

Summer at West Sound Wildlife

By Kol Medina,
Executive Director

Summer is upon us and West Sound Wildlife is as busy as ever. As I write this report, up in the waterfowl enclosure, happy splashes erupt from the pools where goslings and baby ducks splash and dive.

In the C. Keith Birkenfeld Flight Cage, young eagles, hawks, and owls practice swooping from perch to perch. Inside the hospital building, the wards are full of small creatures—scampering opossum babies, blinking barn owlets, and baby bird after baby bird.

This is the busy season for our hospital staff and our wildlife stewards, the scores of volunteers who dedicate four hours each week to tend to our patients. We have just under 100 patients on site right now. By the time you read this, we'll probably have over 120 patients on site, which is our normal number for early July, our busiest time of the year.

Last year (2011) was as record year for us in terms of

patients—over 1,000 patients came through our doors. This was an 18% increase over 2010. Thankfully, so far this year, we are not trending ahead of 2011. Hopefully that means that fewer animals are getting injured, orphaned, or sickened.



Photo: Dottie Tison

Although, unfortunately, most likely it simply means that humans are not finding the animals in need and bringing them to us.

This is also a busy time in our office, where we're planning for the coming fiscal year (our fiscal year is July 1 to June 30). We'll put on a host of fun

events this year, from Whiskies for Wildlife (February 9) and our Call to the Wild gala dinner auction (April 20) to educational programs and other unique events. We're planning one or two new, unique, and fun events this fall. We'll let you know the details as soon as we've firmed them up.

Once again over the course of this fiscal year, we'll need to raise all of our funding. We don't have any earned income which means that we have to go out and obtain our entire budget's worth of donations each year.

I'm sure that our dedicated, but small, development staff, working with a group of wonderful volunteers and a strong Board, will be successful again this year.

West Sound Wildlife Shelter is your local wildlife hospital and education center. We couldn't exist without your support, help, and guidance. Thank you!

View from the Perch

By Mike Pratt, Director of
Wildlife Services

Our younger generation is losing its love for nature and wildlife.

A recent study found that kids and young adults ages 8-18 spent an average of 7 1/2 hours per day on digital media. Attendance at National Parks and wilderness areas has fallen for the past two years and the average age of attendees is rising. Fewer younger adults are going to our national parks and wilderness areas. Pictures on the internet cannot replace

the real visit to these special places.

I am concerned that if this nature deficit continues parks, wilderness and wildlife could become less relevant. I recently heard a quote that touched a special spot in my heart: "What a county chooses to save says something about itself".

I will not give in to the notion that this great country will allow wild areas and wildlife to disappear.

We can all do our part to stop this nature deficit. I make this challenge to everyone reading this: This summer get



©Robin Purcell Photography

your kids, your kid's friends or your grandchildren outdoors without their digital media and experience nature and wildlife first hand.

Together we can and must reverse this nature deficit! The wild animals thank you.



WILDLIFE HOSPITAL & EDUCATION CENTER

The West Sound Wildlife Shelter provides injured, orphaned, and sick wild animals a second chance at life and promotes the well-being of wildlife through public outreach, education, and involvement.

Board of Directors

- Gayle Seyl President
- Elizabeth Ward Vice-President
- John Bomben Treasurer
- Katherine De Bruyn Secretary
- Lindsay Clothier
- Diane Crowder
- Biz Dailey-Allen
- Rob Frankland
- J Hart
- Wini Jones
- Jim Laws
- Kol Medina
- Barbara Sacerdote
- Sandy Schubach
- Michael Sebastian

WSWS Staff

- Kol Medina Executive Director
- Michael Pratt Director of Wildlife Services
- Lynne Weber Wildlife Rehabilitation Specialist
- Elsa Watson Development Coordinator
- Ann Simandl Office Assistant
- Sarah Richardson Summer Rehabilitation Assistants
- Shannen Smith

saving wild lives

Saving Wild Lives is a triannual publication of West Sound Wildlife Shelter. The articles and information contained herein are provided for the education and entertainment of our members and readers. While we make every effort to check the accuracy of the facts, stories, and advice in this newsletter, no guarantee of accuracy or remedy is implied or expressed.

