

THE RESCUE RECORD

Frisky's Wildlife & Primate Sanctuary

ISSUE 43

FALL/WINTER 2021

Frisky's Surviving Covid. What an adventure!!

Dear friends of Frisky's,

I truly hope this newsletter finds you all well. Believing we have all been mentally and physically challenged in this last year and a half, I've remarked to many of you that we should start a support group... but only giving us minutes on the podium though, not really sure it would help.

First I want to personally thank all you who are not only Frisky's supporters and volunteers, but also the ones who have noticed an orphan, injured, or displaced wild animal or bird and found your way here to Frisky's Wildlife Sanctuary so it could receive rehabilitation to go back to where it belongs.

Most of you know us and what we do for wildlife rehabilitation. We fight for what we believe in, trying to help when and where we can, working from the wee hours of the AM till late hours at night. No matter how I feel personally whether its my back going out with a pinched nerve, my rotator cuff aching, my knee popping, arthritis aching my body, or even just physically and mentally tired, I will still get up in the wee hours to rotate laundry, sort out bedding, make special meals, check on each and every animal that is here and has rehabilitating need. And everything that comes in between and believe me paperwork is not just for the bathroom anymore.. Just saying.

Frisky's team in 2021 took in many more animals than the years before. We have surmised maybe because of the helpful information that can be found on the DNR website and our history. The cicadas did not make life any easier for those animals who ate too many. That is not to mention all the grackles and blue jays that succumbed to a mysterious eye disease.

And there was August Friday the 13th when hurricane winds brought down one of our 90ft trees on top of the house smashing into the main living quarters. Although there was a lot of real damage, the blessing was no animals or humans were hurt. We posted on Frisky's facebook if you want to look back on the story. Special supporters and volunteers came out to help us!! It always brings tears to our eyes to find out who our friends are and who cares and who can do amazing work! I wish I could do more for you all, than simply say "thank you" with all my heart!

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Colleen with food for the animals

**Find out what you can do to help
the many animals in need at
www.friskys.org**

The Pandemic

Eileen Sturgill

When the COVID-19 became a problem in Maryland, Frisky's went into lockdown like everyone else. Social distancing and the use of mask were required on the porch entrance. The care of wildlife could not stop. Colleen needed to continue her daily care of the animals at Frisky's. The volunteers were stopped from helping her with her many chores. Fortunately, there was a decrease in the number of animals brought in after being hit by cars. There were fewer people on the road. But there was a great increase in animals needing help. With many people staying home, it appeared they were finding more animals in distress.

Another aspect of Frisky's activities affected by the lockdown was the annual spring fund raiser. The yard sale could not be held. Fortunately Debbie Tavisano stepped in and set up an on-line auction of some of the yard sale items. Contributions were still brought in for the auction. This was very helpful in replacing much of the funds normally gotten through the yard sale. The on-auction was again held in the fall with continued success. Debbie and her helpers were much appreciated.

With the relaxing of the lockdown, volunteers have returned to Frisky's. Masks and additional precautions are still being practiced. The intake of injured or sick wildlife has returned to normal levels.



Juvenile Hawk



Groundhog



Grey Squirrel

Permanent Residents

Eileen Sturgill

Over the years, we have written a lot about the permanent residents at Frisky's. Among the reasons for permanent residency are the inability to take feed themselves or defend themselves.

Three albino opossums are now at Frisky's. They came as babies. Due to their unusual color (white fur and red eyes), they are not camouflaged in the wild and not able to hide well from their enemies.

The opossum is the only marsupial in the US and Canada, north of Mexico. They are a pouched animal, carrying immature babies in that pouch.

Frisky's hopes to be able to use them as exhibit animals when the need arises. They have been fixed so that they don't reproduce. It also reduces aggression. Colleen is working to get them used to being handled.

Albino Opossum



FIRST THREE MONTHS

The research question for my project is "What animals most often come into the wildlife rehab and why?" The idea behind this is that if we find and analyze these trends, there may be preventative measures that could reduce these incidents. So far in my project I have completed the months of January, February, and March of 2019. While this isn't a lot, there are already some trends to be found, both expected and unexpected.

To complete my project, I have been looking through the admittance files from 2019 and recording the species, date they arrived, and the reason for their arrival. In just three months, 142 animals were admitted to Frisky's, and that doesn't include the four pages of my notebook that I've filled up with 23 days of April. The species admitted range from the birds that often arrive in the winter to the baby animals just beginning to come in during March.

