



Wild at Heart Wildlife Refuge Centre

2017 Annual Report

Wild at Heart Wildlife Refuge Centre
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wahrefugecentre.org

Registered Charity: 857767206RR0001



Message from President/Founder

After caring for wildlife, companion animals and domestic animals for almost 4 decades, I have been able to directly observe the close and often complex relationship between animals and people. Over the last decade, I have become involved with national and international veterinary organizations and have had the opportunity to lecture and work in many parts of the world and in many different cultures, sometimes in remote communities and very poor villages. This intricate relationship between animals and people is alive and well in the world.

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, the human-animal bond is a mutually beneficial and dynamic relationship between people and animals that is influenced by behaviours considered essential to the health and well-being of both. The bond includes, but is not limited to, emotional, psychological, and physical interactions of people, animals, and the environment.

This human animal interaction also applies to wildlife. Humans cannot be healthy unless our environment and the animals within it are healthy. Healthy ecosystems are critically important to us yet humans have been responsible for the creation of unhealthy environments resulting in unhealthy wildlife. Because of supposed worldwide improvements in our standard of living, we have created an abundance of issues that decimate wildlife species.

Our modern radio towers that are getting taller every year kill millions of birds annually. Our roads kill over 1 million vertebrates every day. The large windows in our huge buildings kill a billion birds each year in the USA alone. The Exxon Valdez mishap was listed as a horrible natural disaster and was in the media headlines for months, killing 250,000 birds. This is much less than any of the above issues. When you add societal issues that result in lost fishnets, destruction of natural habitats, toxins and chemicals, the loss to our healthy ecosystems is immeasurable. These things cause death which can be measured, but more than death, many more animals and birds undergo injuries and suffering creating extremely large animal welfare problems in our populations.

Methane release in air and global warming results in habitat alteration which can create large negative effects, especially on our large predators, which can result in an explosion of herbivores. Humans are responsible for the introduction of invasive species and by allowing cats to roam freely, over 1 billion birds and small mammals are lost due to predation every year. Since the 1600's, 76 bird species became extinct: 13 because of hunting, 14 from habitat destruction, and 49 because of introduced species. Because of climate change, scientists suspect that 25% of species will become extinct, and along the way, welfare issues and suffering will be astounding.

We need actions and policies. Humans need to get involved and campaign for lower towers with flashing lights, smaller windows, or add-ons to deter birds (shut lights off at night). We need to reduce our carbon footprints. We need reduced speeds in wildlife areas, wildlife overpasses, and underpasses. There are simple things we can accomplish that will result in huge environmental benefits and in humans being healthier. Humans are responsible for all these issues. It will take humans to help fix them. Our long history of the deep bond we share with the animal kingdom needs to be remembered and acted upon so that we can enjoy the benefits of it in a healthy way for centuries to come.

Dr. Rod Jouppi, D.V.M.

