

TreeHouse Droppings



Meet “Casey”, a Red shouldered Hawk, and our newest permanent resident

Casey — from Caseyville — was admitted with multiple fractures to the left wing. Unfortunately the wing had partially healed by the time TreeHouse admitted the bird, so she cannot be released back to the wild.

In this issue:

Eagles, Myths Legends & Facts, Trumpeter Swans, Spring orphans, Pelicans, Nature Nuts, Interns, Wildlife releases, “Busted”, Birthday Parties, Construction, MetroLink, Possums, TreeHouse Wildlife Explorers, Acknowledgements

30+ years of giving back to the wild

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TreeHouse Staff *

Pam Lippert**
(Senior Wildlife Tech)
Libby McGinley*
(Office manager)
Kaeta Cronin*
(Environmental Education Director)
Rachael Heaton*
(Intern & Ass't Ed Director)
Amanda Dixon &
Trincy Nyswonger
(Weekend Interns)
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
Deana Browne,
Melvin & Shirley McCann,
Sabrina Skoog,
Marti Stone, Sue Potter,
Phil Challandes, Adele Moore,
Sherri Medley, Doc Myer,
Brad Blumenstock,
Hannah Rothe, Shelby Burton,
Granite City High School —
Science Club, Kathy Conley ,
Pam & Brittany Deppe,
Sharon Gwillim, Oliver Johnson,
Kathy Border, Gary Surgeon,
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Elaine (Perky) Perkins,
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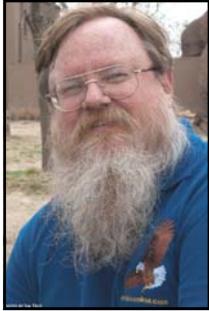
TH Wildlife Explorers

Jennifer Yordy

Social Network

Glenda Eaton, Web Master
Missy Rung Blue, Facebook
Tom Neilsen, Computer tech.

PRESIDENT'S AERIE by Eric Bloemker



Spring is nearly upon us, and for TreeHouse Wildlife Center that will mean much work. Orphaned squirrels and opossums need to be fed at regular intervals throughout the day. Orphaned and injured raptors need foster parents and good food. We could not do this mission without the support of our members and volunteers. I cannot thank the volunteers enough. They come from busy home and work lives and give of themselves to the critters needing help to survive. I realize the hardships these volunteers face to give their time. Truly remarkable.

For those of us that cannot spend as much time in the direct care of the animals, your donations make TreeHouse possible. Whether it is an annual membership or a larger generous check, each contribution is much appreciated. TreeHouse has been around for over thirty years because of the donations from the community— you and people just like you. We have grown from Adele's backyard to our facility in Dow, Illinois, and we continue to grow there. More cages are needed though, especially the rehabilitation cages. Plenty of opportunities exist to volunteer on construction crews or make a lasting donation towards the structures where animal care is lovingly given.

We had hundreds of visitors throughout the eagle season. We welcome you to come out to TreeHouse this Spring, as well. Bring family and friends along to see. Please do not mind the mess of construction that will be taking place over the coming months.

Stop by the gift shop – new tee-shirts will be available. Sometimes it is something as small as wearing your favorite TreeHouse Wildlife Center sweatshirt or tee-shirt that starts a conversation in the grocery line or at work. Volunteers, members, and supporters all play the critical role of spreading the word to potential new members among our family and friends. Thank-you all!



Yes, we have tour buses full of guests. 620 people visited TreeHouse during the first two months of 2013!

Eagle Season Ends, Eaglet Season Begins!

Article & photos by Eric Bloemker

For those disappointed in the lack of eagles spotted along the Mississippi River due to the warm winter, take spirit in knowing that many eagles did come down from the northern winter climates. They just decided to hang along the Missouri River near Creve Coeur airport. If we had a deep freeze of the river, those eagle would have made their roosting near the locks and dams or ferry crossings to find open water to fish.

Also, I'm hearing of many more eagle nests in the region. That means more local eagles, and better chances of sightings throughout the year.

If you know of an eagle nest, please give the birds some room. There's no sense in walking up to the tree that supports the nest. You cannot see the eagles from that vantage point. You'll make mother eagle nervous when she cannot see you. Stand back and view at an angle where the nesting birds can see you – and you can see them. Everyone will be happier.



Soon the eaglets will hatch. Historically, in this area, they hatch in early April. Then over about three months they will grow quickly to fledglings. A juvenile bald eagle has dark feathers, but it will just about reach the size of adults in those short three months. Immature eagles go through a salt-and-pepper stage before starting to acquire that famous “balde” head and tail feathers. (In Old English, *balde* means *white*.) Mature adults of 5 years generally have full white heads and yellow beaks.



Of course, if driving and hiking along the levees of the river are not your thing, come on out to TreeHouse Wildlife Center in Dow. You'll get to see three eagles, as well as many varieties of owls and hawks, plus coyotes and fox. Our Turkey Vultures have recently returned from their wintering at Brighton, too. You might also witness Einstein's daily enrichment program.

