MARS
WILDLIFE RESCUE CENTRE

Annual Report

2022-2023

Mountainaire Avian Rescue Society
Box 415, 1331 Williams Beach Road
Merville, BC, Canada V0R 2M0
info@marswildliferescue.com
www.marswildliferescue.com

Hospital Tel: 1-250-337-2021
Hospital Hours: 9:00 AM-5:00 PM
Visitor Centre Tel/Admin Tel: 1-778-428-1990
Visitor Centre Hours: Fri-Sun 10:00 AM-3:00 PM

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Mission

To conserve and protect native wildlife and its natural habitat through education and rehabilitation.

Goals

To reduce suffering of wildlife often affected by human influences, educate the public about their effect on nature, and how to reduce that impact.

Philosophy

We are a non-profit organization. Our energy is directed towards rehabilitation and education, and the funding for those endeavours.

We abide by all governing laws and regulations under which we operate. MARS holds permits from federal and provincial governments that allow us to rescue, keep in captivity, and care for wildlife.

Purpose

Rescue, Recover, Rehabilitate, & Release

ill, injured, orphaned or oiled wildlife

Conserve & Protect

wildlife by promoting the conservation of wildlife habitat.

Contribute

to the knowledge and understanding of wildlife by participating in research and sharing that information with wildlife organizations and the general public.

Educate

the general public about wildlife issues through lectures, displays, workshops, reports, and publications.

President's Report

Mountainaire Avian Rescue Society (MARS Wildlife Rescue) thanks all of our generous contributors for enabling our programs to continue over the past 2022/2023 year. We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia, the Comox Valley Regional District and the Strathcona Regional District.

Thank you to businesses such as RK Contracting for their time donated at MARS and continued support to keep our septic system healthy; Progressive Electrical for their help and continued involvement at MARS; Animalitos Pet Wellness; Pod Creative; Pacific Mist Spa and Ponting Road Building for the use of one of their excavators.

We much appreciate the support of our corporate members: Dr. Fran Dental Care, Shannon Lawrence Physiotherapy, Spiketop Cedar Ltd. and Incona Inc.

Thank you Westjet, Wickaninnish Inn, the Old House Resort & Spa, Owl Mazda, S.J. Lombard, Campbell River Whale Watching Adventure Tours, Ponting Road Building, Kingfisher Resort and Spa for raffle prize items.

We are grateful for our partners in rescuing and caring for wildlife: BC Ferries, Pacific Coastal Airlines, Planet Clean, Pilon Tools, and Shar Kare. Thanks to Sharron for her continued support and advice, and Chris Hatfield for continuing to turn plants into donations. Thanks to the Esme Eagles estate and to the family that dropped by and donated $5,000.

Land Acknowledgement

Gilakas'la čɛčɛ haθɛč

We respectfully acknowledge that the land we gather on is on the Unceded Traditional Territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.

Of particular interest (and excitement) is the growing number of people contributing through monthly automatic debit. These monthly contributions provide a level of financial certainty for our budget planning and are now up to 92 monthly donors contributing $3,249 per month. Wayne Good, of BC Smoke Shop in Victoria, is our longest standing donor.

There were also many anonymous donors and people, too numerous to list here, who cared enough to contribute time and/or supplies. After several short notice call outs on Facebook for specific supplies we were often overwhelmed by the generosity of our community. Every little bit helps to contribute to a lot.

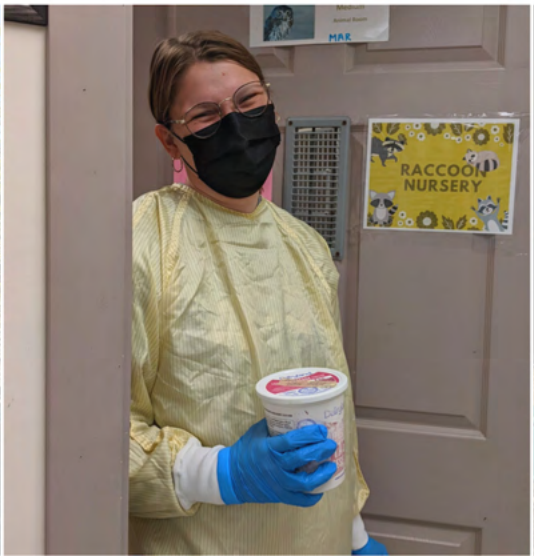
MARS Wildlife Rescue is a volunteer organization with only 4.7 (full time equivalents) expert staff to guide volunteers with their shared knowledge. In other words, volunteers are the lifeblood of our organization. It may sound crazy, but the great number of volunteers (ranging from animal care to education to the people working in the gift shop and visitor centre to regional parks trail maintenance volunteers to bird handlers and construction volunteers) officially logged 22,872 volunteer hours during 2022/2023 for an astounding in-kind value of $457,440. We know that not everyone tracks their hours, so the actual total value is much higher.

