Maryland is home to many species of hawks that soar above our homes, fields, and forests. At Second Chance Wildlife Center, we frequently care for Sharp-shinned, Cooper’s, Red-shouldered, and Red-tailed hawks, with the goal of releasing them back into the wild to once again soar freely in the skies above.

For all of our native hawks, winter can be a hard time. As smaller animals hibernate or find shelter from the cold, the prey that sustains hawks in the warmer months becomes harder to find.

In their desperate search for food, many birds of prey turn to our streets and highways to scavenge roadkill. It is common to see hawks line the roads, perched atop telephone poles and street lights, waiting for a chance to swoop down and get a meal. Unfortunately, this puts them in grave danger of becoming victims of a vehicle strike themselves.

Last year, we at Second Chance admitted over twenty hawks that had been struck by vehicles. Fortunately, many citizens and animal services officers stop to help these raptors that are left injured on the side of the road.

On New Year’s Eve in Derwood, Maryland, one hawk encountered this exact problem! A red-shouldered hawk had been hit by a car and was in the middle of the road completely immobile. Our partners at Montgomery County Animal Services retrieved the hawk and brought him to us. Our Clinic team’s exam

Turtles have always held a special place in Linda Szollosy’s heart, and Linda holds a special place in ours.

Combining her love of turtles with years of experience rescuing and caring for them, Linda assists us as a volunteer specializing in their care and rehabilitation. But that’s not all. She also assists us with other animals, is a member of the Mid-Atlantic Turtle and Tortoise Society (MATTs), and she serves as a “foster mom” to box turtles that are not able to be released back into the wild. Most exciting for us, the completion of her two-year apprenticeship under our Clinic Director, Kathleen Handley – when Linda can qualify for her Master Wildlife Rehabilitator permit from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – is just ten months away!
Dear Friends of Wildlife and Second Chance,

One of the first things that I noticed when I joined Second Chance Wildlife Center a few months ago was that the staff and volunteers are constantly in motion. I soon found myself part of this flurry of incredibly rewarding and challenging activity each day - all driven by a focus on delivering the best future possible for each of the animals in our care and, for me, on delivering the best possible future for our amazing organization, too.

As I meet with people who are unfamiliar with our important work, I enjoy the expressions of surprise I see when I explain all of the things that wildlife rehabilitators actually do, and the tremendous amount of knowledge they need to posses about each species - beyond anatomy, biology, and medical treatments.

Our goal is to release animals back into the wild that are healthy and prepared to survive. So, when orphaned animals arrive as tiny babies and grow to be juveniles ready for release, our experts need to teach them skills normally learned from their parents - and those can be very different depending on the species. When a migratory bird strikes a window and arrives at Second Chance, our team’s understanding of that species’ travel route and even local weather patterns are factors in the timing of its release. Also essential to rehabilitation success is a thorough understanding of each species’ habitat, natural food sources and preferences, gestation and weaning periods, social structures, territoriality, preparations for winter, and much more.

Multiply all of the above by over 3,000 animal patients annually, and you can understand why our small but mighty team at Second Chance Wildlife Center is always in action, and why the animal patients we treat are in loving and highly skilled hands, receiving top-quality care. You’ll also understand why I am so proud to be here.

With gratitude,

Maureen Smith, President

WHAT DO WILDLIFE REHABILITATORS DO?

- Rescue
- Comfort
- Medicate
- Feed
- Clean
- Rehabilitate
- Release
- Educate
- Fundraise
- Mourn
- & Love

Text source: BabyWarm.org  Photo: Second Chance Wildlife Center
revealed that the hawk was suffering from serious head trauma. He had significant difficulty keeping his balance, and was unable to keep his head up. He was very disoriented and slow to react to stimuli. We started by warming him up and giving him fluids to rehydrate, as well as anti-inflammatories and eye ointment to help with swelling caused by the impact. Once treated, we gave him a quiet place to get the rest he needed.

The following morning, he was alert and able to stand up more easily. Fortunately, x-rays showed that the hawk had not broken any bones, a common injury when dealing with car struck animals. By the end of the week the hawk was showing no symptoms of further head trauma.

