

WildLife Rescue News

WILDLIFE-RESCUE.ORG / Fall 2020



Dear Members,

Since squirrels have been in the local news lately, I thought it fitting to send you a re-write of a favorite story of mine and one that many of you have also claimed as a favorite.

Over the years I have seen that it is all too easy to take animals for granted. Those of us who are fortunate to live in the company of dogs and cats see them every day; we feed them, brush them, take them to the vet, fuss at them when they annoy us and love having them in our lives.

On a larger scale, our society views animals as voiceless, emotionless creatures living their lives with an utter lack of non-instinctual desire, needs, or reason. I have often wondered what would happen if one day everyone decided to spend one week of their life quietly observing a backyard full of birds, or followed their beloved companion animal about doing as the animal does, walking, scratching, sniffing, napping...simply being. Or really getting to know a cow or sheep or a chicken. Perhaps ancient,

now sleeping sensitivities would once again awaken in us. I firmly believe our lives would be enhanced by that experience. If we were keen observers, what would we see? How would we label what our eyes and hearts took in? Would we become uncomfortable if we noticed similarities between the animals' behavior and our own? We are, after all, members of the animal kingdom. I imagine that if we were wise enough to draw parallels between human

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OUR MISSION

To rescue, rehabilitate, and release native wildlife, and to provide sanctuary, individualized care, and a voice for other animals in need.

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Founder/President

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Donate today at
Wildlife-Rescue.org

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Lynn's Letter

and non-human animal behavior there would be less "managing," killing, and exploiting animals. Perhaps we would stop believing it is acceptable to "break" horses, "manage" herds, and factory "farm" cows.

I was trying my best to explain this point of view to a gentleman who called Wildlife Rescue last month. He called us because he wanted WRR to send someone out to remove every squirrel that lived or even traveled through his neighborhood. It is a small area, he told me, so why not just come out, set several traps and catch the "little rodents," as he liked to refer to them. He told me how he dearly loved to sit and watch the birds come to his feeders; they gave him such joy and are so beautiful to watch, he explained. I asked him if he could imagine seeing the same beauty and finding the same joy in the squirrels. "Absolutely not!" was his adamant response. "These squirrels are nothing but a nuisance!" He was quite clear—he wanted them removed and he expected us to do as he asked.

At WRR we do our best to help every caller in some way or another. It is not uncommon that our way of helping is to attempt to educate. I cannot tell you how many times over the past 40+ years we have encountered callers who simply do not want to be

educated; this gentleman was one of those.

Wildlife Rescue does not believe it is in any healthy, wild animal's best interest to be removed from the area they call home. We do not believe in live-trapping urban wild animals and taking them away from known food sources, family members, and a comfortable, familiar life simply because we have decided that they are a "nuisance." So, when someone calls and asks us to remove every squirrel in the neighborhood, we feel it is time to educate, even though we are often confronted with an unwilling "student."



We were particularly concerned with this situation because we knew that mother squirrels were already setting up housekeeping and babies were not far behind, if in fact not already on the scene. I did everything I could to convince our caller to leave the squirrels alone; I told him to take a close look at their endearing faces, to watch them at play, to get to know them. I knew anyone who loved birds surely could be a squirrel convert as well. But our caller would have none of it. He threatened to put out poison, to shoot the squirrels, to set up steel

jaw traps in his trees. I kept talking, buying time with every conversation. Little did I know things were going to get stickier before they got better.

Why is it that the rain and wind so often come just when you don't need them, or at least when you think you don't need them. Two or three days passed and our gentleman friend had not called. I had not called him because with the rain and wind, babies were starting to come in at the sanctuary, and as you might have guessed they were almost all squirrel babies. I hated to think what was going on in our caller's neighborhood if he had made good on even one of his threats. I decided to gather up my courage and call him. As "luck" would have it, just the night before the wind had brought down a mother squirrel's nest, babies and all right in his backyard. I anxiously inquired about the babies, half-holding my breath. He did not mince words; he had them and he was going to kill them, all four of them. I told him to please just set them outside, their mother would come and get them; if she did not then we would send someone over and pick them up. "No ma'am," was his reply, if he could not get rid of all the squirrels, at least he could get rid of these four babies. I could not talk fast enough or say anything to convince him. I tried to appeal to his sympathy for the innocent pink babies, but he only slammed the phone



Mother Fox squirrel returns her babies to the old oak after a strong wind brought down the nest.

down. Fortunately, we ask for the address of every caller, so we knew how to find our friend and hopefully we could get to his house in time to save the squirrels.

When our volunteer arrived, he could get no response; no one answered the door and he could find no trace of a nest nor could he find any neighbors who knew of the caller's whereabouts. I felt sure that we had failed; not only had we not educated, we had alienated someone and ultimately had lost the lives of four animals. I could feel little other than pity for this unknown man; he seemed so sad. Why do we tend to choose one species instead of seeing the beauty in all of them?

