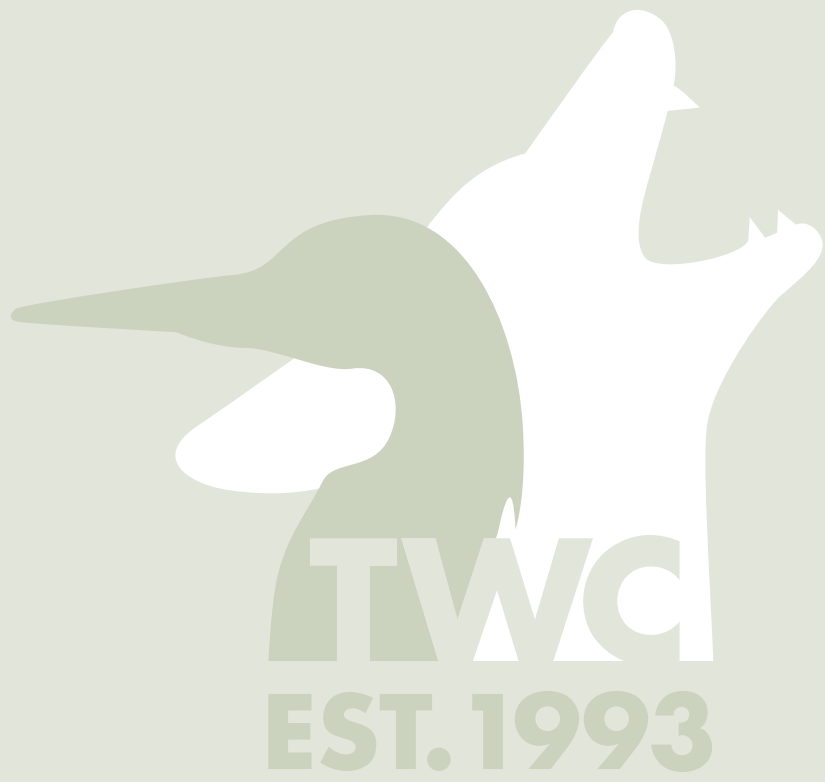


**Toronto Wildlife Centre**  
ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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## OUR MISSION

# Building a healthy community for people and wildlife

## A message from the Executive Director

It's no doubt 2020 was a year different than any other. With the whole world adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic, the team of wonderful staff and volunteers at TWC has continued to work hard every day through this pandemic; helping thousands of wild animals with your support.

In order to keep our doors open, TWC needed to make quick, drastic changes as we headed into our busiest time of the year, spring-time (which is baby season). And proudly, despite the unprecedented challenges, we were still able to help over 5,100 patients in need.

From reducing our number volunteers to ensure safe physical distancing, to moving to a partial work-from-home model for some staff and volunteers, to changing our drop off procedure for important in-kind donations, and so much more... Our team worked quickly and efficiently to keep everyone safe and to continue helping thousands of sick, injured, and orphaned wild animals. Because of your unwavering support, it was possible.

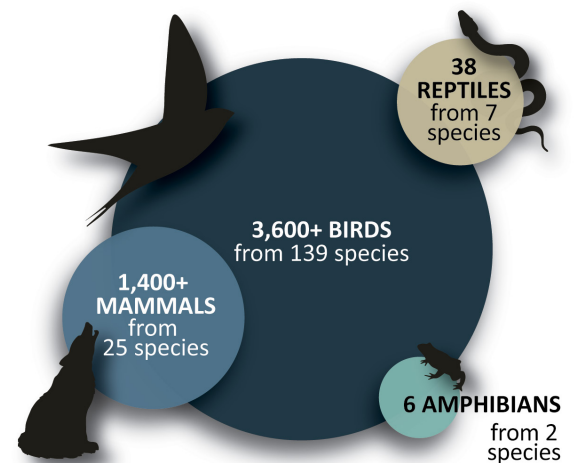
At a time when so many of us feel nervous and uncertain about the future, I hope it provides you some relief knowing you've made a meaningful difference in the lives of wild animals and the people who care about them. My sincerest thanks for being there.

