



# MARS Wildlife Rescue

Helping Wildlife Recover

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British Columbia Gaming Branch



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# MOUNTAINAIRE AVIAN RESCUE SOCIETY

## Helping Wildlife Recover 2016 Annual Report

The Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society (MARS) thanks all of our generous contributors for helping us continue wildlife rehabilitation and conservation efforts in 2015/16. These selfless contributions allowed for this year's programs to proceed.

We appreciate the support of the MARS board of directors, staff, contractors and our many volunteers. Without you this could not have been possible.



**SPECIAL THANKS:** We wish to acknowledge the financial assistance of the Province of British Columbia. The BC Gaming Branch was a significant contributor for our 2015/16 education program on wildlife protection and conservation awareness and our rehabilitation program.

BC Hydro (Bald Eagle Festival), Comox and Strathcona Regional Districts (Directors Leigh, Grieve, Jolliffe and Nicol), Corporation of the City of Courtenay and the City of Campbell River. Local governments continue to be strong supporters of MARS.

Other contributors included Art Martell (Comox Valley Nature), My Tech Guys (hosting our web site and providing tech support), Abode Complete Cleaning, ALJAO Contracting Ltd, Berwick Comox Valley, Beta Sigma Phi, Buy Local Comox Valley, Campbell River ATV Club, Comox District Consumer's Co-op, Comox Military Family Resource Centre, Comox Rotary, Comox United Church Youth Group, Courtenay Elementary, Campbell River Salmon Foundation, Ecole Phoenix Middle School, Fanny Bay Salmonid Enhancement Society, Fresh Start Health Retreat Centres, Friends of Comox-Lazo Reserve, Hitec Screen Printing, Hornby Eagle Group Projects Society, Huband Park Elementary, Interfor Corporation, Investors Group, Kiwanis Club of Courtenay, Lake Trail Middle School, Miracle Beach Elementary, Miracle Beach Markets Ltd, North Island College, Omar Khayyam Restaurants Ltd, Orca Probus Club, Ripple Rock Trucking Ltd, Scotiabank, Strathcona Wilderness Institute Society, Surrey Pilates Studio Inc., TimberWest, Unity Comox Valley, Wayne's Propane and Western Forest Products Inc.

Support was also received from Wendy Kotilla of the YER Program, Connie Schaad Face Painting, Viktor Davare, Boston Pizza, Panago Pizza, Campbell River Tim Hortons and Campbell River Photo Tech foto-source.

Groups and businesses that contributed to MARS events in some way include: Campbell River Logger Sports, Crown Isle Thrifty's, Fanny Bay Salmonid Enhancement Society, Feathers in BC, The Raptors, Gerry Powers (Owls of BC), Remax, Rotary Club of Courtenay and Courtenay Rotary, Ron Chamberlain and "Friends of MARS".

Publicity came from 97.3FM The Eagle Radio, Comox Valley Record, Comox Valley Echo, Campbell River Mirror, CHEK NEWS – Dean Stoltz and Shaw Cable.

The Wickaninnish Inn/Point Restaurant, WestJet, Harbour Hideout Vacation Rental in Ucluelet and Adventure Quest Tours donated prizes for our raffles. Pacific Coastal Airlines donated transport of injured wildlife, and BC Ferries gave free passage for wildlife rescue.

Help from Veterinary Hospitals was amazing (as usual) and included Phoenix Rising Veterinary clinic, Van Isle Veterinary Hospital, Shamrock Veterinary Clinic, Sunrise Veterinary Clinic (thanks Stacey!), Puntledge Veterinary Clinic and North Island Veterinary Hospital.

Others that helped us in some way include Greenways Land Trust, Kitty Coleman Woodland Gardens, Realtor Liz Aldridge, the Maritime Heritage Centre, Ripple Rock and Gem Club, Scotia Bank, Seasmoke "Sail with the Whales", Sharron Lewis, Silpada Jewelry (Lois and Peter Beck-Millman), the Public Conservation Assistance Fund (PCAF) and Woofy's.

Steve Harding of Timberwolf Tree Service was and still is on standby to scale a tree to rescue an injured bird for us.

Several anonymous donors, and those who cared enough to contribute time and/or supplies also helped us out but are too numerous to mention. Every little bit helps to contribute to a lot.

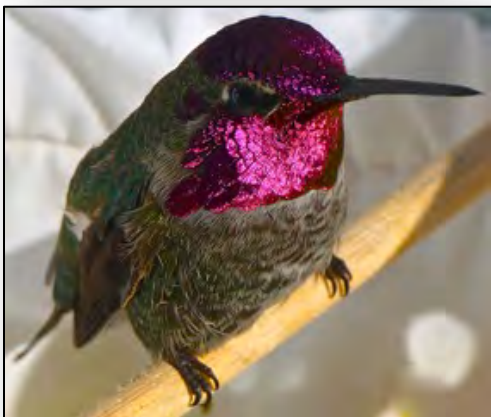
Along with donors locally, we had donors from El Paso Texas, Sutter Creek and Oakland and Studio City California, Camden Maine, Roanoke Virginia, Phoenix and Paradise Valley Arizona, Sarasota Florida, Ortonville Minnesota, Calgary Alberta, Winnipeg and Stony Mountain Manitoba, Gloucester, Thornhill and Copper Bluff Ontario and Port Hawkesbury Nova Scotia.

Hundreds of donors provided assistance through our crowd funding (Cause Vox), directly to MARS Wildlife Rescue, and through Canada Helps. Of particular interest (and excitement) is the growing number of people contributing through monthly automatic debit. These monthly contributions provide a level of certainty and are now up to \$646 per month. We thank all that have donated.

We apologize if we inadvertently missed any donors.



Sandy Royer and Jackie Chamberlain



If you are looking for a simple, no-cost way to help MARS, pick up a Thrifty's card from MARS Wildlife Rescue and every time you use it to buy your groceries with the card 5% of your purchase value goes to us.

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Wood Duck, John Deal photo



Ducklings, John Deal photo



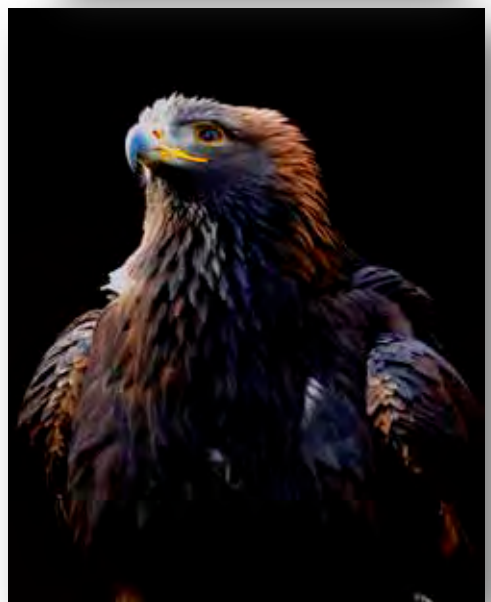
Harbour Seal, phot by Johnson



Humming Bird, Sandy Royer photo



Great Blue Heron, photo by Lavigne



Golden Eagle, John Deal photo

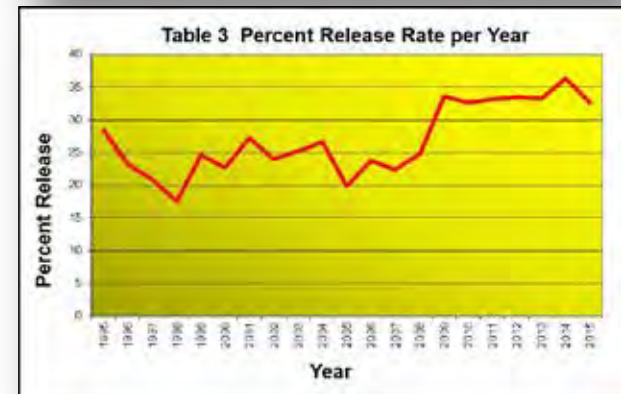
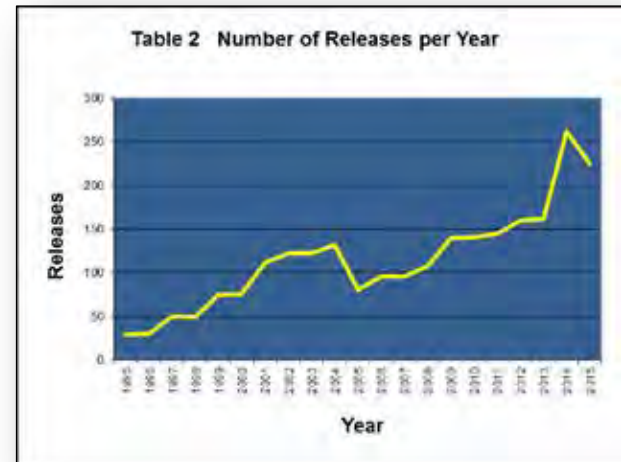
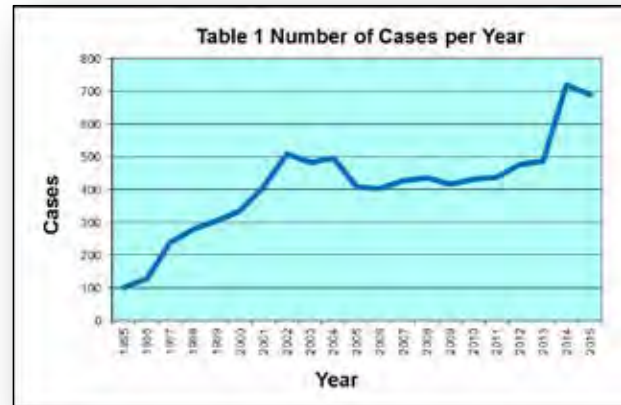
## PRESIDENTS REPORT

Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society (MARS) officially opened its doors in 1995 and recorded a wildlife case load of **102**. Since 1995, we've received **8,620** animals. Our case load gradually increased until 2001 before leveling off to between 400 and 500 animals each year, but in 2014 our case load rose dramatically to **710**. Since 2014 we have averaged **699** injured animals per year (table 1); a clear sign that we desperately need a larger hospital.

Since 1995, we have expanded our mandate to include an active conservation and education component, and more recently we have been involved in greater amounts of conservation issues as well as research and monitoring. This important work helps educate the public and improve land management.

In 2015, we received **688** injured animals (119 different species), **225** cases were released back to the wild (33% release rate) (tables 2 and 3). While this may not seem to be a high release rate, the base case level includes animals received DOA and animals that succumbed to injuries very shortly after we received them. Unfortunately many of the rest have serious injuries that rendered them unable to survive in the wild. From 1995 to the end of 2015, MARS has released **2,413** animals back to the wild; including **95** Bald Eagles.

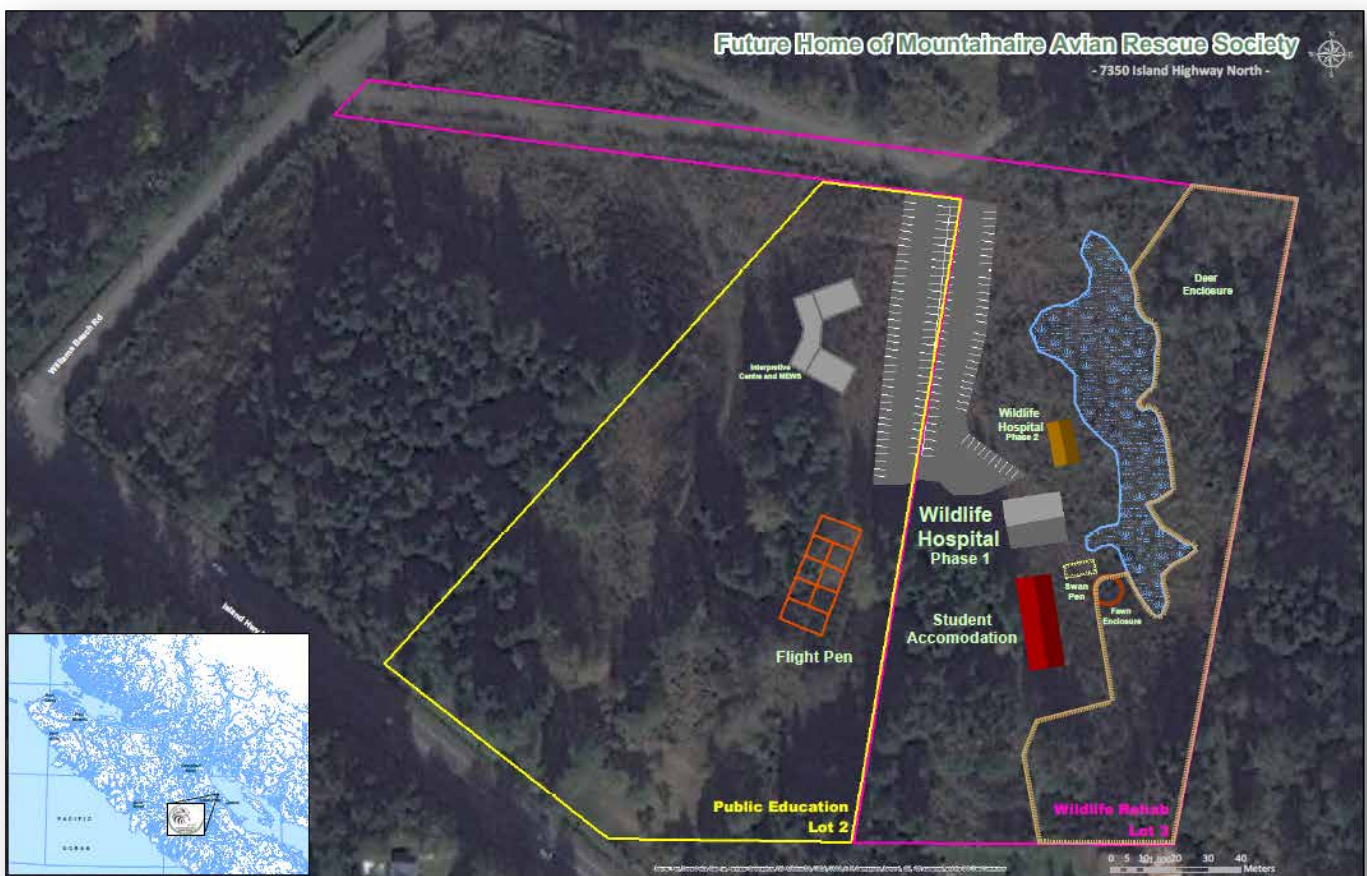
One of the many important functions that MARS accomplishes is our contribution to recovery of species of interest (yellow listed), species at risk (blue listed) and endangered species (red listed). Endangered is when a species has a population so low and threats (e.g. habitat loss) are so high that there is a real chance these species could go extinct unless something is done. **Blue-listed** species are those that are showing population decline that could end up as red-listed if something isn't done. Yellow-listed species are those of particular interest. For yellow listed species, in 2015 we received **39** Bald Eagles and **4** Little Brown Bats. The **blue listed** species we received and treated in 2015 included **13** Great Blue Herons, **3** Barn Owls, **1** Brant Goose, **2** Band-tailed Pigeons, **5** Barn Swallows, **1** common Nighthawk, **1** Purple Martin, **6** Northern Saw-Whet Owls, **1** Western Screech Owl, **2** Northern Pygmy Owls and **1** Marbled Murrelet. The **red-listed** species we received and treated in 2015 included **2** Common Muir's and **1** Peregrine Falcon.



To learn more about red and blue listed species and ecosystems on coastal British Columbia, check out the fact sheets on: <http://www.geog.ubc.ca/biodiversity/factsheets/>

During our 2015 fiscal year, MARS staff included Maj Birch as Manager. Maj had been discussing her wish to transition into retirement which included reduced hours, less time as manager and more time focusing on conservation issues. Reg Wescott remained as Supervisor of Wildlife Care. Allison Morrison went from part time administrative assistant to also take on more of the management duties.

In 2013, with mixed emotions, we were bequeathed over \$300,000 from the estate of Michelle Woodrow. Michelle was passionate about wildlife and a long-time friend of MARS. In 2014 we spent considerable effort looking at appropriate properties for a new MARS site and found a fantastic site within ten minutes of our current location (1331 Williams Beach Road). The site includes two lots totally almost 11 acres.



Since purchasing the property we've completed a lot of volunteer work surveying the property lines, clearing the road right-of-way and removal the alien invasive plants from the properties. The plants included massive amounts of Scotch Broom, Himalayan Blackberry, Evergreen Blackberry, Trailing Blackberry, and incidental amounts of Holly, Spurge Laurel and English Ivy.



We also received \$10,000 from the Public Conservation Assistance Fund to build a 0.2ha (0.5 acre) vernal wetland. Michelle Jones RPBio provided advice on designing the wetland, and a neighbour (Bruce Jones), who happens to have an excavator, donated 100 hours of excavator time to do land clearing, deer fence installation and starting the construction of the wetland!

We constructed a foot bridge over the drainage ditch that divides the two properties and held several planning sessions with the board, staff and volunteer wildlife care givers to develop a property layout design. Further sessions occurred for hospital design with the help of an expert in hospital designs (Chris Cosgrove). Cyrill Werlen of Cascadianwoodtech has been helping us with building designs and budgeting.

