A recent occurrence involving a mother fox killed by a car, leaving her four kits orphaned, reminded me of a fox rescue that happened a long time back which I have never forgotten. The story of the orphaned fox kits is still unfolding and it will be the subject of a future story, but I can think of no better time to tell you the other story than now.

Many years ago, in the dead of winter, Wildlife Rescue was called to trap and rescue an injured fox. The beautiful, auburn-colored animal had been shot and severely wounded. Fortunately, she had managed to make her way onto a ranch with landowners who were kindhearted animal lovers. They had been putting food out for her for about three days when they called me. Initially they had been optimistic that the fox would recover without further assistance, but as the days passed they could see she needed more help than they could provide.

I arrived at the wooded property just after daybreak hoping to get a glimpse of the fox so that I would know exactly what I was up against. My wish was immediately granted. Out of the dense juniper limped a thin, bloody fox. I could not imagine how this animal was holding on to life. Apparently, she had been shot several times. There were bloody shards of flesh and large patches of raw, exposed muscle. Surely infection had set in; she appeared dehydrated and was barely able to walk.

I hated the thought of putting this animal through more stress, fear, and suffering, but there was no way I could help if she remained free. As I approached slowly and cautiously, the weary and wounded fox gave up before my very eyes. She simply could not put up a fight. I gathered the limp animal into a large, soft blanket. As I examined the emaciated body more closely I realized that I was holding an adult female. I was relieved that this was winter and not spring, when she might have had kits to care for. I was soon to learn, however, that she was leaving someone else behind.

I began to walk away with her when, out of that same dense underbrush, quietly
The Future

Those of us who have been at Wildlife Rescue for multiple years always breathe a collective sigh of relief at summer’s end. Not only is it a break for us (and the animals) from the searing heat, but it also offers a chance to peer ahead at what should be a calmer winter season. Traditionally, the end of summer means fewer babies in the Hospital, but with the uncertainties of climate change, we face a future that will look different than previous years. When will our summer respite occur in 2016?

Certainly, we’ve already seen changes in native wildlife that might accompany climate change. This year, as we’ve been telling our valued WRR members and anyone else who will listen, “baby season” started in February. While we pride ourselves on being prepared for any eventuality, the earliness of the late winter/early spring babies took us by surprise.

What we are seeing is disturbing. We are currently in the middle of our second baby opossum groups. While two litters per year isn’t particularly worrisome for opossums, the second litter appearing to early in the year indicates that we might yet see a third fall group of ‘joeys’. If the weather holds and we experience a mild winter, could we see more? Uncertainty about the pace and intensity of climate change is exactly what makes it so terrifying.

Wildlife are opportunistic and, while that word has come to indicate bad character traits in the human population, to a wildlife biologist opportunistic just means making the most of any opportunity that comes along. So, opossums are opportunistic feeders because they might come across any number of potential food items in a given day. Every morsel from carion to fresh berries to discarded food may become a meal for opossums while they’re out looking for whatever they can find.

Similarly, opossums and other animals are opportunistic breeders. If the weather is warm and there’s food to be found, they will have as many litters as possible to provide the species with the best chance of survival.

Some opportunistic wild mammals, like skunks and raccoons, actually have the ability to “choose” when to have babies. If a skunk or raccoon comes across another individual of the opposite sex in the wild, they will likely take the opportunity to mate. However, if conditions aren’t favorable for a baby to be born, such as in the case of cold weather or a lack of resources, the mother can delay the implantation of the fertilized egg. She will keep the embryo until conditions have improved, then begin gestation. While the exact mechanism of this process are unknown, it does show the amazing resourcefulness of animals.

Climate change could result in the wild animal population booming so much that they can’t find food or shelter. (Or heat and drought could lead to a population crash—who can know?) Combine that with the catastrophic urban sprawl that destroys wildlife corridors and animals cannot move from one area to another to locate missing resources. That equation equals human and wildlife conflicts, due to no fault of the animal.

As we look forward to the end of 2016 and try to plan for what 2017 has in store, it’s difficult to remain optimistic about the challenges we and wildlife face together. The answer, indeed the only one that’s valid, is to keep trying. We must be ever more mindful of our natural resources. We must be ever more mindful of how our actions affect others. It is only in the striving for improvement amongst many individuals that change can happen. You might feel like only one person, but this newsletter you’re reading goes out to 20,000, 20,000! Imagine the impact that 20,000 individuals can have, and suddenly our odds seem a lot better.