Stay safe,

**Nathalie Karvonen**

*Executive Director & Founder*

## IN 2020 TWC ADMITTED:



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**28,000+**  
FOLLOWERS



**5,800+**  
FOLLOWERS



**18,400+**  
FOLLOWERS

Social media is an integral tool for sharing stories of wild patients and the work we do in the community, and to inspire people to help wildlife.



An educational activity guide prepared for the resumption of in-person events.

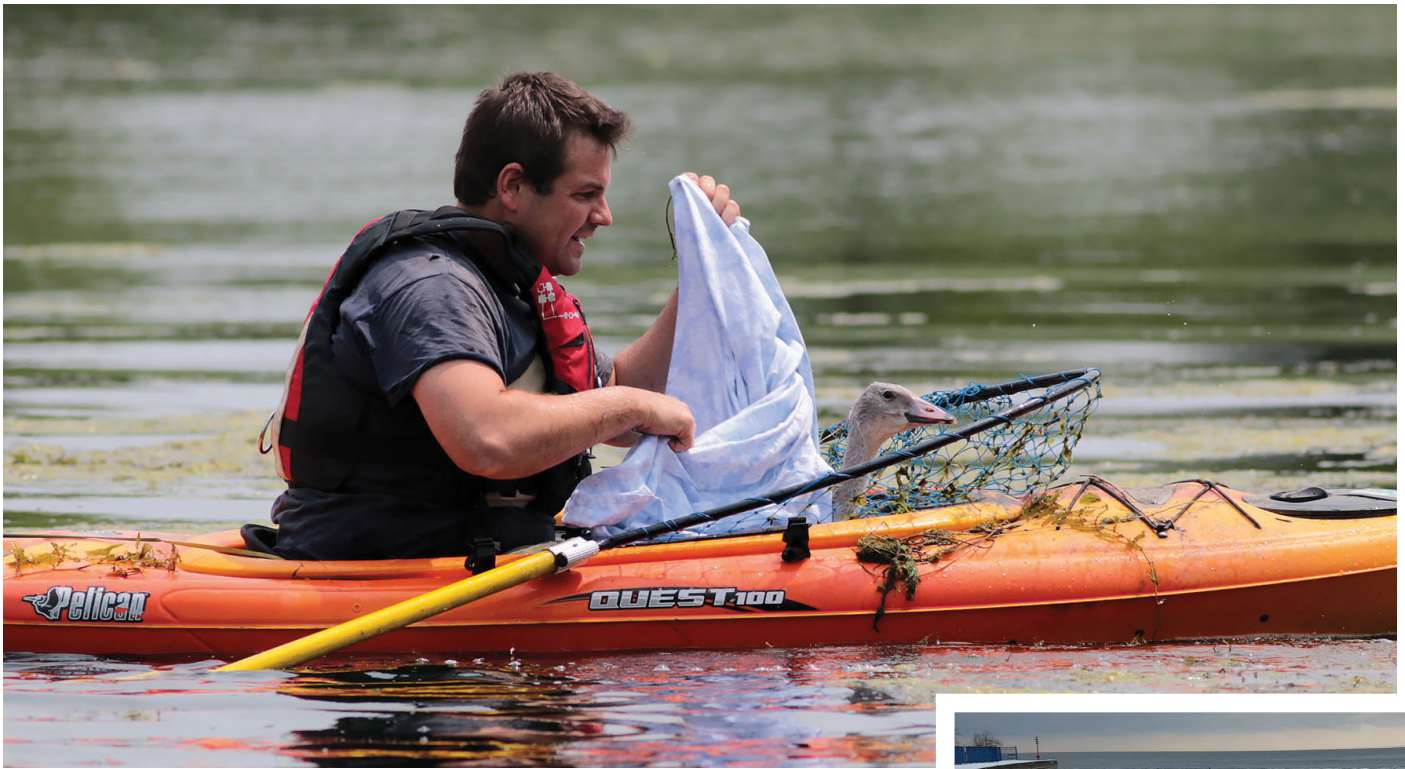
## Wildlife Hotline

TWC's Wildlife Hotline operates like a triage system at a hospital—all callers leave a message, which are then returned in order of urgency. With tens of thousands of calls coming in to the centre, and only a handful of staff to return calls, this system ensures the most urgent calls are returned first.