Dan and Wendy Davies always seem be there when we most need help. And thank you to Cliff and Wendy Craig, and Dean Melness for their valuable contribution to fundraising efforts in the gift shop. We apologize if we inadvertently missed any donors or volunteers and we thank all that have donated time, money, and supplies.

2022 was a difficult year. Just after phasing out of the Covid high-risk period, we immediately entered a period of Highly Pathogenic Bird Flu. Knowing how this virus works, we did everything we could to address each vector, like covering the majority of the bird enclosures, implementing foot baths going into and out of each enclosure, and limiting public access.

I hope you enjoy reading the more detailed reports about events and activities during the past year in this annual report.

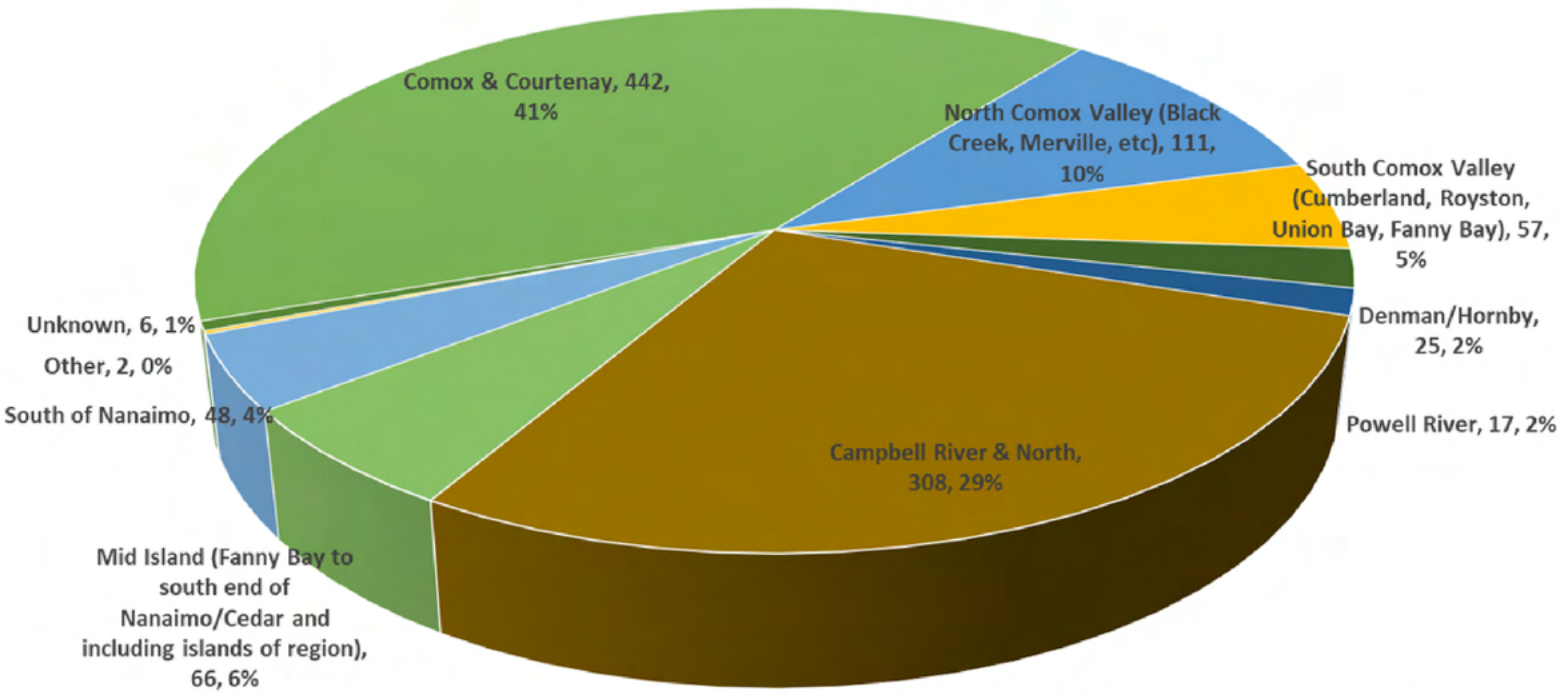
- Warren Warttig, RPBio, MARS President



Wildlife Rehabilitation Report

We admitted 1,082 patients in 2022 from various regions including Vancouver Island, the Sunshine Coast, and Greater Vancouver. Though this represents a 31% decrease in admissions compared to 2021, the year was not without its challenges. A reduction in material donations necessitated greater direct purchasing on our part, and inflation drove up the cost of essential goods and services. These financial pressures, compounded by the emergence of a new strain of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), placed significant stress on our operations. Despite these obstacles, the concerted efforts of our staff and volunteers enabled us to maintain our successful release rate of 36%

Intake by Region 2022



CALIFORNIA GULL
LARUS CALIFORNICUS

PURPLE MARTIN
PROGNE SUBIS

Red-Listed Species

- 2 California Gull
- 1 Northern Goshawk
- 2 Western Grebes

Any species or ecosystem that is at risk of being lost (extirpated, endangered or threatened) in British Columbia

Blue-Listed Species

- 2 Ancient Murrelets
- 1 Northern Pygmy Owl
- 1 Common Nighthawk
- 1 Double-Crested Cormorant
- 13 Great Blue Herons
- 2 Surf Scoter
- 2 Barn Owls
- 5 Band-tailed Pigeons
- 2 Purple Martins
- 2 Peregrine Falcons

Includes any native species considered to be of Special Concern (formerly Vulnerable) in British Columbia.

