

TreeHouse Droppings



In Memory of
"Tigger" the Bobcat
&



"Cappuccino"
the Barn Owl

In this issue: President's Aerie, Short Tails, Rehab Ramblings, Eagles, Swans, Bobcats, Barn Owls, Releases, Eagle Weekends, Nature Nuts, Lunch Ladies, Japanese Visitors, Easter Egg Hunt, Turkey Vultures, Pelicans, Snowy Owls, Building Progress, New Van, Acknowledgements, Information, Memberships, and more

30+ years of giving back to the wild

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(Office manager)
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(Environmental Education Director)
Jennifer Yordy*
(Intern)

TreeHouse Wildlife Center employs
**one full-time, *two part-time staff
members, and *one intern
paid through a grant.
All other staff are volunteers.

Active Volunteers

Judy & Jack Neiman
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PRESIDENT'S AERIE by Eric Bloemker

Our volunteers are amazing. From feeding and caring for the animals to heavy construction to house cleaning to gardening, TreeHouse is looking great while all the construction is continuing. Every one of the volunteers I see is smiling, working hard, and enjoying doing their part.



For those of us who eagle-watch during the winter, we had a little disappointment with the number of eagles to view. The 2012 winter was mild, and the eagles up north decided to stay put and fish at home. Still, eagle watchers in the hundreds did not make the drive up the Great River Road for naught. They were certain to view at least one American Bald Eagle - "Hope" one of our resident eagles. TreeHouse hosted Eagle Days each Saturday in January and February. Volunteers gave their weekends to give tours of THWC's grounds and our facility. Just recently, the Brighton eagle residents, "Mac" and "Spuds," joined "Hope" at the Dow facility after the final construction was complete on the new eagle cage. Everyone is getting along and enjoying their new surroundings. Since the beginning of March, the remaining raptor residents have moved to Dow as well.

After giving a few tours and meeting people from all over the Midwest, I was surprised to learn that so many people assume we receive our funding through State and Federal grants. We do not. We rely on people just like you. People that care for wildlife. People that care to see school children learn how our ecosystem relates to the animals. Good stewardship requires the dedication of us all. We work hard to get grants from foundations, but it is the donations of the members and friends that keep TreeHouse running and operating over these thirty plus years. We cannot do this without your continued help.

We are working to complete the permanent resident cages at Dow. That's the goal for the coming months. Where we still need much financial help is the construction of large rehabilitation cages. We will continue to use Brighton for much of the rehabilitation work in getting raptors ready for release. The facility at Brighton is closed to the public, but tours can be arranged for the Dow facility. Getting the Dow facility ready as the site of all our rehab efforts is critical, and we need a big push for this to happen. When we made a call for baby shower supplies, we were impressed with the response of the membership and the community. When we need your help, you answer. This is a time when we really need your help.

We cannot complete the facilities at Dow without strong contributions from our members. Consider making a special donation to the building fund. Non-cash donations can be accepted as well: appreciated stocks, used vehicles, and

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estate planning are just a few additional ways to give. Whether you can give just at the basic membership level or write a check filled with zeroes and commas (and we love zeroes and commas), we appreciate our members working with us to continue our mission of rescue, rehabilitation, and release of injured and orphaned wildlife, along with education of the community at large.

Check out the blog site: <http://treehousenotebook.wordpress.com/> written by our intern Jen for what's happening at TreeHouse Wildlife Center. Be sure to "Like" our Facebook page to keep up with events and where you might find THWC attending an event, and tell your "friends" as well.

As a grassroots organization, we need your help in spreading the word. Let your friends, family, and co-workers know that you support TreeHouse Wildlife Center.

Cheers.

SHORT TAILS by Judy Neiman

Backyard Story

Since we moved to our neighborhood from St. Louis County in 1974 we've had a lot of wildlife experiences we could never have imagined in our old subdivision. Our new yard abuts to a small area of woods, and we have a variety of new birds at our feeders.

One evening we were sitting on our patio that faced the woods. We spotted a Great Horned Owl sitting in the huge Cottonwood tree that sits on our creek bank. What a thrill it was seeing this huge owl so close.

Suddenly, Jack noticed something flying around its face. What was it? Was it a bumble bee? We ran and grabbed our binoculars. Much to our surprise it was a 1.1 oz. Ruby-throated Hummingbird buzzing up and down and around the face of this 3-4 lb. owl.

Being daytime, the owl was trying to sleep. He would open one eye, glancing at the nuisance as if to say "You've got to be kidding."