The results of the beginning of my project show that 7.7% of all animals admitted in January-March are mourning doves, a ground foraging bird species commonly found across the United States. These birds are then followed by hawks, baby squirrels, and baby rabbits, who all make up 7% of animals arriving to Frisky's in the first three months of the year. Finishing off the top 5 are adult squirrels, which make up 5.6% of arriving species.

Only three months have been completed so far, but it's clear that there will be an obvious trend of baby animals in the spring and early summer. A more surprising trend is the large number of birds that seem to be coming in during the winter. Although I haven't begun to analyze the 'why' data yet, it seems that dog and cat attacks bring in the most baby animals, and birds most often get taken in for window strikes.

Liath Mollenhauer

Young Foxes



Baby Bird



Baby Bunny



Fawn



Baby Raccoon



Baby Squirrels



There I was, enjoying an orange while on my computer as part of a late lunch, when I received a call from Iona, who was with her two young boys, entering the Fred Archibald Audubon Sanctuary in New Market. She told me there was a big bird lying on the ground in the woods near the entrance, but she wasn't a bird expert and didn't know what the species she was looking at. She could see that it was still breathing, though, and offered to send me a pic. When it arrived at my phone a few minutes later, it looked something like a creamy pie, with no appendages, feathers, etc discernable. So being just a few minutes away I quickly grabbed a medium size cardboard box and several old towels.

Upon arriving, I soon found the bird where Iona described it would be. The Red Tail Hawk was still breathing, eyes open, and had not moved from the position it was in the pic. I donned some surgeon gloves and picked it up, noticing it had what looked like a raw area on its neck. I had a little trouble extracting it from some sticker branches where it was lying at the base of a large Tulip Poplar. The Red Tail offered no resistance and moved but little. I placed it into the box with towels above and below, and closed the box flaps loosely. I placed it into the back seat of my 1996 Camry, and as I proceeded towards down I-70 towards Frisky's, wondered what it might be like to have an adult Red Tail flying about in the passenger compartment of my car while doing 75 mph. Fortunately that vision wasn't realized.

Arriving at Frisky's I brought the box up to the porch and Colleen soon appeared. I have been there already on a number of occasions in bringing patients of various descriptions to her. I told her what I had this time, and upon opening the box, she immediately exclaimed "Do you know there's a snake around its neck?!" (Which explained the 'raw spot' I had seen when I first picked it up.). The Black Rat snake had such a tight hold on the raptor's neck and was hidden under feathers it couldn't otherwise be easily seen. Colleen donned a pair of gloves while I went to steady the docile hawk, while she found the tail of the snake. At that point Mr Red Tail came to life and found a finger and palm of my left hand with its right talon. That was rather like a hot knife going thru butter, but fortunately was a fairly light grazing. The snake came off its neck easily, but was one angry rep. In my seven or so years of handling Black snakes it was the angriest one I had ever seen. The second most angry one was several years ago when rescuing a Purple Martin from the clutches of one. These docile guys evidently get pretty annoyed when they get disturbed while in killing mode.

Colleen quickly saw the hawk's left leg which appeared limp. A brief examination confirmed there was no use of it, though there was no visible injury to it, as well as no other immediately apparent injury to any other part of its body. Fortunately, there were no other injuries to us as well!

I remarked this was one patient who's story she'll remember, and Colleen agreed though added maybe the most memorable would be the Red Tail brought in by a couple. The raptor was found lying on side of the road, and the husband had it in a towel. Wife came up to the house and said 'We have a hawk but the hawk has my husband, we can't get it out of the car'. When Colleen saw the situation, it was a Mexican Standoff live in her driveway. Though the husband continued to have a grasp on the toweled bird that was looking at him, the bird also had a grasp on the gentleman's reproductive parts. It took some delicate maneuvering to convince the bird to be the first to yield!

Back to our story, Colleen dropped the snake into a good sized aquarium that was conveniently nearby and we took a look at it. It was by all characteristics but one, a Black Rat, with the exception that its head seemed overly large and triangular shaped as compared to the usual snake of that species, and was displaying aggressive behavior in striking towards us and looking to escape from the top of the aquarium. Colleen got a cloth bag and grabber, and we got it into the bag for transport home. I dropped it off in a wooded area between the Audubon sanctuaries in New Market – we already have our share of his relatives who like to seek out our nesting birds there!

Subsequently, the hawk was diagnosed with two fractures its leg.

