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*The Wildlife Rehabilitators Association of Rhode Island*

# Newsletter

*Spring 2011*



Bobcat Kitten

## Tough Decisions...

During one of your daily trips outside, you find a bird sitting on your lawn, perhaps a mourning dove. She flaps her wings as you approach, but is unable to fly away. You manage to scoop her up and away from danger, do a little research online, find WRARI's hotline number, and make a call. When you finally arrive at the clinic with your little patient, you are told the one thing you didn't want to hear: the wing is broken beyond repair. She needs to be euthanized.

Euthanasia is never a comfortable topic of discussion, yet wildlife rehabilitators face this tough decision all the time during the busy season. Animals come to the wildlife clinic or to individual rehabbers in a wide variety of conditions (mostly due to our existence in their environment: they fly into our windows, we hit them with our cars, or our pets cause the damage); sometimes the injury is so severe, even a seemingly robust young critter becomes another number on the euthanasia's list.

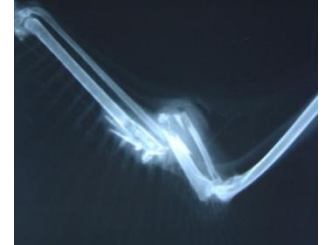
**We must always consider that the primary goal in rehabilitating wildlife is to provide them with their lives back in their natural habitat.** This demands that the bird, mammal or reptile/amphibian is near 100% in its abilities to compete with others and evade predators. Sometimes our patient's condition makes this decision obvious. Creatures that depend on perfect vision or the ability to fly/run to hunt and catch prey are severely compromised if they have permanent eye, wing or leg injuries.



Ultimately they exist at the bottom of the food chain back in their home turf, spending the rest of their very short lives looking for what food they can find and fleeing from predators. The surprising statistic for healthy survival in the wild ranges between 10-30 percent for the first year of life – a mortality rate of 70-90 percent for all healthy juveniles! This exceptionally high mortality rate illustrates the difficulties our

wild neighbors must endure to stay alive on a daily basis (survival of the fittest), and underscores the need to release our little patients at the 'peak of their game', so that they may compete successfully within the harsh environments they come from.

Often we are asked by those who find or bring us wildlife in distress whether they can keep the found creature "as a pet" if the prognosis for release is not good, or whether the animal may be placed in a sanctuary. Studies have shown that adult wild animals never accept forced confinement comfortably, and will often stop eating in response to long term captivity. The amount of stress these animals go through during rehabilitation is tremendous. To think of them spending the remainder of their lives locked in a cage afraid of our next move is unfathomable. Last year the Wildlife Clinic of RI took in a total of 1971 animals in distress. Though we were able to place a few "non-releasable" patients, no one sanctuary could ever be big enough to handle and support every non-releasable animal. In the best interest of our patients, euthanasia has become a merciful way of ending suffering.



So with spring just around the corner, and with new wild babies waiting to be born, you may wonder why we, as rehabilitators, put ourselves in the position of this overwhelming heartache. It is because nature does allow us to witness the joy of being able to fix a wound or a fracture, and give a wild animal a second chance at life in its own world. The reward at the time of a release overshadows the endless work and heartache. We do not have to accept the cruel reality of nature, which tells us an accidental death of a wild parent means the premature death of all her babies after her passing. With your help, we can make a difference on a daily basis. Many creatures that come to us broken and distressed are released healthy and strong. **We may not be able to heal all of their injuries, but we certainly do not give up without a fight!**

**Don't Forget: You can Donate and Become a Member through PayPal! Go to [www.RIWildlifeRehab.org](http://www.RIWildlifeRehab.org)**

## 2010 Statistics

- 1971 animals came through the Wildlife Clinic of RI
  - An additional 510 went directly to rehabilitators' homes
- Total: 2481 animals in 2010**

## "Special" patients 2010:

- ♥ Tundra Swan - broken wing: Transferred to Franklin Park Zoo, MA
- ♥ Chuck-will's-widow - Hit-by-car: Released after recovery
- ♥ Beaver, 1 week old - washed down the river. Returned to parents

## Upcoming Events

### "A Wild Night" Dinner and Silent Auction

Saturday, March 5  
5 pm - 9 pm

Washington Masonic Lodge  
North Kingstown

### "Subpermittee Training"

March 14 and 15  
6 pm - 8:30 pm

Roger Free Library, Bristol  
(Registration Required)