The Wildlife Hotline also responds to general inquiries about wildlife issues and concerns (like whether it's usual to see raccoon downtown in the middle of the day?). One of the unique aspects of 2020 was a sharp increase in the number of calls from the public with general questions of this nature. From issues affecting wildlife, to reports of wildlife sightings and questions about species' behaviours... With extra 'lockdown' time on their hands, it seemed a lot of people were curious to know about wildlife they share their neighbourhoods with.

## Education & Outreach

TWC provides engaging presentations for all ages—perfect for classrooms, scouting groups, or other clubs or community organizations. With-in person events being suspended in 2020, they started transitioning some of the programming to online platforms. The team also used the time to develop new curriculum-linked programs for schools, which will be introduced once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.



## Wildlife Rescue

In the field, the Wildlife Rescue Team deals with difficult and often dangerous wildlife situations that can't be handled by members of the public or other organizations. TWC is the only wildlife centre in Ontario with a rescue program.

A noticeable trend in 2020 was the record setting number of coyote rescues. It was significantly higher than any year; almost doubling from 2019! The majority of these situations involved the rescues of coyotes who were suffering from cases of mange, a potentially fatal skin disease caused by parasitic mites and introduced by man. Although they're in desperate need of help, coyotes with mange are still incredibly difficult to catch. The Rescue Team really honed their skills this past year on these challenging rescues. In 2020 over 60 coyotes were brought to the centre for life-saving treatment thanks to your support and the Rescue Team's dedicated efforts!



Rescue staff are trained or certificated in a wide variety of skills needed to carry out challenging rescues



Chemical immobilization



Ice rescues



Swift water rescues



Slope evacuation



Working at heights



Oil spill response



And many more



The Rescue Team has to put a lot of time and effort into creatively catching instinctively clever coyotes. Often this requires coordinating with neighbourhood residents. This sick coyote was captured in a trap assembled in a backyard. The image was captured on the Rescue Team's spy cam, an important tool in their arsenal.



The Wildlife Rehabilitation Team responds to an incredible variety of situations, like this blue jay found stuck to a glue trap. The struggling bird was delicately removed using oil and his feathers were washed. He had been fighting to free himself from the powerful adhesive, causing painful lacerations and feather damage.

## Wildlife Rehabilitation

Throughout 2020 TWC admitted 5,175 sick, injured and orphaned wild animals from over 170 unique wild species, making it one of the busiest years in our history.

An immense challenge was the loss of volunteer support in the Wildlife Rehabilitation department, when COVID-19 measures forced us to limit the number of people on site. But the staff continued to work diligently and safely, with help from a small group of interns and senior volunteers. We were also able to foster some wild patients at the homes of experienced staff and volunteers.



*TWC is a licensed wildlife rehabilitation facility operating under permits from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Canadian Wildlife Services. TWC also adheres to the internationally recognized Wildlife Rehabilitators Code of Ethics, developed jointly by National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association and Improving Wildlife Care Worldwide.*



Wildlife veterinarian Dr. Meegan Larsen works skillfully to address a fractured bone on this short-eared owl who's under anesthesia. Procedures of this nature are conducted in the specialized surgery room at TWC. This bird is considered a species-at-risk in Ontario.

**In 2020 the Wildlife Hospital performed many lifesaving procedures and surgeries, including:**



**A MALLARD** who had swallowed and fishing line and hook



**A GROUNDHOG** who had been found under a parked car with a large wound on her chest



**A FOX** who needed the tip of his tail amputated after suffering from a severe case of mange



**A PAINTED TURTLE**, terribly injured after being hit by a car



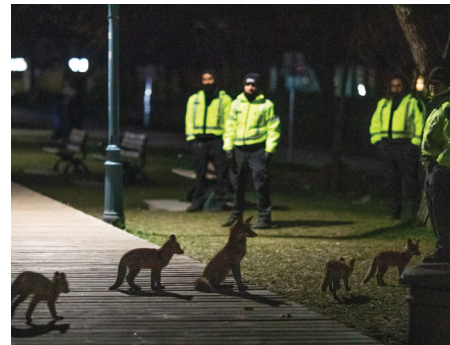
And many, many more...

