

The Wild Times

A newsletter from Wild Things Sanctuary, Inc. • Winter 2020

Happy Holidays from Wild Things Sanctuary!

Happy Holidays to one and all! It's been a challenging year for everyone, and I hope that this finds you all safe and well. It almost feels silly or inconsiderate putting together a newsletter about the trials and tribulations of Wild Things Sanctuary when I know so many folks out there have had a year full of struggles. It's my hope that some of the happy stories of the little patients here will help lift you up and help your spirits fly.

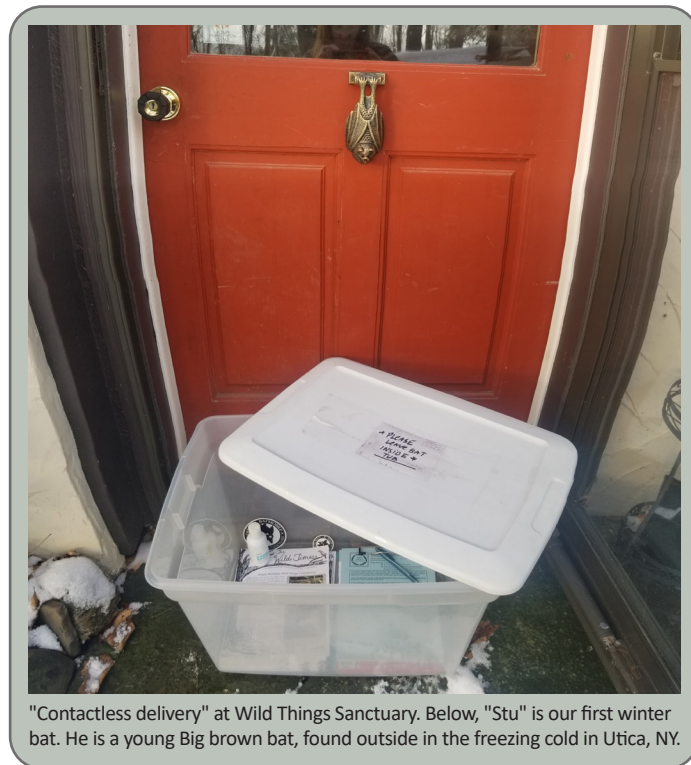
Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Wild Things was faced with a big challenge this year to keep bats safe—and part of that was helping spread correct information after these little mammals were one of the first scapegoats when the pandemic started.

I'll talk a bit more about this on the next page, but in short, there was no reason to fear the bats in our neighborhoods. However, scientists did have a big worry: could humans give bats COVID-19? Might this be the disease that pushes declining bat populations over the edge? As more cases were reported of pets and other animals getting COVID-19, and knowing that bats have to be one of the worst species at social distancing, the fear became real. What were we going to do?

The New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) put together a kind of bat task force to discuss how to move forward. Bat biologists across North America were being advised to discontinue field work and many states decided to stop bat rehabilitation. I am grateful that the NYSDEC agreed with me that by banning intake of bats in trouble, it meant that it would put both bats and people

at risk—people might be exposed to rabies, and bats might be exposed to COVID-19, or cared for by untrained, well-meaning members of the public. So, Wild Things Sanctuary had permission to stay open, but we were not permitted to release any patients until it was determined that they had not been exposed to the virus.

This was great news, but it meant that the 98 bats I had by the end of winter had to stay here until summer when I got the OK to release—many of



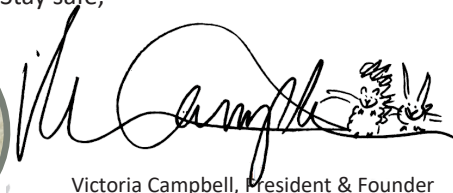
"Contactless delivery" at Wild Things Sanctuary. Below, "Stu" is our first winter bat. He is a young Big brown bat, found outside in the freezing cold in Utica, NY.

whom were pregnant females who ended up having their pups here, and many had twins. This translated into a LOT of bats!! And the waiting line to get into the flight cage for practice meant that many orphan pups didn't get enough flight time, so they are overwintering here. At present, Wild Things is hosting about triple the number we usually have at this time of year.

My responsibilities to the bat patients also meant that I had to almost completely shut down volunteer animal helpers, so more bats and less help. I was grateful to be on the front lines to help animals, but as you can imagine, there were times this year that felt pretty overwhelming! But thanks to the support and kind words from so many people like all of you receiving this newsletter, we got through.

