Dear Members,

Consider the cow. Here is a “common” animal, known by all, easily identified, featured in nursery rhymes and children’s books and often seen peacefully grazing in rural pastures. For many around the world, the cow is thought of only as a “food animal”; for others some cows are considered sacred. Tragically, countless cows only know “life” in a feed lot or confined simply to produce milk. Still others are used as “plow animals.”

But what do we really know about this giant bovine? Though rarely considered, the cow, like all animals, has personality. The more cows you are privileged to know the greater your understanding of how complex, intensely intelligent and graciously gregarious they are. I have been fortunate in that I have known and still know a great many cows. I will tell you the story of one of these.

The life of Buttercup Cow began on a rainy spring day; her mother was old, unwell, and had given birth to six other calves during her short life. She was worn out. She barely had enough milk for her new baby, but once she had licked her clean and her calf was standing solidly on her gangly legs, she did her best to let her nurse until she was no longer hungry. Because she was not well cared for, mother and her newborn were given no shelter from the chilly rain. It was three days before the sun warmed...
That Time of Year Again: Baby Season

Wildlife Rescue faces a busy baby season every Spring and Summer and this year even more so. Record numbers of animals have arrived—more than 600 above last year at this time. As of late May we have taken in over 4,500, most of them tiny orphans. Due to the health and safety of our staff and apprentices, we took the difficult step of halting all volunteer assistance during the pandemic. However, there are still other ways you can help wildlife.

Many of the youngsters we receive are unnecessarily brought in for fear they have been abandoned. This is rarely the case as mothers are extremely dedicated to caring for their babies. Fawns are most often the victim. Deer leave their fawns hidden in a safe location for up to 14 hours at a time because they are safer being kept away from the rest of the herd while mother browses. She will return, feed the fawn, and usually move them both to a new location.

If you find a fawn and are concerned that he may have been abandoned, there are signs to look for. If the fawn is laying on his stomach curled up and quiet but alert, the mother is still caring for him and likely close by. If the fawn is in an unsafe location, such as near a busy street, you can gently move him several feet from where he was found.

There are also signs that the fawn has truly been abandoned: If he is laying on his side and not alert, or if he is pacing and calling out, or if the fawn is visibly injured or covered in fire ants. If you see one of these signs, the baby does need to be rescued.

By helping spread this information, you can help save animals’ lives. Babies’ best chance of survival is with their parents. Encourage people to call our hotline first so we can determine if an animal is truly in need of rescue before moving them.

If you or someone you know is unsure of what to do when you encounter a wild animal, please call our 24-hour hotline for assistance.

Sincerely,

Kelly McCoy
Director of Animal Operations
Lynn’s Letter

the now sodden pasture where mother and baby stood chilled, muddy, and soaking wet. As the day warmed and the sun shoved aside the clouds, the mother cow took her calf to the driest spot she could find; here thin patches of grass provided sparse relief from the sticky mud.

It was on this sun soaked patch of green where the mother cow said her good byes to little Buttercup and it was here that the tiny calf was found, two days later, keeping vigil by her dead mother. Buttercup was barely alive and had it not been for a determined young neighbor girl who found her, she would have joined her mother. The shivering newborn was purchased for five dollars, wrapped in thick, dry blankets and taken home with the hope of saving her life. It was in the kitchen of a small farm house where Buttercup and the teenaged girl spent every waking hour, slept side by side on the linoleum floor during the nights, and where the near dead calf was slowly and patiently fed nourishing formula, had her long, thin legs massaged until sensation returned and where these two became best friends.

In the coming days Buttercup regained her strength and was able to stand but she remained shy and easily frightened by every sound or quick movement. The young girl knew she could not keep Buttercup but she had nowhere to send her. When she called and asked if WRR could take her I assured her the young cow would be in good hands and would have cow friends in her new life.

It was a hot, sunny summer day when her trailer pulled into the sanctuary. The recent rains had washed away the brown landscape and left us with lovely pale green grass in all our pastures. The resident elderly female sheep, four donkeys, one mule, three goats, and two cows all stood watching the arrival of a new resident. Buttercup made her presence known with baritone moos as her large, brown eyes peered out from the trailer. We let her out of the truck and made her comfortable in one of the barns where she and her rescuer could be alone to say good-bye.