Myths, Legends, and Facts about Wildlife in Spring

by Adele Moore

TreeHouse Wildlife Center receives hundreds of calls concerning young wildlife in spring and summer. Below is a guide to what might be going on in your own backyard.

Myth – A mother wild bird or mammal will abandon her young if touched by a human.

Fact -- Female wild mammals, for the most part, will not abandon their young so easily, and most birds do not have a sense of smell, so they cannot detect human scent.

Squirrels: Squirrels have two litters a year. Young ones are born as early as February, with a second litter around mid-summer. If a nest is destroyed, leave the young near the nest site and monitor from a distance to give the mother a chance to retrieve her young and transport them to a secondary nest. One local squirrel mother was observed to rescue her young from one nest when the tree was cut, only to have to relocate again when the second tree was cut a day later.



Opossums: Young are born twice a year – early spring and mid-summer. Gestation lasts just 13 days. Basically embryos at birth and the size of a honey bee, possums remain in the mother's pouch for approximately 70 days and stay with the mother for about 100 days. Possums in the pouch whose eyes have not opened are extremely difficult to raise until they are at least 9-10 weeks of age, when their eyes open.

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Rabbits: A rabbit den consists of a shallow depression in the ground lined with rabbit fur and topped by a grassy layer. Given these parameters, a rabbit den could be anywhere – even in the middle of your back yard. The mother rabbit makes her way to the den a couple times during the evening hours to feed her young, so you won't necessarily see her.



If young rabbits are exposed around the den, replace them and the grassy top. Young rabbits open their eyes at 1 week of age and are gone from the nest between 2 and 3 weeks of age. If you see a small rabbit with its ears erect and eyes open, it's on its own. They stress out easily and can die from excessive handling.



Fawns typically are born in late May. With loss of habitat, deer have made their home in subdivisions and even cities with small wooded areas. The doe scouts out safe havens for her fawn and then beds her young down for several hours while she finds food. These safe havens can be woods, fields, and even back yards, flowers gardens and porches. This is not unusual. If the fawn is quietly curled up in your yard please

leave it alone so the doe can retrieve it later. Normal activity should not disturb it. Only intervene if the young one is injured or running around in obvious distress.

Spring? The calendar may have read "Palm Sunday" but that didn't stop our 14" snow fall. Wildlife are as confused as we are!



Trumpeter Swans by Pam Lippert

As with most recent winter seasons, we admitted three trumpeter swans this year. These magnificent birds, the largest waterfowl in North America, migrate from Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin, and spend their winters in the Riverbend area where they are more likely to find open water. They are usually spotted in the open water in the early mornings and evenings. During the day they may be spotted in fields feeding on leftover grain.

For about the past 20 years, we have been blessed to see these birds in our area due to the reintroduction efforts of the aforementioned states. The most common reasons we admit Trumpeters at TreeHouse are lead poisoning, power line collisions, and gunshot.

The first swan admitted this season was a juvenile found along the bank of Ellis Bay at the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary in December 2012. Unfortunately, it was DOA. There were no fractures and no evident injuries to cause its death except that it was extremely thin – about 15 pounds. A post mortem X-ray did reveal a shotgun pellet in the neck. There was no evidence of lead shot in the digestive system, although it may have still been suffering from lead poisoning, with the shot having already passed through.

The second swan was admitted in January after being found walking along a road within a couple miles of the Dow facility. The bird may have been shot, resulting in a fractured ulna (large wrist bone). Although no shot was found in the wing, evidence showed that the shot appeared to have passed through the wing after breaking the bone.



The third swan was found along Route 3 in East Alton. It was first spotted between Walgreens and Quik Trip,

Thanks to our wonderful TreeHouse neighbors who spotted & rescued the swan in an ice cold farm pond.

before it crossed the highway to Eastgate Plaza, where it was headed west toward the water plant a few blocks away. This bird had been shot in the metacarpal (equal to our hand) part of the wing. We are hopeful that both of these birds will be released soon to finish their recuperation and migration. These birds require a large area for takeoff which practically no one is able to provide in captivity.

Rehab Ramblings

by Pam Lippert and Adele Moore

Fall and Winter: Injured raptors and waterfowl demand our attention in the fall and winter, and this winter was no exception.

Great horned owls, barred owls and screech owls hit by cars dominated clinic admissions this winter. Several of these birds with fractured wings were able to be repaired and released. The birds that didn't fair so well were those with eye damage. Some of these eye injuries will resolve on their own, but the vast majority do not.



Fortunately two of our feisty little red phase Screech Owls admitted on the same day with eye injuries will be placed at the Children's Zoo section of the St. Louis Zoo.



Adult birds are released back into their home territory (when possible) due to the fact that they might have a mate waiting for them. Releases this year included three Cooper's hawks from Madison, Edwardsville, and Collinsville who were either hit by a car or flew into a window — all with very common blunt trauma head injuries. A fishing line-entangled horned grebe was released at Horseshoe Lake State Park, a screech owl in Highland, red-shouldered hawk, in Washington Park, and in addition to the Annapolis great horned owl, another great horned owl who sustained a fractured wing was released in Fairview Heights.



