draw for a SPWC T-shirt. There was a draw for a set of beautiful live edge tables generously donated by St. Leonard's Community Support. There were two additional raffles, which included a hammock swing and a gift basket drawn after the event ended.

Stay tuned for the 2nd Annual Virtual Baby Shower. The event will begin on May 7th and end on the 10th. There will be an online auction, videos, live feeds and a virtual tour with our Founder, Sue Meech.

It goes without saying, but we are all so grateful for our supporters and volunteers.

Stay safe, stay healthy!! We could not do any of this without you!



For more information on volunteering, sponsoring, or donating, please visit www.sandypineswildlife.org, complete the form below and mail to 8749 County Rd 2, Napanee, ON K7R3L1, or call us at (613) 354-0264.

Name _____

Address _____

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Want to keep up to date on what's happening at SPWC?



Our weekly email titled **This Week at Sandy Pines** includes admission photos, patient updates, upcoming events, fun facts and more.

Subscribe today and have updates sent directly to your inbox!
(Your email is kept confidential and only used for the purpose of the update).

Who Am I? is also included monthly.
A photo, with clues is given and those who choose to play, submit their answers.

Those with the most correct answers can receive a prize at the end of the year!
Email: killam@sympatico.ca to be put on the list!

We are still open to take in injured and orphaned wildlife. If you are bringing donations or wildlife that are injured or orphaned please call ahead until COVID-19 is resolved, and we can meet you at the door. We need to protect the staff and volunteers still working to care for the animals in the Hospital. Thank you for your support and we hope to see you soon. Take care!

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Please help us help the wildlife of Ontario!

All of our revenue depends on your generous donations. We receive no funding from the government. You may donate by cheque, credit or debit card or on our website with the "Canada Helps" button.

Receipts will be issued for donations of \$20.00 or more. Please make your cheques payable to the Sandy Pines Wildlife Centre.

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