I waited until the next day around noon then decided it was worth one more try. I had all my speeches ready; I knew just what I was going to say when he answered the phone. I was ready to be as accommodating as I could to talk him into letting

those babies live. The phone rang three times before he answered. I apologized for bothering him but asked if there was some way we could possibly get the four baby squirrels. His reply was brief and to the point as always. "You are too late, I have already taken care of the problem." I asked him what he had done. "Well, I put them outside like you told me to!" Suddenly his voice softened, "And you will not believe what happened!" Our gentleman caller went on and on. "That mother squirrel came down out of that big old oak tree and sniffed around; she ran back up the tree when I tried to go near her, so I let her be. She came back in only a few minutes, sniffed some more, grabbed one of those tiny, tiny babies in her mouth, and up the tree she took off like a shot. I couldn't believe how fast she could run with that baby in her mouth. And you know she came back for

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each one of those babies. I have never seen anything like it in my life. I always thought squirrels were just dirty rodents. I have never seen anything like this in my life," he repeated. He went on and on about how the mother looked thin and so he decided to set up a squirrel feeder. He talked about how she had quite a job ahead of her raising a family of four all by



herself. So he thought that he should help out in any way he could. We talked about what squirrels like to eat and how soon the babies would leave their nest and how he could look forward to watching them grow up right there in his backyard. There was no more discussion of traps, of poison, no thought of harming or killing; just a simple, important revelation and appreciation of life in all the amazing, beautiful forms it takes. Thanks to that beauty, somewhere in San Antonio there is a small, quiet, tree-studded neighborhood where the natural devotion of a mother squirrel opened the eyes of an elderly gentleman who now sits quietly watching her care for her young.

Lynn

Arnold and Irene Kocurek Foundation

Arnold Kocurek and Irene Bucek met while attending the University of Texas in the 1930s. After graduation Arnold moved to San Antonio where he and his brother became businessmen during the depression. Irene returned to Hallettsville and became a school teacher. A year later they were married and he continued in investment banking and financial planning gaining a local and national reputation.

The Kocureks eventually retired to the country in Medina County surrounded by nature and beauty. They established the Kocurek Foundation in 1986 to help the community they loved. As parents of three children with special needs they understood the lack of services for many in need in San Antonio and Texas. Because of this they supported educational and religious organizations helping the disadvantaged.



As the population of San Antonio and surrounding areas exploded in 2000, they saw the loss of habitat happening at an alarming rate. Determined to do something, they found that Wildlife Rescue was the only group whose mission it was to rescue and protect wildlife. They began making contributions to WRR and still do so to this day even though Arnold and Irene are no longer with us. Their legacy of helping those that help others will continue to honor their memory.



Scientists Find That Fish Feel Pain

The idea that fish suffer runs counter to almost everything Americans have been taught about them: that their brains are not complex enough to experience pain; that their behaviors when stressed — such as wriggling violently on a hook or desperately gasping for air —



are just unconscious reactions, disconnected from the suffering of sentient beings; that they are essentially unfeeling creatures that don't deserve animal welfare protections.

In recent years, ichthyologists and biologists have been pushing back on our antiquated perceptions of fish pain through scientific research. Some have argued that fish and other aquatic species meet the criteria

for sentience, including the ability to experience positive and negative emotions.

Researchers at the University of Guelph in Canada concluded that fish feel fear when they're chased and that their behavior is more than simply a reflex. The "fish are frightened and ... they prefer not being frightened," said Dr. Duncan, who headed the study.

In a 2014 report, the Farm Animal Welfare Committee (FAWC), an advisory body to the British government, stated, "Fish are able to detect and respond to noxious stimuli, and FAWC supports the increasing scientific consensus that they experience pain."

Dr. Culum Brown of Macquarie University, who reviewed nearly 200 research papers on fish's cognitive abilities and sensory perceptions, believes that the stress that fish experience when they're pulled from the water into an environment in which they cannot breathe may even exceed that of a human

drowning. "[U]nlike drowning in humans, where we die in about 4–5 minutes because we can't extract any oxygen from water, fish can go on for much longer. It's a prolonged slow death most of the time," he says.

Though it may still come as a surprise to some people that fish feel pain, for those who believe that animals are not ours to use in ways that harm their vital interests, this new research only further validates these values. Like a person, like a kitten, like a pig...fish wish to continue living and without avoidable pain.



We at Wildlife Rescue believe that the gathering evidence of fish consciousness is strong enough that we should take it seriously, and as with other wild animals think about the ways our actions impinge on their lives.

Photography by Jay Kazen: Emu on p4; wolf, artwork, fox on p6; deer on p7. www.jaykazen.com.

MARK YOUR Calendar!