What the Hummingbird was doing I don't know. It was too far away to see if it was a male or female. Was it a female protecting a nest, or a male protecting a mate? Which ever it was, it was quite a spectacle to see.



TreeHouse's
Great Horned
Owl "Stevie"

REHAB RAMBLINGS by Pam Lippert

Eagles

Although the eagle counts were lower in this area over the winter, it was an all-time high as far as admissions (5). None of these birds came from particularly close to our area, all of them at least an hour and a half away.

The first was admitted on Thanksgiving Day from the Mason City area, north of Springfield. It had been on the ground for at least a few days before anyone was notified about it, and probably much longer than that. It was an adult that had lost an eye and was extremely emaciated. It died the following day.

The second was an immature from Prairie du Rocher that I wrote about in the last newsletter. It seemed to be suffering from some type of heavy metal poisoning and was treated for it, but two tests for lead came back negative. The final test we did came back positive for mercury. Unfortunately, the bird did not survive. Fish-eating birds such as eagles, osprey, herons, loons, etc. are particularly prone to mercury poisoning.

The third eagle (which is still in our care) came from along the Little Wabash River in Clay County. It had been shot in the leg and has a fractured tibiotarsus (equivalent to our shin bone). It has a cast on it, hopefully to be removed soon, although we are waiting to see how much function it will still have in the talons on that foot.

The fourth bird was found near Vandalia. It had been sitting on the ground for several hours, which is not unusual in itself as sometimes they will feed on road-kill. When approached, this bird would fly, but not far. Once the bird was caught, it had very bad respirations and appeared to be suffering from aspergillosis (a fungal infection that is usually secondary to another illness or injury). Unfortunately, this bird died overnight before a blood sample could be taken to find a primary cause. The finder did say that a totally scavenged raccoon carcass was found nearby. It had been shot with lead, so it is very possible that the bird died from lead poisoning after consuming that carcass.

The fifth came from Randolph County, close to where the Kaskaskia River flows into the Mississippi River. It was also thin and had respiratory difficulties. It lived for 24 hours, but we were able to get a blood sample before it died. It came back showing high levels of lead. Any animal that is shot with lead (which may be anything except waterfowl, where lead shot is banned) can cause another animal—mammal or bird, wild or domestic—to be poisoned by consuming the shot animal.

Trumpeter Swans

Also admitted this winter were four trumpeter swans. Most of us are familiar with seeing large numbers of these birds at the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary in West Alton, MO. Although there were many there, at least a hundred spent the winter in various parts of northern Madison County, feeding in fields by day and spending their nights on farm ponds.

Two were admitted from Madison County. First was a juvenile that struck a power line and sustained a high femoral fracture (thigh bone) and had to be euthanized. The other was an adult injured when its mate was killed by coyotes.

We also admitted two adults from Riverlands. Both had been shot, and one also suffered from lead poisoning. The lead-poisoned bird is still recuperating, but the other one from Riverlands and the one from Madison County were released together. *(see release photos below)*



Rehab



Rescue



Release



COUNTING TRUMPETER SWANS

by Ginger McCall

Twenty years ago, five Trumpeter Swans migrated to Riverlands Bird Sanctuary from the Upper Midwest during the late fall and attracted widespread attention. It was a first for that species in the Alton Lock and Dam area. Breeding programs had been set up previously in Minnesota and Wisconsin, and these five were banded birds from Horicon, Wisconsin. In the years since 1991, the number of Trumpeter Swans has increased so much that this large bird seems commonplace at Riverlands from late October until sometime in February.

These swans are part of the “Interior Group”. There are two other groups in the lower 48 states—Pacific Coast and the Rocky Mountains. According to US Fish and Wildlife Service surveys, in 1968 the total Trumpeter Swan population was 3,772; in 2005- 35,000; in 2010- 42,000. The species is doing well.



Trumpeters in rehab getting
ready for release
(See story page 4)

The Trumpeter Swan Society, in partnership with the Audubon Center at Riverlands and the St. Louis and Missouri Audubon Societies, is conducting a Great Rivers Swan Watch in 2011-2012. I attended the December orientation meeting at the Audubon Center. The goal is to gather information on the Interior Group of wintering Trumpeter Swans—an accurate number of swans in the area, what other waterfowl species they associate with, types of habitat they use, feeding patterns, and other behaviors. Observations are done every two weeks on a specific day and time at seven different locations: Riverlands Bird Sanctuary, Confluence Point State Park, Cora Island Area, Columbia Bottoms, Portage Des Sioux, Two Rivers NWR (Gilbert Lake and Swan Lake), and Chouteau Island.

