

Second Stories

SECOND CHANCE WILDLIFE CENTER'S NEWSLETTER

MAY 2025

IT'S OUR 30TH BABY SEASON!

Dear Friends of Second Chance,

March 28, 2025 marked the 30th anniversary of our beloved organization and the start of our 30th Baby Season - a roughly 7-month period when hundreds of injured, ill, and orphaned baby animals arrive at our facility desperate for a second chance to survive, to live free, and to fulfill their intended roles in nature. The food, medicines, incubators, expertly trained and licensed staff, x-ray equipment, and everything else required for success are only possible with your support.

The most impactful way that you can pay tribute to our 30th year of service to wildlife would be to donate to Second Chance Wildlife Center at least once this year (if/as you are able). Having received the highest ratings possible from independent charity evaluators, Candid and Charity Navigator, you know you can give with confidence.

In this newsletter, and from now through the end of December, we will be celebrating our major milestone with stories and images from our humble beginnings in the home of SCWC's remarkable founder, Chris Montuori, to the present, plus sharing our vision for SCWC's exciting future.

You can join this wonderful celebration by following us on Facebook (www.Facebook.com/SCWC.org), Instagram (@SecondChanceWildlifeCenter), and YouTube (Second Chance Wildlife Center-Maryland), frequently checking the "NEWS" section of our website (SCWC.org/news/), and by adding us to your email contacts to be sure you receive the emails we send. We are exploring expanding to other social media platforms and we will announce those when they launch.

Thank you for 30 years of helping Second Chance save lives. With your support, we will be helping wildlife - one precious animal at a time - for many more decades to come.

At this time next year, Baby Season admissions and rehabilitation will be taking place at our brand new facility in Clarksburg, MD. Look inside this newsletter for photos of the progress of this amazing project that has been years in the making.



IN THIS ISSUE: Join us for a brand new behind-the-scenes look at just some of what it takes to prepare for and carry out a successful baby season at Second Chance Wildlife Center.



ABOVE: We get very few Green Herons here at Second Chance, and even fewer babies of that species. This adorable young heron was found abandoned by its parents after falling from its nest. Wading birds require specialized care that is quite different from that of our songbirds, and this nestling was initially very wary of humans and reluctant to eat in captivity. However, with the diligent care of our dedicated and trained staff (and supplies purchased with donations), we were able to successfully raise this baby to maturity. After about a month in care, he was released back into the wild! A joyous moment for all.

Animal Care Costs Have **SKYROCKETED!**

Fruits & Vegetables
Formula
Live Fish & Insects
Medications
Cleaning Supplies



But Donations are FLAT.
**PLEASE HELP US MEET THE NEEDS
OF OUR WILDLIFE PATIENTS**

Donate online today at www.SCWC.org or help us avoid service fees with a check mailed to:
Second Chance Wildlife Center 7101 Barcellona Dr, Gaithersburg, MD 20879

AN IMPOSSIBLY AWESOME OPOSSUM MOM

We wouldn't have Baby Season without wildlife moms. This Virginia opossum was admitted to Second Chance after a dog attack left her with minor injuries. Her rescuer immediately brought her in for care, and we discovered that she had 11 babies (called "joeys") in her pouch! Virginia opossums are North America's only marsupials and females have 13 nipples in their pouch. Joeys remain in mom's pouch for about 2 months until they are old enough to climb out and cling to her back for transport. After that, mom continues to carry them around until they are 3-4 months old. No one can care for these babies like their mom, so we want to keep a mom with her joeys whenever possible. Luckily, we were able to keep the whole family together for the duration of mom's treatment. She and all 11 of her babies were successfully cared for and released after just over a month in care here at the center! In this case, your monetary support of one patient (mom) saved 11 more lives at the same time. This photo shows the joeys nursing at mom's pouch.



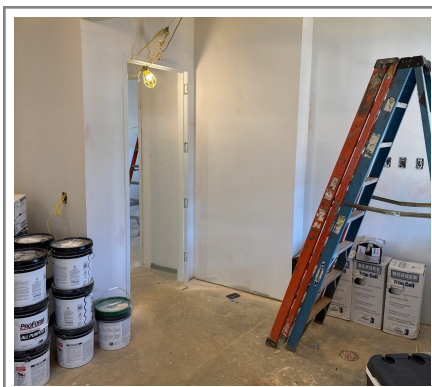
AFTER 30 YEARS OF DREAMS, SCWC'S NEW WILDLIFE REHABILITATION FACILITY IS ALMOST A REALITY

Despite more setbacks out of our control - including harsh winter weather, lengthy permit approvals, and a major utility delay that postponed getting power to the site for over nine months - the main clinic building is nearing completion and work on the outdoor enclosures has just been approved by the County!