© 2012 West Sound Wildlife Shelter

7501 NE Dolphin Drive
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110
Tel: 206-855-9057 • Fax: 206-842-6027
www.westsoundwildlife.org
info@westsoundwildlife.org

Amazing Woodpeckers

Often, our woods are punctuated by the distinctive rat-tat-tat of a woodpecker hammering on a tree or the side of a house. We are lucky in Washington state to have a wide variety *Picidae*, a family of birds that includes woodpeckers, flickers, and sapsuckers. We have thirteen species, to be exact, six of which frequent our western deciduous forests.

While these distinctive birds are well-distributed around the world (with 180 different species), only about two dozen of those are found in North America.

Woodpeckers live 4-11 years in the wild, and they generally mate for life. They live on a diet of bugs, sap, fruit, nuts, and seeds. At backyard feeders, they often gravitate to suet or nuts.

They're fairly easy to spot in the air thanks to their flap-flap-swoop flight pattern that consists of a few flaps followed by a short glide with the wings tucked against the body.

Curious Physiology

Woodpeckers have some of the longest tongues in the bird world (up to 4 inches). Where does all that tongue go when it's retracted? It actually wraps up and around the bird's skull. In some species, the tongue even wraps around the eye socket.

The tip of the woodpecker's tongue is covered by an extremely sticky saliva that helps it catch insects.

They also have unusual feet with some toes that face forward and some that face backward (these are called zygodactyl feet). These toes are incredibly helpful for climbing trees and poles.

Woodpeckers also use their stiff tail feathers to help them balance on trees.

Why All the Drumming?

Woodpeckers drum for the same reasons songbirds sing—to attract a mate and to claim their territory. Each species of woodpecker hammers with its own rhythm and tempo, so prospective mates can pick up on a hearty and enthusiastic drum and know that a healthy member of their species is nearby.

At the same time, strong drumming alerts potential competitors that a woodpecker is already dominating this patch of territory. Pileated woodpeckers have territories that range in size from 1,000 to 4,000 acres.

They also drill holes in rotten trees in order to find bugs and sap to eat. Woodpeckers can



A rehabber examines an injured Northern Flicker at West Sound Wildlife. Photos by Dottie Tison.

drum up to 20 times per second, and they regularly drum more than 10,000 times a day.

What About the Headaches?

It may look painful to us, but hammering isn't painful for woodpeckers. They have extra-thick skulls to cushion their brains from all the blows. Their neck muscles are strong and well-developed, allowing them to drum for long periods of time. Even a woodpecker's eyes are reinforced with special membranes that keep them from popping out during hammering and drilling.

Our Local Species

A number of Washington's woodpeckers and sapsuckers live in the eastern Cascades and Okonogon region, including the American three-toed woodpecker, black-backed woodpecker, Lewis's woodpecker, red-naped sapsucker, white-headed woodpecker, Williamson's sapsucker, and acorn woodpecker. Below is a list of species that frequent western Washington.

Downy Woodpecker - The most common and wide-spread woodpecker in the U.S. Small with a white chest and upper back, black and white wings, tail, lower back

Hairy Woodpecker - Medium-size; white chest and upper back, black and white wings, tail, lower back

Northern Flicker - Large; brown body, black tail and chest, white rump

Pileated Woodpecker - The largest American woodpecker still in existence. This is the woodpecker with the distinctive red crest and black and white body.

Red-breasted Sapsucker - Medium-size; black and white back, wings, tail, red head, round chest

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker - Medium-size; black and white back, wings, tail, yellow belly, red head. Sightings are rare but increasing in Washington State.



Spring Babies!