All of this assistance has helped us very much, but the daunting fact remains that we must be off our old location and onto our new site, with a fully functioning hospital, flight cage, a fenced in fawn release area, functioning infrastructure, and several other out-builds by the end of May, 2017....and we currently don't have enough funding. In short, your financial help is needed.

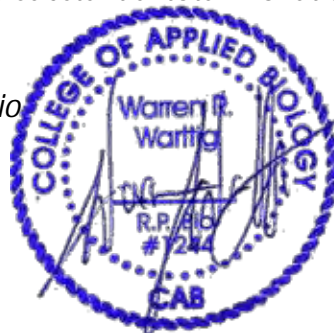
We have 81 active volunteers at MARS Wildlife Rescue. Our volunteers contributed **9,588 hours** of their time in 2015. This is only what volunteers have submitted their time; the actual volunteer time is likely much higher. For example, our local veterinary clinics contribute an incredible amount of time.

Our Board of Directors and associated committees have shown an incredible team effort that is not often seen in volunteer organizations. Our adopted educational birds are popular at many public events that we attend. The dedication and the quality of work of our volunteers and staff, is inspiring.

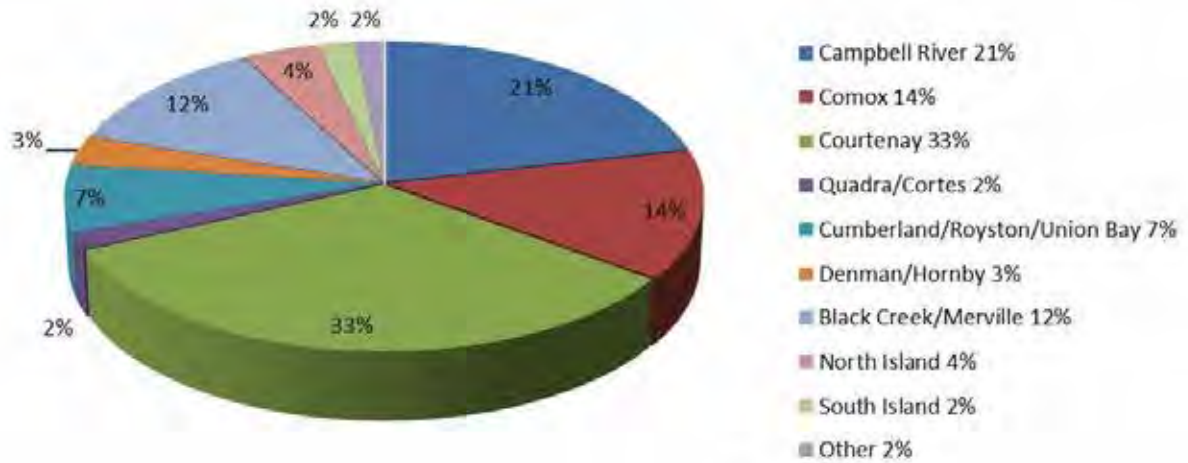
We received donations from people all over the world; many of the donations were small, but the sheer number cumulated to a substantial total. Donations are our single biggest funding source (thanks all!).



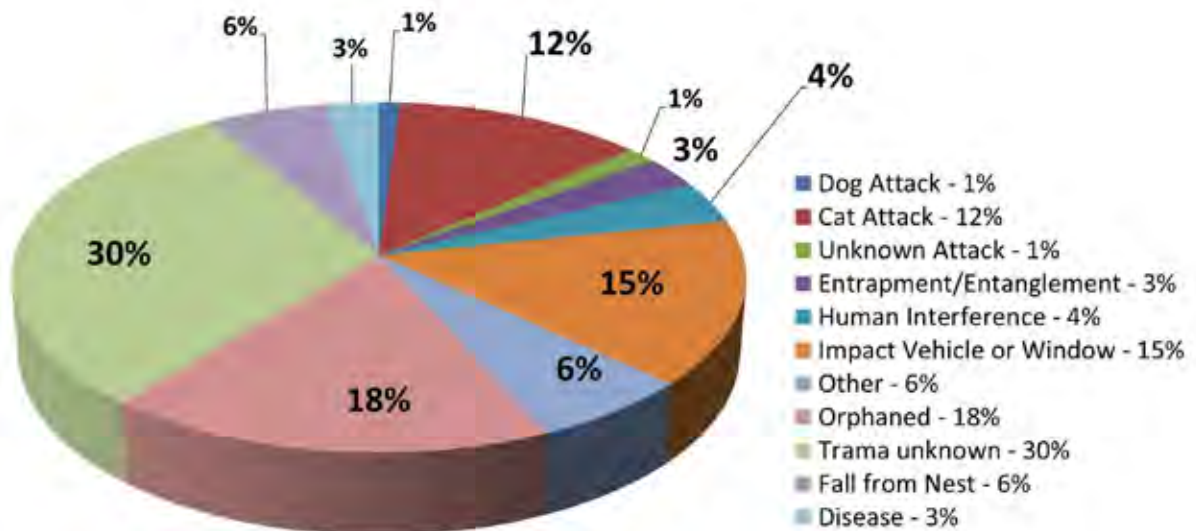
*Warren Warttig, RPBio  
President*



### Source of Injured Wildlife brought to MARS Wildlife Rescue



### Cause of Injured Wildlife brought to MARS Wildlife Rescue



## IN MEMORY OF MARY JANE (MAJ) BIRCH

1949 - 2015

Our founder, Maj Birch, slipped away very quietly at home with friends and family on November 18, 2015 only a few months after a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer. We miss her greatly.

Maj and her husband Keith founded MARS on their home property twenty-one years ago, in 1995. Keith managed the accounting, report writing and other business matters while Maj dedicated herself to rescuing injured, sick or abandoned wildlife. There clearly was a need, as the caseload grew to over 700 patients during the last years of her life.

By this time, Maj had recruited volunteers and a rehabilitator to work with her. As a result of their combined efforts, almost 9,000 injured, sick or abandoned animals on the northern half of Vancouver Island have received care. This caseload includes birds (from the smallest baby Hummingbirds to Tundra Swans with a six foot wingtip spread) and mammals (fawns, bats, squirrels, mink, beaver, etc.).

Maj was also committed to sharing with the public what she learned while doing rehabilitation work. A generation of school children has explored, discovered and increased their awareness and appreciation for wildlife and the habitat they need through the education programs she established. Maj also partnered with other environmental organizations to conserve habitat and to raise awareness of the negative impact our human activities can have on Vancouver Island wildlife.

Before she died Maj had two objectives. The first was to celebrate the 20th anniversary of MARS by thanking the people who have been a big part of the success of this organization. Our anniversary event was held Friday October 23rd in Merville's Big Yellow Hall with an abundance of good music, food and conversation. Maj wanted the focus to be on MARS' supporters, not her illness. She left the hospital to attend this party and had a wonderful time.



Maj's second objective, construction of a new wildlife hospital and educational centre, is her legacy. On the day we took possession of the new property, with our benefactor Michel Woodrow's family in attendance, Maj told reporters: "I've been dreaming about this for at least 10 years. Although my property has served us well, we have outgrown it tremendously. It's inadequate because we don't have enough water and it is ALR land so we're restricted in having public access. More and more of the public is coming to see what it is we do."



Maj was full of ideas for the educational or interpretative centre that we are planning to build, especially for children, our greatest supporters. She wanted kids to get their hands in the dirt or wetlands and connect with the natural world. And yes, we took notes and look forward to putting those ideas into action.

Although Maj did not live long enough to see her dream become a reality, she will always be with us. MARS is a strong organization. Maj's values are embedded in our Constitution and policies. Her skills and knowledge in caring for injured and sick wildlife have been passed on to others. And, perhaps most importantly, Maj inspired a large caring community of MARS' supporters, people who are committed to carrying on her work.



## CONSTITUTION

1. The name of the Society is Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society (MARS)
2. The purpose of the Society is:
  - a. To rescue, transport, rehabilitate, and release ill, injured, orphaned, or oiled wildlife.
  - b. To educate the general public about wildlife issues through lectures, displays, workshops, reports and publications.
  - c. To contribute to the knowledge and understanding of wildlife by participating in research, and sharing that information with wildlife organizations and the general public through meetings, seminars, conferences, reports and publications.
  - d. To conserve and protect wildlife and promote conservation of wildlife habitat.
3. Upon winding up or dissolution of the Society, the ordinary resolution authorizing such winding up shall specify that any remaining assets belonging to the Society shall be distributed to a registered society having objectives similar to those of the Society, after all debts have been paid, or a provision for payment made. This provision is unalterable.

## 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 and educate the public about their effect on nature and how to reduce that impact.

## OBJECTIVES

Provide a safe, stress-free environment for wildlife to recover. To contribute to the knowledge and understanding of wildlife by participating in research and sharing information with wildlife and professional organizations and the general public through meetings, lectures, displays, workshops, seminars, conferences, reports and publications.

