
TALES FROM THE TREE

The Quarterly Newsletter of Ziggy's Tree Wildlife Rehabilitation Center



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OUR VALUABLE WILDLIFE

We're often asked why we do what we do. After all, to many people, it's "just an opossum/robin/bunny – why do you care so much?"

As we work with so many different species, we have become familiar with each species' natural history and the niche they fill in our ecosystem. Even with species we are not able to handle, we've learned why they are important parts of our world.

We'd like to share just a few of the ways that even the smallest, most insignificant creature plays a vital role in keeping our planet healthy.

In addition to helping keep the environment clean by eating rotting fruit and decaying bodies of small animals, Virginia Opossums also include venomous snakes and the ticks that cause Lyme Disease in their diet. As with many other species, that means the opossum is a natural form of pest control!



8 baby Virginia Opossums (can you find them all?)

Speaking of pest control, many species of snakes are a vital part of this activity. Smaller snakes eat earthworms, snails and small rodents, while larger non-venomous snakes eat rodents, smaller snakes and the occasional venomous snake. Even venomous snakes are important to our health – did you know that snake venom is part of the research into treatment for some forms of cancer?

Squirrels are not only entertaining to watch as they jump from tree to tree or balance on the telephone wires, they are also the gardeners of the forest. They cache nuts and seeds to eat later and if they can't eat everything in their "pantry", some of those seeds and nuts will sprout and grow. Next time you admire the beautiful foliage of your local trees and forests, stop and thank that little squirrel!



Eastern Gray Squirrel

Eastern Cottontails are the local lawn experts. Some of their favorite foods are dandelions and other aggressive weeds. And while we don't like to think about what we refer to as National Geographic moments, they are also prolific breeders and are a major food source for larger mammals, hawks and owls.



Eastern Cottontails – almost big enough to be on their own

Eastern Chipmunks are great burrowers, and like their bigger squirrel cousins are responsible for planting a lot of trees. Their burrowing also helps spread the mycorrhizal fungi that lives on and around tree roots and are critical for tree survival.



Eastern Chipmunk recovering after cat attack – successfully released!

There are a wide variety of animals that help pollinate plants in our area. Some of these, like the Ruby-throated Hummingbird, are a delight to watch as they dart from flower to flower, wings beating so rapidly that they are just a blur. Did you know that hummingbirds also eat a variety of small insects? After all, when you move that fast all the time, you do need some protein to keep your strength up!



Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Many of our local birds are insectivorous, preferring to eat a wide variety of bugs as their main source of food. Northern Flickers, a member of the woodpecker family, often forage on the ground, as ants are a favorite treat.



Northern Flickers, displaced when their tree was cut down

Other members of the woodpecker family can be quite annoying as they hammer on trees or your house hunting for bugs. If you have a woodpecker constantly pecking on your house, they may be doing you a service. While some of their drumming is done to attract a mate or establish a territory, they may also be alerting you to the fact that you have termites.



Pileated Woodpecker, the largest of our local woodpeckers

Chimney Swifts and Barn Swallows are aerial foragers and feast on flying insects. Bats also eat thousands of insects every day. We would be covered in bugs every day if we didn't have these amazing creatures performing their pest control responsibilities every day.



Chimney Swift

Hawks and owls help keep our rodent and rabbit populations under control. Some hawks even eat the occasional snake. And Great Horned Owls will occasionally feast on skunks (proof that these birds don't have a highly developed sense of smell!)



Great Horned Owl brancher – successfully returned to his nest!

As you can see, the natural world has a variety of relationships, all of which helps to keep nature in balance and keep our world healthy.

GOOD NEWS!

In addition to the Community Foundation grant (see column at right), we were also thrilled to receive a \$1338 grant from The Estelle, Abe & Marjorie Sanders Foundation. The Sanders Foundation supports organizations in Franklin County. This grant will be used for our caging projects, including a cage for a non-releasable bird of prey that we will use in educational programs. This will allow us to expand the programming we can do for schools and civic groups.

The Kroger Community Rewards program continues to provide a steady source of income. Haven't signed up yet? Instructions are located on page 4 of this newsletter.