Photos by Dottie Tison



Unveiling the New Oiled Bird Washing Facility

We're delighted to open a new space at West Sound Wildlife—the Oiled Bird Washing Facility. Built with 100% volunteer labor, this critical facility was added to our outdoor water bird building and will also double as our baby waterbird nursery until needed in the case of an oil spill.

Many thanks to volunteers Jim Henderson (project foreman) Geoff Nester, Dean Olsen, and Jim Spratt. These volunteers applied their carpentry, plumbing, engineering, concrete, and drywall skills to build our oiled bird wash/rinse and post wash facility. The Poulsbo Heating Company donated important supplies.

Oiled bird rehabilitation requires a specialized facility. The space includes an air ventilation and heating system, floor drainage, and a water system with precise adjustments water pressure, temperature, and hardness. These specific elements are covered by standards defined and administered by the Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife.

In the event of an oil spill that affects water birds, it's essential to have cleaning facilities already up and running. When disaster strikes, there's no time to jury rig a facility of this kind. Recent efforts by the petroleum industry have resulted in new



Photo: Dottie Tison

equipment purchases that, when combined with the existing wildlife rehabilitation community, will greatly improve response capability. We are now the second "certified" facility in the state thanks to our skilled volunteers. Without their generosity, dedication, and many long hours of work, we wouldn't be prepared for the next oil disaster to strike our state.

Meet Lorcan, The Northern Pygmy Owl

OUR NEWEST EDUCATIONAL AMBASSADOR

Lorcan sits on a high branch in her enclosure, her yellow eyes pinned on every movement. She's sitting tall with her back and neck stretched upward, making her brown, feathered body resemble a part of the tree. This is the way she often sits, camouflaging herself as a branch. Despite her ram-rod posture, she's difficult to see since she's only a little taller than the average mug of coffee.

A minute later, this northern pygmy owl makes a soft sound. *Cheep-cheep. Cheep-cheep.* She's blinking her eyes, seeing who her visitors are.



Photo: Dottie Tison

Lorcan came to us about a year ago from the Seabeck area. She was a young owl, possibly a "brancher" who had fallen to the ground. All juvenile birds go through this phase, when they're old enough to hop out of the nest along a branch, but not quite ready to fly.

Often, these birds wind up on the ground for a few days before they learn to take off and fly. Their parents will feed and care for them on the ground—this is a normal part of growing up as a bird.

In this case, however, a dog found Lorcan

before she was able to fly away. The dog picked her up, injuring her, and eventually brought her into the house. The dog's owners called us.

Because her injuries left her unable to hunt in the wild, Lorcan is now the sixth member of the West Sound Wildlife Shelter's educational ambassador team. These select birds (two owls, two crows, and a red tailed hawk) visit classrooms, clubs, and civic groups to spread the word about owls and life in the wild.

Together with her handler, Lorcan will have to complete at least twelve educational programs each year to keep her permit as an educational ambassador. As a group, West Sound Wildlife's educational birds presented to over 5,000 kids and

adults last year.

It was the rhythm of her soft tooting sounds that let rehabbers figure out that Lorcan is a female. Without this, there's no way to know for sure whether a raptor is male or female without surgery (though educated guesses can often be made based on size, since the females are generally larger than the males.)

Wee little Lorcan is just 5 inches tall and weighs 80 grams (under 3 ounces), but don't let her catch you calling her small.

Pygmy owls are fierce hunters. They fly swiftly through the forest, tracking down mammals and small birds.

Because they're so small, they're hard to spot—it's easy to mistake a pygmy owl for just another brown bird. They aren't common in Washington, but they are widespread and can be found in forests on both sides of the Cascade mountains.

Northern pygmy owls (*Glaucidium gnoma*), have striped bellies and relatively small heads with distinctive black patches on the backs of their heads that resemble owl faces. These special markings confuse would-be predators and are part of the pygmy owl's defenses.