Animal Care

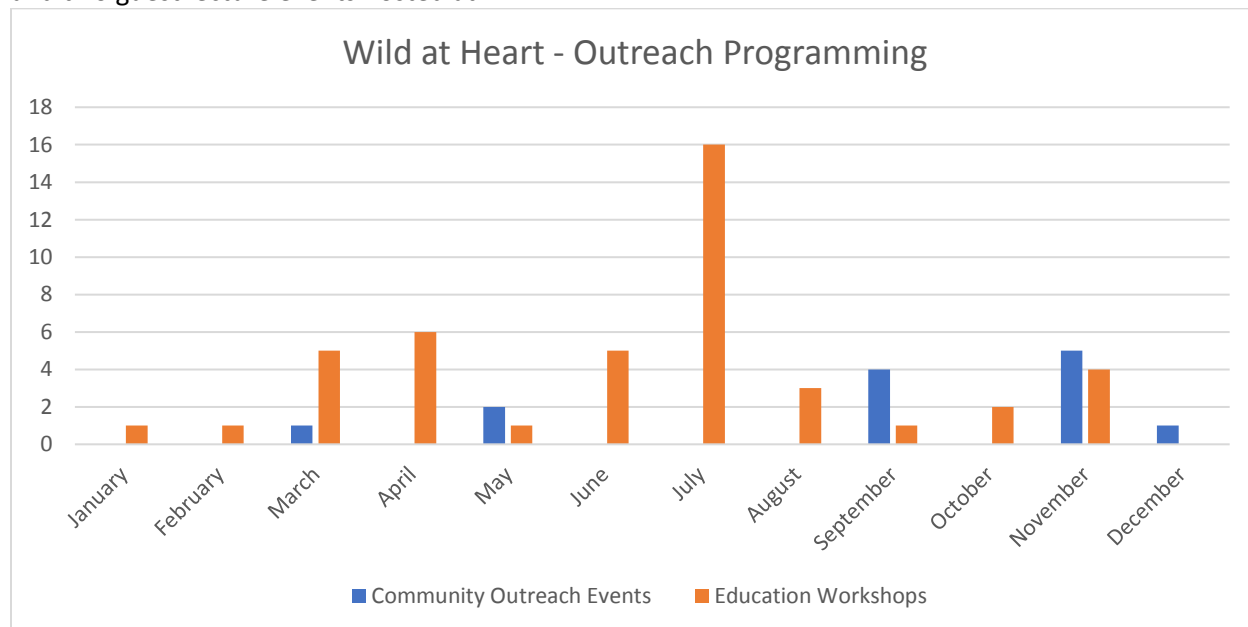
Staff

Wild at Heart hired a full-time Communications and Operations Manager, a full-time veterinary technician during the summer, and 6 summer students through a government grant.

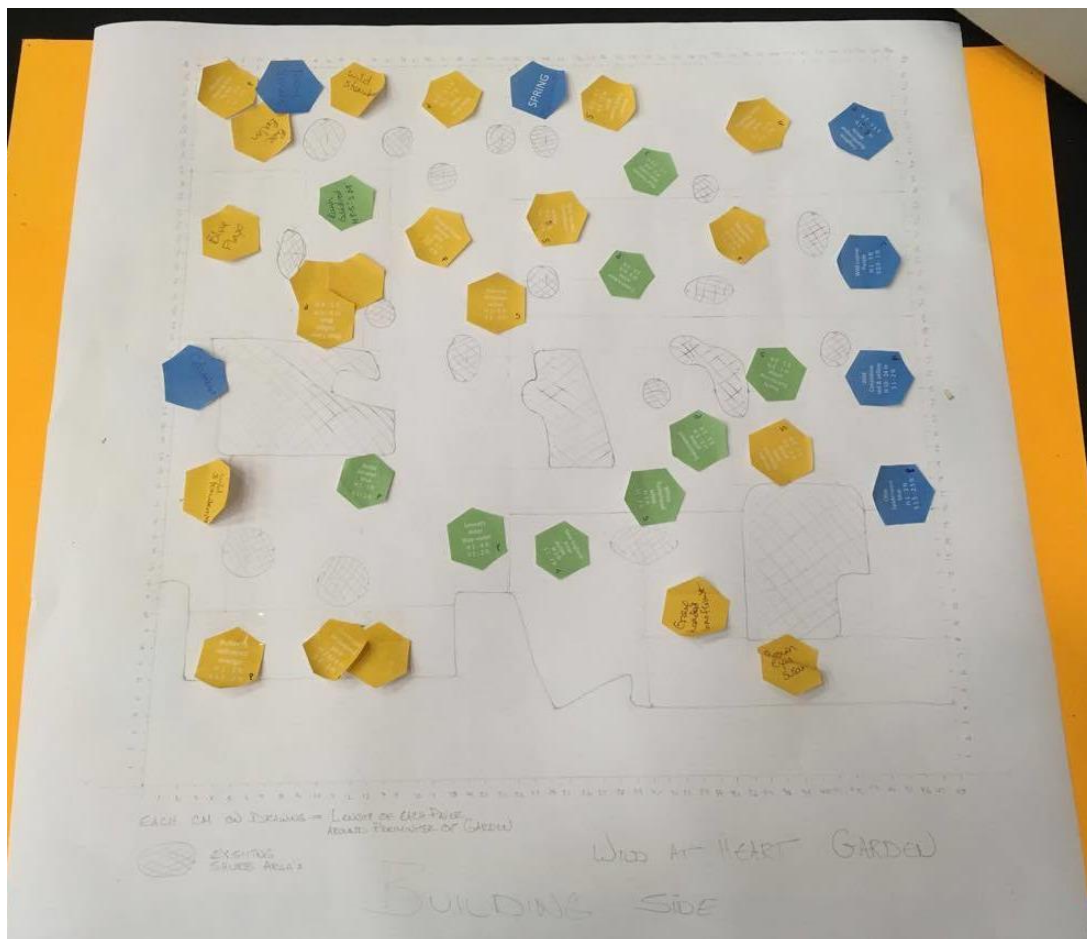
Volunteers

Wild at Heart recorded 2180.5 volunteer hours for animal care shifts (excluding interns), and 290 hours for education workshops and preparation/take-down. Construction and maintenance projects totalled 301.5 hours, including cage repair, painting, plumbing, shovelling, and weeding. Throughout the year, 26 full-time interns volunteered at our Centre through various post-secondary school programs, and due to general interest. Full-time interns accounted for 10,184.25 hours. Five high school co-ops students were placed at our Centre, including a student through the YMCA Employment Program.