Cooper's Hawk before his release in Edwardsville

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One exception to the rule of releasing adult birds in their home territory was Clay the Bald Eagle from Clay County who had been shot in the leg, resulting in a fracture. This bird was released at Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge in Calhoun County and would soon be migrating north for the summer.

Spring: One of the few mammal injuries that came in this spring is a mother possum with one youngster in her pouch. She was picked up in Washington Park, suffering from a broken back. Although she has a back injury and is unable to stand or walk, she is able to eat and provide milk for her youngster. Since momma seems to be comfortable, we are leaving her and baby together until the baby is weaned. Also admitted were three orphaned possums who were found in a mother's pouch after she had been shot.



Injured momma possum nursing her youngster



Right now the nursery is holding a few aquariums of orphaned gray squirrels, a couple of flying squirrels, and two orphaned red foxes.



The isolation ward contains one orphaned barred owl, and three orphaned great horned owls along with their foster mothers.



ELLIS AND CASPER by Adele Moore

It was Halloween 2012 and I was looking forward to leaving TreeHouse early to get ready for our anniversary dinner, but it was not to be. A call came in from a man who said he spotted a pelican walking down a country road north of Fieldon. I questioned him several times about his sighting, but he stuck to his story the entire time.

I'm not familiar with some of the Jersey-Greene County roads and it seemed like I drove for hours. Finally, as I rounded a bend, there it was a pelican taking a stroll down the middle of the road. The bird was missing part of one wing, so was not hard to capture, although it seems birds who spend most of their time in the air and/or in the water can still give this senior a run for her money. So, I bought some fish, took the pelican back to TreeHouse, and with a nod toward Halloween I named him "Casper".

Fast forward another week and yet another pelican missing part of one wing was found near Ellis Island at the Riverlands, so "Ellis" joined Casper. As of this time we have no idea what caused these traumatic injuries (we received a pelican with a partially amputated wing earlier last year that is now at the St. Louis Zoo). No shot was found in either bird, so it is possible that power line collisions caused the injuries.



TreeHouse received several inquiries from zoos all over the country looking for non-releasable pelicans. I e-mailed the San Francisco Zoo to see if



they were interested because they had just lost one of their two long-time pelicans and its buddy was very lonely. Since they are very social birds I felt bad about their lone pelican, so reams of paperwork was started for the transfer. After all the required physical exams, and lab tests, the go-ahead was given and the pelicans were flown to the San Francisco Zoo to begin their new life.

Nature Nuts

Nature Nuts: A nature education program for preschoolers. By offering a variety of outdoor activities and allowing children to explore the natural world with a hands-on approach, we are not only heightening their senses but helping to create awareness.

Nature Nuts session featuring hibernation. Note the “bear cubs” hibernating in their “dens” for the winter



Intern Rachael guides the nature nuts in a paint session which explored the colors found in nature.

The Nature Nuts will take a walk on May 21 to listen for the sounds of nature.

Trincy Nyswonger – Weekend Intern

Have you ever found a place that just feels like home? I have here at TreeHouse Wildlife Center. So far, I've had some amazing experiences and met some wonderful people while volunteering and interning at TreeHouse. The work done at TreeHouse fills me with hope for the future for our wildlife friends. Everyone here obviously has a passion for helping animals. Before coming to TreeHouse, I was a part-time environmental education instructor at the St. Louis Zoo. From that experience, I have come to realize just how reliant every animal is on humans for its species' survival. But TreeHouse has shown me that you don't have to go to Peru or Africa to help endangered animals. Animals in my own backyard need my help too!



I first discovered TreeHouse while doing a Google search for “animal rehabilitation Alton, IL” last spring. At that time, I was looking for a place to get some experience working with animals. Working at the zoo as an environmental instructor, I was only allowed to teach people about animals, not handle animals. When you want to go into a career where you care for animals, experience with animals is a must! When TreeHouse Wildlife Center came up on my search, I was ecstatic! Little did I know that TreeHouse would come to be much more than a title to put on a future resume.

Currently, I am a sophomore at Lewis and Clark Community College getting my Associates in Science. Even when I was younger, I always knew I wanted to work with animals. Because I had no idea about the many jobs available to animal lovers, I decided I wanted to be a veterinarian. It wasn't until my senior year of high school that I decided that I could not be a veterinarian. I didn't want to work with domestic animals. I wanted to work with wildlife!

I realized my love for wildlife and conservation while volunteering and working in the education department of the St. Louis Zoo. However, like I said earlier, I couldn't actually interact with the animals at the zoo. That's when I applied to be a volunteer at TreeHouse. My first day at TreeHouse, I was excited and nervous. I met Marcie, a senior volunteer, and Rachael, the new weekend intern, whom I worked with all summer. I learned many things that first day: foxes are even cuter than I imagined; baby woodchucks do not like being held; and eagle calls are more awesome in person.

