

Every Bat Counts!

Toronto Wildlife Centre Final Report to the Ontario Wildlife Foundation

Project period: 01 September, 2020 - 31 August, 2021 |



18 September, 2021

Dear friends at OWF,

Thank you for giving sick, injured and orphaned bats the chance to return to the night skies! Your gift helped over 60 bats admitted to Toronto Wildlife Centre (TWC) over the past year, including:



54

Big brown bats



1

Eastern red bat



5

Silver-haired bats



6

Little brown bats

an
endangered
species

Several patients were admitted thin and dehydrated in the winter after being disturbed from torpor (hibernation); they faced freezing temperatures and the risk of starvation. You gave them a warm environment in which they were cared for until they were healthy again to be released in the spring!

Others were admitted with injuries from crashing into windows, becoming trapped in buildings, and sadly—like this brown bat—as a result of intentional harm. Your gift provided supportive treatment such as hydrating fluids, essential medication like anti-inflammatory and pain medicines to help them heal, and formula and food, including a variety of worms with added vitamins, to help them grow strong again.

Left: Veterinarian Dr. Meegan Larsen inspects a big brown bat's tooth. The bat was brought to TWC after she accidentally flew into a home and was repeatedly hit with a broomstick. She suffered several injuries to her wings and had fractured her canine tooth, making it painful to eat.



After several days of treatment and hand-fed meals—made possible with your help—this bat is slowly recovering, moving around actively in her enclosure and gaining a healthy amount of weight. Once she is fully recovered she will be returned to the wild!



The sensitive scales we purchased with your gift helps rehabilitators accurately weigh these tiny patients. Even hoary bats—the largest species in Ontario—often weigh less than 30 grams.

The big brown bat pictured here is wrapped in a tea towel for safe handling, and to prevent escape!



TWC's vet team carefully amputated the tip of this big brown bat's wing. Likely due to severe dehydration, the poor bat's wing had become necrotic—an irreversible condition that impeded flight and threatened to get worse without intervention. After a successful surgery and more than 100 days in care, the bat regained full function of his wing and could fly back to the wild!



This silver-haired bat had missed her fall migration and was found stranded in the cold. When she was admitted, she was also found to be missing one eye—a condition she was born with. But based on her healthy weight, it seemed that she had survived well without it.

After overwintering in care, the one-eyed patient passed her pre-release test with flying colours! She had reached ideal body weight, was able to fly well and was hunting insects with ease. She was released this spring to join returning migrants of her species!

A new bat aviary is helping prepare patients for a healthy life back in the wild!

As mentioned in our interim report to you, we built a bat flight cage¹ at Rouge National Urban Park, at the site of our permanent future home. Designed especially for bats, the enclosure has already helped several patients who benefited from your generosity during the final stage of their rehabilitation.

Earlier, rehabilitators would allow bats to fly in a darkened hallway prior to release—not an ideal way to assess these nocturnal fliers! The new cage allows patients recondition in their own time, outdoors, and without the stress of being watched by humans.

*“The aviary has really enhanced our bat rehabilitation program. Without it, we wouldn’t have been able to assess the hunting capabilities of the one-eye bat, for example. We could lure bugs into the enclosure and regularly monitor the bat’s weight to see if she was catching and eating the insects. She did so well that we knew she could take good care of herself in the wild! **I hope donors like OWF know what a tremendous impact they have on these wild lives!**” -- Ashley Knobel, Wildlife Rehabilitation Manager*

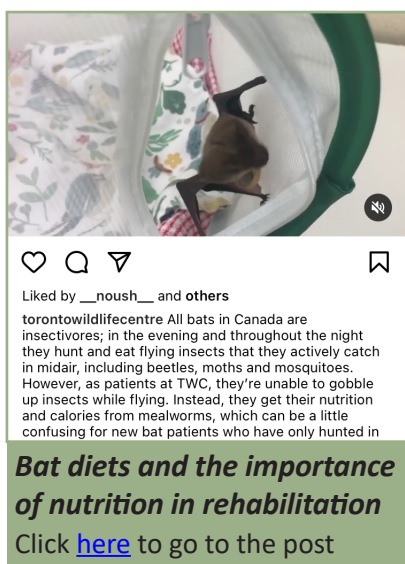
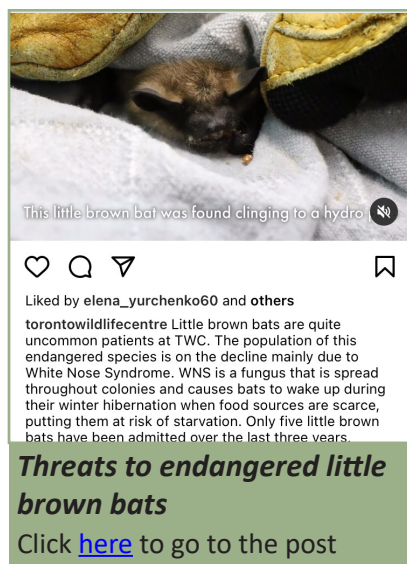


¹Funded by the Rotary Club of Toronto

Education and Outreach: Inspiring our community to help their chiropteran neighbours!

Finally, your support helped raise awareness about wild bats through TWC's public education efforts. We used the stories of patients you helped in:

- **20 social media posts** through the year (see examples below) reaching tens of thousands of people.
- **A feature in our December 2020 e-newsletter** addressing threats to and misconceptions about bats.
- **A virtual presentation** with Vaughan Public Libraries focused on nocturnal animals.



We were also happy to publicly express our gratitude to OWF. We posted a [thank you video](#) to show our community how your gift gives wild bats a second chance!

Thank you once again for your support and for sharing our belief that *every bat counts*! If you have any questions or comments, we would be happy to hear from you.

With gratitude,

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