
TALES FROM THE TREE

The Quarterly Newsletter of Ziggy's Tree Wildlife Rehabilitation Center



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TURTLE TALK

The eastern box turtle is probably the most known and “loveable” of the turtle species found in Tennessee, likely due to its easy-going demeanor, attractive yellow, orange, and brown patterned shell, and the permanent smile it wears. This turtle becomes accessible to many people because of its diverse habitats and its need to wander. Coupled with a non-aggressive personality, these animals are approachable and many times, immediately treasured. These turtles have a high dome-shaped top shell (or carapace) and a flat bottom shell (plastron) with a hinge which allows them to close entirely into their shells. This is where they get their name, box turtle.

The eastern box turtle’s range is from southeastern Maine, west to central Illinois and south to northern Florida. Within this range, this terrestrial turtle can be found in many habitats, including woodlands, field edges, thickets, wetlands, and stream banks. Typically, however, box turtles are found in well-drained forest bottomlands and open deciduous forests. Box turtles hibernate in Tennessee from November to March. During the hot summer months, they can go back into a state of hibernation called estivation. While not in this state, activity is restricted to early mornings and evenings for foraging.

Box turtles are considered omnivores and will eat a variety of things such as snails, grubs, earthworms, insects, toads, carrion, berries, leaves, and fungi. Box turtles have a home range where they spend their entire life; it can range from 0.5 to 10 acres but is usually less than 2 acres.

As soon as box turtles emerge from their hibernation, they will begin to search for food and mates. Due to their long life span of 50 – 100 years, they are not sexually mature until around age 10. The females do not have to mate every year to lay eggs as they can store sperm for up to 4 years. In June and July, the females will travel within their home range to dig a nest and lay 3 – 8 eggs. The eggs are covered with a light layer of dirt and left to be incubated by the sun. During this time many predators, such as raccoons, fox, skunk, and snakes can find and dig up the nest.

Around 60 days, the baby turtles will hatch and emerge from the nest. Some turtles will hatch and over-winter in the nest and then emerge the following spring. As soon as turtles hatch they are on their own - they receive no parental care. This is a dangerous time in their life because their shell is soft and they do not develop their hinge to close into their shell until they are around age 5. At this stage, they have many predators to watch out for.



Box turtles were once considered a common “backyard” animal however they are facing many challenges today which is resulting in rapidly decreasing numbers around our state. In Tennessee they are deemed “in need of management”, a step below threatened. Among the biggest challenge they are facing is habitat loss and fragmentation. As we build more shopping centers, roads, and sub-divisions their chances of human-wildlife conflict increase such as run over by vehicles and lawn mowers, reducing shelter and food sources, being chewed on by the family dog, and the use of herbicides and pesticides which can lead to severe infections.

Another factor in the decline of box turtles is the pet industry. While the State of Tennessee does not allow the sale of box turtles, people readily pick up box turtles they encounter to keep as pets, often time removing them far from their home range. Many of these turtles escape or are set free after the excitement of owning a turtle wears off, in areas they are not familiar with. Research has shown us that box turtles removed from their home range and relocated to another area will actually spend the rest of their lives searching for home. A very small percentage of these turtles will be able to return to their home unaided. Due to the rapid decline of these animals, every individual that is taken out of the population has an effect on the ones remaining.

What Can You Do to Help –

- Please leave turtles in the wild! Every turtle removed reduces the ability of the population to maintain itself.
- Help turtles that are crossing the road. If it is safe for you to get out and move them the direction they are going, place them immediately on the other side.
- Reduce your use of herbicides and pesticides.
- Help spread the word! Turtle conservation has to be done by many, not a few, to have an impact on their survival.

Ziggy’s Tree is pleased to welcome Rachel Singer to our organization as our turtle specialist!

This box turtle was picked up at a summer camp with a double ear abscess. Both ears were severely swollen and the turtle could not pull her head into her shell for protection. After 5 weeks in rehab she was ready to return home. The camper and rescuer, Laney West, accompanied our turtle specialist, Rachel, on her return to the wild. It is imperative for their survival that box turtles be returned to their home range. Thanks to Laney we were able to locate the exact rock that this girl was wedged under and she was definitely happy to be home.



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.

For assistance with injured turtles, contact Rachel at 615-587-2977.

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.

THANK YOU TO OUR "THE BIG PAYBACK" DONORS!

The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee's Big Payback was held on May 2. This is a one day on-line giving event. Thanks to the Community Foundation for sponsoring the event, which raised over \$3.1 million for the 902 participating non-profits.

