

Rockfish Wildlife Sanctuary



A Semi-Annual Newsletter

Spring 2011

Wendell: A gosling in Washington State



On a lovely spring day in a wildlife area near Bellingham, Washington, I went for a walk. My route took me round three big lakes and I was looking forward to seeing migrating birds and babies. About an hour into this excursion, I got down on my knees to spy on the activity happening between the lumpy overhang of the earth and the beginning of the water. I was looking for snakes. But, I found a tiny gosling instead. He was nearly submerged in the water, with just his breathing holes above the surface. His legs had been caught in fishing line as he slid from the shore into the water, forcing his body into the water but snagging his legs on the line.

I held his head above the water and cut away the line. His legs were cold and stiff. I wrapped him in my cotton sweater and scuffed up his downy feathers. I blew hot air on him and began to rub his legs to coax blood back into them. I began imagining him as a regal adult greeting me at the door when I got home from work. I was in love. But I also knew I couldn't keep him. I searched for his family but could find no geese around.

I took him to a vet who gave me directions to a wildlife rehabilitation place. I drove 90 minutes but could find no one at the house. I called a number. A volunteer called me back and told me she was a transporter and would meet me at a local gas station. It all felt suspicious to me. How could I possibly hand over this lovely lad to any ole stranger with a carrier?! I went to the appointed place but determined that I wouldn't give him up to just anyone. They would have to pass my secret test and have the best possible juju.

The transporter knew what I was all about immediately. She crawled into the car with me and asked me all about my new friend—Wendell, as I had named him en route. She was good. She kept her distance. She didn't reach for him. She kept me talking. Finally, I asked what would happen to him. And she said the most extraordinary thing—that she would put him in a cage with straw and water in her car, that she would drive him to the airport (the airport!), where another volunteer was waiting in his private plane to fly my little friend Wendell to San Juan Island, where there was a wildlife place that could take care of him. She said that they would call me the next day to tell me what happened. She said they would try to fix him and get him adopted by migrating geese by the fall. She said they had other geese there to keep him company. I was stunned. I was in tears. I was hooked. I liked the world a little more knowing that people like this were out there, doing this, taking care of animals.

Established in 2004, Rockfish Wildlife Sanctuary is a wildlife rehabilitation sanctuary in Central Virginia providing care for orphaned and injured wildlife from anywhere in Virginia. www.rockfishsanctuary.org

Sanctuary News

Animal Stories

Animal Census: January 1, 2010— September 15, 2010

Barn swallow	3	Bat, Brown	
Beaver		Bluebird	9
Bluejay	14	Canada Goose	31
Cardinal	6	Carolina Wren	31
Catbird	6	Cedar waxwing	1
Chimney swift	8	Cowbird	1
Crow	5	Deer	4
Duck, Mallard	162	Duck, Wood	10
Finch	2	Goose	1
Grackle	3	Hawk, Broadwing	1
Hawk, Coopers	3	Hummingbird	1
King Bird	1	Mockingbird	13
Mouse	1	Opossum	8
Owl, Screech	5	Phoebe	21
Pigeon	2	Rabbit, domestic	
Rabbit	16	Raccoon	33
Robin	14	Sapsucker	1
Skunk	21	Sparrow	3
Squirrel, Grey	13	Sparrow	3
Swallow	4	Thrush	3
Turtle, Box	7	Turkey	5
Vole	1	Vulture	1
Warbler	1	Woodpecker,	1
Woodpecker,	1	Downy	
Hairy		Woodpecker,	1
Woodpecker,	1	Pileated	
Red-Headed		Wren	3
TOTAL	495		

Turkey Facts



A baby turkey is called a poult. A bunch of turkeys is called a rafter of turkeys. The teenaged male is called a jake. The Eastern Turkey can grow up to 4 feet and weigh 30 pounds. The hens lay 10-14 eggs for a clutch and incubate for 28 days.

When the male turkey, called a tom or a gobbler, is excited, his head turns a silvery blue. When he gets mad and expects to fight, it turns red. They have spurs on each three-toed foot.

They gobble, strut, boom, drum, spit and...fly!

WILD ABOUT ART!



Wild About Art! was a great success! Over 200 people joined us at City Space in Charlottesville on March 12, 2011 for a silent auction of over 150 pieces of donated art. A good time was had by all and RWS raised \$13,000 for our capital campaign. Thank you very much to all the volunteers, artists, and donors who made this, our first major fundraiser, such a success. We are already planning to do it again next year! You can check out pictures of the art and the event, and see all the lovely folks who contributed to the evening at our website—
www.rockfishsanctuary.org

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Capital Campaign Update!

Rockfish Wildlife Sanctuary is looking for property to create a lasting spot for wildlife rehabilitation activities and educational programming. After three years of discussions with the Miller School of Albemarle about expanding our location to Miller School grounds, Rockfish Wildlife Sanctuary has decided to go independent! The good folks at Miller School have redefined their plans near the site initially considered for RWS activities and have set different priorities for on campus programming. These new plans and priorities are wonderful opportunities for students at Miller School but not compatible with wildlife rehabilitation housing and programming requirements. While this saddens us, this shift in strategy has become a wonderful opportunity for RWS to identify alternate means for expansion and educational program development.

