



Twin Harbors Newsletter

Call of the Wild

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Published and distributed by the Twin Harbors Wildlife Center (THWC). We rehabilitate injured, orphaned, sick, and displaced wildlife to give them a second chance at life by returning them "Back to the wild".

Each issue details up-coming events, wildlife/habitat information, as well as ways to help us meet our mission.

Editor: Cristine Gilliland

Email:

52feather0915@gmail.com

Volunteer Orientation & Training Dates

All orientations and trainings take place Saturdays on the following dates:

August 19, and Sept. 16.

Orientation at 11:00 am

Training at 1:00 pm

Going Batty

By Karen Huff

"He rose from the coffin, turned into a bat and flew off in search of his next victim."

"Stay away from her. She's got bats in her belfry"

"They'll fly straight at you and get tangled in your hair, then bite you and give you rabies!"

Let's skip the terrifying, (or irresistibly attractive, depending on the book or movie you choose) vampires and get down to real bats.

Austin, Texas hosts a large colony of Mexican free-tail bats under the Congress Ave Bridge from spring until early fall. Locals and tourists alike gather in the park across the street to watch thousands of them fly off in search of their evening meal about half an hour before dark. It has become a major attraction, a source of pride. Postcards, books and lovely bat themed jewelry abound in local shops, along with stuffed toys and T-shirts. Austin has learned to love its bats, but many people are still afraid of them.

Bats, like us, are mammals, the only true flying mammals. They are highly beneficial, feeding on large quantities of insects at night, including mosquitoes and grasshoppers.



(Continued on Page 2)

<https://getsmartratsolutions.com/what-species-of-bats-live-in-the-northwest>

Anybody who eats mosquitoes is definitely my friend! Some bats also eat arachnids, such as spiders and scorpions. All species of bats in Washington have similar diets. We do not have fruit bats or vampire bats.

We have fifteen different species of bats in Washington state, ranging from the very common little brown bat to the rarely seen Townsend's big-eared bat. Our smallest is the tiny, 2 1/2 inch long canyon bat; our largest is the hoary bat, 6 inches long, with a 17 inch wingspan. They hibernate in winter, when there are few insects.

Despite common misinformation, bats are not blind. They see quite well, but since they are nocturnal they depend strongly on echolocation to locate their prey. Similar to a boat using sonar, they emit high-pitched sounds, which bounce back off moving insects that would be hard to spot in the dark. They are very efficient, eating about half their own weight in prey nightly. Bats have no desire to attack you, or get in your hair. If a bat approaches close to you, it is merely chasing a bug that may have been attracted to your body heat.

Bats, like any mammal, can contract rabies, but it is rare. According to state statistics, less than one in 20,000 do. But, these amazing and highly beneficial creatures are having other problems. White-nose syndrome, a lethal fungal infection, has severely damaged the population. They can be sickened by pesticides. Like many other types of local wildlife, they are severely impacted by loss of habitat, and we can help with that. Dispelling harmful myths and creating a bat-friendly environment is good for all of us.

Flight pen update!

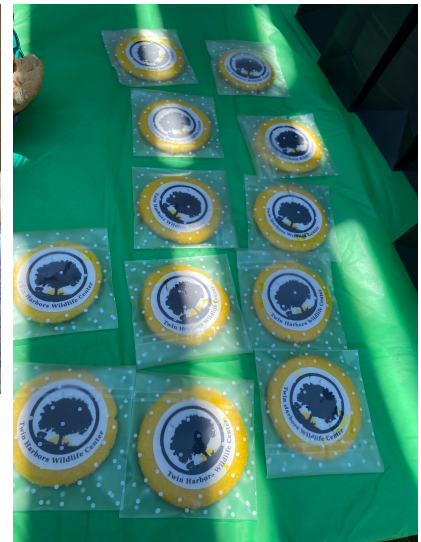
Dr. Corrie Hines

The ribbon cutting ceremony for the flight pen and mew took place on Tuesday, May 16th, and was very well attended by members of the public, volunteers, and donors. As we did not have any animals in the pen at the time, attendees were able to tour both the mew and the flight pen, and were excited for our ability to condition raptors here at our center. We offered cookies bearing our logo, and thank you bags and plaques for our donors.

We were just recently awarded a grant to build a second mew - construction will begin soon.