Krystal Mathis, Chief Administrative Officer

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper and is recyclable! Please do your part.

Make a difference today, for thousands of lives tomorrow.

A legacy gift is a planned commitment to give WRR a major gift, over time or in your will, as part of your overall financial and estate planning. Planned gifts, which are arranged between you and your financial advisor, can provide you with additional income and reduce the amount of taxes you would regularly pay.

Planned gifts take many forms:
- A Bequest made in a Will
- Charitable Gift Annuities
- Gift of Life Insurance
- Retirement Plan Assets
- Charitable Lead Trusts

Call 830.336.2725, ext. 315 or email at DReyes@wildlife-rescue.org to learn more about how your legacy gift can save lives.

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”
- Winston Churchill
crept a sleek, healthy male fox. I knew he must be the devoted mate of the injured female. As I carried her towards the car he cautiously followed only yards behind. If she was to be saved, there was no alternative to taking her away from him. I had to hope that she could be healed and that he would be waiting for her return. As I drove away I could see him in the rearview mirror watching us leave as the cloud of dust enveloped him.

The weeks following her capture were painful and frightening. She was on constant intravenous fluid therapy. Her wounds were flushed and cleaned daily. Much of her desiccated fur had fallen out and portions of her body were left naked and raw. During her treatment she would often slip into a deep sleep and I was certain that we would lose her. Her fever would rage out of control, and then her temperature would plummet. She seemed to be drifting in and out of death’s doorway.

Weeks passed as the amazing, fragile female refused to give up her fight. Finally, on a clear morning in February, the tenacious fox lifted her head, cautiously rose on her trembling, thin legs, and slowly lapped water from a bowl. By noon on the following day she accepted some small pieces of meat. Each day that followed she would grow stronger, hungrier, and less tolerant of our care. Finally she was making her way back to freedom and her life in the wild. It did not matter to her that her appearance was forever altered, that her beautiful coat would never be the same, and that patches of dark, coarse fur had replaced what had once been soft and supple. The scars on her upper legs would be with her forever as well. Still, her spirit had not suffered. This once again vibrant animal was now impatiently pacing, eager to get back to the business of living.

As I arrived back at the ranch with her, I clearly remembered the day I had driven down the same dusty, dirt road, taking the battered fox far from her home and her mate. I remembered so well that male fox watching as the car drove away, watching his life’s mate disappear. Months had passed since their separation. The seasons had changed and I wondered if he could have possibly decided to wait for her.

As I lifted the crate out of the car, she began to scratch at the door. Nothing else mattered to her now. She wanted only to escape the confines of the crate. I opened the door, expecting a flash of red to come darting out of the carrier, never to be seen again. But she had other plans. As the fox stepped out of the crate, she took several graceful strides into the warm sunshine. She stood looking about and shaking the scent of captivity out of her thick coat. Each strand of fur responded to the gentle movement of the welcome wind. She knew that her life was once again her own.

Noon had come, the sun was high overhead, as the fox disappeared into the underbrush. It was time for me to go back home. As I drove away, I felt a little sad. But more than anything, I felt satisfied and grateful that what could have been a tragedy had turned into one of life’s miracles.

I took one last look in the rearview mirror just as I had done on the day I had taken the injured fox away, and I was rewarded by a sight I shall always remember. There, just beyond the stand of dark green junipers, stood two foxes. The female with her battle-scarred coat, and standing silently next to her the male who had watched her vanish and had decided to wait for her return. He did not seem to notice her “less-than-perfect” fur. He only noticed that she had returned to him.

Moments later, the two foxes disappeared into the dense underbrush back into a world that belongs to them alone, back to their life together. As if humans had neither harmed nor helped them. As if they had never been apart.
Caretakers at Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation care for over 7,000 injured, orphaned, and sick animals round-the-clock every year. Each life who comes in is treated as an individual. Though every animal is special in their own way, there are some groups of domesticated animals who touch everyone’s hearts immediately. Since domesticated animals are not like their wild counterparts, they always need human care and, sometimes, human affection.