As a result, the RWS board is actively seeking property on which to build a wildlife nursery, outdoor cages and an educational center. The capital project's phasing remains the same—Phase 1—renovate an existing structure or build a new structure in which to house injured animals or babies; Phase 2—create outdoor caging and on-site housing for RWS interns and staff; and Phase 3—create educational center open to the public. While we will pursue these three phases, RWS is able to offer educational programming immediately at an independent site. Indeed, operating independently means we can begin with educational activities sooner and offer these programs to a wider audience.

Our three immediate goals are:

- ◆ Find and purchases a suitable property, preferably with an existing structure on it.
- ◆ Build relationships with private and public schools to ensure that RWS educational programming will be a meaningful contribution to classroom learning.
- ◆ Create opportunities for the general public to learn more about wildlife in our area and their habitat needs. Think—owl walks, a seminar on local bats, or landscaping for wildlife classes!

We are thrilled to be looking to our future and invite your ideas and suggestions about our next steps. Thank you so much for your support of RWS 's future!

Wise Words

It is an important and popular fact that things are not always what they seem. For instance, on the planet Earth, man had always assumed that he was more intelligent than dolphins, because he has achieved so much—the wheel, New York, wars, and so on—whilst all the dolphins had ever done was muck about in the water having a good time. But conversely, the dolphins had always assumed that they were far more intelligent than man—for precisely the same reasons.

- Douglas Adams

A Great Wildlife Rescuer ...

- ◆ Keeps orphaned or injured wild animal warm—baby birds maintain a body temperature of 104 degrees!
- ◆ Wears gloves when handling wild animals—they are scared and will defend themselves with claws, beaks and teeth.
- ◆ Provides rescued animals with a dark, safe and protected place to await a wildlife rehabilitator—cover boxes with pillow cases or napkins.
- ◆ Reduces stress on the animal by keeping voices and gawking to a minimum and keeping family pets away.
- ◆ Doesn't feed or provide water to an animal without advice from an expert—most baby birds don't drink water and can get water in their lungs easily.
- ◆ Calls a wildlife rehabilitator for help immediately!

Close-up: Duckling Release of Spring 2011

One of the great pleasures of wildlife rehabilitation work is the release. There is nothing like watching wild animals return to their natural habitat, knowing that they are healthy and strong and ready for the world. RWS founder Nathou Attinger and RWS Board Member Patty Wallens were fortunate to release a great waddle of ducklings this spring. We are lucky that they recorded it for us to enjoy:



#1— A brave duckling takes the first tentative steps out of the carrier to check out this new territory.



#2—A few take the leap into the water, which brings out some others to find out how the water is.



#3—Momentum is building and a flock mentality takes over—must be together!



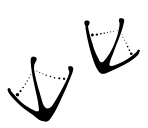
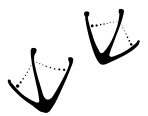
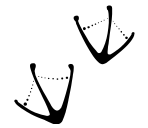
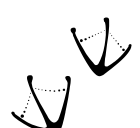
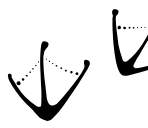
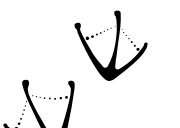
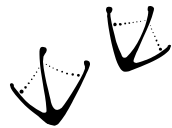
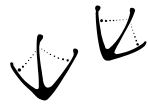
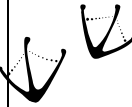
#4—Now, the last few in the carriers emerge, not wanting to be left behind by their buddies.



#5—The ducklings are all in the water and waiting on the stragglers to form their tight unit.



#6— All together now in the right spot to live out their days in the wild.



No Feathers, No Fly



This lovely bluejay survived an attack by a domestic cat but ended up with no flight feathers and no tail. He will stay at RWS until he molts, when birds discard old feathers and make new ones, which will likely be in the fall. In the meantime, he is grounded but is an excellent hopper!

How You Can Help RWS

We need a lot of things to keep Rockfish Sanctuary humming. Please let us know if you can help with any of the following:

- Paper towels
- Kleenex
- Animal transport
- Hay
- Blue pads from the drugstore
- Cash donations—most of Rockfish Sanctuary's funding comes from donors, animal-lovers just like you.
- Please contact us if you can help! 434-962-7429 or 434-831-2900

Hugs & Roses: Our Gratitude

Wildlife Rehabilitator

Nathou Attinger, Founder

Wildlife Staff

Jessie Cole—lead

Sanctuary Board Members

Nathou Attinger	Erla Hagan
Becky Allen	Mary Huey
Beverley Butler	Dede Smith
Kaki Dimock	Patty Wallens

Rockfish Sanctuary Supporters

Patient Transporters

Cindy Davis
Ron Fanditti
Erla Hagan
Susan Hastings
Brenda Lambert
Dolly Prenzel
Nancy Uvanitte

Accounting services

Huey & Bjorn

Payroll & tax services

Huey & Bjorn

Legal Services

Edward Bain

Financial Support

At Last Fund
Bernice Barbour Foundation
Hulebak-Rodricks Foundation
Jane Shields

Trager Brothers Coffee

Wild Birds Unlimited

Calendar & Photos

Ann Strober

Baby Bird Swaddling Cloths

Anna Lee-Durland Jones

Tanner Colley

Tree Removal

Art Austgen

Mike McAdams

Membership list

Judy Heyde

Animal care

Kristen Cole

Kaki Dimock

Susan Hastings

Erin Plews-Ogan

Newsletter

Kaki Dimock

Website

Dede Smith



Congratulations to our founder, Nathou Attinger, for being honored by the Central Blue Ridge Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists for her stewardship efforts!