WESTERN GREBE
AECHMOPHORUS OCCIDENTALIS

COMMON NIGHTHAWK
CHORDEILES MINOR

ALL PHOTOS BY JAMES MACKENZIE

GREAT BLUE HERON
ARDEA HERODIAS

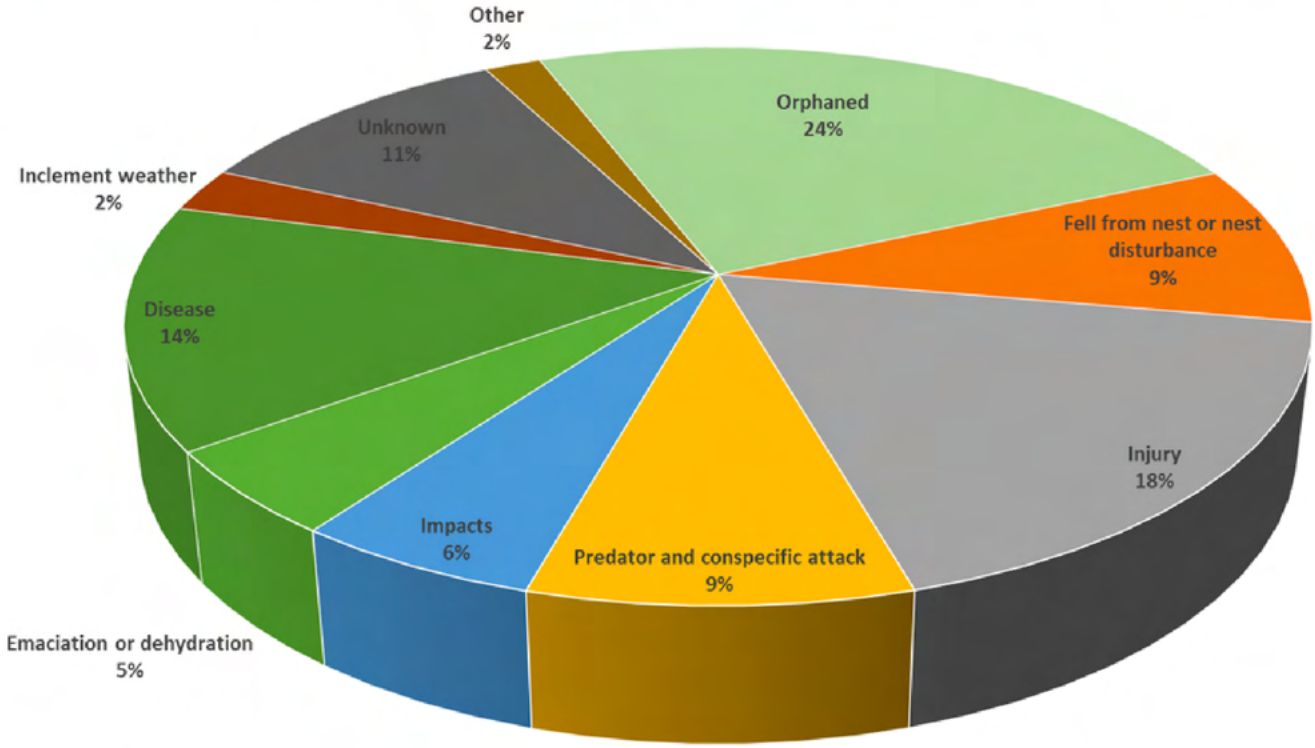
Most Common Avian Patients in 2022

88	American Robin
55	Bald Eagle
38	Anna's Hummingbird
37	Canada Goose
36	Mallard

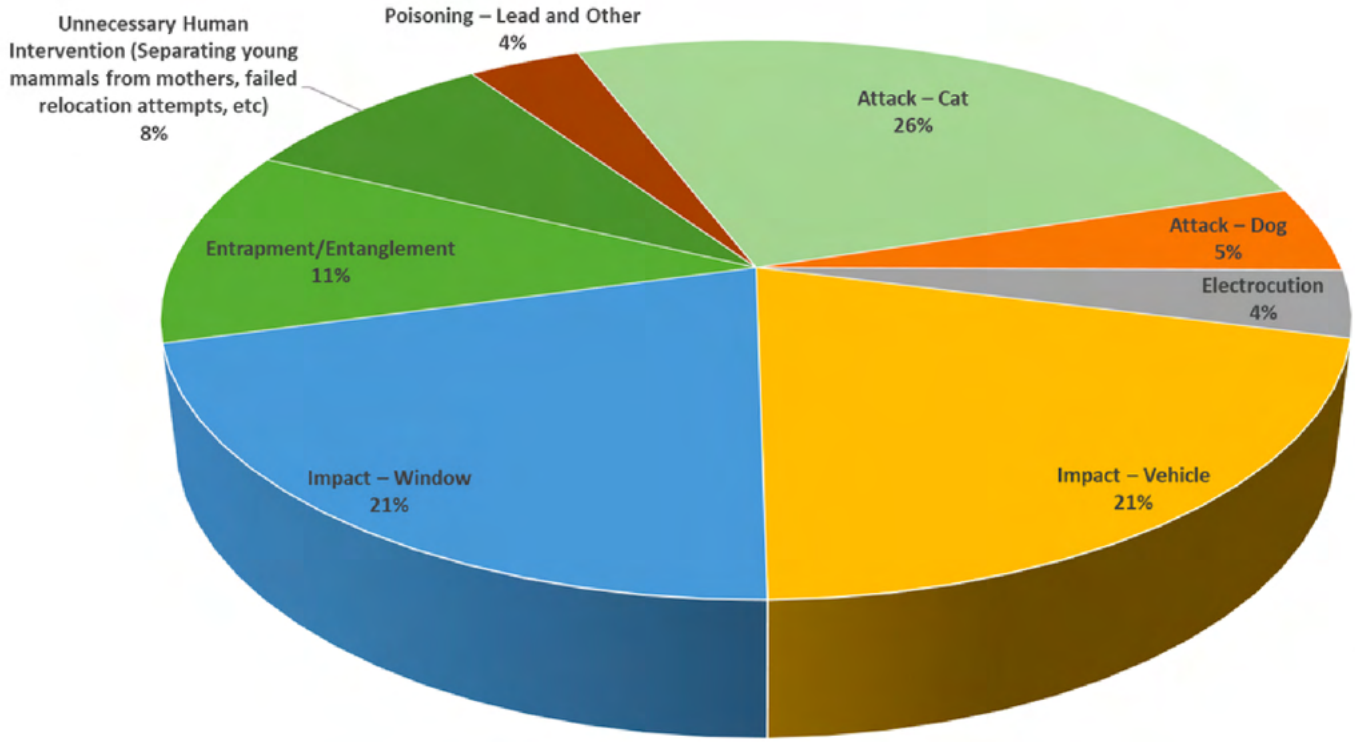
Most Common Mammal Patients in 2022

59	Racoon
15	Black-tailed Deer
10	Big Brown Bat
10	Little Brown Bat
10	Red Squirrel

Reasons for Intake 2022 - Natural Causes



Reasons for Intake 2022 - Human Causes



Financial Reports

Income & Expenses Summary 2022-2023

	ACTUAL Mar 1, 2022 to Feb 28, 2023	ACTUAL Mar 1, 2021 to Feb 28, 2022
INCOME		
Visitor Education Centre & Gift Shop	90,793	75,740
Fundraising	46,597	44,716
Donations	386,302	310,290
Province of BC Gaming	65,000	65,000
Grants	27,073	27,500
CVRD Parks Contract	11,400	10,400
CRD Firehall Lease	19,200	14,400
Membership Dues	5,680	6,925
Wage Subsidy	53,188	36,405
Other Income	3,875	3,998
Total Income	**709,108**	**595,374**
EXPENSE		
Wildlife Care	123,721	95,890
Education	30,419	25,853
Gift Shop	24,714	14,695
Wages	213,206	148,240
Amortization	72,604	70,782
Administration & General	95,614	77,191
Total Expenses	**560,278**	**432,652**
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	**148,830**	**162,722**

