



Second Stories

SECOND CHANCE WILDLIFE CENTER'S NEWSLETTER – MAY 2026

IT TAKES A COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITY, INCLUDING YOU, TO GIVE WILDLIFE A SECOND CHANCE DURING BABY SEASON

Without people like you who take time out of their busy lives to notice and seek help for wildlife that appear to be in need - including those who transport animals to our campus from all across the region - the number of animals suffering every day would be beyond measure.

It is now "Baby Season" - a time from March through mid-October when SCWC becomes a place of second chances for hundreds of injured, ill, and orphaned wild animal babies. Some arrive in groups of five, ten, or more at a time - each one frightened, fragile, and entirely dependent on us for survival. Each requires an individual exam, a carefully tailored medical plan, the right nutrition, and constant, hands-on care - seven days a week for as long as it takes. And, while we're tending to these tiny, vulnerable lives, we are also treating adult animals who need us just as urgently.

It's an extraordinary effort - one that challenges even the most experienced and dedicated teams. If you've ever cared for a newborn, you understand the level of attention, patience, and love it requires. Now, imagine that multiplied across dozens - sometimes hundreds - of wild animals, all at once, each with different paths to recovery.

Our team members are heroes and so are you! **When you reach out to us, transport a patient to our campus, host a donation drive for basic supplies, give what you are able, and/or share information we provide, you become part of every life saved. You help ease suffering. You make healing possible. You help fund our ability to provide the essential services highlighted on the following pages, and you help return healthy animals to the wild, where they play vital roles in the ecosystems we all depend on. The average cost to care for each patient is about \$250 - much more for those that reside in our care for many months, including babies.**

Your support also lifts and sustains the spirits our incredible team - reminding them that their long days, sleepless nights, and unwavering commitment matter deeply, not just to the animals, but also to you - the compassionate community standing behind them and cheering them on. Thank you!

SCWC PATIENT ADMISSIONS ARE UP OVER THIS TIME LAST YEAR BY +70%

Please make a gift today via www.SCWC.org/donate or, avoid credit card fees by sending a check to:

Second Chance Wildlife Center
26400 Haines Rd, Clarksburg, MD 20871

Now that Opossum Pike Veterinary Clinic in Frederick no longer provides wildlife care, we anticipate even larger increases in patient admissions!

YOU CAN HELP US PROVIDE NEEDED SUPPLIES, HOUSING, AND CARE TO ALL WILDLIFE IN NEED!



Great Horned Owl nestling



SECOND CHANCE WILDLIFE CENTER
MARYLAND'S FIRST & ONLY LICENSED WILDLIFE REHABILITATION HOSPITAL

SCWC's new Clarksburg campus is now the first & only Rehabilitation Facility in Maryland to officially be LICENSED as a **VETERINARY HOSPITAL FOR WILDLIFE**

MORE INFORMATION INSIDE!

A TYPICAL DAY IN THE LIFE OF SCWC TEAM MEMBERS DURING BABY SEASON



Most songbird parents feed their babies constantly from sunup to sundown, so to replicate that, we feed every young songbird every 30 to 60 minutes



Baby squirrels must be fed every 2-4 hours because they can quickly become weak or die without frequent nutrition and hydration. They also cannot regulate their body temperature or rid waste on their own.



Ducklings and goslings need frequent feeding and constant access to clean water because they eat and drink often and quickly foul their water. As aquatic birds, dirty water can lead to illness and poor health. The "mama" duck plushie keeps them cozy and feeling safe.