## Wildlife Hospital

With a dedicated team of wildlife veterinarians, TWC's Wildlife Hospital is the only facility of its kind in Ontario. 2020 brought a steady influx of wild patients needing expert medical care, the Wildlife Hospital had to make adjustments to continue their lifesaving work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the volunteer veterinarians and vet techs the Wildlife Hospital usually works in collaboration with were no longer available. Meaning the team had to do some reconfiguration of their scheduling; fewer people to maintain social distancing, while still tending to as many injured animals as possible. Thanks to great dedication from TWC's community of supporters, in addition to the usual supplies, the Wildlife Hospital also received many generous in-kind donations of PPE.



PHOTO BY RICHARD LAUTENS/COURTESY OF THE TORONTO STAR



**IN THE MEDIA:** These devoted efforts did not go unnoticed and the story generated a lot of media coverage. Here are a few examples:

**MACLEAN'S**

**The tale of Toronto's boardwalk foxes**

Stories of wildlife spreading out into human spaces were common during the unprecedented global coronavirus lockdown. Here's what happens when the humans come back.

**The New York Times**

**Toronto Was Obeying Social Distance Rules. Then Came Adorable Baby Foxes.**

Canada's largest city was politely abiding by a strict coronavirus lockdown. But when a family of foxes set up a den in a prime Toronto location, all bets were off.

**TORONTO STAR**

Toronto is setting up fencing to protect family of foxes at Woodbine Beach

## The Woodbine Beach fox family

A red fox family who had made a home under the Woodbine Beach boardwalk in Toronto garnered a ton of attention in 2020.

The seven pups and their parents were disturbed daily by curious onlookers, dogs, keen photographers, and most unexpectedly, members of the public trying to take “selfies” with the baby foxes. This, along with feeding, caused the pups to become habituated to people, which threatened their chance for survival in the wild. Despite barriers and warning signage being put in place by TWC, along with 24-hour camera monitoring, tragically one baby’s life was lost after an animal attack; likely by an aggressive dog.

Sixty volunteers worked 1,500 hours between May and June, under the guidance of TWC’s Rescue Team, to educate people flocking to see the foxes, to guard the babies from harm as much as they could, and to attempt to re-instill the foxes’ natural fear of people and dogs. Some volunteers even faced threats and attempted violence as a result of their work, and sadly we had to pull them for their own safety. But it had already been almost two months by then, and the fox babies were maturing and exhibiting more normal fox behaviour. Before long the family moved on from this dangerous location.





Leeya, a wildlife care volunteer, carefully administers medication to a dark-eyed junco.

## Volunteer Program

Volunteers are a crucial part of TWC's team! We're only able to carry out our work thanks to the time, expertise and dedication of hundreds of volunteers. They're involved in every facet of operations, including wildlife care, administration, grocery shopping, and much, much more.

When the COVID-19 lockdown measures were announced in the spring, TWC was right on the cusp of the busiest time of year – baby season. The volunteer department had to drastically reduce the number of volunteers on site (down to approximately 25% of the usual hands-on-deck). The volunteers who remained coming into the centre were the most senior volunteers, some with years of experience at TWC. They were prioritized to be part of the lower numbers of people in the building. These hard working individuals offered to take on longer shifts, to train in other types of roles (general support, for example), and several transitioned to our secondary location to ensure physical distancing.

**345**  
VOLUNTEERS  
CONTRIBUTING



**30,300+**  
HOURS



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board members are hard-working, critical, behind-the-scenes volunteers who provide leadership as well as independent and objective oversight of TWC's work.

