



May 2020 Issue no 76

The Rehabilitator

B W R C N E W S L E T T E R

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BWRC Symposium 2020 – call for presentations



A Word from the Chair

Welcome to the May 2020 edition of The Rehabilitator! In this edition of The Rehabilitator we have more proceedings from our Autumn 2019 Symposium and advice from a bat rehabilitator.

As promised in our March edition we have now set up a members-only Facebook group through which you can communicate with BWRC trustees and each other to share advice and moral support – if you visit our page and look for groups you should be able to request to join – please do contact me via bwrcouncil@gmail.com if you have any difficulties.

A provisional date of 21st November has been set for Symposium 2020 at Writtle University College in Essex. Obviously at this stage we don't quite know how this event will look, but we will obviously follow government advice and either make use of video conferencing technology or postpone by a month or two. In the meantime, if you would like to contribute to the event by giving a presentation or workshop event please get in touch!

In the last edition we explained new changes to individual membership benefits (including a new logo for individual members to use) and I have written to all current members about this. We also introduced a new type of membership for organisations and are delighted to have already signed up our first Associate Organisation Members! See page 16 for details.



It is with sorrow that we report the passing of Dorothy Beeson MBE, BEM, founder of The Swan Sanctuary, peacefully at home with her family on 1st May 2020 after a battle with cancer and COPD.

As with many now established rescue organisations, Dorothy began rescuing swans in her back garden in the 1980's. The Sanctuary moved to a disused allotment site and then on to its current location where construction was completed in 2010. Dot's work was recognised through long list of accolades including, BEM, MBE, the IFAW Animal Action Award, the RSPCA's Lord Erskine Award and most recently the Queen's Award for Voluntary Services presented last summer at the Sanctuary by Her Royal Highness Princess Alexander of Kent.



Dot shows off her MBE medal to some of her patients!

Photo – The Swan Sanctuary

Dot is survived by children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and will be sorely missed by the wildlife rehabilitation community.

BWRC has prepared a guidance document for wildlife rehabilitators in response to the COVID-19 pandemic which we hope might help now and in similar situations in future – if you have information or advice to add please contact us by e-mail.

Even though we are now thought to have passed the peak infection rate for the UK pandemic we urge everyone to put their own safety first, remember that most face masks offer very little protection from infection, and please do not drop your guard – it only takes one encounter with an infected person.

If you have research, experience or concerns to share, please do write in to BWRC at bwrcouncil@gmail.com or by post to PO Box 8686, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 0AG. Stay safe!

*Terri Amory,
Editor & Chair, BWRC*

Cover photo – adult boar badger killed on an Essex road in Autumn 2019.
Terri Amory



BWRC Advice on Wildlife Rehabilitation Protocols in case of Human Disease Epidemic.

(prepared in response to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic).

This advice is specifically for those working in wildlife rescue and rehabilitation in the UK and is based on experiences of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic to date (31st March 2020). It may be updated as more information is available and is also intended to act as a reference for planning mitigation measures for potential future human disease epidemics which cause similar societal disruption.

Contents:

- General advice regarding COVID-19
- Staff and volunteer management
- Fundraising and public events
- Stocking and sourcing of everyday supplies
- Receipt of animal casualties from the public/ external sources
- Rescue/ collection of animal casualties
- Capacity and release of animals
- Veterinary consultations

Available from our website - www.bwrc.org.uk



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“Life in the fast lane - British wildlife and roadkill risk”

PROJECT SPLATTER

Presented at BWRC Symposium 2019
in collaboration with Wild Things Rescue

Saturday 16th November at Nottingham Trent University, Brackenhurst Campus. Kindly Sponsored by RSPCA & Nottingham Trent University.
Reported by Terri Amory

The final presentation for the morning was given by Dr Sarah Perkins, Senior Lecturer from the School of Biosciences at Cardiff University. A wildlife biologist originally focusing on infectious diseases in wildlife, Sarah’s increasing fascination with social media led her to involve citizen science in her work, culminating recently in a project with collaborators and a team of research assistants at Cardiff to study the incidence and causes of wildlife deaths on roads charmingly titled “Project Splatter”.

One-fifth of the earth’s terrestrial surface is within 1km of a road, and people report seeing dead wildlife more often than live animals. Historical estimates suggest that wildlife roadkill numbers have increased over the last four

decades alongside the road network and vehicle numbers. Project Splatter (“Social Media Platform for Estimated Roadkill”) was set up to fill the void of data on wildlife roadkill through citizen science – members of the public report roadkill sightings via the Project Splatter website, Twitter, Facebook or the smartphone app (look for the logo on the right here in app stores). The project has generated more than 67,000 records since 2013; it is likely that this represents millions of wild animal deaths. Weekly #roadkillreports are published on their website.