## PHILOSOPHY

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

The intensive care unit (ICU) at the centre and outdoors pens are off-limits to the public due to permit restrictions and because wildlife become stressed around people. We endeavor to maintain high standards of care and ethics and to work cooperatively with many related organizations.

We strongly advise against keeping any wildlife species as pets and make every effort to ensure that all wildlife patients remain wild. We work closely with several local area veterinarians and receive many referrals from the SPCA. Before admitting any case, every effort must be made to resolve the situation (e.g. reunite fledglings with their parents). We are not a relocation service for nuisance animals.

We are primarily concerned with treating those animals which are in distress due to human related activities (e.g. car, cat, oil). Human intervention (picking up fledglings off the ground) is discouraged and return to the parent should be immediate. Where it can be determined, we will not interfere with animals in distress due to a natural process (e.g. natural predator/prey interactions).

The responsibility of care of domestic animals falls under the jurisdiction of the Veterinarian Act. Therefore, we cannot accept or attempt to diagnose problems concerning domestic animals, accept them for treatment, housing, or try to find homes for them. This includes chickens, peacocks, domestic ducks and pigeons.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2015/16

<p>Warren Warttig – President  <a href="mailto:Warren.Warttig@Interfor.com">Warren.Warttig@Interfor.com</a>  Registered Professional Biologist, Interfor  3811 Mitlenatch Drive  Campbell River, BC V9H 1J7  Home: 250 926-0001  Work: 250 286-5168</p>	<p>Maureen Woodruff - Treasurer  Bookkeeper, Pateman and Company  1137 Sand Pines Crescent,  Comox, BC V9M 3V3  <a href="mailto:moeart@shaw.ca">moeart@shaw.ca</a>  Home: 250 339-4752</p>
<p>Pearl McKenzie – Vice President  <a href="mailto:pearl_mckenzie@telus.net">pearl_mckenzie@telus.net</a>  Retired Consultant  8685 Beach Crescent,  Black Creek, BC V9J 1K1  Home: 250 337-1934  Cell: 250-650-6837</p>	<p>Julie Hunt – Secretary  Resource Consultant  158 Manor Drive  Comox, BC V9M 1C7  <a href="mailto:wholio12@shaw.ca">wholio12@shaw.ca</a>  Home: 250 339-0980 (fax the same)  Cell: 250 218-4960</p>
<p>John Turner  <a href="mailto:johnjt@shaw.ca">johnjt@shaw.ca</a>  Retired Conservation Officer  926 Stewart Ave  Courtenay, BC V9N 3H2  Home: 250 334-3319</p>	<p>Laurie Ulm  <a href="mailto:ulmpark@telus.net">ulmpark@telus.net</a>  Retired Public Servant  P.O. Box 252, 8030 Memory Lane  Merville, BC V0R 2M0  Home: 250 337-5281</p>
<p>Robert McLennan  <a href="mailto:robert.mclennan9@gmail.com">robert.mclennan9@gmail.com</a>  Trainer/Adult Educator  2000 Embleton Crescent  Courtenay BC V9N 8K1  Cell Phone: 250 465-2578</p>	<p>Megan Burns  <a href="mailto:mhmburns@gmail.com">mhmburns@gmail.com</a>  GIS Specialist, Coastal Woodlands, Interfor  690 Colwyn Street,  Campbell River, BC V9W  Home: 250-895-0229  Work: 250-286-5170</p>
<p>Lynda Hodgkinson  pauljack@telus.net  Retired Medical Office Assistant  2175C Arlington Place  Courtenay, B.C. V9N 9C5  Home: (250) 331-2627  Cell: (250) 792-5075</p>	<p>Paul Jackman  pauljack@telus.net  Retired Accountant  2175C Arlington Place  Courtenay, B.C. V9N 9C5  Home: (250) 331-2627  No cell</p>
<p><u>Staff:</u>  Sarah Gibbins, Program Coordinator  <a href="mailto:coordinator@wingtips.org">coordinator@wingtips.org</a>  Home Phone: (250) 337-2042  Personal Cell (250) 415-8628</p>	<p>Reg Westcott, Supervisor of Animal Care and  Educational Outreach Worker  <a href="mailto:reg@wingtips.org">reg@wingtips.org</a> or <a href="mailto:raptorreg@live.ca">raptorreg@live.ca</a>  Personal Cell: 250-702-3974</p>
<p>Allison Morrison,  Administrative Assistant  <a href="mailto:info@wingtips.org">info@wingtips.org</a>  Home Phone: (250) 335-2261  Personal Cell: (250) 702-3636</p>	

**Full time Staff:** Maj Birch (March 1 – October 31), Sarah Gibbins (Feb 22, 2016) and Reg Wescott  
**Part Time:** Allison Morrison

# REHABILITATION SUMMARY

## Animal Care Statistics

Passerines	378
Raptors	98
Waterfowl	84
Terrestrial Mammal	63
Marine Mammal	6
Shorebirds	47
Game Birds	7
Amphibian/Reptile	3
Other	2

**Total: 688**

**Total Species 119**

## Disposition

Released	165
Transferred/Released	34
Deceased/ Euthanized/DOA	489
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>688</b>

<b>Educational Ambassadors:</b>	<b>6</b>
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Final disposition statistics (excluding invasive species and feral animals)<sup>1</sup>:

- 33 % released
- 33 % euthanized
- 34 % died

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Environment require euthanasia of invasive and feral animals

## PROGRAM COORDINATOR'S REPORT

For those of you who don't know me I am the new Program Coordinator at MARS Wildlife Rescue, having joined the team in February 2016.

I have worked with wildlife for over twenty years in both rehabilitation and zoological settings and have been fortunate enough to work with a variety of species including: elephants, big cats, birds of prey and marine mammals. My particular interest is environmental education and I hope to inspire children and youth to make a difference for local wildlife and their habitats.



I look forward to working with everyone as we transition to our new facility and would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of our volunteers. Last year our volunteers donated 9,588 hours of their time. Their passion and dedication shines through and our wild patients thank them.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Wendy Kotilla and her Youth and Ecological Restoration (YER) Program for all the important work your group has done here at MARS Wildlife Rescue over the years.

The enthusiasm of our summer student volunteers helps us all get through the busy baby season and reminds us why we do what we do. Our Summer Student Volunteers come from all over the world. This program is a great way for students to gain hands on animal care experience and helps them develop the skills needed to pursue wildlife rehabilitation or animal care careers. We are proud to be able to offer such a unique learning opportunity.

Our team here at MARS Wildlife Rescue is very grateful to all our supporters and donors and thank you for your continued support. Together we can make a difference!



*Sarah Gibbins – Program Coordinator*

## REHABILITATION REPORT

Several trends were seen during our peak times at the center. Disease including avian pox was seen in several cases particularly in Common Ravens and Northwestern Crows. Avian pox is a highly contagious disease that is commonly transmitted through mosquitos as well as contact with other infected birds. The disease causes lesions most often seen on the feet, wrists, and eyes which are most likely due to perching in areas that infected birds have been and preening. Patients that come in with the disease are euthanized upon admittance as it is highly untreatable.



Salmonella also had a significant outbreak in Pine Siskins and other songbirds this year. We released a public service announcement to monitor and sanitize bird feeders in order to limit the spread of the disease. We had 12 Dark-eyed Juncos in total with limited success due to cat attacks, salmonella, and other trauma as well.

Myiasis was again seen in several young nestlings that were admitted. Myiasis is a parasitic infection of fly larvae in the feather follicles of birds. This condition is seen most often in featherless, altricial songbirds and occurs before feather growth begins. Through discussions with WildArc (one of our sister organizations) we treat the condition as it appears seasonally with Ivomectin (an anti-parasite medication). This medication can be administered by applying it to the skin and once seen it is applied to all subsequent nestling songbirds that we admit.



We received several Northern Saw-Whet Owls, Northern Pygmy Owls, and Western Screech Owls which can be attributed to a successful winter migration for diminutive owls. This is also evident by the banding numbers received at the Rocky Point Bird Observatory where they banded an estimate of 151 Northern Saw-Whet Owls in one evening at two stations. This was a new record for the observatory.

The successful winter was followed with excessive heat reaching the lower 30°C during the spring months which decimated the Great Blue Heron colonies. Parents were observed trying to shade their young but many nests were unsuccessful and our re-nesting attempts also failed. This was exacerbated by limited food access which can also be attributed to unseasonal temperatures. We expect to see fewer juvenile and sub-adult Great Blue Heron patients in 2016 due to this.

We were able to successfully introduce seven orphaned goslings to wild parents in Fanny Bay. These were the first goslings that we had seen in ten years and knowing that reintegrating into foster families have been successful in Canada geese we decided to try. We hid behind shellfish cages and allowed the goslings to vocalize. The adult geese approached us after hearing the goslings and we would then let them join the adult. Each gosling was successfully accepted and it was a great experience for our volunteers.