**Donna Hayes** – *Co-Chair*

**Gary Gibbs**, BA, LLB –  
*Co-Chair*

**Kevin Empey**, CPA (CA), CHE,  
AMP – *Treasurer*

**Lisa Gibbens**, BA,  
MIS – *Secretary*

**Maureen Tymburski**, BA

**Barbara Fanning**, MLS, MBA

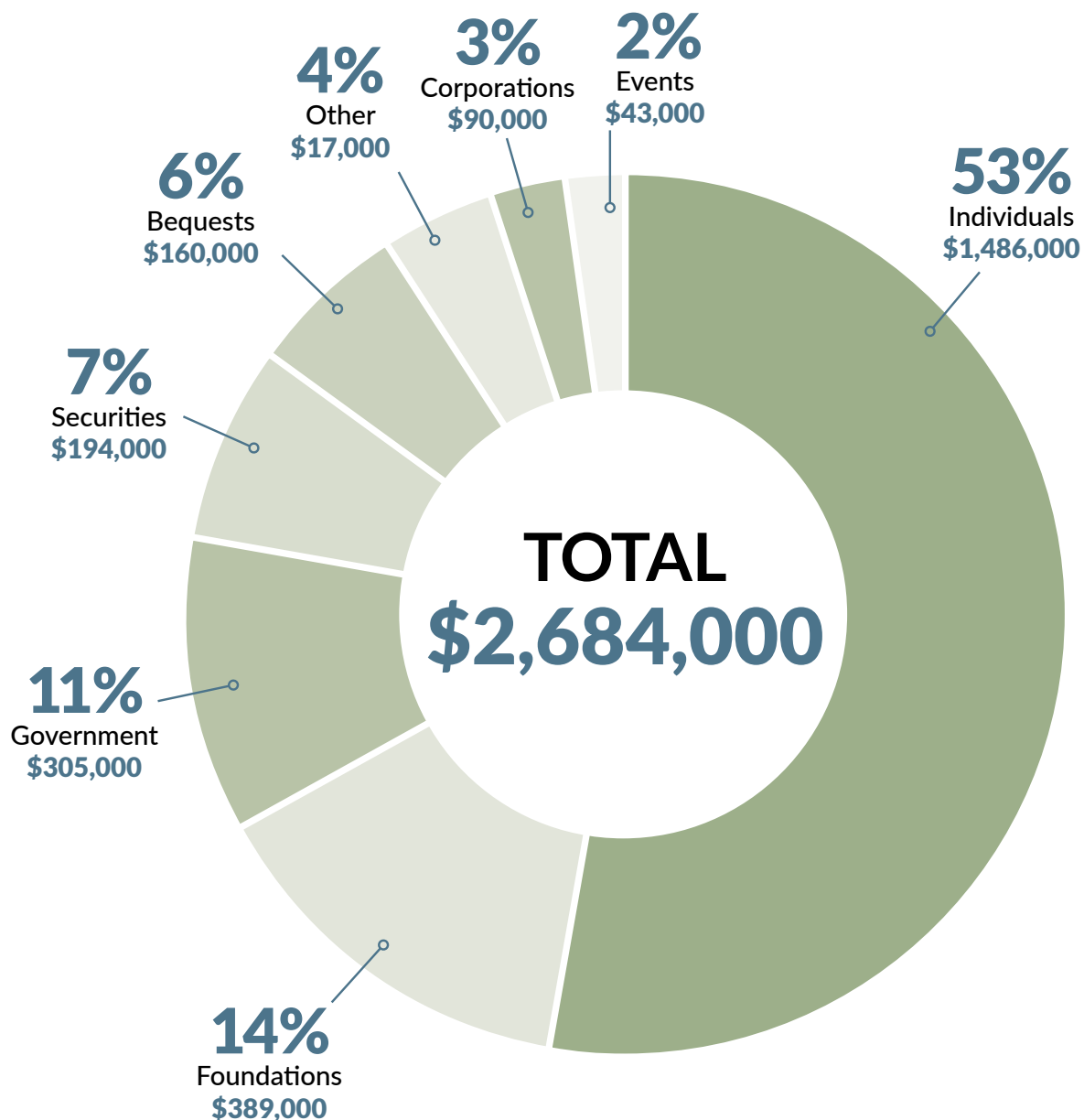
**Selene Hur**, MIS



## Revenue

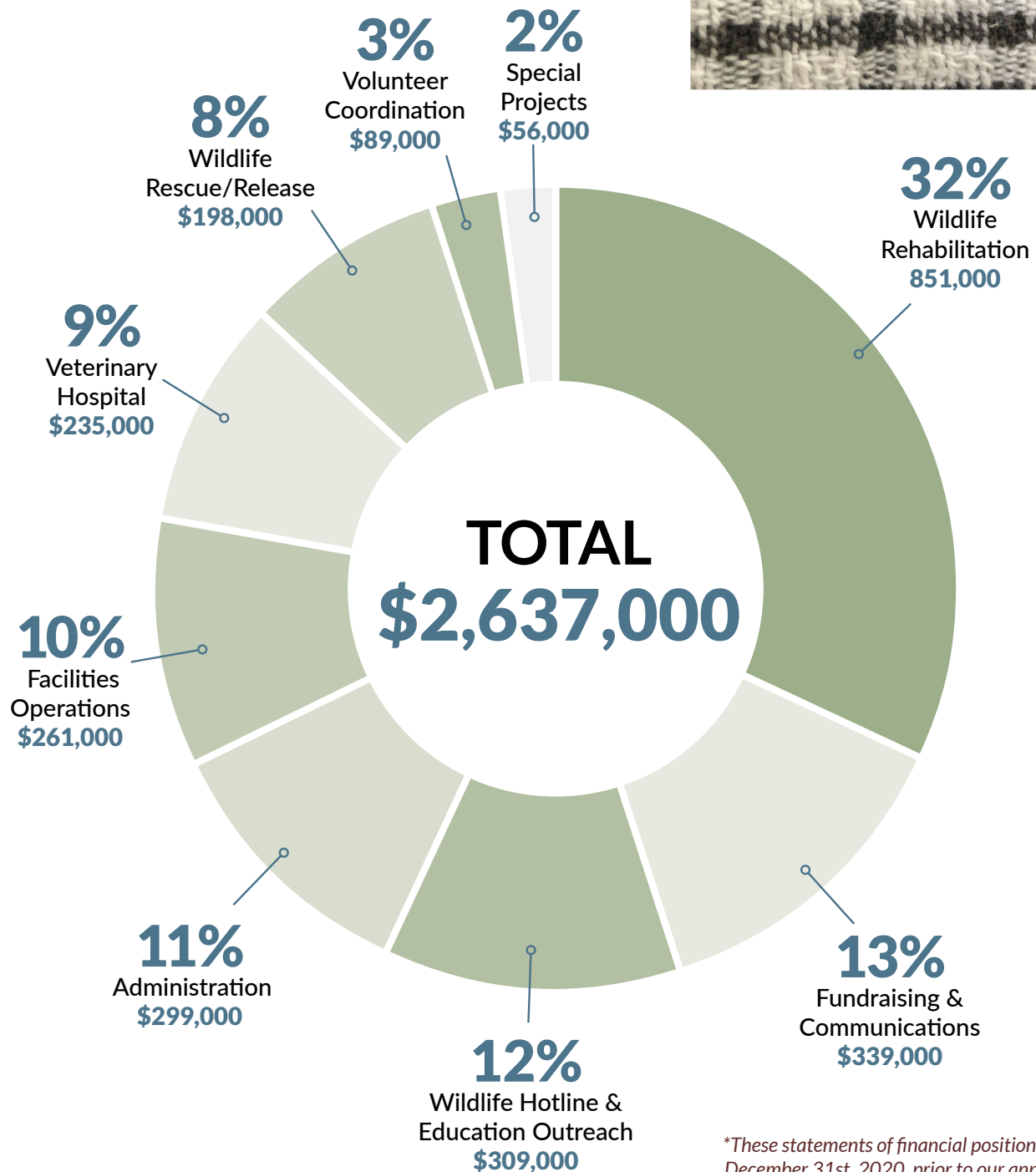