The chartered accounting firm, Moeller Matthews, prepared a Review Engagement Report for this fiscal year for MARS. For a copy of these financial statements, email: **pearl_mckenzie@telus.net**

Financial Reports

Comparative Balance Summary 2022-2023

Assets

	As at February 28, 2023		As at February 28, 2022	
ASSET				
Current Assets				
Operating Funds		282,723		183,442
Restricted Funds		377,224		317,476
Accounts Receivable		4,956		3,948
Inventory		7,080		6,671
Total Current Assets		671,983		511,537
Capital Assets				
Land	389,500		389,500	
Buildings & Outbuildings	1,524,488		1,496,912	
Furniture & Equipment	131,166		125,804	
Vehicles	52,326		66,117	
Parking & Landscaping	46,391		38,461	
		2,143,871		2,116,794
Less Depreciation		-371,682		-312,666
Total Capital Assets		1,772,189		1,804,128
TOTAL ASSET		2,444,171		2,315,665

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Financial Reports

Comparative Balance Summary 2022-2023

Liability & Owner's Equity

	As at February 28, 2023	As at February 28, 2022
LIABILITY		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	14,094	26,805
CEBA Loan	30,000	30,000
Prepaid Firehall Lease	4,800	4,800
CRA, GST & PST Payable	5,835	6,555
Total Current Liabilities	54,730	68,160
Long Term Liabilities		
CCCU Mortgage	278,377	285,272
Total Long Term Liabilities	278,377	285,272
TOTAL LIABILITY	333,107	353,433
EQUITY		
Equity		
Unrestricted Funds	310,008	143,024
Internaly Restricted Funds	174,487	217,499
Externally Restricted Funds	132,758	82,854
Invenstment in Property & Equipment	1,493,812	1,518,855
Total Owners Equity	2,111,065	1,962,232
TOTAL EQUITY	2,111,065	1,962,232
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	2,444,171	2,315,665

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Special Events & Fundraising Report

We began our new fiscal year 2022/23 on March 1st, 2022, after almost two years of dealing with the reality of a global pandemic. Although the cancellation of many events that we previously hosted or attended had become the norm, one constant was the continued support of MARS members and followers. This has not wavered since Covid 19 reared its ugly head.

Things began looking up with the lowering of Covid restrictions. We were able to have more tours of the property, with viewing of the ambassador birds and engaging people in the Visitor Centre and gift shop. Then as Covid lessened, we were hit with HPAI, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, which necessitated the postponing of tours yet again and no public interaction with ambassador birds whatsoever. The Visitor Centre and gift shop remained open, which enabled us to raise some much-needed funds.