We had a success rate of 100% with the 16 orphaned fawns we received. Our change of protocol to using strictly natural human-grade foods and focusing intently on husbandry proved to be a success with our fawns. We no longer use instant formulas, cleaning is more frequent and the fawns are quarantined from other patients at MARS. Astrid McCloud, a respected nutritionist with the WRN who has provided several of our recipes, created the formula that we now use for fawns as well as formulas for squirrels and raccoons. The success was extremely rewarding after our troubles the previous year.

The standout patient of this year had to be the Golden Eagle we admitted. He was a first-year bird and was admitted thin and water-logged who was the first in three years. He was transferred to NIWRA to finish his rehabilitation and was sent to the interior to be released with another Golden Eagle. He was fitted with a telemetry transmitter and is being tracked due to their threatened status. We admitted a total of 39 Bald Eagles during this year which is fairly low for our usual numbers. Many of the patients suffered either from emaciation or car impacts. Another uncommon patient admitted was a Boreal Owl which we have never had admitted at the center. A Boreal Owl has not been sighted in the valley for 27 years and unfortunately this patient succumbed shortly after arrival.

Thank you to all of our volunteers, staff, and students for making our work possible. We are looking forward to another successful year and to beginning to build our future home.

*Reg Westcott*, Supervisor of wildlife Care



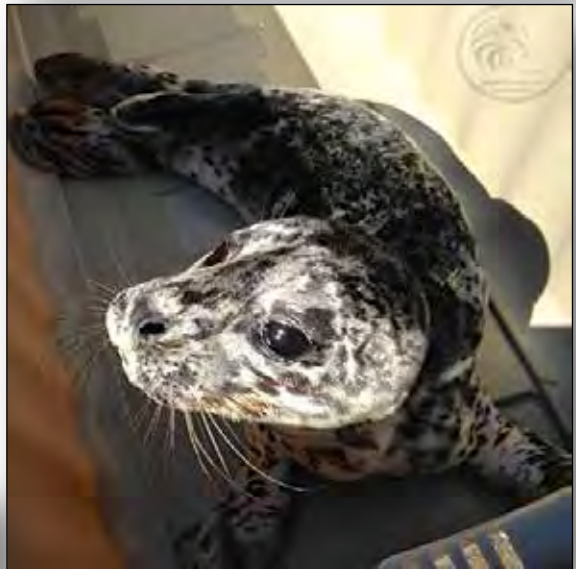
## EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAM REPORT

Our staff, volunteers and ambassadors (educational birds) had a busy year. We delivered 44 presentations at community events throughout the north Island area. Because many of these events take place over a two or three day period, we are able to reach many thousands of people. Thank you to the organizers of the larger events, e.g. Kitty Coleman and Woodland Gardens, Courtenay Fish and Game, Canada Day, Courtenay Market Day, Loggers Sports, Comox Nautical Days, CVEX Fall Fair for inviting us to attend.

In addition, we made smaller presentations to visitors to Miracle Beach Park, summer day camps, service clubs, seniors' centres and seniors' residences. Staff and volunteers also went into 13 school classrooms in School District 71 and 72 with our educational birds to talk about wildlife and wildlife habitat and distribute materials developed during our recent Great Blue Heron project funded by TD Friends of the Environment.

A number of children and their families also visited our centre for class projects and to present their donations after investing time in their own fundraising events. We enjoy having small groups join us at the rehabilitation center for tours to learn more about what we do and meet the ambassador birds.

**Sarah Gibbins** – Program Coordinator



## SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE REPORT

We started off the year with a bang! We moved forward with the purchase of almost 11 acres of land on which to build the NEW MARS. The committee was brainstorming on ways to raise funds to pay off the property and proceed with infrastructure and construction of buildings. A spring raffle was the order of the day and we got busy selling tickets wherever we could with the draw being held at our Open House on April 11th. Raffle sales were \$4600. Open House proceeds were slightly over \$1700.

Our next venture was a Crowdfunding campaign called Mayday for MARS which was launched on May 1st of last year. The goal was to raise \$350,000 to build the hospital. A separate committee was formed and worked to put together a video to plead our urgent need to the public.



Eight year old Stella Swanson and her sister Sophie were videoed singing a song for MARS written by Stella and her family. Reg (accompanied by our Ambassador Red-tailed hawk, Scarlett) and Sandy Royer (accompanied by Northern Saw Whet owl, Sawyer) were also in the video which the Swanson's gave to MARS. It was subsequently aired on CHEK TV as well as put on the crowdfunding site and the MARS website. The campaign ran for two months ending on June 30th. We were able to raise about \$18,000.

**May events:** We were on site at Kitty Coleman Woodland Garden Spring Festival for three days. The festival is where we kicked off our summer raffle, and proceeds from those three days were \$2,200 for raffle sales and donations. Once again

there were some fabulous prizes generously donated.

**June events:** In early June we attended the Courtenay and District Fish and Game Outdoor Show. This is a two-day event and takes place along the shores of beautiful Comox Lake. Raffle ticket sales were \$860. There was nothing much sold in the way of merchandise. Also in June, The Prime Chop House and Wine Bar was the site of our next fundraiser which included dinner and a beverage for \$20 as well as music and a silent auction. Attendance at the dinner was less than we had hoped for, bringing in \$330 from the Prime as their donated portion of the dinners but the silent auction brought in \$1,422, and with raffle tickets and donations our total was \$1,972.

**July events:** MARS attended several events and also set up outside various stores selling raffle tickets and merchandise. The places we attended were: Campbell River Senior's Centre, Pet Lover's Lane at Simms Park, Canada Day at Lewis Park, Campbell River Walmart, Market Day in Courtenay and River City Arts Festival in Campbell River; total proceeds were \$5,141.00 A very successful month's work.

**August events:** We attended Nautical Days on the first three days of August. \$2,586 was raised (raffle ticket sales - \$2,120, general donations - \$336.00 and donations for the new wildlife hospital - \$130.00). Next was the hugely popular logger sports competition at the Salmon Festival in Campbell River. Aug 7, 8, 9. With contributions from the organizers for time keeping for the logger sports, raffle ticket sales and donations, we raised \$2,400. Raffle tickets were sold in August at Thrifty's in Crown Isle for a total of \$1,020 and \$225 was raised in donations (total \$1,245). Raffle tickets were also sold outside of the Bank Nova Scotia raising \$510 in ticket sales and \$123.53 in donations for a total of \$633.53. MARS attended the Comox Valley Fall Fair in August raising a total of \$1,131.75 (Raffle Tickets \$1,090.00, Hospital Donations \$15.00, General Donations \$26.75)

**September events:** A booth was set up at Thrifty's in Campbell River on Sept 4; \$850 was raised in raffle sales and donations. We attended Kitty Coleman Sept 5, 6 and 7. There were raffle ticket sales of \$2,580, general donations and merchandise of \$290.00, and donations of \$228.70. We attended the Black Creek Fair on Sept 12, raising a total of \$1,780.



**Tote launch:** This proved to be a good venture; \$5,568 was raised from September to the end of the fiscal year at the end of February with plans to continue.

**October events:** We attended the Foggy Mountain Fair and raised \$227.35 (tote bags \$200, donations \$27.35). The Merville Fall Fair Oct 4 was attended raising a total of \$173. MARS 20th anniversary celebration was held on October 23; the silent auction at this event raised \$2,364. The 1250 Club campaign was launched in October. This is where members of the public can purchase a virtual square foot of the new wildlife hospital for \$100. This campaign has been very successful, generating revenue of \$29,300 in just over four months and it is continuing to bring in funds for the new wildlife hospital. We set up at the Comox Mall for three days (Oct 28 – 30) raising a total of \$1,370.02 (Tote Bag sales \$1,180, donations \$190.20).

**November Events:** We attended the Comox Mall, the Driftwood Mall

**December Events:** MARS took part in the Black Creek Craft Fair and the Filberg Lodge Christmas Craft Fair. There was a presentation at the Berwick Retirement Community in Comox; this was enjoyed by the residents who loved seeing a raptor up close.

**February Events:** MARS hosted the 11th annual Bald Eagle Festival on February 27<sup>th</sup> 2016 at the Maritime Heritage Centre in Campbell River. Attendance was very rewarding with 581 men women and children coming to the event. Our ambassador birds were a huge hit as always and the children were quite fascinated by the little owls in particular. Our proceeds from the 1250 Club, tote bags, food and other merchandise were \$7,500.00 (including a donation from BC Hydro).

It has been another busy year and a daunting task trying to raise money for the new hospital as well as for daily operations at the centre. We live in a very giving community but there are so many organizations trying to raise money for their equally important causes, making our objective all the more difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, our dedicated Special Events committee continually attempts to come up with new and exciting ways to accomplish this.