There were over twenty birders signed up to do the specific area observations. This is an exciting project for the “amateur scientists” and should give the Trumpeter Swan Society information on the carrying capacity, habitat suitability, and the expansion of range of the swans. Here is a website for more information: www.trumpeterswansociety.org.

From the Audubon Society, Great Rivers Chapter Newsletter

REHAB RAMBLINGS: Saying Goodbye and Hello

by Pam Lippert

Bobcats

Most of you who have visited TreeHouse in the last 20 years are familiar with Tigger. Bred in Wisconsin, Tigger was purchased by a taxidermist as a kitten and confiscated by DNR a couple years later near Springfield about 20 years ago. We don't know if the taxidermist's intentions were to stuff him, but that never happened. He had been declawed in front and treated like a housecat during that time, so he was never able to be released. As a result, many people, including me, were able to see a bobcat for the first time.

The last couple of years he began to show his age, developing cataracts, arthritis, etc. During the past few months it became harder for him to get around, and when his "bad" days became the norm, it was decided to put him down.



Tigger at age 10

Only two days later, I received a call from Belleville. A woman on her way to work discovered a bobcat on a road near her house. She called her husband, and he came and picked up the unconscious cat, put it in his vehicle, and brought it to their garage. He called me and I rushed down, not knowing whether it would still be in la-la-land or climbing the walls. Luckily, it was still in la-la-land.



I was able to get it to the vet, take an X-ray, and give fluids without it waking up. Every day has shown improvement and it was probably just suffering from a concussion. It is now in an outdoor cage at Dow, and its disposition is pending.



Barn Owls

Most of you who have been to our open houses or attended our outreach programs in the last 14 years remember Cappuccino. He came from California, where he was a chick in a monitored nest-box. Every day he was kicked out of the nest and every day he was put back. When the rest of his siblings fledged, he was unable to do so, possibly due to a genetic deformity. He was taken to a wildlife rehabilitator in California who used him for education. A couple of years later he was moved to a Wisconsin rehabilitator. The rehabilitators were looking for a new home for him and we were looking for a barn owl. It was a match made in heaven. For many years he delighted audience with his signature “cappuccino machine” hissing, but unfortunately he passed away in February.

In March, we received a call about an injured barn owl on the Clinton-Washington County line. This bird had a compound (bone exposed) metacarpal fracture. Its disposition is pending, but may very well become a member of our education team.

From the editor:

Cappuccino — volunteers either loved him, or not so much. One thing you can say about Cappy is that he was quite the attention-grabber. Cappy and I never got along so well. He was just way too loud for my taste. My most memorable outing with him was at Blessing of the Animals at Christ Church Cathedral. We stood at the back of the church during the service, and I guess Cappy got bored with it all, so he decided to scream. If you’ve never experienced that sound, it’s blood-curdling! Add to that the acoustics in a cathedral and at that point every person (and animal — except maybe the guinea pigs) turned around to look and see what all the fuss was about. After about five minutes of this I decided to take Cappy outside for some fresh air. I stood next to the St. Louis Police K-9 and mounted patrolmen with their animals and they asked if I was holding what was making that noise. I said, “You heard it outside?” “Yes”, they replied! Of course, every year since then people inquire as to when I will be bringing Cappy back for an encore.

Tigger was with us for 20 years, and he was already two years old when we admitted him. 22 years is very old for a cat. We had Cappy 14 years. These losses for us are not unlike the loss of a beloved pet. We have been their caretakers for a long time, and they’ve been great ambassadors for their species. We will miss them both — even Cappy. *Adele Moore*



Cappuccino and Amanda at the
Let’s Go Fishing Show
in January

REHAB RAMBLINGS



On January 13 we received an adult Bald Eagle who was hit by a construction company truck and sustained multiple fractures to the radius and ulna (equivalent to the bones in our forearm). "Spanky" (named after the town in north Jersey County where he was injured) appears to be healing nicely, and is currently in an intermediate cage ready to make the next step into the large flight cage.

"Spanky" treated on arrival at TreeHouse with a patriotic bandage on her fractured wing.

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"Spanky" in her intermediate flight cage.



Photo by John Watson

This was the same day St. Louis honored veterans of the Iraq/Afghanistan wars with a parade. TreeHouse honored a U.S. Army veteran of another era, Mel McCann, long-time TreeHouse volunteer who released Spanky and watched him take to the skies.

UPDATE

On Jan 28, 2012 at Two Rivers Wildlife Refuge in Brussels, Illinois, Spanky was released in front of a large group of wildlife enthusiasts.