The education committee successfully completed many projects this year, including various community outreach events and education workshops. Workshops were held for the Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, various classrooms, Chartwell Southwind Retirement Residence, YMCA New Canadians program, and across Greater Sudbury Public library branches for their summer programming. 45 education workshops were held, as well as 13 tables at community outreach events, including Seedy Saturday, Sudbury Gardening Festival, Woof Fest, Water Festival, Annual Fall Harvest hosted by Kenjgewin Teg, North Bay Farmers' Market, tables at Battistelli's Your Independent Grocer, Hair Play Holiday sale, Yoga fundraiser event hosted by Dawn Condon, and stuffing envelopes at Chartwell Southwind and Sudbury Development Services. Four events were held for members and interns, including two events with Tammy Naponse, and two guest lecture events hosted at WAH.

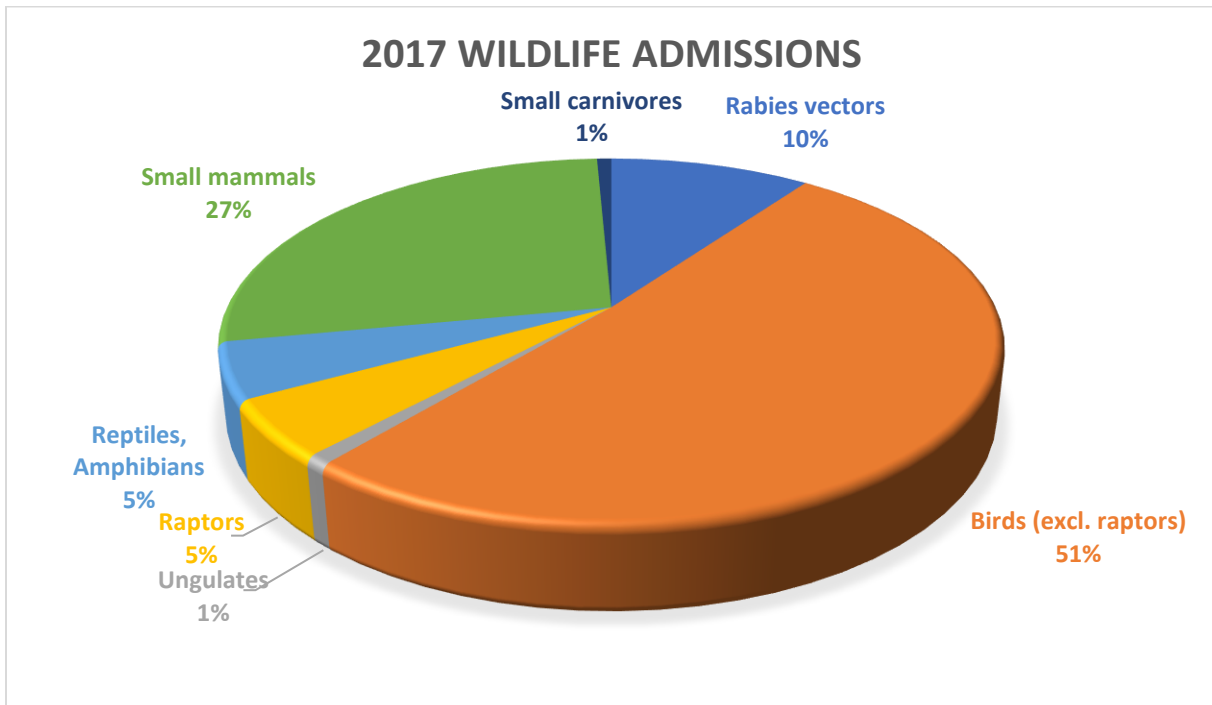


A new volunteer committee was added in 2017: gardening. This was critical for the creation of Wild at Heart's new pollinator garden. Volunteers planned the garden (see photo below), grew native plants from seedlings throughout the winter, planted the seedlings in the summer, and nurtured the garden throughout the summer (weeding, fertilizer, watering, composting). WAH held a "grand opening" event on June 24th, 2017, which was funded in part by a grant from the Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network. Our pollinator garden has been certified as wildlife friendly by the Canadian Wildlife Federation.



Fundraising volunteers secured donations for our Annual Wild About Comedy Night, advertised and sold pick-up lunches from Sixth Avenue Golf & Country Club, volunteered at fundraiser at Taphouse Northern Grill + Pub and Boston Pizza, organized guest lecture events, organized a holiday giftware sale at Ramakko's Source for Adventure and a vegan bake sale through the Sudbury Vegetarian Society, and sold Wild at Heart 2018 calendars.

Wildlife Admissions



Wild at Heart admitted 846 animals in 2017; a slight increase from 802 animals in 2016. Three animals were transferred to other wildlife centres for long-term care, and 337 animals were released back into the wild (40% release rate).