Despite his progress, the hawk refused to eat on his own. It is not uncommon for hawks and other animals to turn down food when in captive care. Often, the stress and confusion of the unfamiliar location makes them too uncomfortable to eat. We started hand feeding him daily, but knew he would need to start feeding himself again soon. We decided to move him into our outdoor enclosure, hoping the more natural surrounding would help reduce his stress. He immediately flew around the enclosure and made himself comfortable, and by the end of the day, he had eaten all the food he had been offered. We were so relieved to see that his appetite had returned.

After weeks of treatment the hawk was deemed ready to go back into the wild. He was flying beautifully and was finally eating on his own. So, in mid-January, we loaded him into a carrier and drove him back out to the location where he was first found. The moment the carrier lid opened, he took off and landed in a nearby tree. We couldn’t have been happier with the progress he made, and with such a successful release (which you can see on our website www.SCWC.org).

Not all hawks are as lucky as this one. Many come in with far more serious injuries and sadly, not all of them make it. Vehicle strikes can result in broken bones, internal injuries, and at times death on impact. Second Chance is always here to help the injured animals in need of care, but we can all help prevent these injuries by staying alert behind the wheel.

**Did you know…?**

- **The sharp-shinned hawk** is the smallest hawk in the U.S. The males being only slightly larger than a blue jay. They migrate south from Canada in the fall, and migrate back north in the spring to breed. They prefer the deep-woods.

- **The Cooper’s hawk** is about the size of a crow and a year-round resident in our area. While they prefer to remain in forests, it is not uncommon to see them venture into more urban areas in search of food.

- **The red-shouldered hawk** is a larger species, being almost twice the size of a sharp-shinned. They prefer marshy areas.

- **The red-tailed hawk** is found all across the U.S. and is one of our largest hawks, with the females possessing a four-foot wingspan. Red-tailed hawks inhabit open spaces, such as wood edges and grasslands.

**Watch video of this hawk’s release on the Second Chance website (www.SCWC.org) and on our social media accounts**

Website: SCWC.org  Facebook: facebook.com/SCWC.org  Twitter: @2ndChanceWild

YouTube: Search for “Second Chance Wildlife Center MARYLAND”
Volunteer Spotlight, continued from page 1

Linda has a growing passion for endangered sea turtles and, along with her son, has participated in volunteer efforts with the Caretta Research Project down in Georgia, with Leatherback Sea Turtles in Costa Rica, and with cold-stunned Kemps' Ridley Sea Turtles at Cape Cod.

As the weather warms in April, we at Second Chance start to see turtles arriving mostly due to car or lawn mower strikes. These are usually more severe injuries and require long term care, sometimes throughout winter. The Center saw 135 turtles in 2018, and one time we were treating 24 turtles simultaneously. Linda was also deeply involved in our efforts with Maryland DNR, MATTs and Montgomery County officials to relocate turtles from an old waste water pond to a healthier pond a mile away. It took all involved one month to relocate over 70 turtles!

Turtles need to be released as close to where they were found as possible. It is important to ensure that they will be in the proper habitat and that their safety is secure until they are reacquainted with their surroundings. According to Linda, “It is not unusual for us to trek into the bush or go off the beaten path to make a safe release. Some of these turtles know where they are and gladly take off straight away, while others may take 30 minutes or so to take their leave. I keep a diary on my releases with pictures from over the past four years and I hope that they are all still wild and happy.”

When asked if turtles demonstrate personalities, she replied, “Absolutely! Turtles can be shy or outgoing, have personal food interests, have favorite sleeping areas, and more.”

We also asked Linda, what makes Second Chance Wildlife Center so special? “Second Chance has been loyal to its community for many years by providing rescue and care to our native wildlife,” she said. “It is forever evolving to meet growing demands and challenges, and it is focused on providing the best treatment for its wide array of animal patients.”

Linda, thank you for all you do. You are special, too!

Are you more than 70-1/2 years old?
Do you have an IRA account?
If you answered “yes” to both questions, consider making a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) to Second Chance Wildlife Center from your IRA account. This can provide a great tax break.

Each year after you reach 70-1/2, you are required to take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA. An ordinary IRA distribution counts toward your RMD and is included in your taxable income. However, a QCD also counts toward your RMD but is not included in your taxable income. This means you can probably reduce your federal income tax if you use a QCD to make a donation to SCWC.

The main requirement for a QCD is that your donation to SCWC come through your IRA custodian or by check from your IRA checking account if you have one. (This message is an alert to seniors about a potential tax-efficient way to support SCWC and should not be considered tax advice. Please consult a tax or financial advisor to see if QCDs are right for you.)