

## Editorial

### A New Beginning for the OCWC

How to put 15 years of hard won, hands-on experience in caring for over 10,000 orphaned and injured wild mammals and 26 different species, ranging from flying squirrels to river otters, to good use? And, how to use the special expertise gained in resolving more than 100,000 challenging human/wildlife conflict calls on the Centre's hotline?



These were the questions faced by the Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre when it decided that changes imposed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources would no longer allow it to provide humane or responsible wildlife rehabilitation. Yet, the pressures facing area wildlife have never been greater. Not only is extensive development consuming a lot of natural habitat but the displaced animals often find themselves in conflict with the humans who move in.

At the same time, Ottawa residents value greenspace and the opportunity to observe wildlife, so we believe the Centre has a unique role to play in giving people the tools to better understand and live in harmony with the natural world. The decision to provide broad-based education on behalf of wildlife and the environment, through school and community programs, has been the right one.

As our newsletter highlights, the positive early response to these new programs has been most gratifying. So, too, has been the commitment of our individual supporters along with that of the New Sun Fund at the Community Foundation of Ottawa and the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Donna DuBreuil  
President, OCWC

## Wildlife Tips

As we continue to encroach on natural habitat, wildlife problems will continue to increase. If you or someone you know is having a wildlife problem don't panic there are humane and inexpensive solutions. Here are some general tips, further detailed information is available on our website at: [www.wildlifeproblems.ncf.ca](http://www.wildlifeproblems.ncf.ca).

### The Birthing Season

- The wildlife birthing season is at its peak between April and July.
- Females seek shelter in attics, chimneys and under steps for a safe spot to have their young.
- This is a TEMPORARY situation. The safest option is to give a grace period until babies are weaned and coming out with mom, before undertaking animal proofing.
- If you trap young inside they can die in inaccessible places in your attic or under your step and create bad and long-lasting smells.
- Never risk barricading an animal as they can cause damage trying to access their young or trying to get out.
- Never try to smoke an animal out of a chimney. Babies will not be able to get out and you could cause a chimney fire.
- Caring for orphans is a time consuming and difficult task. It is certainly better to give mother the

short amount of time she needs to do the job.

- Wildlife removal companies cannot guarantee they will not create orphans.

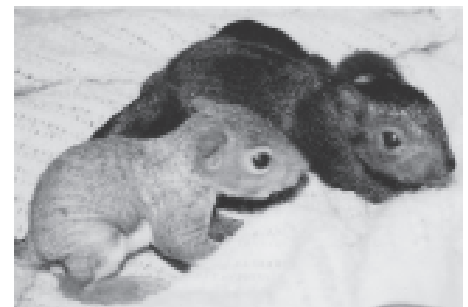
### In Your Yard

- Before pruning, check trees for leaf nests or cavities that could be home to babies.
- If you find a nest of babies in a shed or garage, put it back exactly as you found it and give mom a few days to relocate her young.
- Check your barbeque before using it for the first time this spring, red squirrels and mice will sometimes make their nest under the grill.
- Use chemical free lawn care practices, starting at the beginning of the season, that will control grubs and keep skunks and raccoons from digging up your lawn.

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## Free Wildlife Advice Only a Click Away [www.wildlifeproblems.ncf.ca](http://www.wildlifeproblems.ncf.ca)

Many of you may not be aware that the Centre developed a barebones website just before its closure in 2002. We wanted there to be some information to assist the public with wildlife problems. To date close to 20,000 people have visited the site. We are currently working to update and expand the site. In the meantime, advice is still only a free click away at [www.wildlifeproblems.ncf.ca](http://www.wildlifeproblems.ncf.ca). Here is a recent testimonial about the site:



*"Just a note to thank you for your excellent advice concerning a problem with a squirrel in the chimney! I was kind*

*of frantic and so was the squirrel! I took your advice and it worked like a charm. It also saved me a \$350 fee to have a company remove him."*