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At the end of the summer, the weekday intern Jennifer was offered a job at The Endangered Wolf Center. Everyone was sad to see her leave but happy that she was able to find a job doing something she loves. Because Jennifer could no longer be the weekday intern, Rachael stepped up from her weekend intern position. However, this left the weekend intern position open. After some discussion with the board, TreeHouse decided to make the weekend internship a monthly internship. Currently, Amanda Dixon and I are the weekend interns. Only one of us stays at TreeHouse on the weekends, while the other comes on the day they normally volunteer, and then we switch at the end of the month. I think Amanda and I both agree that since we are full time college students this system has worked out really well.

TreeHouse is constantly trying to improve the life of the animals and the experience of their visitors. One of the many reasons I love TreeHouse is the fact they are really open to new ideas, whether it's creating something new for visitors or doing something new for the animals. Next year, I will leave for a four-year university to obtain my B.S. in Wildlife Biology. I know that when I set off on my new adventure, I will remember and love everything TreeHouse has done to improve me, and I will use every experience and skill that I have learned from TreeHouse to help wildlife in the future. I hope that when I leave, that I can repay TreeHouse by leaving behind a TreeHouse that has been changed for the better.

TreeHouse — Local to Global!

Okay, we already have our wonderful, very competent, local interns — Jennifer, Rachael, Amanda and Trincy, who have been doing a terrific job these past two years. We are expanding our internship program and are now awaiting interns from other states — and beyond. This summer we are expecting two local student rehabilitation externs, as well as an intern from Alabama, one from Canada, and one from Scotland. In addition we will have a recent graduate from Principia Collage who will stay in the area as an environmental education extern for the summer.

Many of you may remember that TreeHouse had an internship program in the early to mid-eighties. That program was suspended when our intern's quarters had to be re-purposed for storage. This new crop of interns will work alongside some of our local interns, as well as our volunteers and staff.

The Great Survivor by Intern Rachael Heaton

Animals come and go at TreeHouse every week. They all come in with varying degrees of injury and differing stories but every now and then there comes in an animal that breaks our hearts but still manages to miraculously rise above our expectations. One such animal is a great horned owl that was found three hours east of TreeHouse, in Annapolis, Illinois. He was on the ground by a country road and was not very responsive. The wonderful family who found him picked him up and drove all the way to Dow, IL. to bring him to TreeHouse. They fondly called him Hootie.

After they left, I took Hootie out of his crate and started checking him over. He was the skinniest bird I had ever seen, as I was able to grab his keel bone, an extension of the breast bone in birds, with my entire hand. The keel bone of an owl of normal weight should be viewable but not grab-able. He also appeared to have been hit in the head, probably by a car, since his eyes were almost always closed and there was a cut near the top of his beak. I gave the poor owl some fluids and then set him up in an enclosure in the exam room. I covered one side with a towel so he could stay out of the light and have some privacy if he needed it. He just kept his eyes closed and let everything happen without a fuss. My hopes weren't high for him as I retired for the night. I feared he had lost too much weight and that his body might already be shutting down.

When I woke up the next day, I headed downstairs to check on him, expecting to find that he had passed. To my surprise he was sitting there, his eyes slightly open, looking right back at me! He had made it through his first night! I gave him some more fluids and checked on him throughout the day. That night, I gave him his first couple pieces of meat, which he took willingly, keeping his eyes closed, and then I left him for the night. It was hard to resist feeding him everything that I could. When a bird is that skinny, it can die if fed too much at once, because its body would use the last of its energy to try to digest the food, and then it would just shut down. For the next few days, I was surprised to find him still with us every morning. I gave him a few pieces of meat every so many hours.

By the following week, he had graduated to a rat for the day. I would cut it up and give him half in the morning and half in the evening. He had become quite accustomed to being hand fed and would even wait by the uncovered door when he knew it was getting close to meal time. I had become more confident in his possibilities of survival as he grew stronger every day. Eventually, I felt it was safe to test to see if he could have a whole mouse twice a day. When owls eat a small animal whole, they cannot digest the bones and the fur, so they expel these parts in a pellet.

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Creating a pellet takes a lot of energy, so up to this point we had been feeding Hootie chunks of meat rather than anything whole. Hootie's first pellet wasn't well formed, but over the next couple of days, as he continued to get stronger, and his pellets began to look more normal. I remember when I gave Hootie his first whole (dead) mouse. I set the mouse on one side of the cage and he stared at me for a moment. He then slowly turned his head in that robotic way that owls do until he caught sight of the mouse. It was like golden light had come down from the ceiling onto the mouse. He was so excited; he went over and immediately grabbed it. He then just held it in his mouth for a few minutes before finally swallowing it down whole.

A few days later, Hootie began sitting on his perches more regularly instead of just on the ground. At this point he graduated to one rat in the morning and one in the evening. I was so proud of him. I had never dreamed that he would come this far, but he had proven to me that miracles can still happen. The great horned owl had quite a personality. He always watched with interest as we worked on other animals in the exam room and he was always super excited about food. He never once tried to escape his small enclosure nor did he hiss at us. In fact, I was rather relieved when he finally began making those clicking sounds that owls do with their beaks to try to warn another creature away. When the family called to check on him, as they often did, I told them that his odds were looking favorable now.