We admitted over 1000 animals this year – a record year for us! The additional caseload was due mainly to an increase in squirrel and opossum admissions. Food sources were good for these critters, so there was a bit of a population explosion. We also had several late squirrel babies and are overwintering 30 squirrels this year. We'll be admitting the spring babies before we'll be able to release all of last year's young'uns!

We have just completed our annual reports for the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency and US Fish & Wildlife. We are required to report all admissions to these agencies as well as disposition statistics. We continue to improve our release rates each year and will be providing a report in our next newsletter.

We've already signed up to participate in the Community Foundation's Big Payback on May 3, 2016. We'll be providing more information on our Facebook page and website as the big day approaches. Funds raised during The Big Payback are designated for our caging fund so we can continue to improve and expand our capacity as the need for our services grows.

As we enter the new year, we are grateful for the continued support of our members. We couldn't do this without you! We'll continue to look for ways to improve the care that we give the wildlife entrusted to us and return even more healthy and healed wildlife to their free and wild lives.

Meet our partner... The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee

Have you heard that Ziggy's Tree has received a \$6,000 grant from The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee? These funds will be used to support our wildlife rehabilitation program, and will directly help us to add to our existing songbird and small mammal cages, repair existing mammal cages and provide food, supplies and veterinary care to the nearly 1000 wild patients we receive each year.

The Community Foundation awarded more than \$1.79 million in grants to 280 nonprofit organizations as part of The Foundation's 2015 annual discretionary grantmaking.

"The need for our services is growing every year here in middle Tennessee", says Angela Hensley, Board President and mammal specialist. "This grant will help us meet that need by expanding our capacity to take in animals with the additional caging, as well as providing food, medications and veterinary care to the wildlife entrusted to our care."

The Community Foundation awards discretionary grants annually from its unrestricted and field-of-interest funds, through an open application process, to Middle Tennessee nonprofit organizations addressing community needs and benefiting the well-being of citizens through valuable programs and innovative services. The Foundation connects generosity with need in order to build a stronger community for the future. To learn more, please visit www.CFMT.org.



For assistance with orphaned or injured mammals or general questions about mammals, call or text Angela at 615-631-2205.

For assistance with orphaned or injured birds or general questions about birds, call LouAnn at 931-393-4835 or 931-841-9781.

Looking for a project for your scout troop, church, school or civic group? We'd love to have more squirrel nest boxes, and could also use small bluebird or woodpecker boxes to use with our young cavity nesting birds. Contact us for more information.

KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS

Thanks to everyone who has signed up to support us through the Kroger Community Rewards program, we received \$628.83 from Kroger in 2015

For privacy reasons, Kroger does not provide names of those who have signed up to support us. So even though we can't thank you personally, please know that we are extremely grateful for your support.

There's still time to sign up and support us. Just go to www.kroger.com/community_rewards, and enroll your rewards card, selecting Ziggy's Tree as your charity. You still get gas points and discounts – and Kroger donates money to us!

If you previously signed up, it is necessary to re-enroll each August, so please check your account and/or your receipt to assure that you are still supporting us. And please ask your friends and family to enroll and support us!



Thanks!!!!!!

WISH LIST

- Gift cards (grocery store, Lowe's, Home Depot, Tractor Supply)
- LCD Projector
- Heating Pads (without automatic shut-off)
- Nuts (pecans, walnuts, acorns)
- Vegetables (broccoli, carrots, kale, sweet potatoes, zucchini)
- Paper Towels
- Facial Tissues
- Toilet Paper
- Reptariums (any size)

SUPPORT ZIGGY'S TREE

- Become a member – just complete the application on the back of this newsletter, or visit our website to download and print an application.
- Give a gift membership to a friend!
- Purchase items from our wish list.
- Donate newspapers (we use those to line cages and cover the tables under the cages)
- Contact us about volunteer opportunities, such as transport, animal releases, administrative/office work, fundraising or contributing to our newsletter
- Like us on Facebook and stay updated on releases, admissions and other news.
- Invite us to speak to your church or civic group – we love to tell people about the work we do!