One group of four unlikely companions trickled into WRR’s care early in 2016 and formed their own special bond with each other and with anyone who witnessed their camaraderie.

Lily was found as an abandoned newborn lamb with severe infections in both eyes. Sadly, by the time we got her at WRR the infection had already left her nearly blind. Her human caretakers could no longer afford her medical treatment so they called on WRR to take her in. Her first days at WRR she was fearful, craning her neck to the sky and searching to make sense of the new sounds and piece together the shadows she could make out in her brand new environment. She was alone at first in a small, safe yard but soon was joined by three companions.

Midnight Star was received from a ranch where she was rejected by her mother. The tiny black and white calf came in just a few days after Lily and seemed to be immediately smitten (who wouldn’t be?). Star stuck close to the blind lamb, watching her closely and bellowing out warnings when Lily would stray. The duo explored their small yard during the day, keeping quite close to one another, and snuggled in their sheltered areas at night. While we all loved watching this precious friendship, we knew it wouldn’t last forever. Star was growing quickly, and soon she would outweigh her companion by hundreds of pounds. Lily needed friends that were closer to her own size. Little did Star and Lily know, they would soon be joined by two others.

Anika and Dwight completed the “baby gang.” These two goat kids were spotted by a caring person roaming a neighborhood. Judging from Dwight’s wounds, it was assumed he had been attacked by a dog. After calling neighbors and nearby farms with no luck, the goats’ finder reached out to WRR. They arrived at our Rehabilitation Hospital for care early the next morning. After a few weeks of wound treatments, they were introduced to Lily and Star. The four of them bonded almost immediately and are rarely seen without each other.

This inseparable “baby gang” has a special area in one of the large pastures on WRR’s 212-acre property. Here they can graze and romp peacefully. As they continue to grow, their area will be enlarged and they will slowly be introduced to other rescued farmed animals.

They spend their days going between the sun and shade, running and bucking with each other, or snuggling down in their protected shed just before nightfall. Star still remains ever-faithful to Lily. She is aware the very moment Lily seems to be lost and Star wastes no time in calling to her friend and guiding her along. They might eventually assimilate into their respective species’ herds, but for now they are devoted to each other and their goat friends.
Wild Birds Are Not Companion Animals

like all birds, the nonnatives who call the WRR sanctuary home enjoy basking in the morning sun, despite the tragic histories that brought them here. Some were confiscated from boarders, others were abandoned or relinquished by people who had grown tired of them, and none of them should have been turned into “pets.” Even though it is commonplace to see parrots, conures and others for sale, it is a cruel industry, and no bird should be forced to live his life in a cage or house so someone can profit from their suffering.

Nonnative birds are often plucked straight from the wild or from breeders at a very young age, without any regard for their native environment or emotional needs that only their parents know already has a nonnative bird, please take immediate steps to learn how they live in the wild and do all you can to mimic that. Help Wildlife Rescue prevent the suffering of these animals by raising awareness of their plight, spreading the message about the illegal wild bird trade, the legal but immoral commercial breeding facilities, and the harmful marketing practices of both. If ever you or anyone you know is tempted to purchase a bird, stop and remember that the purchase supports a cruel enterprise. Or if you or someone you know already has a nonnative bird, please take immediate steps to learn how they live in the wild and do all you can to mimic that. Help Wildlife Rescue prevent the suffering of birds—a quick look at the birds in your yard tells you how much their freedom means to them and how right it is for them to live in natural conditions.

The embargo slowed down exports to the U.S., but since parrots are often marketed as “pets,” captive bird breeders accelerated their operations to meet the continued demand of the public. These birds are the third most popular “companion” animal with 3-5 million babies produced in the U.S. each year. The embargo of all “exotic or endangered U.S. by placing a complete embargo on these birds into the destination: a future in captivity.

WRR and other sanctuaries around the U.S. receive frequent calls from people no longer willing or able to care for parrots. Often, they are purchased on a whim without the realization that they are complex individuals with unique traits, personalities, and needs. Even when nonnative birds are bred in captivity, they retain all their wild needs and personalities. And many species can live up to 75 or 80 years!

