

# A WILD GOOSE CHASE

---

By Chris Montuori

Late July 1995, I was inundated with baby birds as well as larger animals occupying almost all of my cages. It was taking 40 to 45 minutes to feed all the baby birds and they had to be fed hourly. On Friday, July 21, I reluctantly decided to stop accepting wildlife admissions until I could reduce my caseload.

The next day, chimes, triggered by a motion detector, told me a vehicle had pulled into the driveway. I finished feeding the cage of baby birds I was working on and went to see who had arrived unannounced. The Animal Control logo on the side of the van answered my question. I walked out to meet the driver and discover what creature awaited assistance.

In a stainless steel cage, on a soft pad, sat a Canada goose. The Animal Control driver said it had taken a half hour to catch the bird despite a badly injured leg. Fortunately, I had one large cage available.

The goose had a serious cut in the pad of its right foot and an additional wound at the ankle. Manipulating the foot, I detected the tell-tale crunching which indicated broken bones. Using tongue depressors, I taped together a splint my vet (Dr. Piety at Wheaton Animal Hospital) had devised for a previous case. With paper towels and cotton for padding, I carefully spread the foot and wrapped it to the splint. A regiment of antibiotics was begun to deal with the possibility of infection in the open wound.

The first day, the goose had serious difficulty coping with its new, enlarged foot. It kept the foot stuck out behind its body and I wondered if this was a case my vet should see. Experience, however, told me that immobilization was about the only treatment for a fracture in this location so I decided to give it a little time.

The next day, the goose was putting some weight on the bad leg and was keeping it in a more normal position. Over several days, it began using the foot more and more. After one week, and a couple dunks in its water bowl, I decided I had to remove the now soggy wrapping.

I was alone when the goose was admitted and had no problem wrapping the foot by myself. A week later, I was grateful to have the assistance of Cathy Geer, a trusted volunteer. It took all my strength and effort just to hold the goose while Cathy removed the splint. The wrap was stuck to the ankle wound so we trimmed the excess tape and I decided to give the goose a swim in the bathtub to soak the foot. Fifteen minutes later, my daughter informed me there was a loose goose running around the bathroom (not an unusual occasion in my home).

Cathy retrieved the goose and I was able to remove the last of the wrap. The wound looked very good and I decided not to re-wrap until I could see how the goose was managing. It managed just fine. Several days later, it was transferred to my large outdoor cage. There it could walk around to its heart's content and fully extend its wings. A week later, the limp was barely discernable and it was time to schedule the bird's release.

On August 23, Cindy Williams (a former "client") arrived to take the goose to a pond on her property. Cindy reported later that the bird did not seem enthusiastic about its new surroundings but was swimming well and was soon making short, low flights. In days, the goose would be able to move to a "home" more to its liking, if it chose.

Wildlife is surprisingly resilient and quick to heal. Often, all they need is a little time, protection and a second chance.

Reprinted from "Second Thoughts" Newsletter-Fall 1995.

Copyright 1995 - Second Chance Wildlife Center, Inc.