(More pictures from the ribbon cutting ceremony on Page 3)



More pictures from the the Flight Pen and Mew Ribbon Cutting ceremony on May 16, 2023.

Taking Flight By Deb Campbell

A number of weeks ago an adult bald eagle was brought into Twin Harbors Wildlife Center with life threatening injuries, very likely from a territorial dispute with another male eagle. He had severe lacerations required 6 different surgeries.

With the expertise of Dr. Sonnya the wildlife veterinarian at the center and the dedicated interns and volunteers, he is making a remarkable recovery.

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Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) or affectionately known as our national symbol.

In the past 100 years eagles have had a challenging go of it. Fortunately, with the help of many and the Endangered Species Act of 1973, which banned DDT, along with management of hunting and nest protections. The number of eagles in 1966 was estimated at 417 nesting pairs, down from upwards of 400,000 individuals.

By 2020 after the efforts of all involved. The population in the lower 48 states has risen to approximately 316,700 individuals and 71,400 nesting pairs.

Eagles weigh in at 6 to 14 pounds, females being larger. Average wingspan is 80 inches or greater than 6 feet across. They reach sexual maturity at 4 to 5 years old and live beyond 20 years of age.

The main diet is fish, often caught on the fly by snatching a fish from the surface of the water. During salmon runs, hundreds of eagles can be seen wading into rivers to drag spent salmon up to shore to enjoy. The trees along the rives are filled with these white-headed beings. A sight to see!

The courtship ritual is an elaborate display of calls, acrobatic flight of swoops, chases, and cartwheels. A pair will lock talons and free-fall, separating just before they hit the ground.

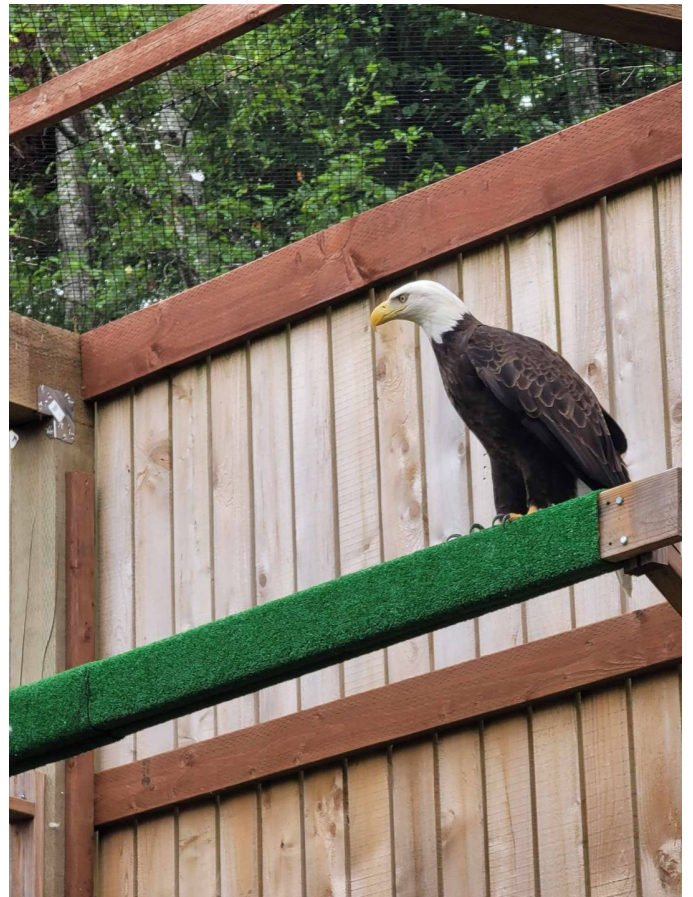
Bonded pairs build large stick nest weighing in at over 1000 pounds, usually 6 feet across and 4 feet deep. Both pairs incubate and feed the young. Built in tall sturdy trees, the nest used year after year after a bit of updating. Chicks fledge (leave the nest) at approximately 8 to 14 weeks.

Eagles can be found from Northern Mexico and Baja up to Northern Canada and Alaska.



So, back to the eagle in care at Twin Harbors Wildlife Center. He is healthy enough now to spend time in the flight pen, where he will build up his flight muscles for release. His time out in the open air as been advantageous. A female eagle has been spending time in a large fir tree the stands next to the flight pen. The two have been calling to each other. Ahhhh, romance!