The purpose of this work is to provide evidence of when, where and why roadkill occurs and develop measures to reduce the rates. Of the 42 mammal species reported in the study, badgers are the most frequent (28%) followed by rabbit (21%), fox (18%) and hedgehog (16%). While some species show seasonal peaks in fatalities (for example badger road deaths peak in March) others such as foxes are killed at about the same rate all year round.

For birds the pheasant outnumbers other species by a long way – representing 59% of birds reported, compared with the runner up woodpigeon reported in 19% of bird cases. Birds also show seasonal patterns – for example deaths of gulls, woodpigeons and magpies all rise sharply in the summer months. Not surprisingly, geographical ‘hotspots’ in roadkill numbers reflect local abundance of animals and density of roads (for all species except gull and rabbits), and pheasant fatalities are lower in urban areas. Motorways have the highest relative roadkill rates.

A ‘Local Authority Roads (Wildlife Protection) Bill placing a duty on local highways agencies and transport authorities to make provisions safeguarding wildlife on roads in specified areas was put before parliament but this was discontinued in 2017. A new road sign featuring the silhouette of a hedgehog was launched in



Small mammal warning road sign launched summer 2019.

2019 to warn drivers about the presence of small mammals on roads. However, the AA report that “Only 40% of drivers slow down and drive more vigilantly when they see a warning sign.” (<https://youtalk-insurance.com/broker-news/57-of-drivers-take-action-to-avoid-wild-animal-collisions-aa-study-finds>). Project Splatter staff are considering whether a smartphone app that warns drivers of small mammal ‘black-spots’ might help.



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AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS

Presented at BWRC Symposium 2019
in collaboration with Wild Things Rescue

The afternoon session of the symposium involved three 45minute workshops...

Liz' Big Badger Quiz!

After lunch three longer workshop sessions began with "Liz' Big Badger Quiz" – an innovative way to consider decision making in badger rescue with chocolate prizes for the winners! Scientific Advisor to Secret World Wildlife Rescue, Liz Mullineaux, posed questions covering human health and safety during the rescue process, key first aid measures, common injuries and their treatment, rearing of cubs, requirements for TB testing and suitable release sites based on the updated Badger Rehabilitation Protocol published by DEFRA and partners in 2018 (<https://bit.ly/3b5M7IZ>).

Principles of effective trustee governance.

The second workshop was delivered by Catriona Wheeler, a Solicitor from Andrew & Co. LPP based in Lincoln. Catriona began by highlighting recent examples of third sector scandal in the news headlines – such as the suicide of 92 year-old Olive Cooke who was overwhelmed by donation requests from charities, sales of personal data by charities to third parties, excessive rates of pay for chief executives, the financial collapse of the charity Kids Company amid allegations of misuse of public funds and sexual abuse. With the not-for-profit sector coming under fire from the press resulting in an eight-year low

in public confidence, it is increasingly important that we all pay attention to the seven principles that form the governance code for smaller charities –

- 1) **Organisational purpose** - effective and sustainable delivery of the organisational purpose
- 2) **Leadership** - effective strategic leadership from the board of trustees
- 3) **Integrity** and transparency to promote public confidence in the charity and the sector
- 4) Decision making, **risk & control** - responsibility for decision making lies with the trustees even if an executive (staff) are making the decisions
- 5) **Effectiveness** – the board must have the appropriate range of skills and experience for the range of activities being undertaken by the charity (or should contract in expertise where necessary).
- 6) **Diversity** – are there any barriers to becoming a trustee?
- 7) **Openness and accountability** – activities should be transparent and accountable unless there is a good reason not to be.

Catriona provided a timely reminder that charity governance comes with key responsibilities and that it is important that the principles of good governance are not overlooked because everyone is busy focussing on the day to day work and short-term goals of a charity.

Recent experiences of setting up a wildlife rescue charity

The final session was an interview with Lucy Steele, veterinary nurse and founder and manager of Wild Things Rescue, a local wildlife rescue “community interest company” (CIC) set up in 2018 at Kirk Vets in Sleaford. Lucy was interviewed by BWRC Chair Terri Amory about her experiences of setting up a new wildlife rescue organisation.

Lucy has been rehabilitating on a small scale since she was young, and was driven to set up her own centre by the stream of wildlife casualties she saw euthanised in veterinary practice during her work as a veterinary nurse due to the lack of a local rehabilitation centre to pass casualties on to.

Lucy carried out some research including contacting BWRC for advice and teamed up with other interested individuals locally. She approached the Prince's Trust for help with the business management side of the project, and set up social media pages to advertise, educate the media and generate funding. Not surprisingly funding continues to be the biggest challenge for Wild Things Rescue, and Lucy advised that setting up a fundraising team should be a priority for any new venture. She also emphasised the importance of developing a good knowledge of common wildlife health problems through research before starting to take in casualties and the importance of good relations with a sympathetic veterinary service. She also stressed how important it is to be able to say no! when necessary!