Heather

When our son Jesse was younger (he is 19 years old now) and would get an allowance, he had 4 jars to fill with little plastic counters, each were worth \$0.25. He had a spend, save, investment and donation jar. He had to put \$1.00 in each jar and the rest he could put wherever he wanted. He saved about \$250 in the donation jar and I asked him to think about where he wanted to donate. He wanted to help animals. I thought he found Frisky's, he tells me I found Frisky's, but the end result was he chose Frisky's to send his donation to, probably around 2017-2018 and we mailed a check. A huge deciding factor was that there is no state, local or federal funding and Frisky's runs on donations alone.

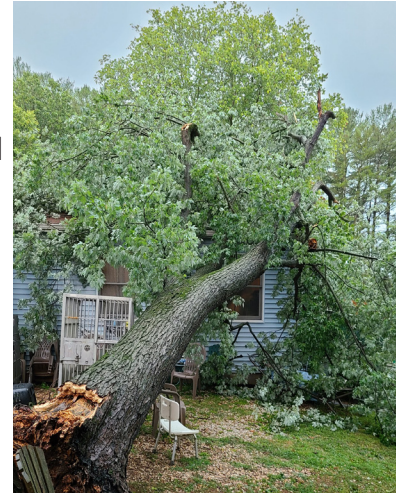
Over the years, I have dropped off a few animals here and there. The first 2 drop offs I did not carry cash and had no donation to leave, that has changed and a donation has been left every time. The week of Thanksgiving 2020, Donnie and I drove by and dropped off a \$2,020 check because I figured the sanctuary suffered due to Covid and we wanted to drop off a donation around the holidays. Anytime a friend/colleague has found an injured, orphaned or displaced animal, they call me to handle it and so then I end up being the animal transporter to Frisky's.

August 13th, I was at the tax office working and saw the post about the tree on the house. I called Donnie and said I was doing a drive by the sanctuary and he of course was ready for a drive by as well. The look on Colleen's face was not pleasant, even behind the mask you could tell she was very frantic as she was dealing with the tree and damage to the house and thought we were bringing her an animal. We were not, we were just stopping in to see what we could do to help. We left that evening and grabbed a tarp from the store and came back the next 2 days to help however we could. I was completely amazed at how busy the sanctuary was, within about a 2-2 1/2 hour time frame, about 6 vehicles came to drop off animals and some were multiples. 4-5 baby squirrels, a crow, 3-4 bunnies, baby sparrow, baby squirrel and another baby squirrel. These were just what I kept track of while working on the tree. I had no idea how busy things were around there until I saw it for myself.

Colleen kept inviting us back for "visits" and had us fill out a volunteer application which we were happy to do. In the meantime, I assisted when I could and how I could with the tree claim and meeting contractors. We would both come by on Sundays with the other volunteers and shadow them for animal care.

We have certainly learned a whole lot. We never realized the amount of animals that come in for care each year. We never knew lead poisoning in wildlife was a thing and actually quite common in the eagles that come into the sanctuary. We never knew we had minks in MD. Had no idea how many varieties of Capuchin and Macaque monkeys there were. We really love learning the stories behind the animals. I looked up the story myself on Jamie the barroom brawling monkey from 1999. We are finding our way around and learning the Frisky's routine of cleaning, feeding and animal care. The other volunteers have been so nice, helpful and patient while we learn. Many things just require some common sense but many do not. I never knew opossums needed a little bit of water in a liter box before they would use it. We love getting to see the different personalities of the animals. This is not a petting zoo and these animals are meant to be rehabbed and released, but it is a really neat and rewarding experience to get in close proximity of animals we would otherwise not be able to see up close while we assist in their care in some small way. Thank you for the experience and allowing us to be of service!

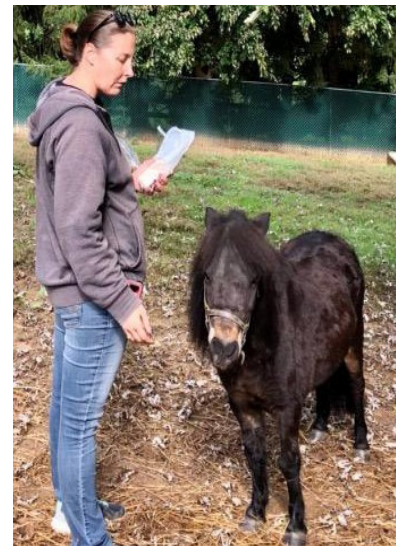
Heather Flanary



Tree that fell on the house



Crane lifting part of the tree



Heather with Beauty



Baby Opossum



Opossum doing a threat display



Opossums



Mother Opossum with babies

ALL ABOUT OPOSSUMS

The last few years there has been a lot of positive attention paid to opossums, and there should be! Opossums are amazing animals and the only marsupial we have in the US.

