

Local rescue center giving care to animals

Benefit to be held for financially ailing ranch

By Jill Newsom
Emerald Contributor

Springtime is in full force at the Willamette Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Center, which means it is a busy baby season.

The center at Wayne Morse Ranch in southwest Eugene receives about three animals per day in the winter, but up to 20 daily in the summer months, said to executive director Louise Shimmel.

"It's pretty overwhelming at times," Shimmel said. "There seems to be so much to do at once."

The various rooms throughout the building are filled with tiny birds, orphaned opossums, owls, a golden eagle, a fawn that was attacked by a dog and separated from its mother, and many others.

Although 50 volunteers offer their time and efforts at the center, Shimmel said "there is

a lot of coming and going, which is frustrating" due to the training involved. She explained that the center usually has two college interns each quarter who receive upper division credit for their work.

Shimmel said she would like to be able to afford paid staff to provide continuity.

"We could invest in training for those people," she said. WWRA would also like to start a high school internship program.

Ronando Long, a student intern from the University who volunteers ten hours per week at the center, explained that many mammals are sent to licensed rehabilitators for care so volunteers can concentrate on animals which must be kept at the facility. The injured fawn was to be taken by a "rehabber" with special facilities for raising fawns, and will be fed by one or two people. The feeders will wear the



Photo by Virginia Pearce

Icarus, a golden eagle who flew into electrical wires when he was a fledgling, has lived at the center for two-and-a-half years.

same raincoat to provide recognition for the animal, and when it is accustomed to the bottle it will be fed through a fence so it

will not see humans regularly. When its injuries are healed and it is able to survive on its own, the fawn will be released.

Long said many animals are released where they were originally found.

Shimmel said the Oregon Wildlife Rehabilitation Association provides a network of about 160 rehabbers statewide, and animals are sent to the locations with similar animals when possible. Long said a license is required to care for most indigenous animals.

Local veterinarians assist the center on a regular basis by examining animals, taking x-rays, and putting animals to sleep when necessary. Shimmel said the number of volunteer veterinarians has remained steady while the animal intake has greatly increased, so a lower percentage receive a visit from the vet.

WWRR is funded entirely by donations and fundraisers, and continually suffers shortages. The center usually receives between \$100 and \$300 each month, and rent for the building \$400. Shimmel said it is difficult for her to write grants to help reduce the funding crunch, since "we spend so much time putting out immediate fires." She added it would be helpful if a student volunteer could work on a grant.

A run/walk will be held June 24 to benefit WWRR beginning at Alton Baker Park, with donated prizes to be awarded. Animal sponsorships or "adoptions" are also available. Sponsorship funds are used for food, housing, and medical services, supplies, and equipment according to the center's fall 1989 newsletter. Sponsors are issued a certificate with their animal's name.

Orientation meetings are held every Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. to help educate the public and potential volunteers. WWRR is open from 8 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. daily for animal intake, and a 24-hour hotline is available for emergencies. Shimmel also visits local schools to help educate children about wildlife.

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