I would like to thank the members of the committee for willingly exploring new ideas and for taking on new events as well as working at regular yearly venues. My gratitude extends to all MARS members who contribute to making it all a success. I say it every year but it bears repeating ...that our Ambassador birds are such an important part of what we do and I would like to thank them, Reg and the other handlers for helping to educate the public regarding our precious wildlife and their habitat.

**Lynda Hodgkinson** – Chair, Special Events Committee



## CONSTRUCTION REPORT

There has not been much construction for 2015. Just a few small jobs most of the roof on the fish and wildlife building (one of the satellite recovery buildings) was replaced. There was burning of the broom piles at our new site, also we had a good turnout for more broom bashing with loaned tools. A job well done.

There was a lot of deconstruction taken on Saltspring Island by Warren, myself, Robert, Bill, Ian, Juliette and Vanille. We signed a new contract with the regional district for the maintenance of headquarters town site Park and One Spot Trail. Brian Mitchell has taken this job on and keeps it in good shape.

There was not much in the way of construction projects in 2015 other than an upgrade and renovation of the ICU building; but I believe that this low level of construction activity is about to change, as we now have our newly purchased property and we have two years to get a new MARS wildlife rehabilitation centre up and running. We have had a crew come out to do some broom bashing that made a great start. Jo Stiles and her husband Ian came with their Bobcat and Flailed broom and alder at least 3 times.

Warren surveyed and marked out the property, Maj marked trees to be saved. Wendy Kotilla came with her youth to do some tree planting along with Maj. Jason and Shana as well as Reg and Nathan helped with the burning. All broom and alder piles that were stacked are now burned. Warren and Robert designed and surveyed the wetland. Robert Warren and I started fencing Lot 3 with the help of Bruce Jones.

I cleared out a trail to the well on the new property and around the old well house on Lot 3. Maj said we will have to make a plug for the well top. I went to Cumberland Cement to price one out and they don't make them like that anymore, so I had to fabricate one.

Reg and I put together a bunk bed in the bunk house for the extra summer students. We also made a moveable duck pen.

**John Turner** – Chair, Construction Committee



## SPREADING OUR WINGS REPORT

As the beginning of the 2015/16 fiscal year, MARS had just purchased a 4.4 hectare or 11 acre property on the corner of Williams Beach Road and the Old Island Highway in Merville. Our founder, Maj Birch, described this as a “dream come true, our society will finally be able to realize our goals for expansion”.

MARS invested \$389,500 in this property, of which \$300,000 was a generous bequest from Michele Woodrow, but needed another \$30,000 before May 15 to complete the purchase. Our fundraising team raised \$20,000 in a few short months. This was topped up by a valued supporter of MARS, Sharron Lewis, who donated \$10,000. MARS now owned property, mortgage free, and could begin planning our new facility. As the year went on, MARS was able to raise an additional \$100,000 to put toward our building fund. This amount includes \$10,000 from the Comox Valley Community Foundation for a solar hot water heater and \$34,000 from the Blue Moon Foundation to finish the inside of the wildlife hospital.



Every year we must raise \$150,000 for operating expenses. This is done through raffle sales, fundraisers, sales of donated merchandise and donations. During the 2015/16 fiscal year, MARS volunteers, staff and supporters raised that amount plus the \$130,000 needed for purchase and development of the new property. This amounts to a very impressive total of \$380,000.

In December MARS applied to the Comox Valley Regional District to rezone our property to allow us to build an interpretative or education centre for visitors. This process takes time but Regional District staff have been moving it along as quickly as possible. Members of the Regional District Board have generously waived fees for this application. We expect to have final approval in June 2016 at which time we can apply for building permits.

Our goal is to begin operating from our new site in May 2017. In the meantime, our fundraising efforts continue. MARS' supporters are contributing whatever they are able to the development costs. The 1250 Club (\$100 will build one square foot of the new hospital) was almost \$30,000 by the end of the fiscal year. MARS' members are very grateful to our Special Events and Fundraising Committee and supportive community.

*Pearl McKenzie*, Vice President

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

The following Board members were elected for a two year term at the 2015 Annual General Meeting held on May 30, 2015 at the Merville Community Hall and will complete their term next year in 2017:

- Robert McLennan
- John Turner
- Kaleena Singleton

Board members regret that Maureen Woodruff will not be running for re-election. Maureen has served as treasurer for the past two years. Kaleena Singleton, elected in 2015, resigned from the Board during the past year for maternity leave. We thank Maureen and Kaleena for their valuable contribution to MARS.

The following Board members, who were elected in 2014 and are finishing their term this year, have indicated that they are willing to continue to serve as directors on the Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society Board for a two year term to end in 2018. I nominate:

- Julie Hunt
- Laurie Ulm
- Warren Warttig
- Megan Burns
- Pearl McKenzie

I also nominate three people who are new to the MARS Board but have actively been assisting with MARS' fundraising and public relations over past months:

- Jamie Bryant
- Brian Mitchell
- Lenore Gibson

If elected, Lenore, Brian and Jamie will complete their term in the spring of 2018.

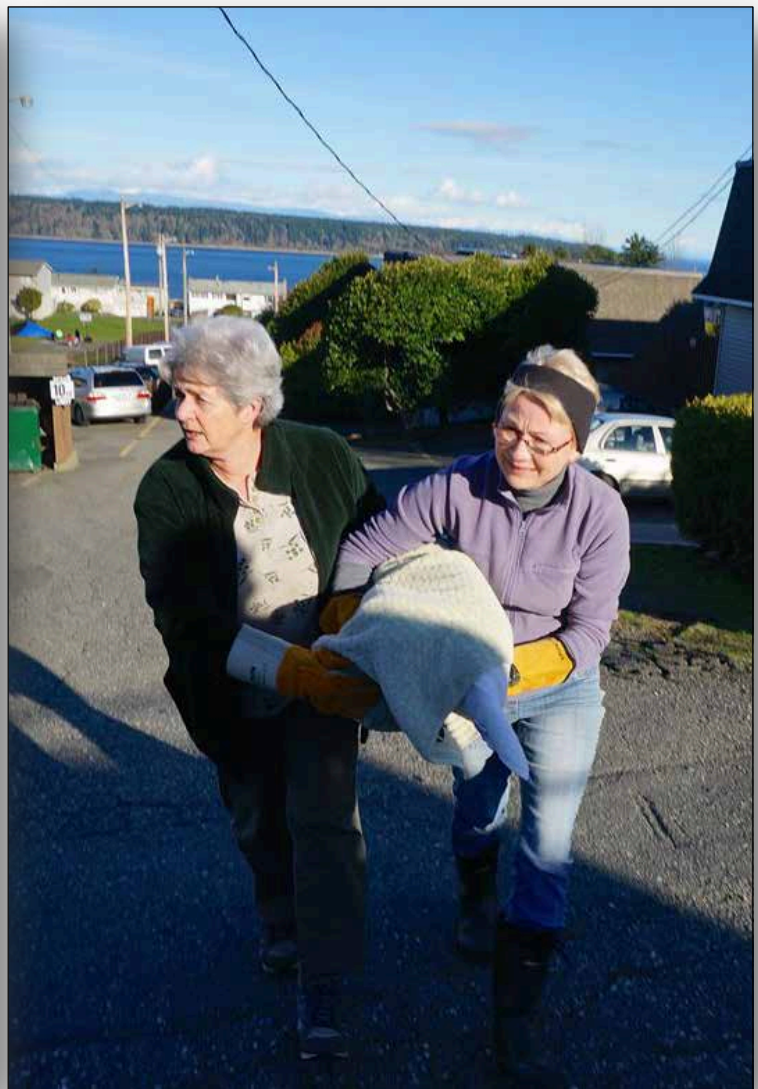
*Pearl McKenzie and Robert McLennan, Nominating Committee*



Bob Lemay photo.