In the coming weeks little Buttercup remained quiet and kept to herself; she stayed at the back of her shelter and would rarely venture to the front even when the curious donkeys stood braying at her gate. The calf wanted nothing to do with her new home and new food or those who now fed and cared for her. She was mourning the loss of her friend and everything she had grown comfortable with in her short life. We offered her toys, stuffed animals, interesting food items, and constant companionship but none of these made any impression on Buttercup. It was time to let her out into the pasture and hope she and one of the other farmed animals would get to know each other.

This would not be so easy. On her first day out when approached by an elderly

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donkey, Buttercup froze in place, stood rock still, and would barely breathe while the donkey sniffed and nuzzled her soft coat. She knew if she remained motionless he would eventually leave, which he did. Later that same day one of the rambunctious pygmy goats came bounding up. He pounced and bounced and bleated out a welcoming hello but the calf only stared out into space, once again hoping this newest visitor would please go away and leave her alone. In no time the tiny goat had given up; he found more engaging activities with the other goats.

Day two was another challenge for the calf. We let one of the resident cows into her pasture, a young bull who had been with us for a year. He was quick to stride over to the female calf, rub his large, black nose on the top of her head and send her bolting back to her shelter where she remained for the rest of the day. Almost everyone, with the exception of the elderly sheep, had come forward to greet Buttercup but she had chosen not to make a friend of any of these.

Life did not look rosy for Buttercup; she had been sent off to this strange place with all these strange, new animals and new people and she just could not seem to fit in. It was my hope that she simply needed more time. After three more days of encounters similar to those earlier in the week Buttercup seemed to give up. She spent each day in her shelter, munching on hay, alfalfa and oat treats until nightfall when she would step outside and fall asleep alone with the dark, star-filled sky overhead.

The following day her food was untouched and she could not be found in or near her shelter or anywhere in the upper pasture, I worried she had managed to get stuck somewhere and could not get free or had simply become lost in her new surroundings. The pasture was several acres and there were only a few areas where she could have wandered in amongst the oak trees and decided to stay put. But she was nowhere in the stands of live oaks; she was nowhere along the side fence lines or in the tall grass. It was time to explore the very back of the grassy terrain, which was a particularly peaceful spot. There was shade from the warm sun, the hackberry trees provided shelter from the wind, and the grass was dense and soft where a spring ran underground.

This was a preferred place of an elderly female sheep who had come to WRR after losing her entire herd to disease. She had miraculously survived but life held little for her after such a devastating loss. She kept to herself and seemed to be at peace here in this part of the pasture. On this sunny, summer day the old sheep did not even seem to mind that her solitude had been invaded by a lonely, frightened calf. When I found her there, Buttercup did not move. She did not run but only raised her soft, brown head, looked into my eyes, nuzzled her new companion and fell asleep.

From that day on Buttercup and the old sheep were friends. Where you found one, you would surely find the other. They ate, sunbathed, and slept together for an entire year. On the day when the elderly sheep died, Buttercup was there, standing by, vigilant, loving, ever faithful to the one friend who, when she was lost and afraid, accepted her and helped her accept her new life at WRR.
Reuniting Families

In early April a violent thunderstorm passed through Bulverde. The strong winds and rain knocked a nest with a baby owl in it from a tree over someone’s home. The following day the resident found the owlet perched alone on top of her house and immediately knew he didn’t belong there, so she contacted WRR.

We advised that she create a makeshift nest using a box lined with bedding and secure the box high enough in a tree so the owlet would be safely out of reach of other animals and humans. This would allow the parents to find the youngster and continue caring for him.

The resident was more than happy to do anything necessary to reunite the owlet with his parents. WRR sent a volunteer to her home to help and they placed him in the secured nest high up in the tree. To make sure the nestling was safe, and to ensure his parents had come back, the dedicated rescuer set up a camera to keep watch. After a couple of days of closely monitoring the nest, she was ecstatic to capture the parents returning to care for the nestling, which she recorded on video and shared with us.

During this time of year stories like this one provide an important lesson for us all. If you find a fallen baby bird or other animal in need, there are usually steps you can take to ensure they are able to continue their life in the wild as nature intended. By helping a young animal, you will likely have the unique opportunity to witness the devotion wild parents have towards their young and help reunite wildlife families.

Clockwise: Owlet stranded on roof; makeshift box-nest placed in tree with owlet inside; owl parents return and find owlet.