The 1992 Wild-Caught Bird Act reduced the flow of these birds into the U.S. by placing a complete embargo on the import of all “exotic or endangered feathered species into the U.S.” But huge numbers are still illegally smuggled to meet the demand for the “pet” trade. Today, largely because of the nonnative bird trade, nearly one-third of all parrot species worldwide are nearing extinction.

You can help end the suffering of these animals by raising awareness of their plight, spreading the message about the illegal wild bird trade, the legal but immoral commercial breeding facilities, and the harmful marketing practices of both. If ever you or anyone you know is tempted to purchase a bird, stop and remember that the purchase supports a cruel enterprise. Or if you or someone you know already has a nonnative bird, please take immediate steps to learn how they live in the wild and do all you can to mimic that. Help Wildlife Rescue prevent the suffering of birds—a quick look at the birds in your yard tells you how much their freedom means to them and how right it is for them to live in natural conditions.

Come enjoy a vegetarian lunch, socialize with other WRR members, staff, and volunteers

Register your place now!
Registration: $35 per person, $60 per couple, $15 per child
4 convenient ways to register:
Email: Debbie at dcrawford@wildlife-rescue.org
Phone: Debbie at 830-336-2725 x308
Mail: Coupon on back of issue, clip & mail
Online: Go to wildlife-rescue.org, click the Members’ Day page

Wish List Needs
As you know the animals are in constant need of many items to make their lives at WRR clean, comfortable and healthy. Please consider bringing some of our Wish List needs with you. We will have a truck at the gate ready to receive them when you arrive.

Wish List:
1. Purina Complete dry dog food
2. Purina Complete dry cat food
3. Tidy cats Unscented Clumping Litter
4. Wild Bird Seed
5. Paper Towels
6. Cotton Balls
7. Bleach
8. Facial Tissues
9. Dish soap
10. Scrub brushes
11. Dish Sponges
12. HE (high efficiency) liquid laundry
13. Baby pools
WRR’s Sherman Animal Care Complex Moves and Grows

BY LYNN CUNVY, FOUNDER/PRESIDENT

Five years ago Wildlife Rescue received one of the most unexpected gifts in our history. And not only that, one that turned into an amazing amount of good for the animals we serve, along with all the people around San Antonio who care enough about those animals to rescue and bring them into our care.

Roger and Phyllis Sherman have been friends of WRR for a very long time and through their family foundation they have provided generous support to purchase and maintain a facility in San Antonio while also supporting the purchase of food and medications. When they decided to close the foundation they thought of us, and after much discussion of how its resources could best serve WRR and Central Texas wildlife, we decided to use the funds to buy a building to serve as an outreach rehabilitation center in San Antonio and remodel it for our purposes. Since then, upwards of 25,000 animals have been received.

The WRR Roger & Phyllis Sherman Animal Care Complex has given us the ability to provide an injured or orphaned wild animal immediate care upon arrival, thus increasing the chances for survival, then continuing that life-saving care in SA or at our hospital in Kendalia, the choice being determined by their needs.

The number of animals arriving has naturally increased and in only a few years we realize that the Complex, which was perfectly sized and designed for the amount of work we had expected it to do, became cramped and bulging at its seams. There is no denying that we need more space so, aided by our dedicated friend and realtor Kit Walker, in July, we found it—at 1354 Basse Road. From about 2,000 square feet we will now have 7,000. And not only will we have more space; it will be even better equipped. The segregation and quarantine of birds and mammals will be more easily done, the receiving area will be larger, the aviary will expand, veterinary staff will have specialized space, and the small cattery will better allow for viewing and adoption. There will also be a new education center allowing WRR to better educate the community about wildlife. This space will be available (when possible) to small companion animal rescue groups for meetings and outreach adoption. In short, Basse Road will have everything we need (or as close as we can get).

Once again, Roger and Phyllis Sherman are supporting these efforts and we are currently seeking additional assistance for completing renovations and equipping the facility. This new facility will be a great benefit to the animals, and we thank the Shermans and all the other people who have helped. In October you will be invited to a soft opening with the grand opening taking place next spring (we will already be receiving and helping animals by then). We’ll let our members know and hope you can come see this latest step forward in Wildlife Rescue’s 39 year history of commitment to area animal protection.