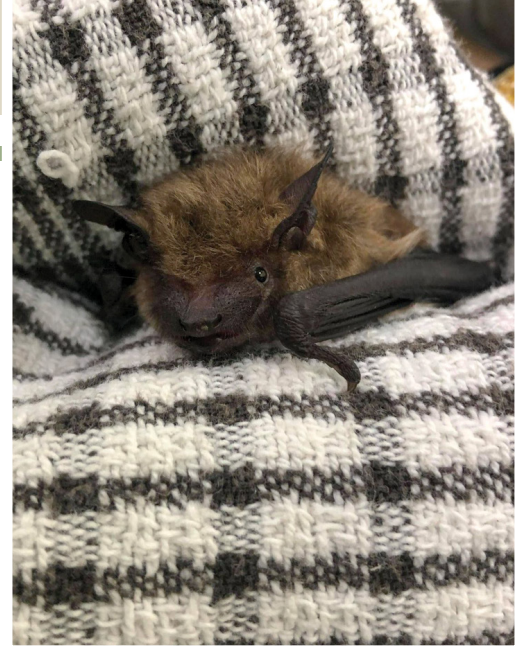
Toronto Wildlife Centre is committed to the efficient and effective use of all resources and donor gifts, using donated goods and services, as well as volunteer time wherever feasible, in order to stretch each donation dollar as far as possible.