However, Hootie's trials were not over. When we felt he was strong enough, we moved him out into our flight cage. I tossed him into the air so that he would be encouraged to fly up onto a perch, but he went straight to the ground and looked at me accusingly. I frowned and then walked up to him to see if he would fly but he just sat there looking at me. Taking note of that, I left the outdoor enclosure, hoping that he just needed to get his bearings and that I would find him on a perch the following day. Unfortunately, over the next few days, he never once went up onto one of the high perches. Could he not fly? He was holding one of his wings lower than normal. We brought him back inside and laid him out on the exam table to examine his wings. We could not find any breaks, but he did have this strange twitch when we poked him up near the shoulder of one of his wings. Nerve damage perhaps? Uncertain of his fate, we put him back in the flight cage to give him more time. When the family called to check on him, I told them the grave news and asked them to cross their fingers that he would begin to fly soon.

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It seems like weeks went by before we started to see improvement. We had even cycled him out of the flight cage to give other birds a chance to practice flying for a while before they were released. When the flight cage was vacant, then he was allowed back in. One night when I went inside the enclosure to feed, he was perched on top of one of the low stumps. I walked up to him to coax him to move, just to see if he would fly. To my pure joy and relief, he flew along the ground to one of the other low stumps! He could not get very far but it was still progress from just sitting on the ground. Over the next couple of weeks his flight along the ground seemed to get stronger. Finally, I decided to push him a little more and tossed him up onto one of the high platforms. He looked around in surprise, and then I tried to coax him to fly again. He was quite reluctant, but eventually he took off. He did not make it to the other perch, but he did make it to wall on the other side of the flight cage. I left him that night, my hopes for him rising again. Perhaps, when he had come in, as skinny as he was, his body had consumed much of his muscle mass in its effort to stay alive. Perhaps he just needed to exercise enough to get his muscles back!

A couple of days later, I entered the enclosure to see him up on one of the high perches. He had flown up there all on his own! Now I knew that we were back on track. When the family called to check up on him again, I told them the wonderful news that he was now flying. He was still a weak flyer, as he could just barely make it from one high perch to the other, but it was still flight. He had come a long way from when he had first arrived at TreeHouse barely conscious. It is March now and he has been with us for a few months. His flight is much stronger. I can always tell which owl he is as he still lets me walk right up to him. Perhaps after everything he had gone through and after all the help we had given him; he knows that I am no threat. He has now been released and is once again flying the nighttime skies in Annapolis, IL. He is the great survivor. I had never thought a bird in his condition would make it, but he proved me wrong every day. He taught me to never give up hope! Even when the odds are stacked against you and everyone else thinks your fall is eminent, you can always rise above your trials, regain your wings, and fly again.



Hootie in the intermediate flight cage

Busted



I've been busted. Yesterday, after nearly three years, my boss finally discovered I've been bringing baby squirrels to work with me so I can ensure they get their multiple times per day feedings. I knew it was inevitable, and I actually feel a bit proud of myself that my squirrel feeding remained under the radar for as long as it did. It would have lasted longer if those babies hadn't been so impatient.

They were in their usual place in an aquarium under my desk. They were hungry. The larger female and the male are big enough now that they "demand" food rather than wait for it. The two little girls were still snuggled under their blankets, but the bigger babies were standing on their hind legs and rattling the screen topper of the aquarium. And glaring at me. My boss had a meeting in about ten minutes and would be leaving the department. It is far easier to hide the fact you are feeding squirrels at work if you wait to do it when your boss is not around. And it's not like the babies were starving. They were still going to eat at their usual time. But as luck would have it, my boss came in my office and sat down to talk. I tried to pretend there was nothing unusual in the knocking, scrabbling sound that came from under my desk.

Interestingly, she did not immediately ask about the sound, and I actually started feeling hopeful that, for whatever odd reason, she just wasn't hearing it. But eventually she frowned and asked, "What is that?" I feigned complete ignorance, but she knows me too well. "I know you have something in here. What is it?" I shrugged so she turned to my coworker (and co-conspirator) and said "What does she have in here?" Well, neither one of us is in prison for telling so she just shrugged, big-eyed, and said "I have no idea." Well, Boss Lady wasn't buying it. She stood up and stalked around my desk. And stared. "What are those? Are those squirrels? Do they live here?": she asked in a breathless rush. "No," I assured her, "They travel back and forth with me." "Well", she huffed, "they had better not get out and get in my hair!" And with that she stalked off.

