



MARS Wildlife Rescue November Newsletter

Food for Rehab, Food for Thought

One of the little discussed sides of wildlife rehab is the food that various patients eat while recovering at MARS. Like all patients in recovery, they need good food in order to make healing a more efficient process. During the winter months, we receive a wide variety of juvenile birds, as well as many migratory species; all of which may suffer from some degree of emaciation, on top of any injuries they may have sustained.

Many of the animals arriving at MARS, including Eagles, Herons, Gulls, and other seabirds, usually get a combination of various types of food, but a common staple in the prepared diets is smelt. These fish are inexpensive individually, but the quantity that the birds consume on a daily basis is astounding. A Great Blue Heron will eat around 40 smelts a day, which is equal to roughly \$2.50 a day for each heron in our care. While these birds are usually with us for a number of days, the cost of care is continually rising. After 10 days at MARS, a Heron will have eaten at least \$25.00 worth of smelt, and this cost does not include the cost of any medications or other supplements added to their food.

The average Trumpeter Swan in care eats up to \$15.00 a day, by way of a mixture we call swan slurry; made up of corn, potatoes, greens, clams and a various mixture of supplements and medications. These swans, depending on their diagnosis, may be in care for 10 days or longer.



Photo: Kiersten Shyian

Recently we rescued a young Sandhill Crane who is now currently recovering with us. After blood and other tests were done, costing us roughly \$150, we have discovered that he had a variety of internal issues. After courses of medication treatment, the crane is now eating well, although it is quite a fussy eater. This particular Sandhill Crane has developed a taste for mealworms; eating approximately 800 a day! This amount of mealworms equated to roughly \$8.00 a day.

As you can see, the cost food for our patients can really add up over the course of their treatment and rehabilitation. Your donations to MARS get used in many different ways, but one of most crucial, is to purchase food for our patients.



Photo: Coral Taylor

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Cages, Cages & More Cages

At MARS, the last few months have meant much headway on the cages needed for recovery of both patients & for the ambassador birds. The concrete has been poured and the walls have been going up steadily. We discovered late in the move from the old location that many of our previous cages could not be moved without damage and substantial cost. The new ambassador cages are specially designed for each species, and meet international standards for birds in captivity. They provide shelter and protection for each bird, while simultaneously allowing public to safely view each tenant.

We are grateful to have four of the ambassador cages sponsored by local businesses and service groups. Campbell River Daybreak Rotary sent a team to build their cage, as did Courtenay Fish & Game who began building this month. Work has also begun on the cages sponsored by Marine Harvest & Western Forest Products; the concrete has been poured and we are assembling materials for building.

We still have three ambassador cages and three recovery cages available for sponsorship. Costs range from \$6,000 for the smaller cages; to a large cage for the two ambassador eagles, which will cost \$20,000 to build.

If you are interested in sponsoring a cage, please contact us at info@marswildliferescue.com for details & specifics.



IWRC Basic Skills Course

MARS hosted 42 attendees at the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (IWRC) Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation Skills workshop at Mount Washington Alpine Resort on November 4th and 5th. The Basic Skills course provides experienced and novice rehabilitation volunteers with the training they need to help injured or orphaned wildlife anywhere, at any time.

Forty-two attendees, travelling to Courtenay from as far east as Nova Scotia and as far south as Washington State, took part in the rigorous two-day course. Lessons included; physiology and anatomy, basic fluid therapy, and how to manage shock in wildlife. Six MARS volunteers, including President Warren Warttig, attended the course. Dr. Pawel Palkiewicz volunteered his time acting as a teaching vet for the students, and four MARS caregivers acted as assistants during the hands-on labs.



Photo: Warren Warttig

IWRC works in tandem with rescue organizations around the world to set standards for wildlife treatment, care, and housing. The new MARS hospital and enclosures, which opened on May 15, 2017, were built to IWRC standards in order to ensure a state-of-the-art facility.

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Creative Ways to Donate to MARS

Early this spring a local resident, Dan Davies; offered to Provide his artwork to MARS to sell for fundraising. In the following months these lovely shadow boxes, or Seashore Inspirations, have been placed in local gift shops, sold, and the proceeds have been donated to MARS.

Averaging \$50 - \$70 each, Dan's Seashore Inspirations can be purchased at the Salish Sea Market in Bowser, and at Mid Island Gifts in Comox. They make lovely home décor and could be perfect Christmas Gifts for friends & family.

To date, dozens of these shadow boxes have been sold, and thanks to Dan & his wife Wendy, they have provided MARS with hundreds of dollars in donations.



Leveraging Dollars

There's no better gift you can give a wild animal than release back to the wild. For those supporters who are considering a holiday gift for the wildlife at MARS, cash is the most versatile and utilitarian gift you can provide.

Over the holiday season, many of the gracious supporters of MARS are moved to charitable giving, so they drop off items commonly used in wildlife care. We receive many gifts of groceries, laundry and cleaning supplies, all much appreciated in our work helping injured and orphaned wildlife. However, we can extend your cash donation much further than individual purchases because of our long-standing business relationships.



MARS receives substantial discounts when we buy goods from stores such as Home Depot, Black Creek Farm and Feed, Thrifty Foods, and Quality Foods. When we have money in the bank, we can time our purchases around seasonal requirements. For example, fresh goat milk for orphaned fawns eats up a large portion of our spring / summer budget.

If the thought of a cash gift doesn't leave you with that warm and fuzzy holiday spirit, there are sponsorships, gift certificates, and other ways you can donate to support MARS in the treatment and release of local wildlife. Check out our web site at www.marswildliferescue.com for more information.

Donating Stocks and Securities

Did you know that you can donate securities and stocks to MARS, and receive a bigger tax deduction than if you sold them yourself? Most securities or investments are subject to capital gains tax, unless they are donated directly to a registered charity.

Canada Helps provides an explanation and a tool that makes it easy to donate.

<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/why-canadahelps/ways-to-give/benefits-of-donating-securities/>.

Your financial advisor or bank can help you calculate the actual tax benefit and savings. It's a win / win for both you and MARS!



Photo: Ruth Hibberson



Photo: Judy Gurr



Photo: Kiersten Shyian

Invest In MARS Wildlife Rescue

Through our website at www.marswildliferescue.com

Through our Facebook Page: MARS Wildlife Rescue Center

Through Canada Helps at canadahelps.org/dn/10210

Credit Card Donation by phone at 250-337-2021

Cheque by Mail to our P.O Box 415, Merville, BC V0R 2M0

By Gift Card: Home Depot, Canadian Tire, Slegg Building Supply, Home Hardware, etc.

Return your empties to the Courtenay Recycle Center and donate the refund to MARS

In person at our location: 1331 Williams Beach Road

Tax receipts are available for donations over \$20 if requested



**MARS would like to thank all of our past and current supporters.
You make all of our work possible.**