WRR is thankful for the tireless work of volunteers on this project, especially Jim Grisham and Ralph & Linda Lambeth who have been invaluable.

W ildlife Rescue’s first priority has always been to care for wild animals and return them to the wild. But because we often are faced with domesticated animals in terrible conditions, we will also step in to help them as needed. Part of that endeavor is our work with companion animals through the program we call “Last Chance Rescue.” We call it Last Chance because we often help dogs and cats who are literally on the edge of having their lives tragically taken from them. The lengths WRR sometimes goes to is nothing short of heroic, as was the case with a little dog named Lola.

Lola’s story starts over 5 years ago. She was first rescued by staff at the Sherman Animal Care Complex. Our Manager there, Kimberly Stephens, remembers the day she learned of Lola’s plight: “We were simply trying to help a WRR supporter rescue a stray dog whom she started feeding after someone literally tossed Lola over her fence. Lola took refuge under the person’s house, making it very difficult to get to her. One of our most dedicated volunteers, Jeff Williams, was finally able to rescue her by crawling under the lady’s house. Since WRR is very limited in our ability to take in dogs and cats, the original idea was to bring her in just long enough to get her cleaned up and spayed and returned to the WRR supporter.” However, we soon learned that the little brown pit bull we named Lola would need a lot more TLC and time to heal. Lola had almost lost her will to live. She was bone thin, filthy, and covered in fleas and ticks, and because of this she was also anemic. Not surprisingly she was terrified of everyone she met.

According to Kimberly, “We were able to get her cleaned up and spayed. But she was extremely timid and scared of everyone and everything. She cowered in fear most of the time. It was months before she would even consider trusting us; she wanted only to hide and be left alone. The staff at the Sherman Complex was patient and continued to work with Lola who was now living full time at WRR. We implemented various positive and gentle behavior modification techniques and little by little Lola began to blossom.

What we did not realize was that Lola’s journey was far from over. Even with the day to day attention and presence of WRR caretakers, Lola’s damage was so deep that it would take years for her to fully trust people and learn to enjoy life. One of the most encouraging signs that she was healing came when someone dumped a friendly terrier mix at our gate in Kendalia. Little Echo seemed like an ideal candidate to befriend Lola. The two dogs lived side by side in our dog yard in Kendalia until the day they were allowed to share the spacious, grassy area. They were instant friends and spent hours every day in raucous play; at night they slept side by side.

As the months passed we could see that Lola, with the help of ebullient Echo, had come out of her shell of apprehension and was ready to be adopted. Today both Lola and Echo are members of loving homes, never again to know the loneliness or fear of being unwanted, abandoned, and all alone in the world.

Lola was luckier than most; she now has a safe, caring home and people who love her. She has learned that humans aren’t all bad! The capacity for dogs to recover and adapt from traumatic circumstances is truly exceptional, although in this case slow and difficult. Both Lola and WRR are grateful to volunteer Ralph Lambeth for his patient determination to bring her into a world where she would be loved and protected. A most happy ending to a very difficult story.
**Wildlife Rescue Donation & Members’ Day Registration Form**

**MEMBERS’ DAY REGISTRATION**
Saturday, October 22, 2016 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

- $35 per person; $60 per couple, $15 per child
- I plan to attend #________ $________
- I cannot attend but would like to make a donation $________________________
- I would like to volunteer

**ONE-TIME GIFT DONATION**

- $35
- $50
- $100
- $250
- $500
- $1,000
- $ __________

**WRR SUSTAINERS** (minimum of $10/month)

- I want to be a WRR Sustainer and make a monthly gift of: $________________________

Your card will be charged this amount on approximately the 5th of each month.

You may use the enclosed envelope (filled in) by itself if only making a donation; if registering for the Members’ Day event, please fill in, clip and send this coupon.

Name __________________________________________________________
Address ________________________________________________________
City ___________________________  State _________ Zip ______________
Phone __________________________________________________________
Email ___________________________________________________________
Card # __________________________________________________________
Expiration Date _________________________ *CW Code ______________
Signature _______________________________________________________

Payment Enclosed:  Check  Cash  Charge  (Check card type below)

Visa  Mastercard  American Express

*3-4 digit security number on the back of the credit card (4 digit code on front for AMEX)