

**DEMOLITION WILL LEAVE SICK, INJURED AND ORPHANED
WILD ANIMALS WITHOUT HELP**

~ Charity wildlife hospital in Downsview Park targeted for demolition ~

(TORONTO: December 12, 2011) – Toronto Wildlife Centre (TWC), the only help for sick and injured, and orphaned wildlife in the Greater Toronto Area, has been told by its landlord, Downsview Park, that its building has been targeted for demolition and the charity will soon have to move.



“This news was such a shock,” the centre’s executive director Nathalie Karvonen said. “We have no extra funds to handle an emergency of this size. If we close down, even for a short time, there is no other wildlife centre in the Greater Toronto Area to help the tens of thousands of people who call our hotline, and the 5,000 wild animals that we care for each year.”

The centre is appealing to the community for help. Right now the most urgent need is to figure out options for a new location. Up to 20,000 square feet of indoor space is needed and 15 to 20 acres of land. This is a tall order for Toronto, so the centre could possibly divide their operations with a smaller admission / emergency medical care facility located in Toronto, working in conjunction with another facility near Toronto which has more space. The ideal location would be low or no cost, perhaps a partner interested in environmental education, and would be somewhere where TWC could finally have a long-term home.

“We need to have a “community brainstorm” to figure things out, and we need to do it fast,” Karvonen says. “We will be out on the street unless we find a new home soon. Even if the perfect location dropped out of the sky tomorrow, it will still take an incredible amount of work to rebuild the hospital.”

The facility is very specialized for the types of wild animals it helps. It has pools for loons, flight cages for hawks, owls and falcons, smaller soft-sided flight cages for little birds like cardinals and woodpeckers, specialized pools for injured turtles, pens with metal-lined walls for beavers, a full veterinary hospital for wildlife, nurseries for orphaned wild animals, and much more.



This is the second time the centre has received this bad news from Downsview Park; the first time in 2004 they were given only months to find and renovate a new facility, and move their operations. The community rallied to their side, donating building materials and volunteering to help. Companies, unions, and skilled tradespeople joined in to help, but it still took almost 5 years to get the highly specialized facility completed – with the work being juggled carefully so that the care of the wild patients could continue.

TWC is a registered charity and runs entirely on donations. It receives no government funding.

People are asked to call (416) 631-0662 X 123 or email themove@torontowildlifecentre.com if they have a suggestion or if they can help.

About Toronto Wildlife Centre:

Toronto Wildlife Centre (TWC) is a registered charity whose main focus is assisting sick, injured, orphaned and distressed wildlife, as well as educating the public about wildlife issues.

TWC operates entirely on donations and receives no government funding. Despite receiving no government funding, many government agencies refer calls to TWC and rely on them to provide services to the public and wildlife.

TWC is the busiest wildlife centre in Canada, handling up to 30,000 phone calls and admitting up to 5,000 patients each year. TWC works with over 270 different species of wild birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians.



Over a hundred patients are currently being cared for including a sharp-shinned hawk who recently had surgery to repair a broken wing, many blanding's turtles (a threatened species), a beaver, red-tailed hawks, bats, a northern cardinal, red foxes, a bobolink (also a threatened species), an opossum, a wood thrush, mourning doves, a lesser scaup, a cottontail, red squirrels, a gull admitted with a blow dart through his neck (removed in a delicate surgery) and many more.



The centre was the first in Canada to have a full veterinary hospital for native wild animals. The team of veterinarians and registered veterinary technicians are highly specialized in wildlife medicine.

TWC's rescue program is the only one of its kind in Canada. Highly trained staff handle difficult or dangerous animals / situations. Trained in ice rescue, swift water rescue, tree climbing, chemical immobilization, oil spill response, etc., they are available to help 365 days / year.

For more information about the centre, please visit www.torontowildlifecentre.com.

###

If you'd like more information about this topic, or to schedule an interview, please contact:

Toronto Wildlife Centre
Nathalie Karvonen, Executive Director
60 Carl Hall Rd., Unit 4
Toronto, Ontario M3K 2C1
(416) 631-0662 x 3201
director@torontowildlifecentre.com
www.torontowildlifecentre.com