The Virginia Opossum is a common sight here in Maryland, although they prefer the woods they have adapted easily to urban areas. They are nocturnal and can often be seen trotting along at night (and sometimes in the day), or maybe you've caught one trying to get into your trash can. Opossums are solitary and nomadic, they don't have territories but will stick around if there's easy access to food. They are opportunistic omnivores, they will eat anything they can get their hands on, including ticks! Opossums love to eat ticks and can eat thousands of them every year.

Opossums are around the size of a large house cat and active year-round. They are very short lived, average lifespan in the wild is only 1.5-3 years and in captivity about 4 years. They have the most teeth of any land mammal in North America. If you startle one they might show off all those teeth as part of a threat display where they open their mouth, hiss, drool, and snap their jaws. A scary sight! But don't worry, opossums are not aggressive and will run away from people at the first opportunity. If they get really frightened they will fall down and play dead.

We get baby opossums starting in the spring and all through the summer. They can have 2-3 litters a year, up to 13 babies at a time! The baby opossums stay in their mothers pouch for 8 weeks then stay with mom for another few weeks by clinging to her back. If you see an opossum get hit by a car you should always check its pouch for babies. They are completely dependent on their mother at that stage and will need to be taken to a wildlife rehabilitator as soon as possible.

Opossums have a lower body temperature than most mammals, this has caused a myth that they are immune to rabies. That is not true. Opossums, like all mammals, can get rabies. Their low body temperature means it is less likely but still possible. Like with any wild animal, if you have to handle them for a rescue you should use caution and take proper preventative steps to avoid injury to yourself and the animal. Always use gloves, a towel or blanket can be used to push the animal into a box without touching it. Never pick up an opossum by its tail! You can damage their spine doing that.

The Virginia Opossum is an incredible animal. Keep an eye out at night for these tick-eating marsupials, they are a delight to see and contribute a lot to our local ecosystem!

Julia Dagnello

Frisky's Surviving Covid *Continued from page 1*

With everything needing replaced, refurbished, or repaired we have been able to care for animals in need. Supplying everything that is needed to care for them depends on public donations. Besides financial support we always need linens and exam gloves.

In closing we all really know what is worthwhile, can mean real hard long-term work, seeing it through. We are blessed to have such wonderful people in our lives, that I know Frisky's will always be here, a place for wildlife to come for rehabilitation. We will always try to do everything together and better than before. I want to personally thank you all again and again for caring and sharing your lives with us. Our love with the biggest of hugs!!!

Always yours,

Colleen and Scott Robbins

Nuisance Wildlife and the Law

Submitted by: Mike Lathroum, Natural Resources Police - retired

Nuisance wildlife is the generic term for any of the thousands of calls that come into the DNR Communication Center in the course of a calendar year. They run the complete gamut from there is a snapping turtle laying eggs in my garden, a deer stuck in the fence, a fox in the yard or squirrels in the attic.

Let me first premise with the fact that the vast majority of these perceived. Quote "nuisance wildlife emergencies" as every hysterical caller would have you believe are in fact nuisance wildlife problems at all, they are people problems. Newsflash folks, the critters were here long before we were, and they are constantly being forced into smaller and smaller parcels of suitable habitat. Some species of wildlife have adapted to living in close proximity to humans and actually thrive in suburban neighborhoods. So we are now faced with a generation of people who did not grow up watching Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom (yes I realize that I am dating myself) and have zero idea of what wildlife is or that it is acting completely normally most of the time.

Maryland has a number of laws and regulations on the books that pertain primarily to native Maryland wildlife species. To paraphrase the most sweeping of those laws off of which many regulations have been promulgated, Natural Resources Law 10-902 essentially says that if you want to do just about anything with native Maryland wildlife then you need a license or permit first.

So how does this affect you as the homeowner with a perceived nuisance wildlife issue. Certain animals have been defined as game birds and mammals. There are legal hunting seasons for these species and you are required to have a hunting license in order to pursue, trap, hunt, capture, possess any part of such an animal. Squirrels are one such species that fall under this designation. I have found that where squirrels are concerned there are two types of people, those who love the acrobatic rodents and those who hate the bushy tailed tree rats. There is no in between where squirrels are concerned.

