

TALES FROM THE TREE

The Quarterly Newsletter of Ziggy's Tree Wildlife Rehabilitation Center



Volume No. 1 Issue No. 1
Ziggy's Tree Wildlife Rehabilitation Center
Website: www.ziggystree.org

Date January 2011
PO Box 330756 Murfreesboro, TN 37133
E-mail: ziggystree@aol.com

PATIENT GALLERY

GROUNDHOGS GALORE: This past year's flooding in Nashville not only took a toll on the residents of the area, but impacted the wildlife as well. Seven of the nine groundhogs we took in this year were as a direct result of the historic flood. Our youngest groundhog was rescued from a creek near Opry Mills along Briley Parkway. A wonderful gentleman saw what he thought was a puppy, clinging to a log and being swept down the creek. With the assistance of other kind citizens, he was able to get to the drowning creature and bring it back to shore. Wet and cold when we took him in, the little groundhog was dried off and wrapped in warm towels. He was given fluids once his condition stabilized. Soon he was drinking a substitute formula and provided a wide variety of grasses, greens, fruits and vegetables while he continued to grow.



He was released with his adopted siblings when he was about 4 months of age through a process we call a soft release. Our groundhog cages are built so that the young animals can dig their way out when they are ready. Food is made available in the cage until the youngsters establish their new den site and no longer need to return for the food.

Groundhogs (also known as woodchucks or whistle pigs) are very misunderstood. Thought to be the bane of every farmer's existence, they actually provide a valuable service by aerating the soil, frequently at depths that cannot be

reached by standard aerating methods. They are a valuable resource in keeping our soil healthy. And while they are frequently accused of raiding the vegetable gardens in the neighborhood, their primary diet is actually grasses, clover and dandelions. And other than on the Geico commercial, they are not generally seen chucking wood (or hogging ground) – but when they are startled, their whistle is unmistakable!

A BIRD OF A DIFFERENT COLOR: When we received a call this past spring about a bird that was blue, purple, green and red, we were expecting an escaped exotic pet. Instead, we received a purple gallinule, a relative of the more common American coot. These birds are generally found much further south and west. We suspect this bird was blown in by strong winds. Weak and thin, but with no injuries, the gallinule slowly regained its strength and built its muscles back up.



Once the gallinule was ready for release, we were faced with a dilemma. While gallinules have been seen in Tennessee, they are not generally found within the state. After consulting with members of the Tennessee Ornithological Society, we determined that Standifer Gap Marsh in Hamilton County provided the best habitat. Gallinules had been documented there in the past. Dr. David Aborn, ornithology professor at UT Chattanooga graciously volunteered his time to place a leg band on the bird so that it could be identified should it ever be recaptured in the future.

IT'S BABY SEASON!

Spring is nearly here – the time when animals' fancies turn to thoughts of raising their young. In our increasingly urban/suburban habitat, it's possible you'll find what appears to be an injured or abandoned young animal. But appearances can be deceiving.



Fledgling Barred Owl

Some species will leave no doubt as to whether or not they are caring for their young. In other cases, it may be more difficult to tell if the young animal is truly orphaned. Here are some guidelines for the most common species you'll find.

Baby birds



Hatchling Red-bellied Woodpecker

If you find a pink, bald or lightly feathered nestling on the ground, check to see that it is warm and uninjured – then look for a nest nearby. The bird can be placed back in the nest – human scent will not deter an adult bird. In fact, with the exception of vultures, most birds do not have a highly developed sense of smell. If you can't reach the nest, construct one from a plastic dish or basket. Poke a couple of holes in the bottom of the dish or basket so that water will drain if it rains, then line the “nest” with grass and leaves and place it as close as possible to the original nest. The mother should return to feed the babies within 2-3 hours.



Fledgling White-breasted Nuthatches

Fledgling songbirds (those with all their feathers, but shorter tails than their parents) may be on the ground learning to fly. If they are in a safe area, leave them alone. The parents will continue to

feed them and show them how to forage for their own food – a very important stage of development (as anyone with teen-agers will tell you).

If you find a large ball of fluff with sharp talons, be careful! This is most likely a baby hawk or owl. The parents may be watching from a nearby tree and can be very protective of their young. If the baby hawk or owl can fly to a low branch, they will be safe from predators and the parents will continue to feed them. Like the fledgling songbirds, they are learning to fly and soon will be taught to catch their own food.



Fledgling Great-horned Owl

Baby mammals

Although many species of mammals leave their young in a hidden burrow or nesting area, others hide their babies in plain sight. Diurnal (daytime) animals like deer and rabbits leave their young in open areas during the day to rest while the mother forages, sometimes for as long as 12-15 hours. If you find an uninjured healthy baby cottontail or fawn in a safe location, leave it alone!