Photo by Margie M. Barnes
The Telegraph Staff Photographer





Eagle Weekend Family Day included crafts for the kids

EAGLE WEEKENDS

TreeHouse was open to the public for Eagle Weekends on Saturdays in January and February, sponsored by the Alton Visitors and Convention

Bureau. During those seven Saturdays, TreeHouse hosted 135 families and groups from 71 cities representing Illinois, Missouri, Indiana and Michigan.

NATURE NUTS

TreeHouse's pre-school program found the kids digging in the dirt in March's session, "Spring has Sprung". Activities included hunting for insects and creating caterpillars and butterflies while listening to a story, followed by a creepy crawly snack.

Kaeta Cronin, Ed. Director



LUNCH LADIES

TreeHouse has our very own lunch ladies, otherwise known as Shirley (l) and Perky (r). Our construction crews and workday participants head into the kitchen when the dinner bell rings, and they eat very well thanks to these two great cooks!

MOCHA

Mocha, our outreach program Short-eared Owl, does what he does best — hide among the foliage. These owls are ground-nesters, making it no surprise they are listed on the Illinois State Endangered Species list.



EXCHANGE STUDENTS VISIT TREEHOUSE by Connie Yordy

For the past several years, families and teachers from Queen of Peace and Blessed Sacrament Elementary Schools in Belleville have hosted children and their teachers from Notre Dame Elementary School in Kyoto, Japan. The program, called Discover America, began with an invitation for two teachers from Queen of Peace (Connie Yordy and Diane Diekemper) to visit Kyoto and meet the children and families that would be coming to Belleville the following summer. Since that initial visit, over 100 Japanese students and five of their teachers have shared their lives and their culture with families from the two Belleville schools.

This year, nineteen students, two teachers, and the principal of Notre Dame arrived in St. Louis at the end of July 2011. They visited several places in St. Louis, and then traveled to southern Illinois to experience a classic summer tradition for many American children - summer camp.



Yukari Shimizu, Katsuya Endo, Sr. Beatrice Tomoko

Because Japan is a country dominated by mountains, the majority of the population is crowded into the small areas of land between the mountains. The cities are densely populated, and the houses are small. Children from Japan are generally impressed with the wide open spaces in Illinois and the amount of land we have to play in and devote to nature.

When the children return from Camp Ondessonk, they meet their host families. Two children are paired with each family, and for three days they experience what it is like to be a child in America. While the children are with their host families the teachers stay at the home of Connie Yordy, a teacher at Queen of Peace School and a recent volunteer at TreeHouse. The teachers, too, enjoy the opportunity to visit the attractions in our area, and they appreciate seeing wide-open spaces and learning about American animals.

On July 29, 2011 they had the opportunity to visit TreeHouse. Perhaps because the Japanese people do not get to experience nature often, they have a great reverence for it. At TreeHouse the teachers were delighted to have the opportunity to view native wildlife up-close.

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Sister Beatrice Tomako, the principle, quickly climbed to a spot so all of her 4 foot 10 inch frame could be at eye level with the orphaned opossums. As they showed their mouthful of tiny teeth and hissed at her, she told them she had seen many things that were a whole lot scarier than they were. They stopped hissing, and simply backed away.

Katsuya Endo and Yukari Shimizu were impressed with the devotion of the volunteers and their dedication to saving orphaned and injured wildlife. They hope the children will have an opportunity to visit TreeHouse next summer.



Diane Diekemper, Yukari Shimizu, St. Beatrice Tomoko, Michelle Biver, Katsuya Endo
(Diane and Michelle are teachers from Queen of Peace School)



HAWTHORNE ANIMAL HOSPITAL'S ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT



Proceeds benefited TreeHouse

Ready, Set, Go!

Top left — Dr. Selbert and her dog demonstrate the agility course.

Upper right — Dogs up to 20 pounds line up at the “starting gate”.

Right — Dogs over 60 pounds find their “eggs”.



TURKEY VULTURE BOOT CAMP-Part I by Jennifer Yordy, Intern

You might think that a bird whose primary means of defense is to vomit on its enemies wouldn't rate too high on the animal intelligence scale. On the other hand, there's not really anything to do to come back to that. So maybe it's actually a very smart move. And, speaking from unfortunate experience, when a turkey vulture throws up on you, there really is nothing to do but run away. It's pretty horrible.

All in all, vultures have kind of an unsavory reputation. The ominous feeling associated with vultures circling in the sky is not surprising, given that this behavior indicates that something has either just died or is nearing its last breath. Their featherless heads and powerful, hooked beaks give vultures an appearance many consider grotesque. Their tendency to assume a hunchbacked posture and to hold their wings out like a black cape make them look right at home in the setting of an old horror movie. They gather in loud, raucous groups to feed on particularly choice carcasses.