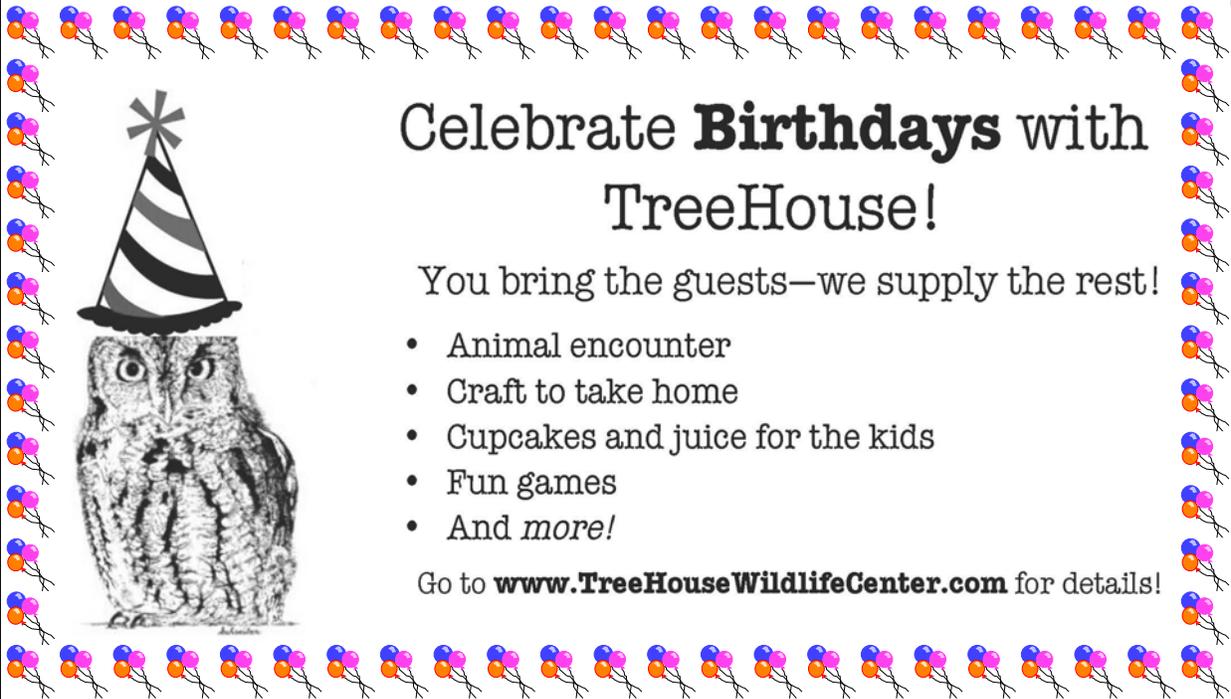
Later that day I caught Boss Lady telling another staff member about catching me with squirrels in my office. Poor Boss Lady had no idea how many people already knew. How many people see me walk into work in the morning and whisper, "Do you have anything with you?" and when I nod, will come to my office to see the babies.

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How many people have asked to help feed them or will whisper in awe, “Look how tiny they are!” How many people have actually brought orphaned baby squirrels to work for me to take, knowing I will help them grow up, then release them. So it came as a surprise to her when the staff member simply shrugged and said, “I told you she was nuts!” “You knew!” she screeched. He just smiled and said, “I like it.”

Today as she walked in the door of the department, the only acknowledgement of my contraband babies was a breezy, “I don’t have to worry about flying squirrels, do I?” “Nope,” I said, “Not today.”



Celebrate **Birthdays** with TreeHouse!

You bring the guests—we supply the rest!

- Animal encounter
- Craft to take home
- Cupcakes and juice for the kids
- Fun games
- And *more!*

Go to www.TreeHouseWildlifeCenter.com for details!



Check out our new sign located at the intersection of Green Acres and Elsay Rds. Illinois state sign on the Great River Road coming soon.

BUILDING PROGRESS REPORT

We received a wonderful response to our Cash for a Cage Campaign which allowed us to dismantle the intermediate flight cage at our former location in Brighton and re-assembled it in Dow. The cage is in full use now and the number of raptors who are awaiting their turn in this cage before release to the wild, is rapidly increasing. This cage will get constant use as it's the only usable flight cage we have until the large raptor complex is completed. Many thanks to all who participated. **Come out and see your name in lights— slat(s)!**



Listed below are several building projects that still need funding. If you, your friends, family, or company would be interested in funding one of these projects, or volunteer on our construction crew, please contact Adele at TreeHouse for more details:

Large Raptor Flight Complex: Thanks to a bequeathal from the late Corrine Hawkins we are very close to our goal for this 64' x 96' complex. We are looking for an additional \$30,000., and will add your name to the cage with each \$5,000 donation. Construction will begin once the weather breaks.

Avian Ward: \$40,000.

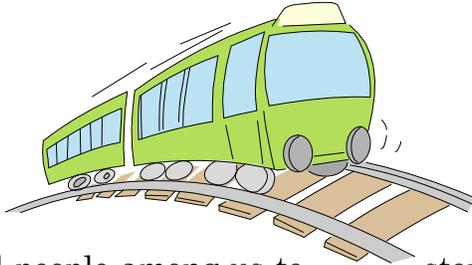
Small Mammal Rehab Cage Complex: \$10,000

Permanent Resident Raptor Complex: \$7,000

Permanent Resident Small Mammal Duplex: \$7,000

MetroLink Operator Rescues Owl and Forges Partnership to Rescue More Wildlife in Metro East Illinois

from "Next Stop" the official blog of Metro Transit St. Louis
 Posted on February 1, 2012 by Courtney L. Sloger, Online Media Specialist



Life presents us with plenty of opportunities to witness hardship, pain or suffering. But it takes the special people among us to stop, turn back, and do something to alleviate it. When MetroLink Operator Robert Yawn of O'Fallon, IL took the time to rescue an injured owl, laying near the light rail tracks between the Belleville and College MetroLink Stations, he didn't just extend his compassion to one animal. Thanks to Operator Yawn, with local wildlife rehabilitators Treehouse Wildlife Center and friends, and dispatchers at Metro like Craig Blase, injured wildlife spotted by MetroLink or MetroBus operators in Illinois may be saved, working together to support both transit and our natural ecosystem.