Two week old Eastern Cottontail

Squirrels are good parents, but casual nest builders. You may find young squirrels on the ground after a heavy wind or if a tree has been cut down. If the babies seem warm and healthy, place them in a shallow box or basket to keep them warm and protected, and observe them from a distance for two to three hours of daylight to make sure that mom returns.



Six week old Eastern Grey Squirrel

Nocturnal animals like raccoons will den with their young during the day, but will leave them to forage at night. If a mother raccoon is accidentally separated from them (but not injured), she will return after dark to retrieve them.



Six month old Raccoon

At the opposite end of the parenting spectrum are opossums. Mother opossums may have as many as 13 babies, so if one falls off, it's on its own. If it is fully furred, eyes open and longer than 7 inches (minus the tail), it will survive on its own.



Two month old Virginia Opossum

Injured or orphaned babies

You may find a truly orphaned or injured baby bird or mammal. If the baby has been caught by a cat or dog, it will need medical treatment even if there are no visible injuries. Or you may not be sure if the baby needs your help. What should you do in this situation? Contact a wildlife rehabilitator for assistance and instructions on how to properly capture and transport the animal.

Wildlife rehabilitation is the process of providing care for orphaned, injured or displaced wildlife with the goal of returning them to the wild. Both federal and Tennessee state regulations prohibit private individuals from keeping wildlife without the proper permits. Wildlife rehabilitators have received permits from the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) after completing the necessary training. These individuals are permitted to care for most small mammal species. Additionally, the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) issues permits to trained individuals to allow for the rehabilitation of all migratory birds (this covers most species of birds).

It's also important for the health of these young animals that they are taken to a wildlife rehabilitator as soon as possible if they are truly orphaned or injured. Each animal has very

specific nutritional needs, and even one day without the proper amount and type of food can cause all sorts of health problems as the animal grows. Under no circumstances should any wildlife baby be fed homemade formulas or cow's milk. Most formulas found on the internet are unsuitable for young animals and will likely cause the babies to become ill.

A special note of caution - certain species, such as raccoons, foxes, skunks, bats and coyotes can carry the rabies virus and may be contagious without showing any of the typical rabies symptoms. If you find any of these species, please do not attempt to handle them, but immediately contact TWRA or a wildlife rehabilitator for assistance.

Ziggy's Tree has two permitted wildlife rehabilitators volunteering their time for the organization. Angela Hensley specializes in small mammals and can be reached at 615-631-2205. LouAnn Partington provides care for all types of birds and can be reached at 931-393-4835. Contact our friends at Walden's Puddle Wildlife Rehabilitation Center at 615-299-9338 for larger mammals, such as fawns, raccoons, foxes, bobcats and coyotes.



Nestling Barn Owls (yes, they are siblings – hatched several days apart)

All of our squirrel species have two nesting seasons, generally running from late January through April, and again from July through October. Great-horned owls may fledge as early as January, while the rest of the birds of prey nest slightly later in the spring. Most songbirds begin nesting by early April, and may raise more than one brood each year. Most of our baby opossum intakes occur from April through June.

THANK YOU!

Our Generous Supporters

ADVOCATE

The Animal Welfare Fund of the
Community Foundation of Middle
Tennessee

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VETERINARIANS

Pet Medical Center – Tullahoma
Black Fox Veterinary Clinic – Murfreesboro

IN-KIND DONATIONS

Josie & Jimmy Armstrong- pecans
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KROGER GIFT CARD PROGRAM

Glenda Cowles * Mary Ann Partington
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Carolyn & Darren Sanders

VOLUNTEERS

Mary Ann Partington * Peg Rindfleisch
Jeff Cashdollar * Carol Manganaro
Florence Cole * Sandie Palmer

We accept donations in memory of and in honor of a loved one or cherished pet and will feature that donation (as well as print a photo of your loved one, if provided) in our next newsletter



Killdeer

We are available to conduct programs for schools, civic and church groups. For more information or to schedule a program, contact LouAnn Partington at 931-393-4835 or e-mail louannpartington@yahoo.com.

For assistance with orphaned or injured small mammals, contact Angela Hensley at 615-631-2205.

For assistance with orphaned or injured birds, contact LouAnn Partington, Certified Wildlife Rehabilitator, at 931-393-4835.

For assistance with large mammals, such as deer, raccoons, bobcats and coyotes, contact Walden's Puddle Wildlife Rehabilitation Center at 615-299-9938.