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*Events will be held online
unless otherwise noted. More
information at [www.wildlife-
rescue.org/get-involved/
speialevents/](http://www.wildlife-rescue.org/get-involved/speialevents/)
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~ September 25-October 2~
Food Drive

~November 30-December 3~
Ten Thousand Villages

*Not an online event



~ December 1 ~
#Giving Tuesday

~ December 5 ~
Artistic Animals



~ December 11-17 ~
Holiday Giving Drive

~ December 18 ~
Living with Urban Wildlife



During the month of July, Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation introduced a new online event, *Story Time with Lynn*, to our members. The event was a four-part interactive series where Founder/President, Lynn Cuny, read excerpts from her two books “*Through Animals’ Eyes*” and “*Through Animals’ Eyes, Again.*”

During the month-long event, Lynn engaged with over 100 members to personally share four stories of her experiences during the past forty-three years of WRR’s existence. The heartwarming tales included a time when Lynn’s persistence and dedication would not let her give up on saving squirrels, when Lynn rescued and rehabilitated a female fox and found out her mate never stopped waiting for her, and when an owlet’s parents did everything they could to reunite with their young. After each reading, Lynn answered participants’ questions regarding the story, wildlife, rescue successes, and plans for WRR’s future.

This event was a huge success for participants and allowed Lynn, Jessica Neidhart, Donor Engagement Manager, and Philip Hadley, Communications and Development Manager, to interact and engage with members during a time when social distancing is encouraged. Even though we couldn’t be together in-person, we were still able to enjoy the company of one another using video conferencing.



If you wanted to attend *Story Time with Lynn*, but were not able to do so or want to re-watch the series, visit www.tinyurl.com/WRRStories to listen to Lynn’s rescue stories.

To Our Volunteers: We Thank You



August Volunteer, Molly Hartshorn

“As a child, I lived in a rural area of Pennsylvania at a time when it was safer for children—and animals—to roam outdoors. After forty-eight years as an urban medical administrator, I’ve switched from helping people to helping animals, some of the same that I saw in the fields and woods many years ago.



September Volunteer, Ashley Sells

“I have loved volunteering at WRR since 2014, the year I retired. I have a BS in Zoology and hoped, in my younger days, to do primate behavioral research, but life intervened to take me in a different direction. Since retirement, I’ve been thrilled to work with native wildlife ‘hands-on’ and am especially gratified that WRR can return so many animals to their wild environs to live their natural wild lives.

YOUNG FRIENDS of WILDLIFE RESCUE

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.

*Upcoming Exploration Sessions

September 16
Why Do Animals Matter?

October 14
Sanctuary Permanent Residents

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*Young Friends of Wildlife Rescue Club exploration sessions will be prerecorded and delivered to members in an e-mail that includes a link to a private WRR YouTube video. Each topic will be accompanied by two enrichment project opportunities. Contact Robert Burns, Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator at rburns@wildlife-rescue.org for more information.

Volunteer Update



We appreciate your interest in volunteering with Wildlife Rescue. Unfortunately, we have suspended all new volunteer orientations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are taking this precaution

to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our staff and the animals who depend on them. If you are interested in volunteering remotely or would like more information, please email Robert Burns, WRR Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator: rburns@wildlife-rescue.org. He can help you find opportunities to get involved that allow you to maintain social distancing.



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Food Drive
Donations
September 25 - October 2
*Donate food items or make a contribution
All gifts go directly to the animals.*

You can help with this year's Food Drive!

HOW TO DONATE

Drop Off

San Antonio: 8 am-8 pm
Sherman Animal Care Complex
1354 Basse Rd, 78212

Kendalia: 8 am-8 pm
WRR Sanctuary
335 Old Blanco Rd, 78027

Call In

Spring Branch Strutty's Feed & Pet
830-438-8998
Call in your order to Spring Branch and Wildlife Rescue will pick it up!

Online

Wildlife-Rescue.org
Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation
PO Box 369, Kendalia, TX 78027
(830) 336-2725
events@wildlife-rescue.org

ITEMS NEEDED

Wrangler All Stock Pellets 12% and Basix Monkey

Chow: These supplement the diets of our farmed animals: goats, sheep, pigs and others love these pellets. The monkey chow is given as a supplement to all the primates in our care.

Layer Crumbles: These feed more than 67 resident chickens, ducks, and geese.

Fawn Pellets: These are special-ordered by Spring Branch Strutty's Feed & Pet. This year, the sanctuary has received hundreds of orphaned fawns and spent thousands on specialized infant fawn formula. As the fawns grow and are able to feed themselves these fawn pellets are vital to their diet.

Wild Bird Seed & Hen Scratch

The flocks of rescued chickens always need premium hen scratch and all the wild birds in rehabilitation consume tons of wild bird seed every year.

Used towels and sheets are helpful too!