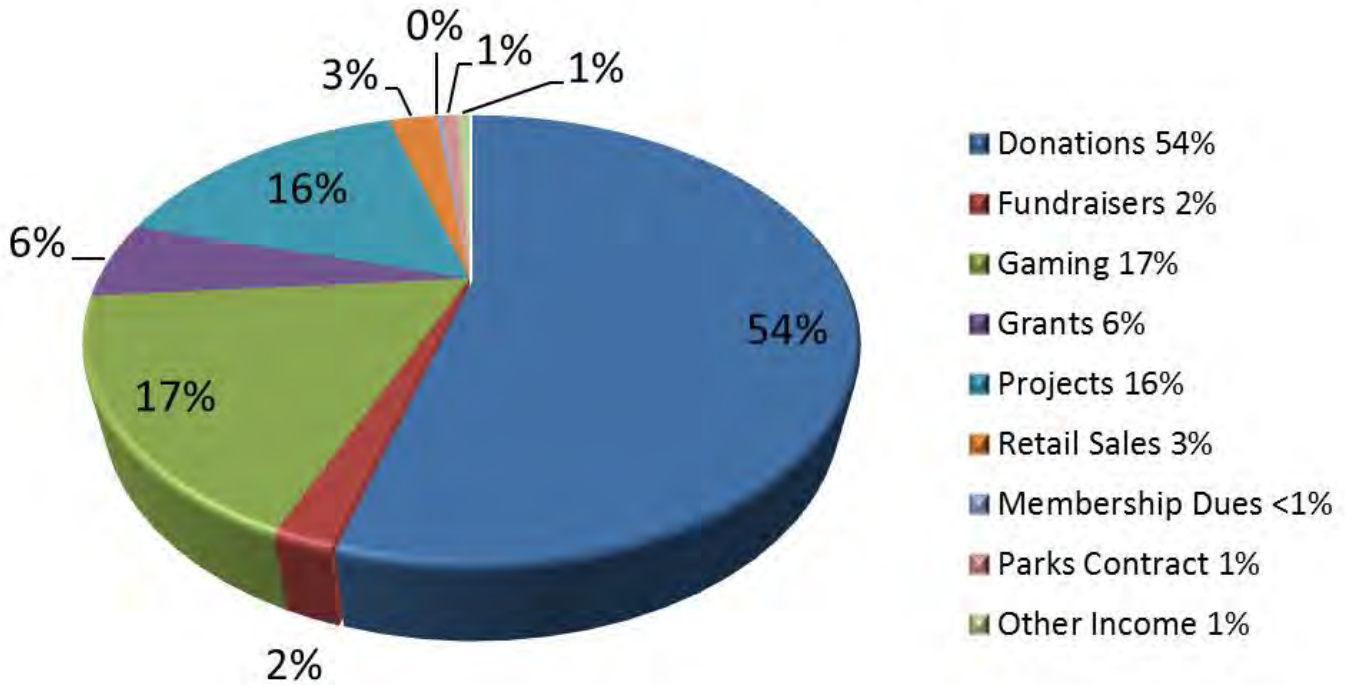


Sandy Royer Eagle rescue



Sandy Royer and Jackie Chamberlain

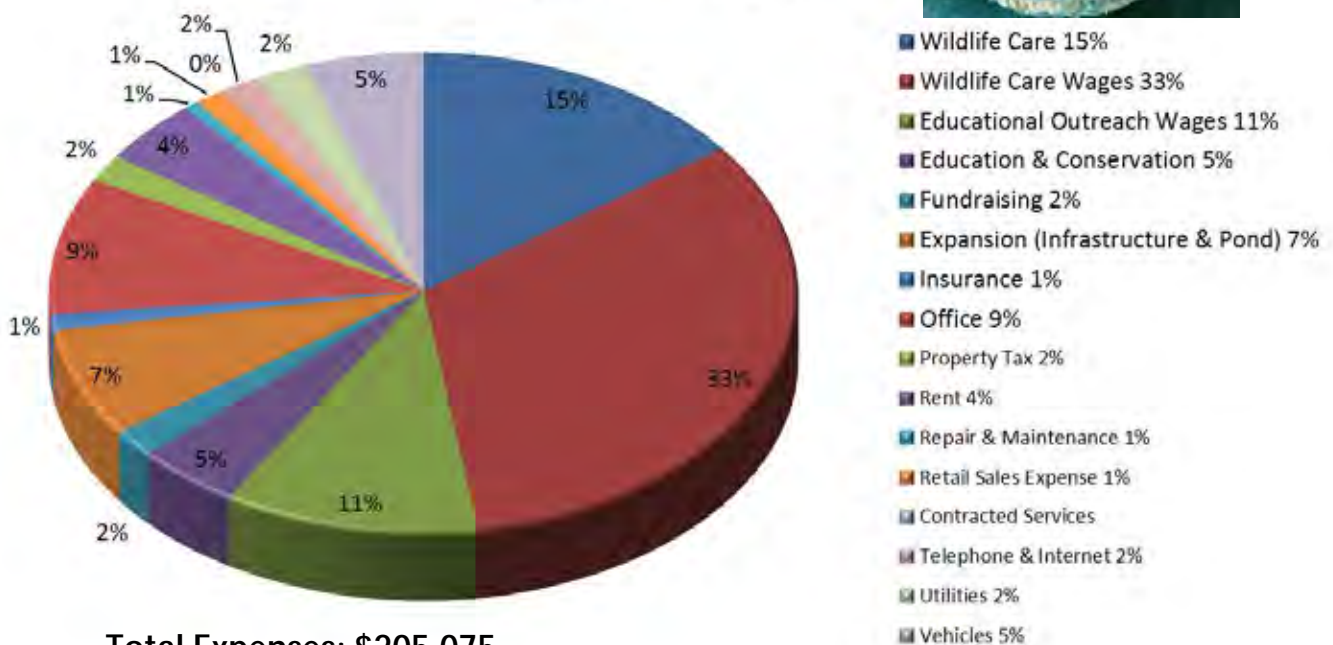
## Sources of Funding 2015



Total Income: \$337,724



## Use of Funding 2015



Total Expenses: \$205,075

## Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society Balance Sheet

	Year Ended Feb 29, 2016	Year Ended Feb 28, 2015
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash on hand	469	595
General Accounts	29,830	60,509
Gaming Account	22,088	12,594
Expansion Accounts	101,760	841
Restricted Project Funds	1,000	6,000
GST Receivable	1,193	10,324
	156,339	90,863
<b>Capital Assets</b>		
Land	389,500	389,500
Furniture & Equipment	17,727	15,164
Building	38,184	40,070
Vehicles & Trailers	12,665	3,067
	458,076	447,801
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>614,415</b>	<b>538,664</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Short Term Debt	-	30,000
Accounts Payable	3,356	10,833
	3,356	40,833
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Capital Assets	458,076	447,801
Unrestricted Assets	50,224	43,189
Restricted Assets	102,760	6,841
	611,059	497,831
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Fund Balances</b>	<b>614,415</b>	<b>538,664</b>

**Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society**  
Statement of Operations

	Year Ended Feb 29, 2016	Year Ended Feb 28, 2015
<b>REVENUES</b>		
Community Gaming Grant	38,000	35,000
Licensed Gaming Revenue	20,270	20,410
Government Grants	8,375	9,875
Corporate Grants	10,500	12,500
Donations	183,939	95,606
Bequests	-	1,000
Memberships	845	1,222
Fundraising	6,692	17,401
Project Grants	55,000	6,000
Retail Sales	8,798	1,980
Comox Valley Regional District Contract	3,100	3,100
Interest and Other Income	2,205	5,005
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>337,725</b>	<b>209,099</b>
<b>"In-Kind" Income:</b>		
Labour	199,436	122,412
Services (animal transport, advertising)	30,454	20,613
Materials	10,581	5,885
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>240,471</b>	<b>148,910</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>578,196</b>	<b>358,009</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
<u>Program Expenses</u>		
Wildlife Care	30,402	21,932
Educational	5,975	5,370
Conservation	3,258	1,876
Fundraising	3,897	2,223
Wages, CPP, EI, WCB	89,880	97,951
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>133,411</b>	<b>129,351</b>
<u>General &amp; Administrative Expenses</u>		
Accounting & Legal	2,219	2,458
Amortization	9,100	8,212
Expansion (Infrastructure & pond)	14,998	-
Insurance	2,206	2,139
Membership Dues, Licenses, Permits	2,745	699
Office	11,018	5,157
Property Tax	3,748	400
Rent	9,000	9,000
Repairs/Maintenance - Infrastructure	1,346	3,184
Retail Sales	2,648	1,863
Staff & Volunteer Development	2,921	925
Contracted Services	-	1,404
Telephone & Internet	3,581	4,947
Utilities	4,615	4,310
Vehicle Operating	10,619	7,911
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>80,764</b>	<b>52,608</b>
<b>"In-Kind" Expenses</b>		
Labour	199,436	122,412
Services (animal transport, advertising)	30,454	20,613
Materials	10,581	5,885
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>240,471</b>	<b>148,910</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>454,646</b>	<b>330,869</b>
<b>Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>123,549</b>	<b>27,140</b>