Fundraiser - The CV Curling Club and Hoyne Brewing went forward with their plan to raise some funds for MARS during their Pros & Joes Fun Spiel March 18th – 20th. They raised $1,400 for us and we greatly appreciated their efforts.

The summer raffle was launched on May 7th with a total of eight fantastic prizes. We decided to run the raffle through an online platform called Raffle Box. The draw was for September 7th.

MARS Tours - As a precaution, we had to suspend tours at MARS on May 16th, 2022, due to a virulent strain of Avian Influenza. A local poultry farm was reported to have the flu and we wanted to have safety measures in place to protect our ambassador birds and patients and to hopefully stay one step ahead.

Kitty Coleman Woodland Gardens Spring Event was held on May 21st, 22nd, and 23rd. Due to the Avian flu outbreak, no ambassador birds could attend. Our raffle tickets were being sold mainly online, so we opted to have a booth with some educational displays along with some taxidermy and information on our raffle, how to go about buying raffle tickets and updates on the avian flu and our efforts to mitigate the chance of an outbreak at MARS. Some of our Visitor Centre crew set up a booth and engaged the public during the weekend. They devised a way to sell raffle tickets on site using a tablet, the proceeds of which were $400. We also had donations of $415.

Fortunately, we were able to re-open the Visitor Centre and gift shop on June 17th . It was still necessary to suspend tours of the property and viewing of the Ambassador birds as a safety precaution to avoid spreading the Avian Influenza virus.

The garage sale, held on July 23rd was a success, and thanks to all the hard-working volunteers, it went off without a hitch. It was our first MARS hosted event in quite some time. We didn't sell food and beverages, have our usual bake table or sell raffle tickets but we still brought in $2,303.50. Besides the funds raised, it was the first chance in a long while for volunteers to work at an event together and interact with the public. The public is very supportive of our work so it's nice to meet many of them face to face.

MARS Summer Raffle – It was getting down to the wire with lots of tickets left to sell and after continual posts to get them sold, we sold out on August 29th in the morning. The draw was held on September 7th. MARS is extremely grateful to everyone who donated raffle prizes and to everyone who purchased tickets. All funds received are for the rescue, rehabilitation and release of wildlife.

October Raffle – MARS Hootin' Halloween 50/50 started on October 1st and ran until October 31st. The jackpot was $23,740, with $11,870 going to MARS and $11,870 going to winner Randy Wilford of Courtenay

We held a **Christmas craft sale** at the Visitors Centre from November 18th to December 24th. Local crafters were invited to sell their items on consignment. MARS proceeds were $726.40.We also participated in Giving Tuesday on November 29th. Our goal was to raise funds for the hospital expansion and several people donated to the cause.

In January, we asked people to donate in memory of **Betty White** for her 101st birthday on January 17th. She was a great animal lover and advocate and we decided to make this "ask" an annual event. Donations totaled just under $900.

Crown Isle Resort Charitable Event – During the 2022 holiday season, Crown Isle hosted their Holiday Resort Walk and Gingerbread Village. Several MARS volunteers helped with this charitable event. In February 2023 we received a cheque in the amount of $2,068.56.
It goes without saying that we could not accomplish what we do without the dedication of MARS volunteers. We have a very supportive staff and Board of Directors, which makes what we do much easier.

Kudos to Gyl and Kiersten, our manager and assistant manager of animal care, the caregivers and the bird handlers who help educate the public. Children come away from these up close and personal encounters with our ambassador birds, with an increased appreciation of wildlife and with a sense of awe. Several kids have donated their birthday money to support what we do, and this is evidence of the positive effect of our virtual educational programs as well in person ones and a positive input from teachers and parents who instill these values in the children.

- Lynda Hodgkinson, Chair of the Special Events Committee & Facebook Administrator

Education & Habitat Stewardship

In the face of a difficult year with restrictions surrounding tours due to the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, our intrepid team of Visitor Centre volunteers persevered in educating the public about wildlife issues and raising funds for the MARS hospital. Risk of the public bringing Avian Influenza on our site meant first limiting tours to our wetland and native gardens, then reintroducing an ambassador bird on the glove at the Visitor Centre, before finally opening tours in full once again with precautionary measures. Our tour guests donned the infamous “booties,” shoe covers to help limit the spread of Avian Influenza, and learned about how the virus affected our patients and day-to-day operations.