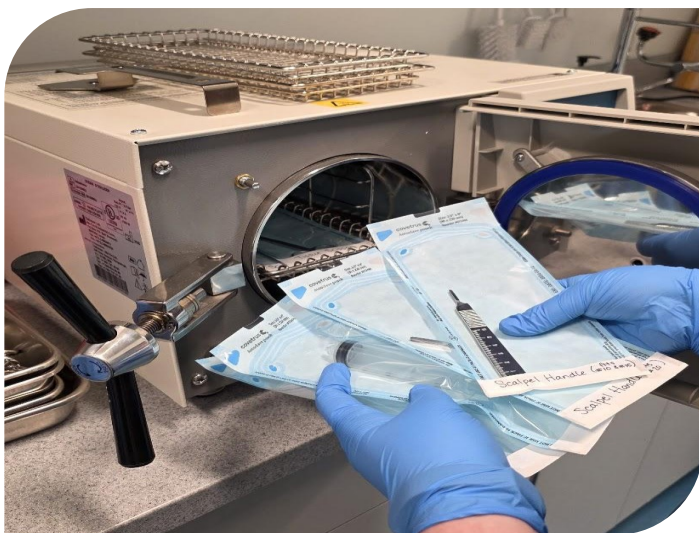
Baby rabbits are highly sensitive to stress, dehydration, and digestive issues. Some require time-intensive tube-feeding by well-trained staff.



Young opossums grow rapidly and can quickly decline without consistent nutrition and hydration. Regular feeding of specialized foods supports their proper development and survival.



Diagnostic tools like microscopes, lab work, and X-rays help assess and treat unseen internal injuries and illnesses. These are essential for creating effective treatment plans as well as quarantine procedures that may be needed.



Equipment, incubators, tanks, and entire rooms must be regularly disinfected to prevent disease transmission. Strict sanitation protocols are essential in both hospitals for people and hospitals for wildlife.



County Animal Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and the Department of Natural Resources work with SCWC to monitor and respond to disease outbreaks like avian influenza, rabies, and distemper. These agencies also assist with animal transport to SCWC for expert care.



Regular maintenance keeps the facility safe and functional for both animals and staff. Issues must be addressed quickly to avoid disruptions in care. This includes HVAC and air filtration, water, electricity, and more.



During Baby Season, medical procedures on patients of all ages are also taking place to ease suffering and save lives. Our team must be prepared for anything.



Enclosures of all kinds and sizes in which patients are housed must be cleaned at least once daily to prevent disease and ensure proper hygiene for each patient. This is one of the most time-intensive tasks and is critical for animal health and recovery as we clean **100-150** housing units each day in baby season.



Food and medical dishes are used constantly and must be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized throughout the day. This prevents cross-contamination between patients. It protects staff, too.



Laundry is ongoing, including towels, bedding, and cleaning materials used throughout the facility. Clean materials of all kinds are essential to maintaining a sanitary environment.



Outdoor spaces require regular cleaning to remove waste and prevent build up of harmful bacteria and parasites. This ensures animals have safe, healthy environments.



It is essential to ensure our outdoor enclosures – like the flight strength & conditioning facility seen here (the only one of its kind and size in Maryland) - and other outdoor enclosures are always clean and ready for use. This enclosure measures 100' long by 20' tall – requiring a great deal of time and labor to keep clean and well maintained.

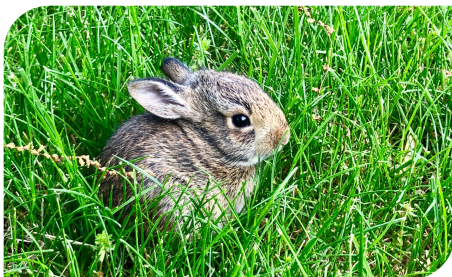
PLEASE HELP US SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT BABY ANIMAL DISPLACEMENT ALSO CALLED “UNITENTIONAL WILDLIFE KIDNAPPING”

by Maia Chicherio, a Lead Rehabilitation Technician at Second Chance Wildlife Center

We are very grateful that so many compassionate people care about injured, ill, and orphaned wildlife. But, **each year, a whopping 15-20% of Second Chance Wildlife Center’s 2,500+ admissions are healthy baby animals, unknowingly displaced and brought to our facility by well-meaning - but uncertain - rescuers who don’t call us or visit our website before taking action.**

Following is some general information we hope that you will help us share with friends, family, neighbors and colleagues:

