



Second Stories

SECOND CHANCE WILDLIFE CENTER'S NEWSLETTER

HOLIDAY 2023

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Every day our goal is to nurture, heal, and rehabilitate as many injured, ill, and orphaned wild animals as possible so that they can be returned home - wherever that may be. For some, "home" is a quiet neighborhood backyard or trees in a busy corporate plaza. For others, it is a pond on a golf course, the brush in a field, the rafters of an old barn, or even the shore along the Chesapeake Bay. Our precious wildlife neighbors have homes all around us.

For migrating birds, home can be thousands of miles away, and we face a ticking clock to get them healed, strong, and in flight before Mother Nature's window of opportunity closes for the season.

In the winter, Second Chance is the holiday home for some animals, like reptiles and amphibians, that - even though they are healed - would not survive if released before the arrival of consistently warm spring weather.

Throughout the year, the release of wildlife back to their homes makes for our most joyous moments. We high-five, fist-bump, and cheer. Sometimes we cry (a happy cry) - especially for those animals that overcame tremendous injuries and required extraordinary care over many months.

Speaking of home, we recently announced that work is officially underway on SCWC's future "home" - a custom-designed wildlife rehabilitation facility in Clarksburg, Maryland that will be nearly 3 times larger than our current aging farmhouse. We hope to be home at this wonderful new life-saving facility in time for the 2024 holiday season.



In this edition of our newsletter, we are sharing stories of some of the more interesting or noteworthy releases in 2023. Please join us in celebrating all releases - after all, without your support at the holidays and throughout the year, these successes would not have been possible.

We're Happy These Cuckoos Didn't Miss Their Flight Home for the Holidays!



This year SCWC admitted two Yellow-billed Cuckoos and one Black-billed Cuckoo. Cuckoos are migratory birds and when in our area, they spend most of their time high up in the canopy eating caterpillars. These seldom seen birds can be challenging to care for, and it is vital that they are healed quickly to ensure they can complete their migration to central and south America for winter. We are happy to share that these amazing birds were successfully treated for impact injuries and released back to the wild - and by now all three should be enjoying warm holiday weather near the equator!

A Blended Family Goes Home for the Holidays



When this Wood Duck came to Second Chance as a tiny orphaned duckling, our team successfully placed it with some of our Mallard ducklings to ensure it received the vital socialization that young ducks require. Wood ducks are high-stress patients, and our Clinic Team took great care to provide this one with a comfortable, enriching environment for rehabilitative success. After a few months in our care, this young Wood duck and its Mallard foster siblings were successfully released.

Slow but Successful Journeys Home



Each of these Box turtles was admitted with major wounds, but thanks to the incredible work of our Clinic Team all have been returned to the wild and are likely in a cozy state of brumation (similar to hibernation) until spring. Some required special brackets to stabilize fractures, while others required specialized wound care (including cold laser therapy to accelerate healing) and surgery to ensure a full recovery. Although they are often slow to heal, we are always amazed how resilient box turtles are.

These Two Siblings Will Dig Their Holiday Homes



This summer, these Groundhog siblings were brought to us after being orphaned. Without professional rehabilitative care, there would have been no chance of survival for these young animals – they were too young to survive on their own. Only a few groundhogs are brought to SCWC each year, and most are dealing with catastrophic injuries from car strikes. Our Clinic Team was extremely excited to be able to rear these siblings until they were experienced in foraging for food and old enough for release. Thanks to SCWC and your support, they will be spending the holidays in cozy burrows this year.

Home to the Trees!



Eastern Gray Squirrels are one of our most common patients and are often some of the most labor-intensive! It takes up to 3 months to raise an orphaned or abandoned squirrel until it is ready for release, and those 3 months require specialized and frequent care. Squirrel releases are always worth celebrating!

Get SCWC Photos, Videos & Helpful Information on a Regular and Timely Basis



These newsletters are wonderful for seeing photos of our mission in action, but space is limited. To see more of them - plus videos - on a regular basis, and to read behind-the-scene stories and learn tips for safely coexisting with your wildlife neighbors, simply follow us on our Facebook page (www.Facebook.com/SCWC.org) and/or on our new Instagram account (@SecondChanceWildlifeCenter). We recently refreshed our approach to these social media platforms and hope you will find our content even more educational, inspiring, and heartwarming than before.



It's an easy way to become more engaged in our special SCWC community and to share Second Chance Wildlife Center's great work and informative resources with friends, family, neighbors, and colleagues.

A GREAT Flight Home



This Great Blue Heron arrived at SCWC after being found entangled in fishing line, struggling to breathe in a pond. It arrived soaking wet, so our team immediately warmed and dried it. Our veterinarian sedated it to assess its bone and lung health using our in-house x-ray machine, and determined, thankfully, that its injuries were minor. After a short stay with us to ensure the heron was healed and exhibiting normal behaviors, it was released back home. Watching it take flight took our breath away.

OWL be Home for Christmas



This beautiful Barred Owl was found in the road after being hit by a car. SCWC diagnosed a wing injury and severe head trauma. After 71 days in expert care this majestic bird was released.

A Hawk We Helped Get Home



This gorgeous Red-tailed Hawk was admitted with a wing injury and missing feathers from impact plus severe poisoning and anemia from rodenticide. We managed its pain and provided vitamins and a healthy diet, and gently kept its muscles moving and strong. It took a while for the feathers to grow back, but after several months, this raptor passed its flight test and flew home.



Your support this time of year helps determine our capacity for care in the new year. Please give as you are able via check mailed to Second Chance Wildlife Center at 7101 Barcellona Dr., Gaithersburg, MD 20879 or give online by scanning this QR code that takes you to our donation page on www.SCWC.org.



When animals are brought to **Second Chance Wildlife Center**, rest assured they are in the skilled and compassionate hands of well-trained and well-educated **Clinic employees** dedicated to the highest levels of wildlife care and following state and federal guidelines. In recent years we have worked diligently to attract and assemble the best team possible and to transform Second Chance Wildlife Center into an organization in which talented and dedicated people can (and will want to) pursue satisfying long-term careers in wildlife care and rehabilitation.



College degrees earned by current SCWC Clinic Team members include Wildlife Biology, Conservation Biology, Biology, Marine Science, Animal Behavior, Data Science, Environmental Science and Sustainability, Veterinary Medicine, and more.

The current team has more than **70 YEARS** of combined animal rescue and care experience, and they bring to SCWC and its wildlife patients proven best practices from working at facilities in **11 DIFFERENT STATES plus THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.**



Our 10-person animal care staff includes a **full-time Veterinarian** and a **full-time Clinic Director.**



Three SCWC staff and two long-term volunteers have earned **MARYLAND MASTER WILDLIFE REHABILITATOR PERMITS** issued by the state after rigorous training, lengthy apprenticeships, and required courses. Three additional staff are **APPRENTICES** in the process of earning their Master Wildlife Rehabilitator permits. All staff participate in required and voluntary continuing education courses.

SCWC and various staff are members in good standing with **THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE REHABILITATORS ASSOCIATION, THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REHABILITATORS ASSOCIATION, and THE INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE REHABILITATION COUNCIL.**

And, Second Chance is **LICENSED BY THE U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE** to care for migratory birds and Bald Eagles, among others.



Special thanks to the SCWC Team Members working Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and every holiday to care for our patients. We remain open 365 days a year, but – as always – please call before traveling to our facility (301-926-9453).