Ziggy's Tree raised \$2,460 through this event, thanks to the generosity of the following people:

**Rita Cobb * Leigh Anne Walker * Anne Ray
Debra McKill * Barbara Futter
Donna Jennings * Kimberly Dutzek
Sharon Lee Butcher * Carolyn Heinrich
Susan Parker * Sabina Mohyuddin
Michael Teas * Kathy Barrett
Whitney Quandt * Susan Hanson
Katherine Brown * Andrea Hershman
Lloyd Daniel * Gracie Vandiver
Amy York * Hazel Fannin * Lisa McCord
Marcia Medford * Amanda Miranda
Philippa Holloway * Joy Chrisman
LouAnn Partington
The Eskind Family Foundation
Delek Fund for Hope
3 anonymous donations**

AND A BIG THANK YOU TO THE AMERICAN HERITAGE GIRLS TROOP IN FLAT CREEK!

Our songbird specialist, LouAnn, was invited to talk to the American Heritage Girls troop in Flat Creek. She gave an overview of our work with small mammals and songbirds, discussed natural history of these species and provided pointers on living in harmony with wildlife.

The girls collected non-perishable items from our wish list. We are so grateful. We got through many, many rolls of paper towels, Kleenex and toilet paper every year.



ANIMAL CARE UPDATE

As you can see from our release list, most of our spring crop of mammals have been returned to their free and wild lives. We still have a few of those youngsters in care due to health issues, but we anticipate they will make a full recovery and be released this fall. We have already started admitting our second round of baby squirrels and opossums.

Baby bird season has been slower than usual, but we are still taking in birds that have recently hatched. These late season will likely be with us until the middle of September. Most of the baby birds we take in spend an average of 5 to 6 weeks in care before they can be released.

KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS

It's time to re-enroll! Every August, Kroger requires everyone supporting us to update their enrollment. Just go on-line 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!

Don't have an e-mail address or computer access? You can still sign up. Just call 1(800) KROGERS, OPTION 3 or 1(800)576-4377, OPTION 3.

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.

And please ask your friends and family to enroll and support us!



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, board membership 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!

WISH LIST

- Gift cards (grocery store, Lowe's, Home Depot, Tractor Supply)
- Dried Bloodworms
- High quality dry cat food
- Baby Food (fruit – apples, bananas, blueberries)
- Canned or frozen mixed vegetables
- LCD Projector
- Heating Pads (without automatic shut-off)
- Nuts (pecans, walnuts, acorns)
- Fresh Vegetables (broccoli, carrots, kale, sweet potatoes, zucchini, apples)
- Paper Towels
- Facial Tissues
- Toilet Paper
- Unscented laundry detergent
- 24, 36 or 48 inch Bungee cords

Contact us at 615-631-2205 or 931-393-4835 to arrange to drop off any of the above items.

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS!

SUSTAINING

Jeff Cashdollar
Peeble's 30 Days of Giving

SUPPORTING

Banjo Baby Squirrel Fund
Stephen & Pamela Adreon
George Rivers
Anne Kenny
Molly Bronaugh
Deborah Bomar
Crown Castle USA

FAMILY

Natalie Mong * Jena Gray * Lisa McCord * Jackie Taylor
Connie Meverden * Ellen Jones
Bryan, Leigh, Meredith & Grant Fogle * Kacee Farmer
Ashley Kraft, Deobrah Belmont * Sherry Nickell
Janet Harris * Anonymous * Joy Fontanetta

INDIVIDUAL

Waiting Bird Art & Craft Consortium * Chelsea Croft
Kaul Bluestone * Shannon Vick * Melinda Quick
Ruth Ann Henry * Stacy Chandler * Meigan Van Dijk
Dorothy Martin

VETERINARIANS

Pet Medical Center
Airport Animal Clinic

IN-KIND & CASH DONATIONS

Banjo Baby Squirrel Fund * Teresa Danford
Andrea Hedrick * Abby Schneider * Jerry Vandiver
Melanie Hickman * Peg Rindfleisch * Vicky Dany
Cathy & John Jennings * Lisa Kelly * Linda Foster
Bethany Henshaw * Anonymous * Mike Blackburn

VOLUNTEERS

Animal Care: Sami Green, Valerie Bjorn, Sherri Pierce,
Angela Hensley, LouAnn Partington, Rachel Singer

2018 RELEASES

APRIL

1 Pied-billed Grebe
1 Northern Cardinal
1 Common Loon
40 Eastern Gray Squirrels
27 Eastern Cottontails

MAY

30 Eastern Gray Squirrels
1 Fox Squirrel
20 Eastern Cottontails
22 Virginia Opossums
1 American Robin
1 Northern Mockingbird
5 House Finches

JUNE

80 Eastern Gray Squirrels
72 Virginia Opossums
21 Eastern Cottontails
6 American Robins
10 Carolina Wrens
11 House Finches
1 Summer Tanager
3 Eastern Bluebirds
2 Northern Mockingbirds

JULY

61 Eastern Gray Squirrels
14 Virginia Opossums
31 Eastern Cottontails
4 American Robins
6 House Finches
3 Eastern Bluebirds
1 Brown Thrasher
8 Carolina Wrens
2 Northern Flickers
2 Song Sparrows
10 Chimney Swifts
1 Eastern Towhee
1 Eastern Box Turtle

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. You can also renew/donate by credit card using our PayPal account.

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.