Although we were initially devastated to hear that **our grand opening will now be delayed until October** due to these delays, Baby Season 2025 is officially underway and thousands of vulnerable young animals - along with a steady flow of adults - will be arriving at our current facility in Gaithersburg now through September. Patient care is always our priority and transporting wildlife is very stressful on the animals. Moving after Baby Season (when most of the young we cared for during spring and summer will have been released) will greatly reduce the number of animals to transport during times of critical care.

Fire suppression and security systems are installed. Concrete floors with epoxy sealant and built-in drains are in place. Room-specific climate control systems are working. Cabinets are being installed. By the time you read this newsletter, all core work inside should be completed and we will be focusing on building the pre-release outdoor enclosures (including an incredible 100' long flight strengthening enclosure - all of which we need in place before we can open.

Thank you for your understanding regarding this project's lengthy progression. We are almost "home."



WE MAKE 220+ GALLONS OF FORMULA ANNUALLY



Each of our mammal babies - squirrels, rabbits, opossums, and groundhogs (like the one shown here) require specialized formula feedings multiple times each day, 7 days a week, to ensure healthy growth while in our care. Each batch must be mixed by hand on a daily basis.

In one Baby Season, we go through almost 225 gallons of formula custom-made for each species. Most formula is perishable and can not be made far in advance nor can many of the fresh ingredients be purchased in bulk. Also, we never know exactly how many patients to plan for each day. **Your donations help us purchase the ingredients as needed.**

WE STITCH MORE THAN WOUNDS!



Our team prepares for the busy baby season by cleaning and organizing the clinic, prepping enclosures, reviewing and updating our Standard Operating Procedures for each species, taking continuing education courses, and crafting supplies for our patients. Some animals have unique housing or enrichment needs that are difficult to satisfy with commercially available items. Squirrels and opossums, for example, get custom hammocks sewn by one of our staff members using donated fleece



“PEEING” THE SQUIRRELS: A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH



Eastern gray squirrels are among our most frequently admitted baby patients, as well as some of the most charismatic. They are born blind and deaf and rely heavily on their caretakers during the first few weeks of life.

Before their eyes open, squirrels are unable to urinate/defecate on their own, so they have to be stimulated to relieve themselves every few hours in addition to being syringe fed. In the wild, this is done by the mother. When in our care, staff, interns, and volunteers spend about 182 hours per week feeding and “peeing” our baby squirrels - an unglamorous but life-saving task.

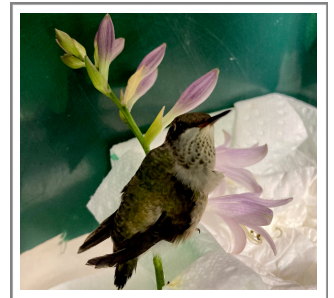
BABY SEASON FOSTER PARENTS

From a wildlife rehabilitation perspective, the best option for a potentially orphaned or abandoned animal is to reunite them with their parents and keep them wild. If those efforts are unsuccessful, the next best option is to foster them into a new wild family of the same species. This is not always an option; some animals, like ducks, may not accept a stranger into their group, often with devastating consequences. However, other species, such as Canada geese and Black vultures, may welcome a new baby and care for it as their own - if introduced appropriately by experts, of course. **The barn on our current property is home to a pair of delightful black vultures who have babies each year, and we have enlisted them as foster parents in the past with great results!**



THESE BABIES KEEP THINGS HUMMING

Hummingbirds have extremely fast metabolisms, which means they need food almost constantly! Babies, like the one pictured here, **need to be fed up to every 15-20 minutes** throughout the day to meet their nutritional needs as they grow. As you can imagine, this keeps our rehabilitators VERY busy!



SEEKING COMFORT

Nothing can replicate the warmth and comfort of a caring mother, but we have found that placing orphaned ducklings with a decoy "mom" can have a calming effect in between feedings and examinations. Reducing stress among all of our patients (young and old) is always a priority at Second Chance Wildlife Center - and it is one of the reasons we don't put our patients on public display.

GIVE WITH CONFIDENCE!

Second Chance Wildlife Center now holds the **highest ratings possible** from two of the most trusted independent charity evaluation organizations in the U.S. (Candid/ Guidestar & Charity Navigator).