So, onward to 2021! Stay safe,




Victoria Campbell, President & Founder

A Quick Overview: COVID-19 & Bats

All animals, humans and bats included, harbor viruses, many of which have evolved within a particular species and do not cause those animals to get sick. Some bats have coronaviruses, and humans do as well, as do other animals. Researchers have found that a coronavirus like the one infecting humans as COVID-19 is found in a bat species, but it's still not similar enough to infect humans. Recent research indicates that, all being equal, the number of human-infecting viruses in bats is similar to those found in other mammals (Mollentze and Streicker, 2020).

Danger arises when viruses jump from one species to another, as the new species may not have developed an immune response to this new-to-them virus. This kind of "spillover" event is historically rare, but there's a good chance that increased human activity and populations will create more chances for spillovers to occur. How? In two main ways:

1) When humans bring species together in markets or encroach on wildlife habitat, there is a greater chance for cross-species transmission of viruses.

2) Habitat disturbance can stress animals, potentially making them more susceptible to viruses and/or produce viruses in greater numbers.

This means that the best way to keep people safe is to respect wildlife and their natural habitats. Are we up to that challenge? I hope so!

For a list of references about bats, viruses and COVID-19, see www.bats911.org.

QUIZ: Bats & Your Health

Where did COVID-19 come from?



A. Bats



B. Not sure



C. A lab

Who's more likely to make you sick?



A. A bat



B. A rodent



C. A pre-schooler

What's the most dangerous animal?



A. An angry bat



B. A shark



C. A mosquito

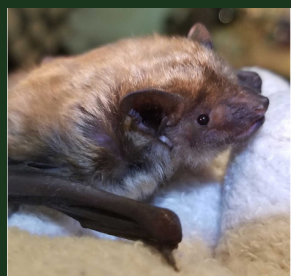
Illustrations by Virginia Greene.

Answers: B, C, C

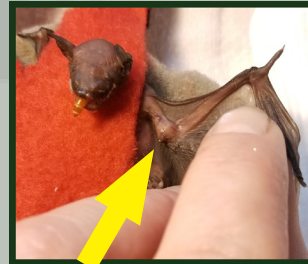
Feel Good Stories 2020



Roxy arrived at WTS at five weeks old with severe metabolic bone disease (top row). She had been found as a newborn and didn't receive the care she needed, resulting in deformed bones and other issues. Thankfully, with proper care, a lot of the deformities almost completely resolved and she is able to fly. Bottom row photos taken in November, almost four months after arrival.



Lucky Z almost had his head bitten off by a cat, but has been restored to full fluffy cuteness! In the flight cage, he always roosted with all the orphans, so became like a WTS big brother.



PeeWee arrived at 3.2 grams with a badly broken wing at the elbow. I took a chance that baby bones heal well, designed a mini restraining device, made a special cast to accommodate growing bones, and look at him now!



Nardi was a super tiny newborn Big brown bat orphan: 3.03 grams. How could he survive? Well, he showed us that he wasn't going to let his diminutive size stop him! (Baby photo shows him curled up on his back).



Your year-end gift makes a BIG difference to Wild Things!

Wild Things Sanctuary, Inc. is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization, EIN#: 68-0573815.

All donations are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

Please send to: **Wild Things Sanctuary, Inc., P.O. Box 713, Ithaca, NY 14851**

You can also donate online at www.wildthingsanctuary.org

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____



Wheeler Dealer is a Big brown bat who was found frozen to a wall on a frigid day. The area is home to a feral cat colony and his injuries were consistent with being caught. It's amazing that he was found, and is now settled in at Wild Things Sanctuary. Thanks to supporters, he has a chance to heal!

Crafts for the Wild Things



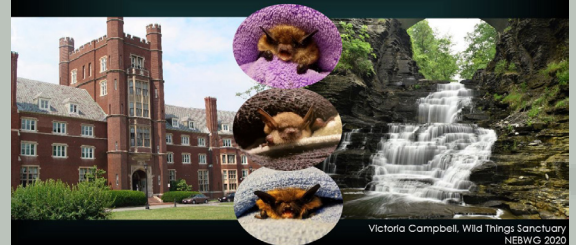
Wild Things Sanctuary received some special donations from **Trumansburg Crafting for Critters** and **Crafters & Artisans for Rescued Animals (CARA)**. We loved the tiny bat blankets designed for newborn bats. Pictured above is a week old Big brown bat (with a mealworm pacifier), just fed, and wrapped up in her blanket before being placed in an incubator. Local artist Carol Bloomgarden also made us a gorgeous set of tiny bowls—so my bat patients now have a nicer place-setting than me!

2020 Talks & Presentations

I was honored to give a presentation at this year's **Northeast Bat Working Group (NEBWG)**, a group of scientists, agencies, organizations, industry, and individuals interested in bat research, management, and conservation. Being in the Northeast, NEBWG has been an essential group following and investigating white-nose syndrome. It was the first time rehabilitators presented at the conference. I talked about the small bats of the genus *Myotis* that have been treated at Wild Things Sanctuary. Although I don't see many in a year, perhaps six at the most, apparently I still see more than are observed in other areas of New York.