So how do you deal with backyard squirrels legally? The simplest solution would be to just learn to live with them. But since we have a people problem and the people don't want to coexist with the rodents you now have to go through the U.S. Department of Agriculture and obtain a permit in order to trap the squirrels out of season. The permit will detail terms of how and where they can be released. Keep in mind that releasing animals into a new area isn't always a solution, they may not be able to find food, have to compete with others already in that area and by removing them from your little plot of land you have just created space for more to move in, so it's really just a temporary remedy.

It is illegal to attempt to trap/trap wildlife without a permit. It is illegal to shoot them with a pellet rifle outside of the legal season as I have seen suggested by some homeowners. You cannot poison wildlife which I have also seen suggested. If you make the decision to legally trap wildlife it is incumbent upon you to make sure the traps are checked and that wildlife is quickly released. Failure to do so can lead to additional problems such as potential animal cruelty charges. You could try decoy owls etc. but they usually only have a temporary effectiveness at deterring our furry friends.

You also have the option of hiring a licensed Nuisance Wildlife Cooperator to assist you with your wildlife issues. Cooperators are licensed to trap and deal with all types of wildlife removal as well as identifying entry points, installing preventive measures etc. A lot of people don't like this option because it costs money. When you hire a cooperator you are paying for their time, travel, expenses etc. this is after all their livelihood.

Legitimately orphaned and certain injured wildlife may be taken to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for evaluation and potential treatment. They can't save them all and in some cases euthanasia is the most humane option. Only young of the year rabies vector species and white tailed deer fawns may be accepted by a rehabber.

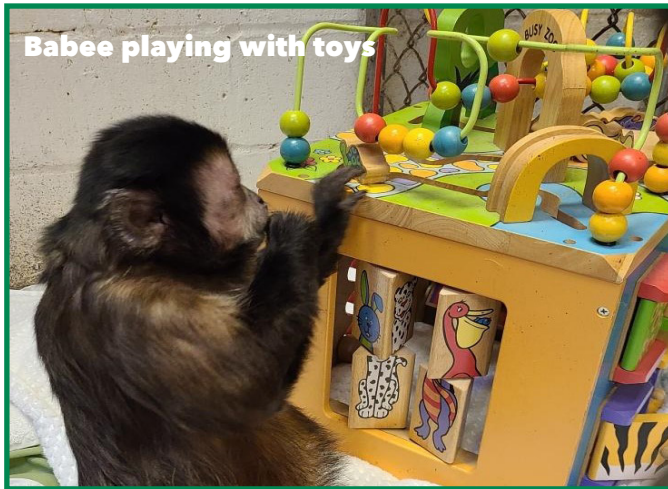
So the next time you see wildlife in your neighborhood try to stop and remember that they were here first. Just because a fox or raccoon is out during the day doesn't mean the animal is rabid there are other clues to look for to determine an ill animal. Just because you don't want the critters in your yard, neighborhood is not a valid reason to assume you have a wildlife problem, remember what we all learned about assuming when we were growing up.

Squirrel





Scott feeding baby hawks



Babee playing with toys



Fox



Bald Eagle

As always, you can go to our website
and safely donate through paypal!



WHAT CAN I DO?

Frisky's is a 501 (c) 3 Organization. Frisky's DOES NOT receive any county, state or federal funding. Frisky's survives only by public donations. All proceeds and donations go directly to the care and welfare of the animals. Please donate an item from the wish list, or send in your tax deductible donation!

www.friskys.org • friskyswildlife@yahoo.com

DONATION RECORD

Frisky's Wildlife & Primate Sanctuary, Inc.

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Your donation is 100% Tax Deductible. Retain this receipt for your records.

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☐ Cash \$ _____ ☐ Goods \$ _____

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(Description of Goods)

Thank you for your support!

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Please remember to detach this form and leave it with your donation so we can thank you.

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Date _____

☐ Yes, You can count on me to help support your efforts to care for the animals of Frisky's

☐ My check/gift is enclosed. Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Frisky's is a 501 (c)3 organization and receives no financial support from federal, state or county government.

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(Description of Goods)

If you are interested in collaborative opportunities or donating your time and expertise, please write us with your thoughts, call or email Frisky's

We try very hard to use your contributions for the most urgent need at the time we receive them.

If you would like to restrict this contribution for a specific project please mark here

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Name _____

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With a donation your name will be placed on our mailing list to receive
The Rescue Record.