Photo: Dottie Tison

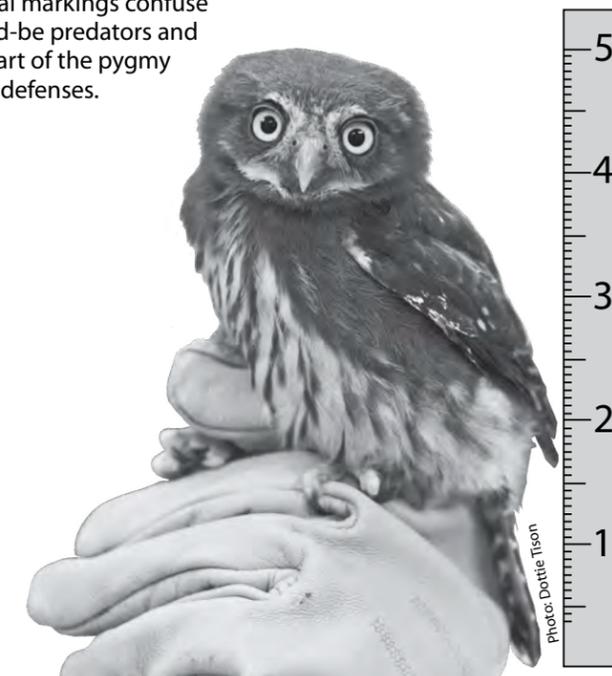


Photo: Dottie Tison

Special Offer

Book at Stay at a Luxurious Mexican Villa and Benefit the Shelter

The owners of Casa TAZ, a stunning Mediterranean villa that's nestled at the foot of the Baja Peninsula (casataz.com), are offering a special opportunity for Shelter supporters. If you book a 4-night (or longer) stay, they'll donate 10% of the rental fee back to West Sound Wildlife!

Casa TAZ is an incredible 6500 sq. ft. oceanfront home that sleeps up to ten. Nestled between Cabo San Lucas and San Jose del Cabo, Casa TAZ has a private white-sand beach that's just steps away, and every room overlooks the turquoise Sea of Cortez.



You'll enjoy relaxing in the pool and Jacuzzi, dining in the gourmet kitchen, and soaking up the sun on the 2800 sq. feet of terrace.

Casa TAZ includes four master suites, an attached one bedroom casita, and a state-of-the-art media room with 300-movie library.

You'll find plenty of opportunities for getting in touch with Mexico's natural wonders, whether you go swimming with the dolphins, deep sea fishing, whale

watching, snorkeling with the colorful marine life, or zip-line riding through the desert canyons. Excellent surfing, scuba diving, and golf are just minutes away.

To learn more about Casa TAZ go to www.casataz.com. Special discounts may also apply depending on length of stay and number of guests. To discuss bookings on mutually agreeable dates, please contact Elsa Watson at 206-855-9057 or elsa@westsoundwildlife.org.



Photo: Dottie Tison

Certify Your Garden as a Wildlife Habitat

Bainbridge Island is the 39th city in the U.S.—and the 8th city in Washington—to become a Certified Backyard Habitat City.

Whether you have an apartment balcony or a 20-acre farm, you can create a garden that attracts beautiful wildlife and helps restore habitat in commercial and residential areas. By providing food, water, cover, and a place for wildlife to raise their young, you not only help wildlife, but you also qualify to become an official Certified Wildlife Habitat™ and join the nearly 140,000 sites across the country.

West Sound Wildlife is overseeing the Bainbridge island-wide effort to maintain the wildlife certification. Please join the over 200 island households, schools and businesses and get your yard or business certified. Certify your Backyard Habitat Today!

To learn more, visit the National Wildlife Federation at www.nwf.org or West Sound Wildlife at www.westsoundwildlife.org.

Found A Baby Animal?
Call 206-855-9057

Wish List

You can give wildlife a second chance at life by donating the items listed below. Collecting items in your community is a great project for kids, groups, classrooms and clubs and a simple, fun and rewarding way to help wildlife. Donations are tax deductible. For questions contact Mike Pratt at mike@westsoundwildlife.org or 206-855-9057.