It was also great to give a presentation

A Possible *Myotis* Hot-Spot in Ithaca, New York Observations From Wildlife Rehabilitation Patient Intakes



Victoria Campbell, Wild Things Sanctuary, NEBWG 2020

to Cornell's vet student **Zoo and Wildlife Society (ZAWS)**. This talk focused on wildlife rehabilitation, bats, and the creative treatments and diagnostics that accompany their care.

Finally, thanks to the **Endwell Garden Club** for hosting a fun Zoom event where I was invited to talk about bats and gardening.

Interested in a talk? Let us know, we love spreading the batty word!

Wildlife Mindfulness

Wildlife can get in trouble in all different kinds of ways. This year we took in three bat patients who got trapped in shutters (bats like roosting behind them), like the Big brown bat pictured at right. This little guy was lucky as he was spotted right away and rescued. Be mindful of keeping animals safe if your New Year's plans involve construction.



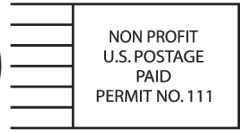
Award-Winning Documentary

Congratulations to Ithaca College students Becca Hetzel, Edie McRoberts, and Mia Thorne for their documentary, *Wild Things*. The short film won Best Documentary at the Ithaca Student Film Festival (and Audience Favorite), out of more than 100 entries. It follows the rescue of a Big brown bat patient found in a snap mousetrap with a broken wing. As of press time, the patient is flying again. I hope to release her in 2021.





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Address Service Requested


Mission Statement

Wild Things Sanctuary, Inc. (WTS) is dedicated to helping native wildlife through rescuing and rehabilitating debilitated and orphaned/displaced animals until they are ready for release back into the wild.

WTS is also committed to improving the well-being of wildlife through public education, focusing on how humans can safely and peacefully coexist with native wildlife, and on wildlife's importance to man and the environment.

WTS specializes in caring for native bats, a beneficial group of animals in desperate need of care as numbers continue to decline due to disease and misunderstanding.

 Keep up with us on Facebook, www.wildthingsanctuary.org, or www.bats911.org

 This newsletter is printed on recycled paper. Enjoy and share!

Small Animal Rescue: UPDATE

Wild Things Sanctuary
Published by VM Campbell [?] · November 18, 2019 · 🌐

RESCUE911: Please call the Tompkins County SPCA if you can help: 6072571822. Hundreds of rats, guinea pigs, mice and gerbils were dumped in the woods near Ithaca, NY. Many have died but about 230 have been rescued so far: 170+ rats, 32 guinea pigs, 21 mice, 12 gerbils. The SPCA doesn't have nearly the housing. If anybody can help foster these little animals please call the Tompkins County SPCA: 6072571822



1,475,533 People Reached 451,622 Engagements [Boost](#)

👍👍👍 You and 7.4K others 3.9K Comments 13K



WTS was happy to help the local SPCA get the word out about hundreds of small animals dumped in the snowy woods as last year's newsletter was going to press. We reached over 1.4 million Facebook users, and all the survivors found homes! On day three, I went out with friends and we found two surviving rats. The SPCA was full so I took them home...and what happens when you get a pair of rats cuddled together to stay warm? Mom, Ruby Rose, had 11 pups with dad, Cornelius. Dad and the six boy pups were neutered and they now all live together at WTS, bringing a lot of fun and mischief every day. A very happy Year of the Rat indeed! *From top: me & Ruby Rose, Cornelius, pups at three days, six brothers.*



Illustration by Virginia Greene.

Thanks to the Wild Things Community!

Special thanks to our 2020 volunteers and batmobile drivers: A. DeLorm; J. Fan; M. Fishman; L. Garner; R. Guttridge; H. Hauck de Oliveira; A. Kelly; L. Lassiter; S. Kowalczyk; P. Leonard; A. Michaelson; C. Mosher; A. Palmer; V. Perez; C. Persons; L. Richter; A. Roy; J. Safran; N. Smith; A. Venuti; D. Wilkinson. Hope I remembered everyone!

Our wonderful veterinarians: B. Barry; B. Collins; E. Davies; L. Donato & Radnor staff; J. Morrisey; the team at the Cornell Animal Diagnostic Center; staff at the Cornerstone Veterinary Clinic.

Also: S. Stronsick at the Pennsylvania Bat Rescue; Wildlife Resolutions; the Tompkins County Health Department; C. Herzog at the NYSDEC; D. Wohlgemuth at Wildlife Wishing Well; T. Volke at The Nature's Way; L. Bowen; J. Hermanson; G. Whitman; colleagues at my Cornell University "day" job for supporting my work with WTS.