In fact, it is precisely this last behavior that makes intelligence such a vital adaptation for vultures. Vultures are highly social animals, and as is the case with many animals that live in groups, a high level of intelligence gives them the advantage of being able to analyze complex social situations. It's very difficult to measure animal intelligence, because it's difficult to assign objective values to different kinds of skills. Studies have shown that chimps outperform humans on tests designed to gauge short-term memory, and rats can learn the correct path through a complex maze in an incredibly short period of time. As humans, we are naturally inclined to favor human-like intelligence—namely, a skill for problem-solving—when observing animal behavior. This is exactly the kind of intelligence that vultures possess to an amazing degree. When living with a large group of birds with beaks specially adapted for the purpose of tearing flesh, the ability to analyze social dynamics and solve social problems provides a distinct advantage. Intelligence confers the ability to form mutually beneficial alliances and to resolve conflicts without sustaining serious injury.

Last summer, a young human-imprinted turkey vulture was brought to TreeHouse. "Imprinting" refers to the process by which young birds establish their social identity. A bird of the age at which visual focus develops forms a social fix on whoever is caring for it. In normal circumstances in the wild, this will be the bird's parents, so it learns to identify itself as a bird of the same kind as its parents. But when a bird at this age is raised by humans without the help of a foster parent, the bird "imprints" on humans.

Unfortunately, as we were soon to experience with our human imprint turkey vulture, just because a bird thinks he is human does not mean that he understands that humans don't usually play by attacking each other's legs.

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It was the beginning of winter when the vulture moved in, so we installed him in one of the deck cages, enclosed in plexiglass, for the remainder of the season. (Because of their bald heads, turkey vultures need pretty solid shelter in the winter.) From the beginning, his behavior clearly marked him as a human imprint. He showed no fear of humans, instead spending most of his time right at the sliding glass door looking into the education center, intently observing all of the goings-on. Every day, someone would have to go into his cage to feed him, dispose of the previous day's leftovers, and mop. Mopping quickly became a real problem. At first, he was obviously afraid of the mop, but unfortunately his dread was short-lived. He soon began launching attacks on the mop head. It didn't take him long to put two and two together and realize that the mop was not fighting back. At that point, his focus began to shift to feet and the backs of knees, which apparently made much more interesting targets.

So, caring for the vulture became an increasingly hazardous ordeal, as he escalated his attacks and eventually drew blood from several volunteers. He would pursue his caretakers all the way back to the door, biting at their heels the whole way, and even after the door was closed with the volunteer safely on the outside, he would remain at the door, tilting his head and putting his eye right to the glass. Most of us came to see this behavior as aggressive and threatening; it seemed as though he was running us out of his territory and then guarding the entrance, challenging any would-be intruder.

Finally, enough was enough. The vulture's behavior was only getting worse, and we had no idea what to do about it. Then, Marcie, a TreeHouse board member and animal care volunteer, contacted a bird behaviorist who has a business training parrots. Lisa Rose, of the Parrot Posse, had never worked with raptors before, but she was excited to give it a try. After doing some research and discussing the situation with various experts, she came to TreeHouse in February for our turkey vulture's first training session.

You can read more about the vulture's training and his progress on my blog:

www.treehousenotebook.wordpress.com.



THE PELICAN FROM RIVERLANDS by Adele Moore

After crossing the Clark Bridge in Alton for gas a couple months ago I noticed out of the corner of my eye a lone white pelican walking on the dirt road between Lincoln Shields Conservation area and Route 367. Pelicans are a social lot, and a lone pelican usually indicates a problem. I pulled into the conservation area to get a better look and when he flapped his wings I noticed he was missing the wing tip on one side, making flight impossible. I checked in with the rangers at Riverlands for a crate, but upon my return I could not find the bird. The rangers kept watch for the pelican and finally captured it a couple days later.

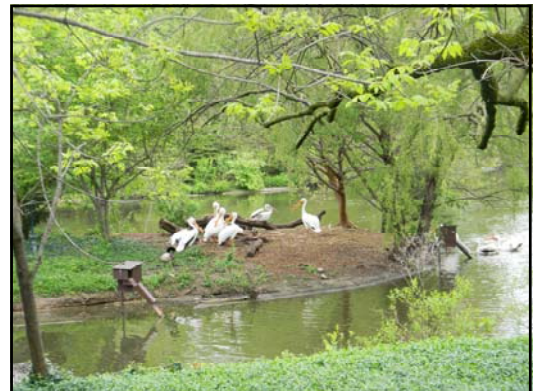
I contacted the St. Louis Zoo, and they agreed to take the pelican for their collection if we would agree to keep it for a couple months. We decided the newly vacated former greenhouse/raptor overwintering cage would be the perfect place for a pelican, with it's natural light, concrete floor, sink and drain.