The most common instances of baby animal displacement involve fledgling birds, baby rabbits, and fawns - **and almost all of these scenarios can be prevented.** Most baby animals are healthy and still receiving parental care, even when their parents aren't visible. It can be unnerving to leave an animal in a seemingly vulnerable situation, but it is always best for them to stay with their parents when possible. Imagine the stress on the parents and the babies when separated! Furthermore, bringing animals to Second Chance when no human intervention is needed means that our team and our limited resources are stretched thin when they could – and should – be spent on patients that do need expert care. When most birds fledge (grow adult feathers) and leave the nest, they spend about a week on the ground before they can fly. Their parents occasionally return to feed them, but this is the critical period during which babies learn to fly and even feed themselves. If you see a fledgling on the ground that is alert and hopping around, the parents are almost certainly still looking after them - **even if you don’t see them!**



Eastern cottontails are efficient parents - mom will visit the nest only 1-2 times a day, and their babies are weaned in just 3-4 weeks! If you accidentally uncover a rabbit's nest in your yard, simply cover the nest back up with the fur and dried vegetation originally placed there by the mother. Mom should return overnight to nurse her babies but will likely not be seen at all during the day!

A newly born fawn is too small to keep up with its mother while she grazes. A doe will leave her baby in a safe location for most of the day, visiting only at dawn and dusk to nurse and then relocating the fawn every few days. If you see a fawn hunkered down, quiet and calm, you can assume it is likely well cared for.



If you see a baby animal covered in flies or ants, bleeding, or you know it was caught by a pet, it DOES need help!

If you are unsure whether an animal needs help, please contact Second Chance by phone (301-926-9453) or email (info@scwc.org)! After hours, you can find helpful information on our website (www.scwc.org). Always seek advice from a licensed professional before handling or intervening with wildlife. And, if bringing a rescued animal to Second Chance Wildlife Center, always call first for advice on transporting it and to allow us time to prepare for the patient's arrival.

SCWC: MARYLAND'S 1ST & ONLY LICENSED VETERINARY HOSPITAL FOR WILDLIFE

We are proud to announce that Second Chance Wildlife Center has officially been licensed as **Maryland's first and only licensed Veterinary Hospital for Wildlife by the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the Maryland Board of Veterinary Medicine** - marking a major milestone for our beloved and respected organization and for wildlife care across the region.

This designation comes after a rigorous application process and an on-site inspection and recognizes our new facility's advanced medical capabilities, our full-time veterinarian - Dr. Natalie Zimmerman, a highly-trained staff including several Master Wildlife Rehabilitator permit holders, and an unwavering commitment to providing comprehensive and compassionate care to injured, ill, and orphaned native wildlife and migratory birds.

Most notably, this new licensure elevates SCWC's role from a traditional rehabilitation center to a fully recognized veterinary hospital for wildlife - capable of delivering a higher level of diagnostic, surgical, and long-term treatment services.

It takes a compassionate and engaged community to make things like this happen. We thank you for your generous support to make this achievement possible.



SCWC SELECTED TO PARTICPATE IN HPAI ("BIRD FLU") RESEARCH STUDY

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), or "bird flu," effects many bird species - especially waterfowl, raptors, and poultry - and spreads through respiratory secretions, feces, and raptors feeding on carcasses. Cases often rise in winter as migrating birds gather in large numbers.

Following several local outbreaks this season, SCWC implemented strict biosecurity measures, including protective suits, masks, gloves, foot baths, and quarantine spaces for suspected cases. We also partnered closely with local and state agencies to monitor the situation.

After eight weeks without new regional reports, we've cautiously scaled back some precautions. However, all incoming birds are still carefully screened, and we are ready to reinstate stricter protocols if needed.

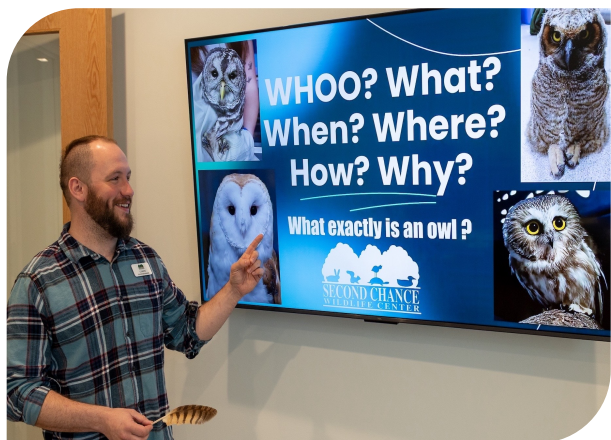
We're also excited to share that **SCWC has been selected to partner with the Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGen North - part of City of Hope)** on a national HPAI surveillance study. Through this collaboration, SCWC will collect samples from birds and mammals to help track the virus, monitor outbreaks, and better understand its potential impact on mammal species.