Check our website at www.ziggystree.org for other ways you can support us!

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS!

WILDLIFE CHAMPION

Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee
Estelle, Abe & Marjorie Sanders Foundation

ADVOCATE

Overall Creek Elementary School 5th Grade Classes
Anne Kenny

SUSTAINING

The Bucket Foundation
Joette Carter
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Murfreesboro
Hydraulics, Inc.

SUPPORTING

Thomas & Mamie McClure

FAMILY

Susan & Michael Gruber * Sharon Dunkin
Banjo Baby Squirrel Fund * Kimberly Dutzek
George Gifford

INDIVIDUAL

Shelly Garrett * Carol Shelton * Debbie Bomar

VETERINARIANS

Pet Medical Center – Tullahoma

IN-KIND & CASH DONATIONS

Banjo Baby Squirrel Fund

VOLUNTEERS

Animal Care: Brenan Bailey, Sami Green, Joanne Groat, Valerie Bjorn, Dana Bjorn, Amanda Hampton, Lena McKee, Tahira Mohyuddin, Amayla Knight, Angela Hensley, LouAnn Partington

Webmaster Dana Bjorn
Social Media Tiffany Woody

2015 RELEASES

July

5 American Robins
2 Northern Cardinals
4 Eastern Phoebes
1 Cliff Swallow
6 Eastern Bluebirds
3 Northern Flickers
1 Red-winged Blackbird
1 Brown-headed Cowbird
2 House Wrens
5 Chimney Swifts
2 Northern Mockingbirds
2 Blue Jays
28 Eastern Cottontails
25 Virginia Opossums
1 Eastern Gray Squirrel

August

6 Mourning Doves
3 Eastern Phoebes
11 Carolina Wrens
18 Chimney Swifts
7 Barn Swallows
1 Northern Rough-winged Swallow
12 American Robins
1 Downy Woodpecker
1 House Finch
4 Northern Mockingbirds
4 Blue Jays
15 Virginia Opossums
19 Eastern Cottontails
19 Eastern Gray Squirrels
1 Eastern Chipmunk
1 Southern Flying Squirrel

September

4 House Finches
2 Northern Cardinals
1 Eastern Meadowlark
1 American Robin
14 Eastern Cottontails
27 Virginia Opossums

October

5 Eastern Cottontails
17 Virginia Opossums
15 Eastern Gray Squirrels

November

16 Eastern Gray Squirrels

Ziggy's Tree Wildlife Rehabilitation Center
92 Maple Ave.
Tullahoma, TN 37388



NOTICE: YOUR MAILING LABEL CONTAINS YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION DATE.

To avoid any interruption with delivering your newsletter, we ask that you renew at least one month before the date shown. Use the Membership Form provided below.

PLEASE RENEW, STAY INFORMED, WE NEED YOU!!!

YES, I WANT TO SUPPORT ZIGGY'S TREE, I AM ...

- A NEW MEMBER**
 RENEWING MY MEMBERSHIP

Memberships are for one year
Gift Memberships are also available.

Please Mail This Form To:

**Ziggy's Tree WRC
92 Maple Ave.
Tullahoma, TN 37388**

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY.

___ Individual	\$25.00
___ Family	\$40.00
___ Supporting	\$100.00
___ Sustaining	\$250.00
___ Advocate	\$500.00
___ Wildlife Champion	\$1000.00

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____
Home Phone (____) _____ Zip _____ -- _____
Work Phone (____) _____
e-mail _____

I would like to receive my newsletter by email.

I am interested in volunteering in the following areas:

- ___ Environmental Education
___ Wildlife Rehabilitation
___ Fundraising

Checks should be made payable to Ziggy's Tree WRC.

Not sure what to get that special someone for birthdays, anniversaries or just because? Consider giving them a one year membership to Ziggy's Tree!

Members receive our newsletter.

Ziggy's Tree strives to be environmentally conscious. If you would prefer to receive an electronic copy of our newsletter, please check the box above or e-mail ziggystreewildlife@gmail.com to be placed on our mailing list.