What fun! Pelicans are just as comical as they look! During this period of time many TreeHouse visitors got a chance to observe our temporary resident. The comment most often heard was, "I didn't think they would be this big". The pelican made his final trip from Riverlands to TreeHouse to the St. Louis Zoo on April 5, where in one month he will join the rest of the flock (two of which TreeHouse rescued many years ago).



Above and above right —
pelican at TreeHouse

Right — the pelican's eventual home
and friends at the St. Louis Zoo



INVASION OF THE SNOWYS

We hear about Snowy Owls moving out of the Arctic and into southern Illinois every few years. According to Kay McKeever of The Owl Foundation, this event occurs when there is a crash in the population of the bird's prey base, or sometimes young males will wander south just to check things out south of the border — not unlike spring break for college students! The winter of 2011-2012 was one of those years and thank goodness their stay did not require our services. TreeHouse has received five Snowys over the years — 1981, 1984, two in 1985, and 2007.

The town of Red Bud about 1-1/2 hours south of TreeHouse played host to one of the birds. Another was spotted in McHenry County at the extreme northern end of the state.



Left, and right, the 2012 McHenry County Snowy Owl.

Photos by Karen Lund



Bottom left: the 1981 Snowy at TreeHouse

Middle: The 2012 Snowy at Red Bud.

Bottom right: The 2007 Snowy in Roxana



BUILDING PROGRESS REPORT

This past winter's high temperatures allowed us to work outside for most of the year, and we were able to get quite a bit accomplished.

The **avian ward** is now filled with stainless steel cages moved from Brighton. Although the building lends itself beautifully to the needs of recuperating birds of prey with the oak post and beam construction and multiple windows letting in natural light, much still has to happen to bring it around to be used for that purpose. The building needs a new roof, as the current one leaks, and a water line, plumbing, insulation and drywall installed. Also, the electricity will need to be upgraded.



Proposed Avian Ward

*At this time the **avian ward** has **not** been funded. If you know of an individual or company that would like to help fund this project with a donation of funds or materials, please let us know.*

OUTDOOR EDUCATION AND OUTBUILDING AREA

The **Cardinal pavilion** located near the fire pit has been partially funded, and we're looking for additional funding and workers to complete the project.

The **Mouse House** has been funded by Jack and Carolyn McCann, but work has not yet begun.

OUTDOOR AVIAN PERMANENT RESIDENT CAGES

All are completed and are fully occupied. The **memorial cage triplex** contains Great Horned Owls, a Long-eared Owl, and our Short-eared Owl.

The **Ameren triplex** contains Red-tailed Hawks, Rough-legged Hawk, Screech Owls and American Kestrels.

The **cathedral cage** contains Barred Owls and Barn Owls.

Also completed are the **Bald Eagle cage**, sponsored by Kristi & Jay Blanquart and The Pautler Family Foundation.

Discussion is underway for a **waterfowl exhibit area**, but final plans have not been decided upon and a sponsor has not been found.

OUTDOOR MAMMAL PERMANENT RESIDENT CAGES

The bobcat cage is finally finished. This cage is a nice two story duplex for a permanent resident bobcat. The cage is currently housing a bobcat in rehab. If this cat cannot be released, she will occupy this cage. The cage is nestled among a row of white pine trees. The back half of the cage is shaded, with the front half exposed to sun. A variety of shelves located at different heights should keep a bobcat well exercised. **Thanks to**



Missy Rung-Blue and her husband David Blue for sponsoring this cage. Missy and her brother-in-law, Chuck Collis also worked on the cage.

The final cages for permanent resident mammals include a **coyote cage** sponsored by the **Sierra Club in memory of Bob and Louise Freeman**, and the **fox duplex** sponsored by the **Chuckles the Red Fox Campaign** chaired by Missy Rung-Blue. We are looking for sponsors for a third duplex cage for a variety of **small mammals**.

OUTDOOR REHABILITATION CAGES

Outdoor rehabilitation cages are the next building phase on our schedule. Prior to construction, a gravel driveway will have to be built to the back of the property to allow vehicles access to the cages. Also, electricity for an outdoor light and water lines for a water hydrant will need to be placed.

The **fawn pen**, sponsored by **The Chaney Family**, and **waterfowl rehab complex**, sponsored by **Jack and Judy Neiman** will be first on the list once the driveway and utilities are complete. Both of these pens will need drains installed.