Thanks to TGen's support, all testing and materials are provided at no cost—allowing us to contribute to critical research while continuing to deliver high-quality patient care.

This partnership is just one example of how your support for our daily work makes a broader impact. We look forward to sharing updates as this important work progresses.



SCWC'S NEW EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM: MAY 1, 2026 LAUNCH



Education is part of SCWC's mission, and in March of 2026 we launched new efforts to educate people on how to protect wildlife, why doing so is important, and how to safely co-exist with wildlife neighbors.

Core elements of this program are presentations for community groups, senior centers, schools, businesses, scout troops, places of worship, etc.

With this program, we will also work to create a greater sense of community by engaging people across the region to join us through volunteering, donation drives, table-top events, gardening to help wildlife, and more.

PRESENTATIONS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE (WITH MORE COMING LATER IN 2026):

Sessions are led by SCWC's Manager of Education, CJ White. CJ has over 15 years of experience in wildlife education and loves sharing little known facts about Maryland's wildlife and how everyone can help them in some way. Although we do not currently use ambassador animals, CJ uses feathers, bones, turtle shells, x-rays, and more to give audiences a new way to appreciate and learn about the wildlife species SCWC works so hard to save, rehabilitate, and release.

Presentations currently being offered (with more to come), include:

- **Misunderstood Wildlife** (for adults)
- **SCWC & Owls of Maryland** (for adults)
- **SCWC & the Hawks & Falcons of Maryland** (for adults)
- **Simple Ways to Be a Good Wildlife Neighbor** (one for adults and one for kids)
- **SCWC & Owls of Maryland PLUS Owl Pellet Dissection activity** (for adults, kids, or adult & a child pairings)

We will bring the presentation to you, or we can host groups of up to 16 in our Education & Meeting Room on site at SCWC in Clarksburg. **For pricing information and to complete a presentation request form, visit the Education page our website (www.SCWC.org) or email Education@scwc.org.**

OTHER WAYS TO ENGAGE WITH SCWC AND HELP WILDLIFE THROUGH THIS PROGRAM



Explore our educational display at SCWC made possible by a grant from the Healthier, Greener, Kinder Foundation.



We provide simple tips for hosting a donation drive for basic supplies SCWC needs year-round.



Employee/Group Volunteer Days for team-building while helping SCWC & wildlife.



We love being invited to community events where we can display items and answer questions.

And, we are always looking for long-term volunteers in Animal Care, Housekeeping, and as Greeters in our admissions area. To learn more and complete an application, visit www.scwc.org/join-our-team/

For more information, email Education@scwc.org. Please keep our phone lines open for animal emergencies.



**YOU ARE INVITED TO OUR ONLINE BABY SHOWER.
HAPPENING THROUGHOUT THE MONTH OF MAY
ON OUR FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM PAGES**



Our Annual Online Baby Shower is happening throughout the month of May on Facebook (Facebook.com/SCWC.org) and Instagram (@SecondChanceWildlifeCenter). We'll be expanding to additional platforms soon.

See wonderful photos and videos, learn new things, and engage with our team and other members of the SCWC community – all in celebration (and appreciation) of the most vulnerable wild critters...BABIES and the people who give them the best chance for a second chance at life.

Please share our posts to help spread the word about protecting wildlife and the work of SCWC.



**Should you wish to send a baby shower gift to help us with animal care, please mail a check to:
Second Chance Wildlife Center, 26400 Haines Road, Clarksburg, MD 20871
or, make an online donation (subject to third party fees) at SCWC.org/donate.**