

Dogue Hollow Wildlife Sanctuary News

Highlights from 2006

WHAT A YEAR OF UPS AND DOWNS

It's hard to know where to begin as it's been a year of extremes, both very good and very bad. The worst was a mystery virus that killed countless baby raccoons, and most wildlife rehabilitators were touched by it, including the loss of several here at Dogue Hollow. The real tragedy was the fact that no one was able to identify it, including several veterinarians who performed necropsies. So we had no cure and no cause, making it very hard to eliminate the problem.

On the high side of things - two of my girls raised here last season, returned with little ones!! Xena was the first to show off her litter of two, which is the normal size for a first time mother.

Later, in the summer, my girl Lilly, arrived late one night with two screaming babies in tow! They were very young and, I soon discovered, not yet weaned. I think they were screaming for mum to slow down as they seemed to have a hard time keeping up with her and she had to keep going back and pushing them from behind, often resorting to picking up the little girl and carrying her in her mouth! I named these two Leo and Lucy!



Top right: Rio
Above & left: Lilly, feeding Lucy and Leo



Despite it being 3am, I grabbed the camera and rushed out to meet the new family. As soon as I sat down, Lilly came up with a baby in her mouth, and dumped it in my lap! After that, the family visited every night, and still does! When the babies were still tiny, Lilly would eat and then haul her babies up to my top deck where she would feed them and then all would curl up together and sleep. As the kits grew older and were weaned, they would all eat the dog food and then Lilly would herd them upstairs, tuck them into one of the nesting boxes and leave them to do whatever raccoons do at night. Just before dawn she'd be back to collect them.

UP A TREE WITH NO PLACE TO GO!

Some of last years families were not released until this spring. That included Penny, Pound and Sixpence and the Terror Twins, Emmy and Pearl. Two days after their release, while cleaning out the cages, I felt I was being watched.... I looked up, way up, and saw Pound looking down at me from the top of a 60 foot tulip poplar! It took six days to coax him down. I was so worried about him as all he had to eat were tree buds and rain water licked off his coat. I finally got a ladder up about 20 feet and climbed to the top, where I tottered for hours, talking to him, begging him to come down. When he finally got close enough, I grabbed him and we flew down the ladder. NOT something I ever want to do again! Pretty scary stuff!



Left: The dot at the top of tree is Pound!! Right: Close up of Pound



Photos clockwise from top right: Pluto - Isabel, Katrina & Camille - Andrew & the Snowman - baby Roni - Rio, Cal, Syd and Tim - Jenna with Penny and Pound

NEW FAMILIES ARRIVE

The first family of 2006 arrived in May. Four little bundles of fur, each weighing in at under a pound! Sherry, my volunteer helper, and I named them SYDney, CALgary, RIO de Janeiro and TIMbuku!

Two weeks later they were joined by five more tiny creatures, WOLFbane, SCARLET Pimpernel, VeRONica, POPPY and BurDOCK. Along with this family came the mystery virus and we soon lost little Doc and then Scarlet. Thankfully the other seven survived.. Though for weeks they all hated me as, twice a day, I had to squirt evil tasting antibiotics down their throats! Late in July these survivors were moved to the outdoor enclosures and we took in more babies. Two groups of two and none were related. Though housed in two separate cages, the four got on well when out together for play time, in my kitchen. The two bigger kits were named Randy and Street Boy and the two little guys we named Pluto and Venus. All went well for the first week, then it hit again and we lost Pluto and Street Boy within a 24 hour period. It was heart breaking to see them suffer. As baby raccoons don't do well on their own, I moved Randy and Venus in together, despite their size difference. Little Venus soon learned how to get the best of Randy and they became good friends. And happily, stayed healthy. In September, Syd, Rio, Cal, Tim, Wolf, Poppy and Roni were released into the wild, but still visit nightly for dinner, and often for a sleep over in the "Moose Lodge" on my top deck where Emmy, Syd and Roni seem to have become permanent residents!



BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

Enter "The Hurricanes"!! And what a whirlwind they are too! First to arrive in late August were Isabel, Katrina and Camille. Three little angels who were easy to feed and used the litter box from day one....and then they grew up! They were a very bad influence on the next set of Hurricanes who arrived in October: Hugo, Andrew and Hazel. These three came already weaned and were wild children! Though they will now take food from our hands and allow us occasionally to stroke them, picking them up without being bitten, is not an option! The three girls are now in an outside enclosure and the wild ones will follow before the new year. All six will winter with us at Dogue Hollow, and be released in the spring.

Dogue Hollow Wildlife Sanctuary is dedicated to saving wildlife, specializing in raising and releasing orphaned raccoons. We do what we do without payment and all our expenses come out of our own pockets, though we must be licensed by the state of Virginia. We make no bones about it, we need the public's help. Dogue Hollow is affiliated with The Wild Bunch, a non profit organization and your tax free donation will go a long way to helping us save more orphaned wildlife, and will be greatly appreciated. Checks can be made out to The Wild Bunch, and sent to PO Box 740, Lorton, Va 22199-0740, attn. Jenna Such. Sherry and I, along with all the raccoons at Dogue Hollow, wish you a Merry Christmas, and thank you in anticipation of your generosity.