A couple of weeks ago, Operator Yawn was leaving the Belleville MetroLink Station near the end of his run, when he spotted from the train cab a large animal that looked like an owl, laying listless between the two tracks. He felt sorry for the bird, but assuming it had deceased, continued his route. He was traveling again past the station the next day when he noticed the owl turning its head, looking around. It was alive!

He called into dispatch, asked to permission to exit the cab. Craig Blase in dispatch gave permission, and using gloves and his coat, carefully carried the owl, immobile with a badly injured wing, over to a nearby fence away from the tracks, and continued his shift. After he finished up at 11:15 a.m., he contacted a woman named Sandie, a local wildlife rehabilitator in the Belleville area to see if there was anything she could do for the injured owl.

Yawn had met Sandie several years ago when he struck a barnyard owl while driving MetroLink. He had sought help for the bird, and thanks to Sandie, the owl survived. Now, another owl needed help. Sandie met up with Yawn, and with her husband, went out to rescue the fallen owl. The bird, a Great Horned Owl about two feet tall, had a broken wing and suffered from head trauma. Sandie and her husband transported this bird to the Treehouse Wildlife Center in Dow, Illinois.

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Owls and other birds of prey are federally protected, supported for their contribution to the ecosystem and treasured by local conservationists. Sandie is a home animal rehabilitator, working with Treehouse to provide additional support for injured or orphaned wildlife.

Robert Yawn's good nature is reflected in his love of animals. "I just didn't want him to die on his own." "I just hate to see animals suffer," said Yawn. "I figured even if we couldn't nurse this owl back to health, at least he wouldn't die in the cold or attacked by other animals."

Now, thanks to the initiative of Operator Yawn and Dispatcher Blase, Metro will partner with Treehouse Wildlife Center and Sandie to provide 24-hour help for animals injured by or near MetroLink tracks, or reported by MetroBus drivers in Illinois. If Metro operators spot an injured animal, they can report it to dispatch, who will contact Sandie or Treehouse. Not all animals can be rescued or rehabilitated, but many animals may have a better chance thanks to the care of Yawn, Sandie, Treehouse and other concerned members of Metro and the community.

Mocha, our (senior citizen) Short eared Owl is enjoying the view from her winter "condo" retreat.



Thanks to Brenda Blumstein for baking and donating these adorable cookies for our Winter Wonderland event

Fun at the Let's Go Fishing Show booth in Collinsville



The Plea for Opossums by Amanda Dixon, Intern

I was sitting in my chemistry class one morning, talking to some fellow classmates. Somehow my being a volunteer at TreeHouse was brought up in the conversation, and they seemed genuinely interested in hearing more about it.

“So what’s your favorite animal that you work with?” one of students asked.

“Well, I love the coyote, the foxes, and the owls, but I do have a special fondness for opossums, as well.”

“Uh, opossums?” he said with a look somewhere between disgust and puzzlement written all over his face. “Why? They’re so nasty!”

It was at this moment that I wept a little for all opossum kind. More and more I find that people think so lowly of these creatures, and it breaks my heart. Everyone thinks them to be mean, disgusting, ugly creatures, which is just not true (well, for most of them, anyway). In the hopes of removing some uncertainty by playing opossum advocate, I want to share some of what I find fascinating about North America’s misunderstood marsupial.

The Virginia opossum is much more than just road kill; it is a resilient animal that has learned to survive throughout the years. Make that about 70 million years, to be more exact, which means opossums are one of the oldest living families of mammals around. Playing dead must have its perks after all! Speaking of which, “playing ’possum” is actually a very useful tactic. When doing so, they will often roll over on their backs, drool, and slow their breathing down. This coma-like state can last for hours, and it is a very good predator deterrent.

Opossums can also live almost anywhere throughout North America, and they are omnivorous, which means they can have a wide variety of food in their diets. Yes, they do often eat carrion, which seems gross, but this cleaning up of dead animals is very useful and necessary in maintaining a proper ecological balance. Opossums also help keep rodent populations low, and I think that deserves a big round of applause because let’s face it, we would much rather deal with opossums than mice or rats any day. Thank you, Virginia opossum, for acting like nature’s little garbage disposal and taking care of things that are gross so we don’t always have to.