General Animal Care Supplies

- Flat sheets
- Blankets
- Towels (bath size)
- Tools of all sorts (hand & power)
- Bird seed & Suet
- Cleaning brushes, sponges
- "Dawn" liquid detergent (Original)
- Liquid Laundry detergent

- Liquid hand soap (regular – not antibacterial)
- Zip-lock bags
- Large trash bags (45 gal)
- Duct tape
- Masking tape
- Cable ties
- Toilet paper
- Paper towels
- Astro Turf door mats (new)
- Ceramic bowls

- Gift Cards (hardware's, pet stores, gas, retail stores)
- Nolvasan (Chlorhexidine)
- Disinfectant

Rehabilitation Equipment & Supplies

- Heating pads (non automatic shut-off)
- Chain-link dog kennels
- Non-Latex disposable gloves

- Dust & paint masks
- Cotton balls
- Stocking caps & ski masks
- Have-a-heart live traps
- Folding tables

Education Program

- Wildlife books for shelter library
- Flat Screen TV for viewing training videos

Special Thanks

A special thanks to you and all of the wonderful people and businesses whose donations year after year allow this wildlife hospital and education center to exist. The following supporters deserve special recognition for their efforts over the last three months.

Organizations, Corporations & Foundations

- Rotary Club of Bainbridge Island
- Kitsap Audubon Society
- Town & Country Markets
- One Call for All
- Blue Sky Printing
- Susnshine Yogurt
- Penny's Team
- Microsoft Giving Campaign
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Employee Matching Gift Program
- Google Matching Gift Program
- Verizon Matching Gift Program
- Regence Employee Giving Program
- Combined Federal Campaign
- City of Bainbridge Island
- Kitsap County
- Suquamish Tribe

In-Kind Donations

- Superior Pet Foods
- All Creatures Animal Hospital
- Winslow Animal Clinic, Dr. Christine Susumi
- Dr. Scott Ford
- Dr. Balderama
- Compassionate Critter Care Veterinary Hospital, Dr. Crawford
- Motive Marketing Group
- Bloedel Reserve
- American Gold Seafoods
- Dottie Tison Nature Photography

Monthly Giving Plan

- Geraldine Carbaugh
- Karla Piecuch
- Victorinia Ridgeway
- Ervon Robinson
- Stevie Stephens
- Elizabeth Ward



THE BLOEDEL RESERVE.



The Shelter is a proud participant in Bainbridge Island's One Call for All, the "red envelope campaign." Please help us save the lives of local wild animals by donating to the Shelter through One Call for All.

Loud Fireworks Affect Wildlife

At the West Sound Wildlife Shelter, we're often asked if fireworks have a detrimental affect on wildlife.

Research studies show that the loud sounds of fireworks do have an affect on wild animals as well as domestic animals.

During times of widespread fireworks use, the West Sound Wildlife Shelter receives an increase in calls from the public relating to wildlife on the roads and wildlife being seen in unusual areas.

The noise from fireworks causes a great amount of fear in wild animals. This fear causes them to flee into roadways

which results in more vehicle damage (from large animals such as deer) and more dead animals.

The loud firework explosions also cause panic, confusion, fear, and anxiety in wild animals.

The US Fish & Wildlife Service has documented effects of loud fireworks causing ground nesting birds to abandon their nests and flightless chicks to be permanently separated from their parents during the confusion, resulting in death.

A study at the University of Guelph, Ontario, points out that the panic and disorientation from fireworks noise resulted in birds flying into buildings or too far out to sea.

A New York study demonstrated that black ducks in high-noise areas grew slower and had less body weight than those in low-noise areas.

A study examining the impact of sudden loud noise on snow geese found that the birds reduced their feeding time and had less rest and sleep. Over time, these sorts of behaviors no doubt reduce survival rates.



Photo: ©Robin Purcell Photography



This spring, four goslings came to the Shelter, each from a different part of western Washington. They were excited to enter the pools in the Waterfowl Enclosure. Photos by Dottie Tison.