Dr. Stacey Gastis



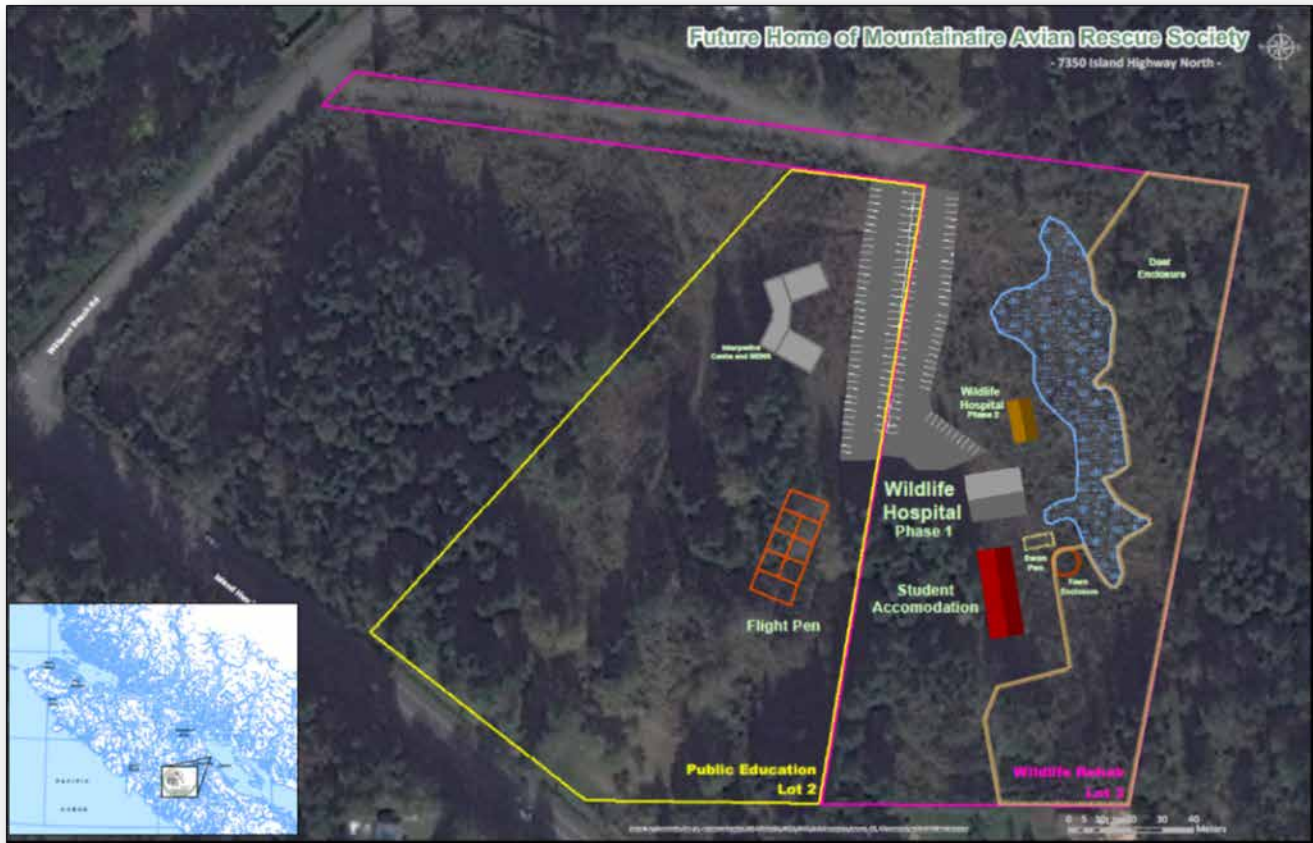
Dr. Stacey Gastis



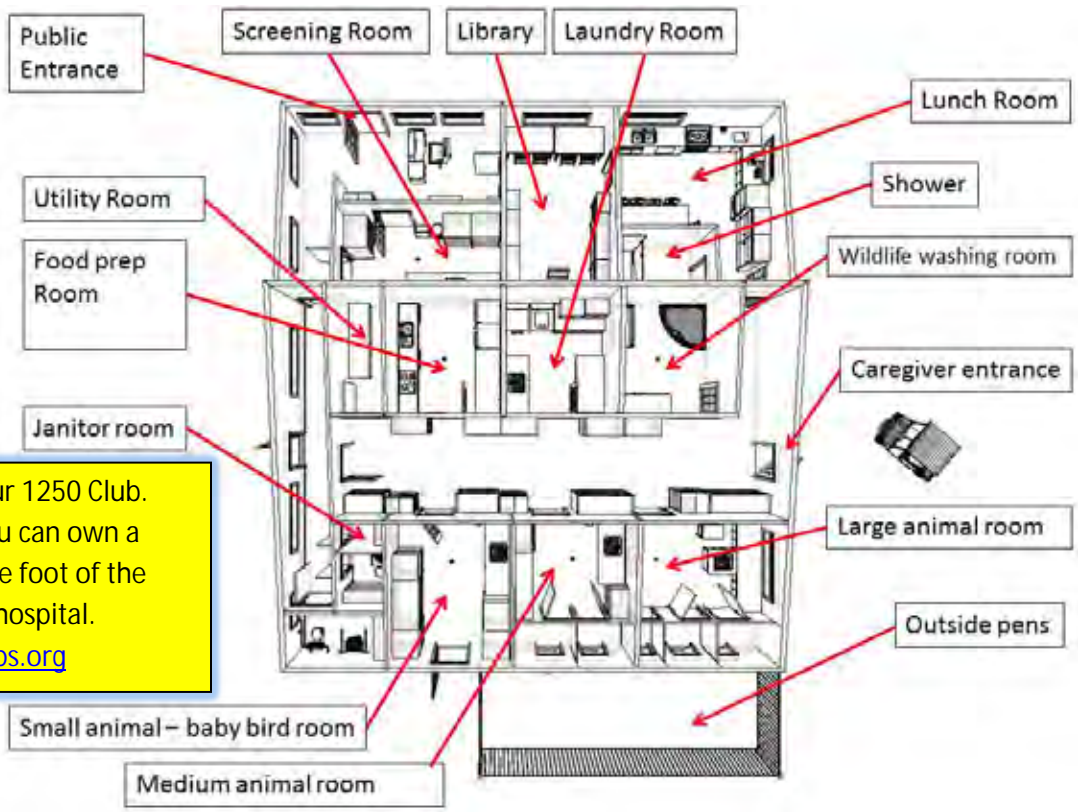
Sandy Royer



# APPENDIX 1 – PROPERTY DESIGN OF NEW-MARS 2016

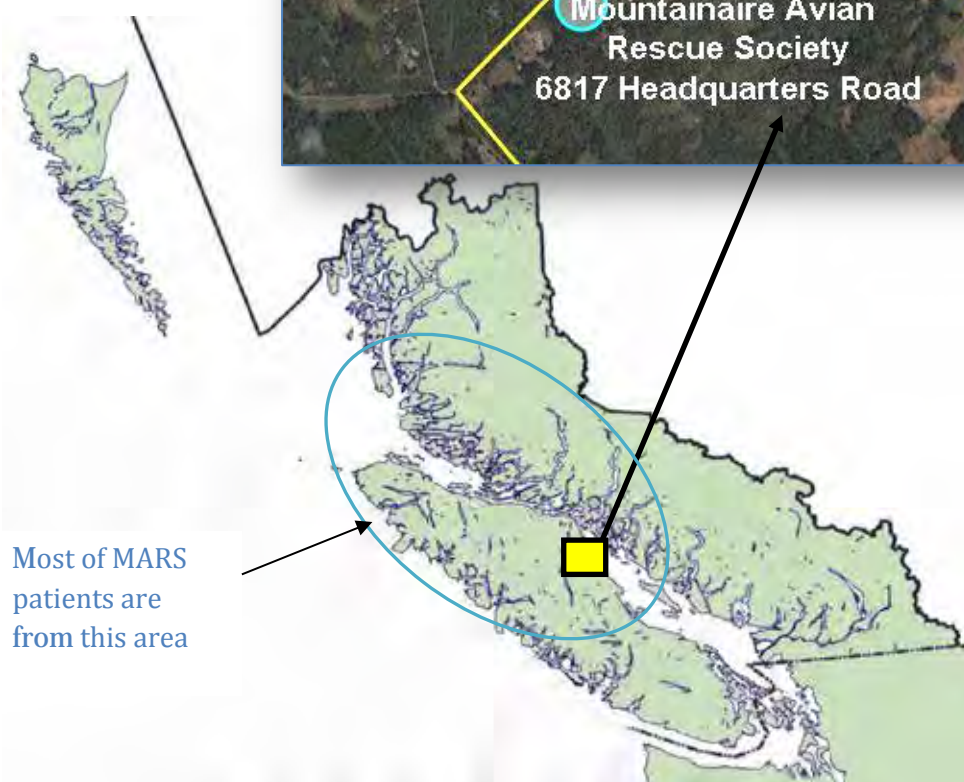


## Hospital Design



Check out our 1250 Club. For \$100, you can own a virtual square foot of the new animal hospital. [www.wingtips.org](http://www.wingtips.org)

# DIRECTIONS TO MARS



Most of MARS patients are from this area