Soon he will be released to spend his wild time with his newfound friend. And those who were involved in his care can be grateful for the experience he brought.



Bat Friendly Backyards

By Raeann Edwards

If you are interested in reducing the flying insect population in your yard and garden, then providing a bat friendly backyard habitat will surely help. Ironically, the first step to a good bat insect control system is to plant native plants, which encourage the insects that you are hoping to control. Including flowering plants in your backyard that bloom in the evening or stay open at night will attract night-flying insects. This will provide a great food source for your nocturnal bat friends. You can then enjoy a beautiful backyard landscape and observe bats, all without being overrun by night time pests. Some native plants that have these characteristics include: Trumpet Honeysuckle (*Lonicera ciliosa*), evening primrose (*Oenothera biennis*), Canada goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*), and Common Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*). Fragrant, evening blooms are the key.

In addition to a good food source, bats need a water source. Having a natural pond or stream on your property or close by is most ideal. If that isn't the case, providing one will do. This can be in the form of a pond, fountain, or bird bath. Since bats swoop down to a water source to drink, it is essential that an unobstructed "swoop zone" is present around the area that you provide.



To keep bats around your backyard they will need a place to roost. Dead trees are an ideal natural roost as they often have

tight spaces between the bark and wood. If this is not available in your space, a bat house will mimic a natural tree. You can purchase bat houses or build your own. Either way, selecting a proper location for the house is most important. Mount the house on the side of a building, such as a house, shed, or barn. A pole will also work, but avoid the side of a tree as there may be too much shade and it may be accessible for predators. The house needs to be 15 to 20 feet high and have no obstructions directly below, as bats tend to drop before taking flight. Find a location where the house will receive at least six hours of direct sunlight each day. Spring and early summer is the best time to set up a bat house. It may however take some time, even a couple years for bats to begin using the houses that you have provided.

If you choose to provide a bat friendly backyard habitat, ensure that your home does not become a part of it. Make sure to seal up cracks and small openings to your home. Bats will find the small, cozy crevices ideal for roosting. Also, use window screens and chimney guards to keep bats from accidentally flying in. Providing a home for bats that will keep everyone at a safe, comfortable distance will be beneficial for all.



Editor's Note: Don't place bat houses in trees! Predators have easy access to pups by climbing back and waiting on upper limbs. Photo by WDFW

(Both photos from: <https://wdfw.medium.com/adventures-with-pacific-northwest-bat-houses-1db3c1940343>)

Volunteer of the Quarter – Spring 2023

By Dr. Corrie Hines

Andrea Thorfinson



Andrea has been volunteering with us for two seasons (this is her second one). Her favorite part of volunteering is “the feeling it gives me, being part of a great team that is helping animals that would otherwise be forgotten and not cared about.” She loves being able to

give our patients a chance to live a full and happy life.

Opossums are number one in Andrea’s heart, although squirrels come in as a close second. Years ago, Andrea witnessed something truly upsetting and horrifying involving a helpless trapped opossum, and she vowed that one day she would find a way to help not only opossums, but all wildlife.

Andrea has two fur babies; a miniature rat terrier and a tripod Burmese kitty. If she could do anything in the world, she would travel the world helping care for animals and write books.

When asked what advice she would offer new volunteers, Andrea said, “Don’t be afraid to ask questions or ask for help if needed.”

Please join us in congratulating Andrea as the Volunteer of the Quarter!!!

Here’s how you can help with supplies needed for the center ...

We are always gathering the supplies that we will need to help the wildlife. If you have been looking for a way to help the wildlife and weren't sure how to help, we have updated our Amazon wish list to reflect what we are looking for. Use this QR code or click on this link to take you directly to our Amazon site.



https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3VIPMHCSFBWSW?ref_=wl_share&fbclid=IwAR0buJERaONKsRISApMYI3hwdJtKGrM2EOwr_gCU6IJwR0JDkHpVs_goDqUM

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Jeff Lewis, Treasurer
Talia Bailey
Debbie Campbell

Assistant Wildlife Rehabilitators:

Amy Bledsoe and Karla Kershaw

Intern: Brandon Mezzell

Contact Information

Twin Harbors Wildlife Center
16 Old Beacon Road
Montesano, WA 98563
(360) 861-4556

<https://twinharborswildlife.org/>