Board Members

President – Angela Hensley
Vice-President – LouAnn Partington, Certified Wildlife Rehabilitator
Secretary/Treasurer – Chuck Hensley
At-Large Directors – Trisha Gaitely, Jan Brandon, Jeff Cashdollar

Newsletter Staff

Editor LouAnn Partington
Contributors Angela Hensley, LouAnn Partington
Photographs courtesy of Debbie Mauney, Deborah Troy and LouAnn Partington

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Newsletter – If you would like to contribute an article or have suggestions for articles, please contact LouAnn Partington at 931-393-4835 or louannpartington@yahoo.com.

Animal Transport – Can you help pick up animals from outlying areas and transport to one of our rehabilitation facilities OR return the animal to its habitat once it's recovered? Call Angela at 615-631-2205 or e-mail ziggystree@aol.com with your availability.

Education Programs – If you'd like to help with upcoming programs, contact LouAnn Partington at 931-393-4835 or louannpartington@yahoo.com.

Board of Directors - If you would be interested in serving on our Board of Directors or would like to nominate someone to our Board, please submit resumes via e-mail to ziggystree@aol.com or mail to Ziggy's Tree Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, PO Box 330756, Murfreesboro, TN 37133. Board members are responsible for setting policy for the organization and assisting with fundraising activities. Time commitment is less than 10 hours per month.

WISH LIST

Paper Towels
Facial Tissue
Bleach
Laundry Detergent
Nuts (pecans, walnuts, acorns)
Vegetables (broccoli, carrots, kale, potatoes)
Fruit (Apples, Blueberries, Strawberries, Grapes, blackberries)
Gift cards (grocery store, Lowe's, Home Depot, Tractor Supply)
Bird seed (millet, finch seed, black owl sunflower seeds)
Chick Starter (unmedicated)



QUOTE FOR THE DAY

A bird does not sing because it has because it has an answer. It sings because it has a song.

----- Chinese Proverb

NEWS

2010 was an exhausting but exciting year for us at Ziggy's Tree. We completed the mountain of paperwork required by the IRS, and are now operating as a non-profit corporation. This means that your contributions are tax-deductible!

We added to our volunteer staff this past year – LouAnn Partington came on board as our songbird rehabilitator. In addition to the 500 small mammals (squirrels, opossums, chipmunks, cottontails and groundhogs) that we average each year, we also provided care for nearly 450 songbirds, hawks, owls and ducks.

The Kroger Gift Card fundraising program is already a success. Thanks to all the members, friends and family who have purchased and re-charged their cards, we have already earning money to support our wildlife rehabilitation program. If you'd like to learn more about this program, and how you can support Ziggy's Tree without spending any extra money, visit our website at www.ziggystree.org or call LouAnn at 931-393-4835.

We are especially grateful to the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee (see next page) for their generous grant. We cannot continue our important work without the support of our individual and family donors, and foundations like the Community Foundation. We're busy planning fundraising events, writing grants and recruiting new members and volunteers! Stay tuned for more details!





\$1,200 Grant Awarded to Ziggy's Tree Wildlife Rehabilitation Center by The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee

The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee has distributed more than (need number) in grants to (need number) nonprofit organizations in (need number) Middle Tennessee counties as part of The Foundation's annual grant making process.

“As needs in Middle Tennessee grow, the work of our nonprofit partners to provide vital services and innovative programs has never been more important,” said Ellen Lehman, president of The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee. “The Foundation is honored to connect generosity with need through our annual grantmaking, and congratulates nonprofits on their efforts to improve quality of life for our community.”

Ziggy's Tree Wildlife Rehabilitation Center has received a \$1,200 grant through The Animal Welfare Fund of the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee to support its wildlife rehabilitation program. Since Ziggy's Tree was founded in (what year), its state and federally licensed rehabilitators have provided care for over 900 orphaned and injured hawks, owls, songbirds, shorebirds, small mammals and turtles each year. “Each of our wild patients requires specialized food and caging while they are recuperating” according to Angela Hensley, Ziggy's Tree founder and president. “This grant will allow us to provide the best care possible for each animal that is brought to us.””

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

E-mail Address:

Are you interested in volunteering in the following areas:

Environmental Education

Wildlife Rehabilitation

Fundraising

Membership Category

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$40
<input type="checkbox"/> Small Business	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate	\$250
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainer	\$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Advocate	\$1000 or more

Make checks payable to: **Ziggy's Tree Wildlife Rehabilitation Center**
and mail to
PO Box 330756, Murfreesboro, TN 37133

Not sure what to get for that special someone for birthdays, anniversaries or just because? Consider giving them a one-year membership to Ziggy's Tree! Members receive our quarterly newsletter and invitations to special events and programs that are held throughout the year.

Your mailing label contains your membership expiration date.

Ziggy's Tree Wildlife Rehabilitation Center
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Murfreesboro, TN 37133