Funding from government sources was significantly higher than normal during 2020 due primarily to COVID-19 related job creation grants (a welcome relief since we couldn't engage as many weekly volunteers), and a one-time grant from the City of Toronto to help set up interim facilities on our new Rouge Park site.



## Expenses

Staff expenses across various program areas were higher as a result of, and offset by, COVID-19 related job creation grants in 2020. There were also a significant amount of one-time expenses to set up the interim facilities on our new Rouge Park site, offset by the grant from the City of Toronto.



*\*These statements of financial positions are as of December 31st, 2020, prior to our annual audit.*



## Our Amazing Donors

TWC's work is only possible through generous donations. We're deeply grateful for each and every one of our supporters; our achievements in 2020 would not have been possible without you. The following are donors who made contributions of \$1,000 or more.

### \$100,000+

City of Toronto  
Darlene Mazur  
Donna Marie Hayes  
The Eric S. Margolis Family Foundation  
M.S.I. Enterprises  
The W. Garfield Weston Foundation

### \$50,000 - \$99,999

Employment and Social  
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The MapleCross Fund  
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### \$10,000 - \$24,999

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### \$5,000 - \$9,999

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Shuttleworth Family Fund at  
Toronto Foundation  
Susan Hebert  
TD Friends of the  
Environment Foundation

### \$1,000 - \$4,999+

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Ah Lan and Ah Mee Hor  
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Alexa Petrenko  
Allen E Walsh  
Amit Raja  
Anke and Ron Owston  
Ann E. Raney and Helmut Kruger  
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 Ziyaad Mia

*Please note, we're unable to identify all supporters that donate through third parties—  
 such as Facebook Fundraisers, for example. We hope you know that we're so appreciative of your support!*



This red-tailed hawk recovered from head trauma after being hit by a car. After two weeks of medical care, the beautiful bird spent time in the large outdoor flight cage to practice flying, rebuild her strength, and prepare for life back in the wild!



Some of the portable units at the new site.

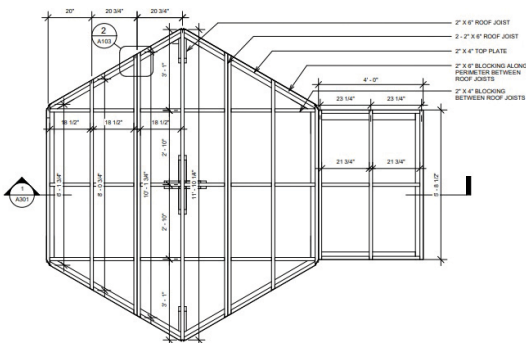
## Looking towards the future...

Due to COVID-19 restrictions in 2020, much of the work planned for the new site in the Rouge National Urban Park was delayed. But we are happy to report some progress!