*The **small mammal** rehab complex does **not** yet have a sponsor.*

The very large **raptor holding and flight cage complex** is partially sponsored by the **Arthur L. and Elaine V. Johnson Foundation**. *We are currently looking for sponsors to complete this cage.*

THE WELL OILED MACHINE VOLUNTEER CONSTRUCTION CREW

The following volunteers worked on the Eagle/Vulture, and Bobcat cage complexes:

Melvin McCann, Gary Surgeon, Tom Foster, Ann Robertson, Richard “Woody” Woods, Sr., Richard Woods, Jr., Rod, Katrina, and Alex Davis, John Becker, Tom Nielsen, Paul Edelman, George Hobbs, Bob Ruland, Stephen, Connie, and Jennifer Yordy, Andy Woesthaus, Bonnie Castroman, Aaron Hodges, Gail Wallace, June Hellrung, John Kennedy, Les & Marian Hardison, Chuck Collis, David Meyer, Eric Bloemker, and Adele Moore. Also thanks to our lunch ladies, Shirley McCann and Elaine “Perky” Perkins for providing delicious meals for the workers.



The Vulture-Eagle Cage Complex Before and After

Gary, one of our “high wire” volunteers sets atop the cage waiting for roofing materials to be hoisted up.

The cage to the right shows the vulture cage occupants and visitors. Four permanent Turkey Vultures reside inside, while two wild vultures are regular visitors—one is on the power pole and the other shows off on the cage roof. One of our staff noted one of the wild vultures standing on the ground just outside the cage door one morning. He must think we run a four star hotel!



TreeHouse volunteers donated 5,000+ volunteer hours in 2011



Some of the volunteers donating hours toward building the eagle cage during the Martin Luther King National Day of Service in January.



Above — Spuds, Mac and Hope explore their new cage.

Right — Mac (l) and Hope (r) in their new digs.



TreeHouse Has a New Van

2003 van purchased with funds from anonymous donors

SHORT TAILS by Judy Neiman**Dedication**

It's been the warmest March I can ever remember in my 65 years. We were heading up the Great River Rd. to our friends' house one Sunday. Motorcycles were just everywhere. We headed off on Graham Hollow Rd. near Pere Marquette Park. We drove a couple of miles and saw two small birds sitting in



the road side by side. One flew off but not the other. I asked Jack "Was that bird dead?" We thought maybe not. We turned around and found him still sitting in the road. One more car and he would have been crushed. I jumped out and picked him up. It was a Black-capped Chickadee. I held him in my hand.

I could see a small amount of blood in his mouth. He probably had been grazed by a passing car and he was very still until we made it to our friends house. We put him in a brown paper sack and he began to thrash around. I was pretty sure he had recovered. I let him loose in the bathroom and he flew to the ceiling and up over the curtain rod.

We immediately drove him back and released him where we found him. He flew up and out of sight, hopefully to reunite with his mate who sat faithfully by his side when he was injured. What dedication for one of God's tiny creatures.

There are two species of Chickadees in our area - Black-capped and the Carolina. They overlap in territory, with the Black-capped being further north. Their plumage is very similar, and they are hard to distinguish from one another. If you know their songs, you can tell them apart easily. Black-capped have a three note descending call, and the Carolina a four note song. At Brighton they have Black-capped, and at our house near Glen Carbon we have Carolina. Whichever you have they, are a joy to see at your feeders.



Chickadee drawings by Sally Joosten

SHORT TAILS *continued***Burn Out**

Rehabilitating wild animals can be very stressful, and burn-out is a big concern for those of us facing life and death decisions for wildlife on a daily basis. We are grateful to all our long-term volunteers for their persistence day after day and year after year.

Some days after 24 years of rehabbing at TreeHouse two times a week plus taking in adult songbirds and countless ducklings at my home, I begin to think I may be burnt out. But just when I think I am too tired, I get a call about a bird that is really in trouble and desperately needs human intervention.

It could be a hawk just stunned from hitting a window who just needs a safe area for recovery.

It could be a Black-crowned Night Heron wrapped in fishing line laying in ice-cold water just barely clinging to life. He recovered completely after the line was removed, he was warmed, and given fluids.

It could be a curious Carolina Wren caught in a glue trap in someone's garage. She was released back at her home after we successfully removed her from the trap, cleaned off the glue, and restored her feathers to pristine condition.

It could be a tiny duckling with a bad foot who could not walk and was left behind to die. A makeshift shoe left on for just two days enabled him to walk properly. After nine weeks with others his age he was released on a beautiful lake in Prairietown.