Before the meeting closed the floor was opened for further questions and a lively discussion was had amongst delegates on a range of topics. BWRC made a donation to Wild Things Rescue from the symposium profits.

Chair Terri Amory interviewed founder of Wild Things Rescue Lucy Steele about her experiences of starting up in wildlife rehabilitation. (Photo - Lucy Cosgriff).

Bats and me

By Tracie Charles, Lincolnshire Bat Group

I first became interested in bats after visiting the Maldives. Every night I would go out and watch the fruit bats flying high above the skyline, landing on the fruit trees, carrying their young and looking down deep into the camera as I videoed them. My next encounter was approximately three years ago, and came from visiting Tattershall Church, where my local bat group were giving a talk on the different bats that were roosting there. Once it got dark, we used bat detectors to pick up the bats' echolocation calls as they flew around the church on their way outside to find food. It was totally fascinating and that was it, I was totally hooked and wanted to learn more about bats, and how I could be more practically involved.



Natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*)

I became a member of the Lincolnshire Bat Group <https://lincsbatgroup.co.uk> (there are approximately 80 groups across the UK), and since then have done so much including going on out bat walks, bat hibernation checks and training days learning a lot such as how to identify the different species. I'm also now classed as an ambulance driver, going out

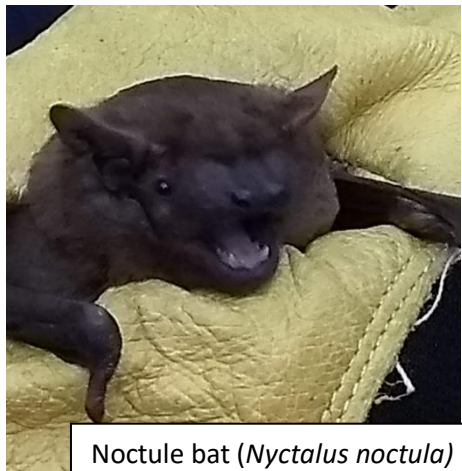
with my partner in cases where members of the public report that they have either found a grounded and/or injured bat. On most occasions we go out to collect the bat and take it over to one of our senior carers for them to assess its condition/injury. I'm keen to further expand my knowledge and have recently undertaken further training to give me more confidence in being able to handle bats and assess minor injuries when collecting.

What to do if you come across a grounded or injured bat

If you see a grounded bat, it will in most cases need help. If it is in a place of danger, i.e. where a cat could get at it, or you can see an obvious injury, the best advice is to act as quickly as you can. If you feel comfortable to approach and pick up the bat, please do so following the steps below

- Using gloves, or a cloth, carefully pick up the bat and place it into a secure, container such as a large ice cream tub or shoebox (check that there are no thumb-size holes or perforations in the box first, as bats can escape from the tiniest of holes). Put four small holes in the lid of the box for ventilation (the end of a pencil is ideal) and place some kitchen paper or tissue on the bottom of the box. A cloth can also be added to allow the bat to crawl under and feel safe if it wishes.
- A milk bottle lid or other small very shallow container filled with water should be added to allow the bat to drink, should it wish to.

You will then need to find a bat group in your local area for further advice. You can do this by searching on <https://www.bats.org.uk/support-bats/bat-groups> or ringing the National Bat Helpline on 0345 1300228.



Noctule bat (*Nyctalus noctula*)

(If you do not feel comfortable in picking up the bat, please follow the instructions above to locate either a local bat group or ring the national helpline for general advice).



New for 2020 – BWRC Associate Organisation membership

We are pleased to add to our existing individual associate membership the option of organisation level membership. This is open to any interested organisation including wildlife rescue hospitals/centres, veterinary practices, colleges and universities and others who wish to demonstrate their commitment to sharing best practice through continuing professional development by affiliating themselves with BWRC.

In order to qualify for Associate Organisation status after the first year, BWRC will require the organisation to provide evidence of engagement in external staff and/or volunteer development (i.e. outside of the organisation itself). BWRC reserves the right to withhold/ withdraw membership in the absence of adequate evidence of CPD (a minimum of one event every two years).

Organisation level membership for 2020 costs £100 per annum and the benefits of becoming an Associate Organisation include:

- Purchase unlimited membership discount rate tickets for your staff or volunteers for BWRC events
- Receive our newsletter and other bulletins via up to 10 e-mail addresses per organisation
- Permission to display our new BWRC Associate Organisation logo on your media
- Promote your events through BWRC media (subject to approval)

To download and application form and for full terms and conditions please visit www.bwrc.org.uk



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Terri Amory, Simon Allen, Janet Peto, Molly Varga, Adam Grogan, Dan Forman, Llewelyn Lowen, Lucy Bearman-Brown, Mike Brampton, Lucy Cosgriff and Chris Riddington.

BWRC would like to thank volunteer Jayne Morgan **Facebook Page**

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If you would like to submit an article or letter for publication or give a presentation at a future symposium please contact:
bwrCouncil@gmail.com

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