Memorable Animal Care Cases



These two fawns were raised as orphans at Wild at Heart during summer 2017. These fawns were bottle-fed specialized formula, and stimulated regularly to ensure proper digestion. They could be seen cleaning each other after eating, and following each other around the cage! As they grew, they were offered a variety of branches, grasses, and fruits and vegetables around their cage.

As these fawns grew older and more independent, we began looking for a suitable release site. Thank you to Katrina and Craig Fielding for providing a safe release spot for these fawns on their property at Wavy Farms.

These fawns were at our Centre for 6 months. When we arrived at the release spot, one of the fawns took off right away to explore her new, permanent home. We could not help but feel a bit emotional watching her run off, but we knew in our hearts that they were finally back where they belonged.



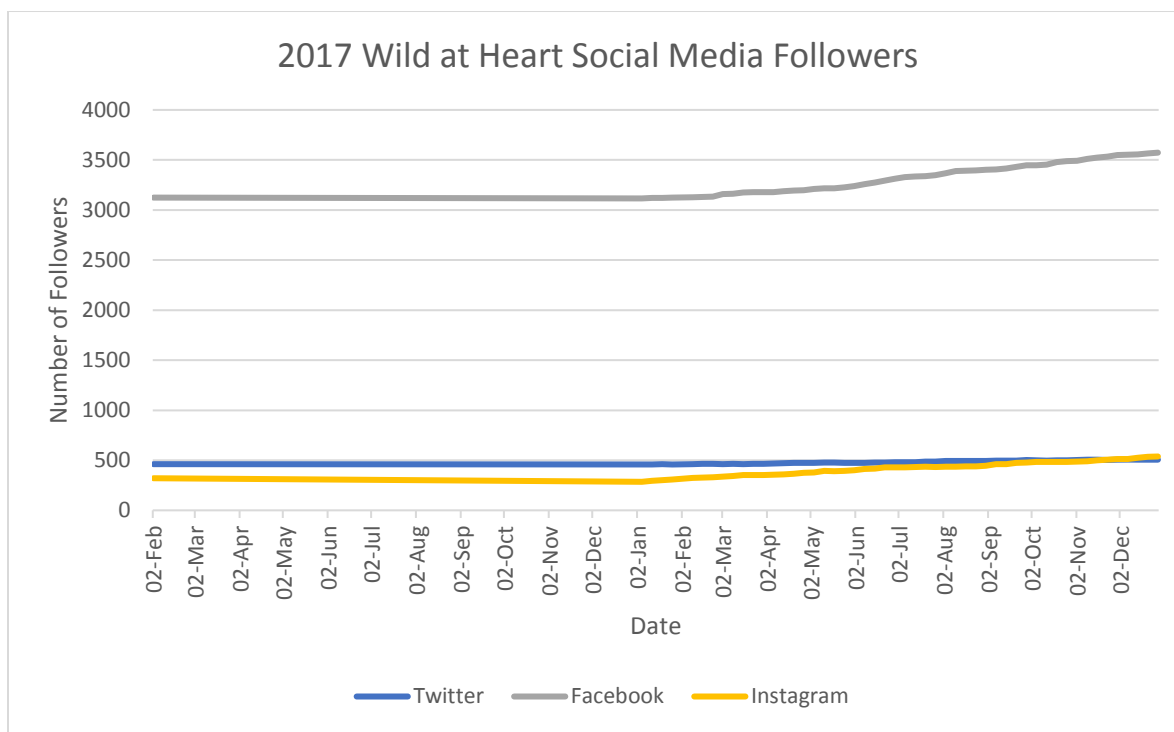
Rough-legged hawks are so named because of the feathering that extends down its legs, keeping them warm when they migrate and nest in the Arctic. Raptors are fed mice at our Centre, and are given a variety of perches to test grip and stability. This was very important for this hawk, as it was admitted after being hit by a car.

The hawk was banded before it was released in spring 2017. There was an identification number on its band, which is reported online. This facilitates research about migration routes. What a great moment to see him fly off back into the wild!



Social Media

Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram



In 2017, Wild at Heart saw a steady increase on their social media pages. Growth of 14.67% on Facebook page, 10.23% on Twitter page, and 88.77% on Instagram page was observed.

YouTube

A steady increase in subscribers to the YouTube channel was observed from July – December 2017. There were 22 new subscribers in 2017, for a total of 33 subscribers on December 31, 2017, marking a 150% growth.

Total watch time: 4191 minutes

Total views: 5579

Videos published: 29

Most popular videos published in 2017:

1. "Project for Awesome 2017 (P4A): Wild at Heart" (981 views)
2. "Wild at Heart – Animal Care Internship Program" (164 views)
3. "Painted Turtle Shell Scrub: Wild at Heart 'Vet Techniques'" (145 views)
4. "BLOOPERS: Wild at Heart – Animal Care Internship Program" (126 views)
5. "Wild at Heart – Education Workshops" (115 views)