It could be a Great Horned Owl hanging by one wing from a barbed wire fence who would have just suffered for days and died without our intervention. Unfortunately, his wing was too damaged to save.

We are sorry not all situations result in a happy outcome, but I've learned that the rewards always outweigh the disappointments and frustrations. My hope is that I will never stop helping the helpless and that Treehouse will be there to continue its good work for years to come.

"Though boys throw stones at frogs in sport, the frogs do not die in sport, but in earnest" Bion 325-255 B.C.

Other Locations:

Troy Hawthorne
(618.667.4900)

Adair Gardens
(618.235.2744)

Countryside
(618.664.4420)



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THANK YOU

Granite City High School Science Club
Jersey County High School —
Ag. Construction Classes,
Alyssa Elliott

The Nature Institute, the Sierra Club,

Alton Middle School Student of the Month
— Kiona-Mei Sperr
Piasa Mint
East Alton Boys & Girls Club

Ameren and MJM Electric for providing and
installing bird safety equipment for our
transformer. We have many wild birds
visiting the permanent residents at
TreeHouse and now they will be able to
safely perch on the nearby power pole.

Thanks to all those groups and individuals
who provided much needed donations of
time, cash and supplies!

IN MEMORY OF

James Summers,
Donna Jean Dover
&
Julius Challandes
(TreeHouse volunteer-
Phill Challandes' father)

IN HONOR OF

Alyssa Elliott's birthday

For more stories please check out the intern's blog at:
www.treehousenotebook.wordpress.com

Wish List

Paper towels
33 gal. trash bags
Dryer sheets
Canned cat food with liver
Scotch-brite sponges
Metal trash cans with lids
Welding gloves
Fishing nets with handles (all sizes)
Plastic animal kennels (all sizes)
6',8',10' & 12' step ladders
Garden hoses
Folding chairs
Pool covers
Gas cards
Cash donations
Gift cards for Home Depot or Lowes

If you have an animal in need of rehabilitation, call
(618) 372-8092 — Brighton or
(618) 466-2990 Dow
or the
BiState MO/IL Wildlife Hotline at
www.wildlifehotline.com or
(636)-492-1610

If you have questions about becoming a volunteer, or you would like to book a program, please call
(618) 466-2990 — Dow

or check out our website at
www.treehousewildlifecenter.com

TreeHouse Wildlife Center, Inc.
23956 Green Acres Road
Dow, Illinois 62022

To Our Members and Supporters,

It is very important to get our animals moved from Brighton to Dow — the sooner the better. Our goal is to vacate the Brighton hospital building and move those operations to Dow as soon as possible, but by winter at the very latest.

We are incurring double expenses because we're operating out of two facilities, and we're hemorrhaging cash from Brighton via high utility bills due to the state of that building. The only obstacle holding us back right now is cash to renovate the rehab area, and building more outdoor caging in Dow.

Any and all donations toward this end are welcomed!



Company Gift Matching

Many companies offer Charity gift matching programs.

Ask your employer or check our web site for a list of employers who will match your contribution to TreeHouse

TREEHOUSE WILDLIFE CENTER MEMBERSHIP

TreeHouse receives **NO** state, federal or county funding.
Our only funding comes through you, the concerned public.

One way of helping TreeHouse operate is through purchasing a membership.
You will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have helped us
give something back to the wild.

TreeHouse Membership fee consists of a minimum donation of
\$20.00 annually.

Senior Citizen Membership fee consists of a minimum donation of
\$15.00 annually

Lifetime TreeHouse Membership fee consists of a **one-time** minimum donation
of **\$1,000.00**.

- ☐ I would like to **renew** my membership to Treehouse Wildlife Inc.
- ☐ I would like to **become** a member of TreeHouse.
- ☐ I would like to make an **additional contribution** to TreeHouse.
- ☐ I would like to make a **donation** to the **TreeHouse Building Fund**.

Please check the appropriate box and mail this form with your donation.

☐ \$15.00 ☐ \$25.00 ☐ \$50.00 ☐ \$ _____ Other

- ☐ I would like information on becoming a **volunteer**.
- ☐ I would like information on **volunteering to staff a TreeHouse booth at fundraisers**

Remit via Pay Pal or Mail check to:
TreeHouse Wildlife Center
23956 Green Acres Road
Dow, IL 62022

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TreeHouse Droppings by e-mail, please send your e-mail address to
treehousewildlifecenter@gmail.com**

**TreeHouse does not sell or share our mailing or e-mail lists with
anyone.**