### "Spring Baby Shower"

Saturday, April 2  
1 pm - 4 pm

Cold Spring Community Center, Wickford

For more information on any of these events, visit our website at [www.RIWildlifeRehab.org](http://www.RIWildlifeRehab.org)  
Or call the Wildlife Hotline at 401-294-6363

## JOIN US FOR AN ENTERTAINING AND

## "WILD NIGHT"!



On Saturday March 5, WRARI will host "A Wild Night," Dinner and Silent Auction, from 5 pm to 9 pm, at the Washington Masonic Lodge Center in North Kingstown, to benefit the Wildlife Clinic of RI. This entertaining evening will include a buffet dinner graciously prepared by Chef Craig Mitchell of The Christian Brothers, and musical entertainment provided by Gary Wright. We are also pleased to present to you "The Return of the

Native" by Bill Betty. The Mountain Lion, also known as the Cougar, Panther, Puma, or Catamount, is making a comeback. Bill Betty, a mountain lion advocate from Rhode Island, will give a forty five minute PowerPoint presentation that covers all aspects of cougar behavior. The various theories that explain how Mountain Lions are rapidly reoccupying the Northeast will be explored. Bill's narrative of close encounters with nature's perfect predator gives compelling testimony about their presence in New England. Tickets are on sale, \$50 per person for the evening (RSVP required). All proceeds from this event will directly benefit the cost of care and medical support for the many wild birds and mammals received annually. For ticket reservations or donations, please contact the Wildlife Clinic at (401) 294-6363 or go online at [www.RIWildlifeRehab.org](http://www.RIWildlifeRehab.org).

Return of the Native



## SPRING WILDLIFE BABY SHOWER

### ICE CREAM SOCIAL

*Cold Spring Community Center*

Beach Street, Wickford

*April 2, 2011: 1 - 4 p.m.*

## Last Subcommittee Training for 2011

(Pre-registration Required)

WRARI's LAST Subcommittee Training for 2011 will be held on Monday and Tuesday evening, March 14 & 15, from 6 - 8:30PM, at the Rogers Free Library, 525 Hope Street (Rt. 114), Bristol, RI. This five-hour course covers hands-on, practical information on the rearing of songbirds, squirrels, rabbits and opossum, and satisfies the formal training portion for subcommittee licensing in the State of Rhode Island. The cost of the class is \$35.00 for non-members (\$25.00 for members) and includes all training materials. Visit [www.RIWildliferehab.org](http://www.RIWildliferehab.org) for more info on Subcommittee Training and to register online or call the clinic at 401-294-6363. This is your final opportunity this year to learn the necessary skills to get your Rhode Island subcommittee license - **Baby season is starting very soon!**

### Wildlife Clinic Intake Statistics:

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
# Intake	1311	1542	1491	1593	1971

#### MISSION STATEMENT

Wildlife Rehabilitators Association of Rhode Island is committed to fostering an understanding and respect for all Rhode Island wildlife, through education and practical assistance with wildlife issues. WRARI also strives to provide quality and humane care to injured and orphaned wildlife, with the goal of release back into the environment.

We could not have done it without your help.  
Thank you!

**A special Thank You goes out to all our Members and Supporters. Your generous donation helps us continue providing the best care possible for Rhode Island's most precious and beautiful natural resources!**



## What is Included with my Membership Dues?

All memberships to the Wildlife Rehabilitators Association of Rhode Island include our quarterly newsletter filled with great local wildlife information, heartwarming stories of second chances at life for our wild neighbors, and great photos of Rhode Island wild "patients" at the clinic. You will also receive a membership card, our logo decal, and our new bumper sticker!

You can choose to become a member with the following membership types:

- ❖ **Individual:** \$25  
Includes newsletters, membership card, decal, and bumper sticker
- ❖ **Family:** \$50  
Also includes our new membership T-shirt, and stickers for the family
- ❖ **Business:** \$75  
Also includes public advertisements on our website when you provide a business card!
- ❖ **Supporter:** \$100  
Also includes our new membership T-shirt, and a surprise gift
- ❖ **Benefactor:** \$200  
Also includes two of our new membership T-shirt, a surprise gift, and special acknowledgement in future publications
- ❖ **Memorial Gift:** Any Amount  
Includes special acknowledgement card and package for membership type

\*\*\*WRARI is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization. All donations are gratefully accepted for any and all amounts and all are tax deductible. We thank you for your support.

LOOK FOR US ON THE WEB! Go to [www.riWildlifeRehab.org](http://www.riWildlifeRehab.org)