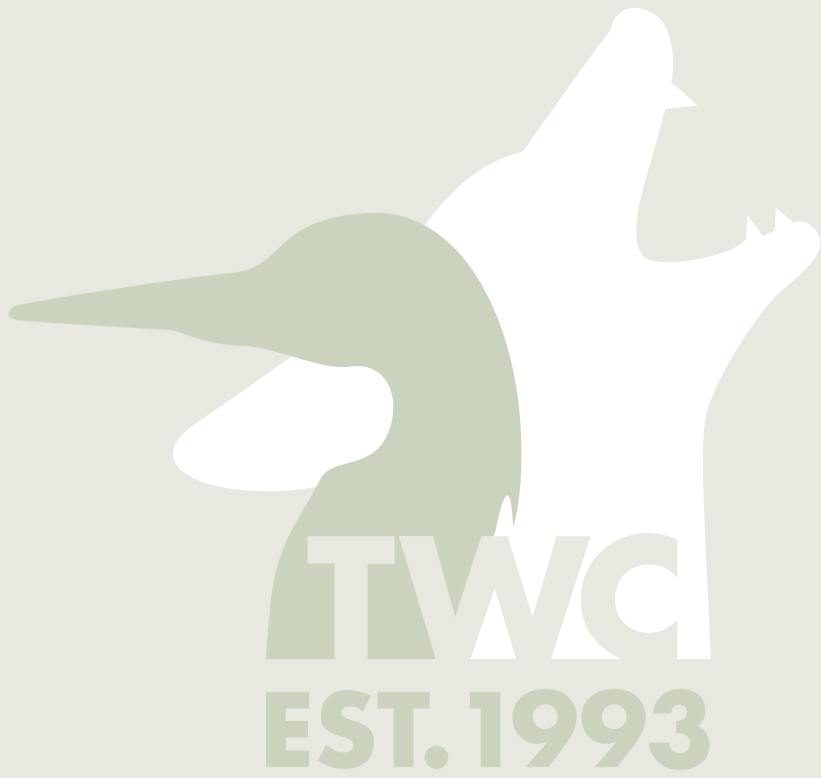
We have set up six portable units which will be renovated along with the existing house and barn on the site to serve as an interim facility while we raise funds for then build the permanent centre. Once renovated, the portables will house most of the rehabilitation program. Initial work on the portables, e.g. setting them on their foundations, painting them, installing new doors, etc. was completed in 2020, and the planning work started for the interior renovations.

An enormous amount of fencing was installed in 2020. This fencing will surround the area where outdoor wildlife recovery cases are located – ensuring they are kept secure and out of sight of curious passersby. Within the fenced areas, some new enclosures were built in 2020.

In 2020, planning work for the historic barn renovation – a huge undertaking – was also initiated, and planning work for new main facility continued.

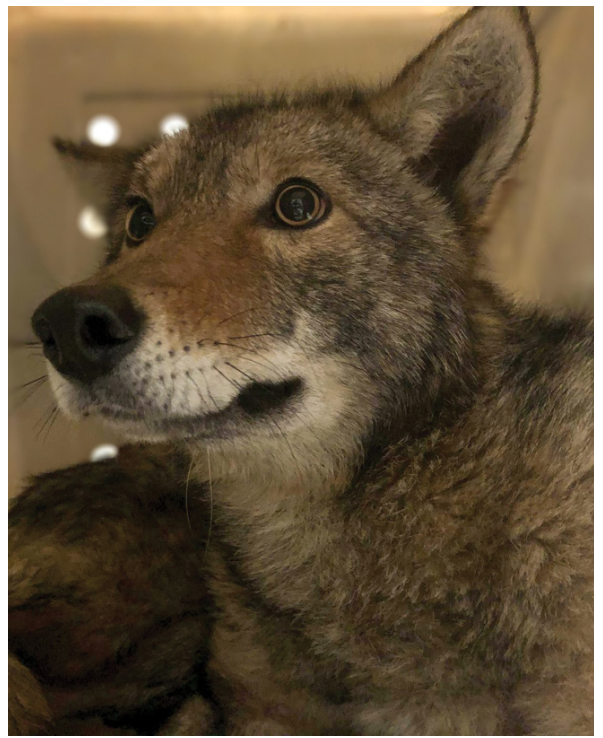


The floor plan of a bat flight cage built over the summer of 2020.





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