Despite these restrictions, we welcomed an incredible 76% increase in visitors from last year, with 5618 people coming though our Visitor Centre compared to 3184 the year before. This is of course partly due to the fact that we were finally able to stay open the entire fiscal year, despite limiting tours for a short period and having a few single day closures due to extreme weather events. Perhaps people heard about our excellent new exhibit, *Rehabber for a Day*. We also conducted public education seminars on topics ranging from bats to hummingbirds, and on the wildlife patient’s experience, from rescue to release.

Word clearly got around that coming to MARS for a school field trip is a literal hoot! We welcomed 22 unique classes or summer camps, with a total number of 392 curious kids! A huge thank you to all the volunteers who helped with school tours, it can be challenging at times to deal with classroom dynamics at such a distracting and engaging place as MARS, but all handled it with passion and compassion.

SOCIETY FOR ORGANIC URBAN LAND CARE

GREENER GREENSPACES

We also used our extensive social media reach on Facebook (55,000+ followers - 34% increase) and Instagram (2700+ followers - 16% increase), local print media, and our website to share messages about our wildlife patients, the needs of the hospital, reducing risks to wildlife, and our fundraising efforts. Quarterly newsletters have also begun to be distributed to members, featuring fun stories, going-ons at MARS, and any other pertinent information.

- James MacKenzie, Education & Volunteer Coordinator

HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

In 2022, our team continued the work of expanding and tending healthy habitat at MARS. Invasives like Scotch broom, cut-leaf blackberry, and reed canary grass were pushed back, and five new beds (for a total of 15) of native trees, shrubs, forbs, sedges, and grasses took their place. Some areas, like the wetland, were fenced to keep deer out, and others were left open for browsing, though young trees were protected with caging. On any given Thursday, the team was out preparing the soil, cardboarding and composting, planting, seeding, watering, weeding, mulching, and collecting seed. The progress we've made was recognized by the Society for Organic Urban Land Care as a *Greener Greenspace*.

SOUL
SOCIETY FOR ORGANIC URBAN LAND CARE

MARS received a grant from the Comox Valley Community Foundation to establish an invasive plant removal tool lending library. Local stewardship groups and individuals, as well as MARS work parties have made use of these tools for the benefit of wildlife and wild spaces.

- Jan Smith, Habitat Stewardship Team

Photo by Moffat Photography

Board Members & Staff

Board of Directors

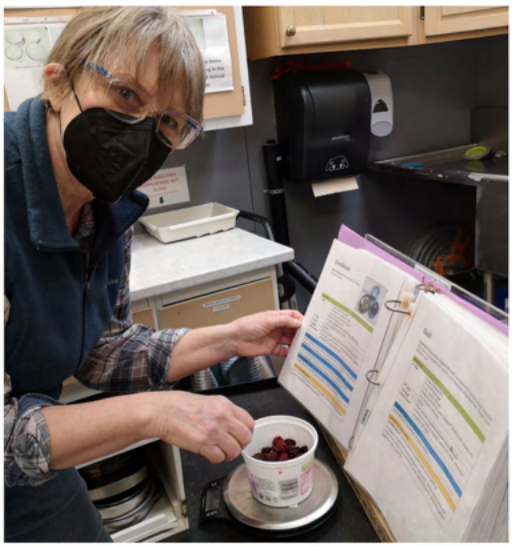
President: Warren Warttig
Vice President: Pearl McKenzie
Treasurer: Jaewon Kim
Secretary: Therisa Lowe
Darlene Banerd
Linda Hawk
Lynda Hodgkinson
Virginia (Ginny) Simpson
John Turner
David Volkert

Staff

Manager of Wildlife Rehabilitation: Gylaine Andersen
Assistant Manager of Wildlife Rehabilitation: Kiersten Shyian
Wildlife Rehabilitators: Melissa Steinkey, Isabel Morales
Manager of Visitor Centre: Allison Morrison, part time
Administrator: Laurie Ulm, part time
Education and Volunteer Coordinator: James MacKenzie, part time

MARS
WILDLIFE RESCUE CENTRE

Thank you to our volunteers, an integral part of the MARS team!

MARS
WILDLIFE RESCUE CENTRE

Mountainaire Avian Rescue Society
Darlene Banerd