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As I mentioned before, opossums are marsupials—the only ones native to North America. Naturally, they carry their young in their pouch, as marsupials do. When the young become too large for the pouch, they ride along on Mom's back until they are big enough to go off on their own. Oh, and opossums have been known to have up to 20 young born in one litter, but thankfully for mom opossums everywhere, the average is around 8-10. It should also be a fact that opossum babies are just the cutest little guys one will ever see, but I may just be slightly biased.

Well, these are just a few of the many interesting facts about the Virginia opossum. If I have managed to pique some curiosities and encourage some more learning, come by and stop by the nursery to see some babies.

Opossums really are wonderful little animals, and they deserve more credit than they get. They aren't the vicious, disease-ridden, gross creatures most people make them out to be. All they want is to just to live their little opossum lives in peace, and like all other life, we should respect that. So the next time an opossum crosses the road, I encourage you not to hit it with your car but to think of how incredible this most unlikely of animals really can be.



INTRODUCING TREEHOUSE WILDLIFE EXPLORERS

Beginning this spring, TreeHouse would like to introduce its brand new junior membership program, TreeHouse Wildlife Explorers. The program is just for kids aged 14 and under, and it's designed to teach kids about wildlife and the natural world in a fun and engaging way. At TreeHouse, we know how important it is to foster an appreciation of nature from an early age. As members of the TreeHouse Wildlife Explorers, kids will receive a one-page monthly newsletter keeping them informed and in the loop about the animals being cared for at TreeHouse. They'll learn the natural history of native wildlife and read about some of the techniques of wildlife rehab. Each newsletter will also include fun activities and ideas for how kids can help wildlife in their own backyards.



In addition to receiving the monthly newsletter, kids who join the program will receive a personalized membership card that they can present at TreeHouse events to take advantage of special offers and discounts. We will also be holding a special annual event just for TreeHouse Wildlife Explorers and their families.

Membership in TreeHouse Wildlife Explorers costs just \$15 a year, and signing up couldn't be easier. Just fill out the form (on this page?) in the name of the child you wish to sign up and mail it to TreeHouse, along with your first year's membership dues, and your child will begin receiving our monthly newsletter. Our intention is to keep dues low enough that kids will be able to afford membership themselves, but membership also makes a great gift for kids, grandkids, nephews and nieces—any child aged 14 or under who loves animals and wants to know more about wildlife. With your help, we hope to reach as many kids as possible with our message of caring about the natural world.

**YES! I would like to join the
TREEHOUSE WILDLIFE EXPLORERS
My \$15 membership dues are enclosed**

Name _____

Date of Birth _____
(mm/dd/yyyy)

Street Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-Mail _____

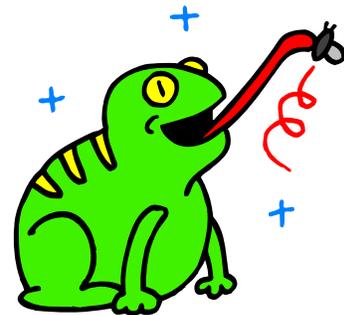
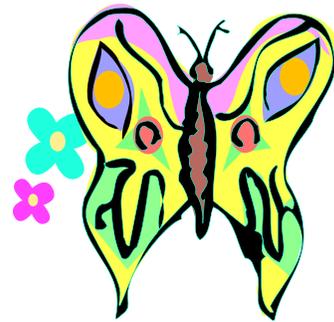
Make checks payable to:

TreeHouse Wildlife Center

and send to

**TreeHouse Wildlife Center
23956 Green Acres Road
Dow, IL 62022**

attn: Jennifer Yordy



Other Locations:

Troy Hawthorne
(618.667.4900)

Adair Gardens
(618.235.2744)

Countryside
(618.664.4420)

Hawthorne Animal Hospital
#5 Cougar Drive
Glen Carbon, IL 62034
p. 618.288.3971
f. 618.288.3977
www.hawthorne.vetsuite.com




We take exceptional care of pets!

THANK YOU

Granite City High School Science Club

The Nature Institute

Joan Green

Charity Work, Jerseyville

Kristina Heaton for the
TreeHouse Explorer logo

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

The Pautler Family Foundation

IN MEMORY OF

Corrine Hawkins

Indiana DNR
Conservation Officer
Mr. Lynn Ryggs

Volunteer Shirley
McCann's mother

IN HONOR OF

Eric Bloemker's Birthday

Dr. Paul Myer & Family

Rod & Maggi Vaught

**For more stories please check out
the intern's blog at:**

www.treehousenotebook.wordpress.com

Wish List

33 gal. trash bags

Canned cat food

Welding gloves

Fishing nets with handles (all sizes)

Plastic animal kennels (all sizes)

Garden hoses

Cash donations

Tractor with scoop or
(Mechanical) Bobcat

Mini van with stow & go seating

Gift cards from any store

If you have an animal in need of rehabilitation, call
(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

TreeHouse Wildlife Explorers Membership consists of a minimum donation of
\$15.00 annually

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

TreeHouse is registered as a non-profit corp. 501 C (3). All contributions are tax deductible

- 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**.

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

**If you would like to receive an expanded online color version of
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**