Mothers are often the first to be recognized when it comes to raising kids, but let’s not forget to give fathers credit where credit is due.

In honor of Father’s Day, celebrate the outstanding animal dads who go to great lengths for their young, whether it’s protecting them from threats, keeping them warm and fed, or socializing them through play.

To show appreciation and love for everything fathers do, give him a very special gift of one of our Wild Animal Sponsorships.

Learn more about sponsoring a wild animal today at www.wildlife-rescue.org/support/sponsor-a-wild-animal/.

Celebrate Father’s Day!
Sunday, June 21
Over seventy individuals participated in our annual Enrichment Supply Drive. During the week-long effort, we asked for donations of toys, feeders, assorted supply items, and funds to assist us in providing physically and mentally stimulating items for the wildlife who live at the sanctuary.

As always, you met our expectations with generous responses. We received over $5,000 in monetary and in-kind donations. In comparison to 2019’s Drive, we more than quadrupled the monetary donations and significantly increased the value of enrichment items. We are immensely grateful for all of the support we received. These gifts were put to immediate use and the animals are already benefiting from your compassionate gestures.

Although the Drive has ended, enrichment items are essential to the well-being of wildlife in sanctuary. So if you weren’t able to participate but would still like to help, please visit www.wildlife-rescue.org/support/wish-list/.

Be sure to follow us on social media for pictures and videos of the animals using the donated items.
Hawk Rescue

As members of WRR you often hear of the work we do rescuing wild animals who are found ill, orphaned or injured. Every year there are more of these animals, many living in urban settings, who need our help. As you know our rescue efforts also extend well beyond the bounds of San Antonio as we are often called to assist animals in the Texas Hill Country.

There are an abundance of lakes, ponds, creeks and other areas that are ideal habitat for wildlife scattered throughout the counties that are contiguous to San Antonio. Unfortunately for the wildlife who have long called these natural areas home, these are seen as recreational sites for thousands of people.

It was over a beautiful river where a red-tailed hawk was found hanging, tangled in fishing line. It was his good fortune that he was found by John Pace, a WRR volunteer. John knew exactly what to do. He contacted the sanctuary and in no time, Leon Ruttley, WRR’s Rescue Coordinator, and John worked to pull together all the necessary equipment to rescue the stranded hawk. John returned to the river, saws and small boat in tow, made his way out to the hawk, trimmed the necessary limbs to liberate the bird and brought him safely in to our wildlife hospital for treatment. The bird spent some weeks under our care and on the day he was able to be set free, John took him back to the river and let him go.

Monofilament line is often death to wildlife; everyone from turtles to ducks, geese, deer, songbirds, and raptors are found tangled in this thin, strong, nearly invisible strand struggling to survive. Most waterways are used for fishing and where there is fishing you will find this life-threatening line carelessly discarded just waiting for someone to get tangled in it. WRR receives hundreds of calls every year from people who have found a wild animal entangled in fishing line. Many lose limbs, some lose their lives and others, like this hawk, are fortunate and find the help they need at WRR.

Top left: Hawk tangled in fishing line found by WRR volunteer John Pace and brought in for rehab. Bottom left: John releases hawk. Right: hawk taking flight.

Midnight to Midnight
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

24-Hour
#BigGive2020!

Donate to WRR to benefit and protect wildlife
Give during the special time slots to enhance your gift
THEBIGGIVESA.ORG

Photographs by John Pace: Page 7.
A Wildlife & Conservation Education Club for Ages 8-12
Members explore different topics and activities ranging from wildlife rehabilitation to natural history, advocacy, and environmental protection with volunteer opportunities each month.

**Upcoming Exploration Sessions**
- June 24: Wildlife in Your Backyard
- July 15: Where is Nature?

**Upcoming Volunteer Trainings**
- WRR Sherman Animal Care Complex, San Antonio
- or WRR Sanctuary, Kendalia

- **Saturday, July 11, 10 am–12 pm**
  - Introductory Orientation in San Antonio

- **Saturday, July 18, 10:30 am–12:30 pm**
  - Introductory Orientation in Kendalia

- **Saturday, August 1, 10 am–12 pm**
  - Introductory Orientation in San Antonio

Register today for Young Friends events or Volunteer Trainings

www.wildlife-rescue.org/services/wildlife-education/ • (830) 336-2725

or www.wildlife-rescue.org/get-involved/volunteer/