

Spring's New Arrivals: Step Inside the Nursery at Red Creek

Although the New Year is months behind us, at Red Creek Wildlife Center, our year truly begins with baby season. As the days grow longer and the earth awakens from winter's grip, the calls start coming in—one tiny life at a time. A fallen nest of baby squirrels, an orphaned raccoon kit, a fawn left behind, a nestling songbird found on the ground. Each of them fragile, helpless, and completely dependent on us for survival.

Spring is the busiest and most demanding time of year at Red Creek. Every day, our incubators fill with the soft chirps and tiny cries of new arrivals. Our dedicated team works tirelessly to provide the specialized care each species needs—feeding baby birds every 20 minutes, bottle-raising fawns for months, and teaching young raptors how to hunt. The journey from rescue to release is long, and for every animal in our care, we commit not just our time but also our hearts.

Raising wild babies isn't just a labor of love—it's a significant investment. From specialized formula and food to medical care and proper enclosures, the cost of saving these lives adds up quickly. It takes a community of caring individuals—volunteers, donors, and supporters like you—to make this work possible.

This spring, as nature renews itself and fills the world with new life, we invite you to be part of these incredible journeys. In the pages ahead, you'll meet some of the wild babies we care for, learn about the challenges they face, and see firsthand the difference your support makes.

Thank you for being a part of our mission. Because of you, these tiny, fragile lives have a second chance to grow wild and free.

With gratitude, ~Peggy



Open House Postponed for Wildlife Safety

Last year's Open House at Red Creek Wildlife Center was a huge success! More than 1,000 visitors enjoyed meeting our team, learning about wildlife rehabilitation, and touring our clinic. The overwhelming response inspired us to make it an annual tradition, and we were excited to welcome you again this year.

However, due to the recent rise in highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), **we have made the difficult decision to postpone this year's event.** Hosting hundreds of visitors increases the chance of exposing the animals, including our vulnerable education birds, to this deadly virus.



HPAI cases often decline as temperatures rise, and we are hopeful that we can return to normal operations by summer. If conditions improve, we plan to reschedule our Open House for the fall. For updates, please follow us on **Facebook** or visit **RedCreekWildlifeCenter.com**.

We appreciate your understanding and continued support as we navigate this challenge together.

Raising Raccoons: A Labor of Love

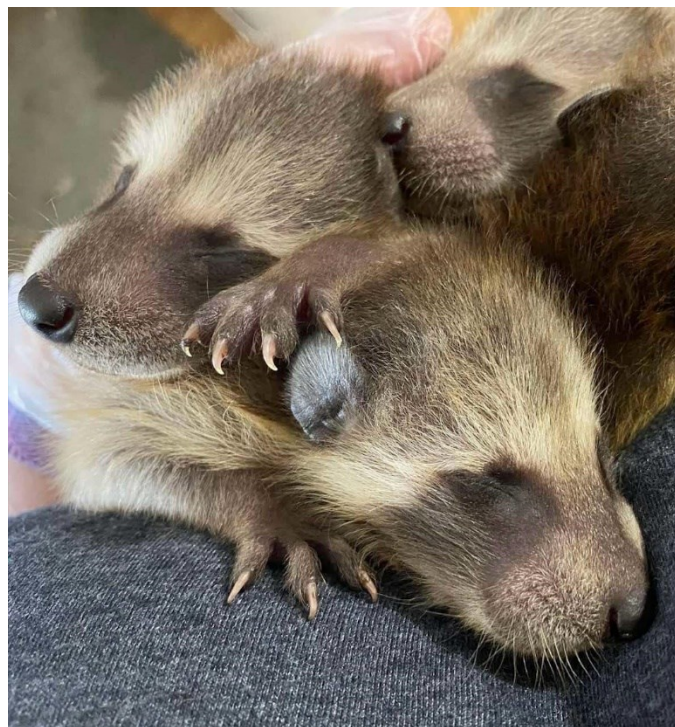
By Kaley Egan

Each summer, Red Creek Wildlife Center welcomes hundreds of orphaned raccoons. While they may not be the most numerous species in our care, their needs are among the most complex. These tiny masked bandits often arrive due to tree-trimming accidents, vehicle collisions, or nuisance removals. Some simply turn up alone, their circumstances unknown, but their need for care remains the same.



The youngest require the most attention. Of the 208 raccoons admitted in the summer of 2024, nearly half—97—were just five weeks old or younger. Newborns up to two weeks old need round-the-clock feedings and care every four hours, day and night. At two to four weeks, feedings shift to every five hours, still requiring a relentless schedule. With dozens of babies in care at any time, it's an exhausting but necessary commitment to ensure their survival.

Raccoons in Pennsylvania are classified as a Rabies Vector Species, requiring extra precautions. Staff must be fully vaccinated against rabies, and every interaction follows strict biosecurity measures. Each raccoon or litter is housed separately, with dedicated feeding supplies. Caretakers change gloves between every feeding to prevent cross-contamination.



Despite the long hours, the sleepless nights, and the meticulous care, raising these orphans is a labor of love. Watching a once-fragile newborn—umbilical cord still attached—grow into a fearless, healthy juvenile ready to return to the wild makes every effort worthwhile.



All Pennsylvania non-profit solicitations are required to include the following statement:
"The official registration and financial information of Red Creek Wildlife Center, Inc. may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1 (800) 732-0999.
Registration does not imply endorsement."

Sleepless Nights and Tiny Wings: Raising Orphaned Bat Pups

By Lylee Leonard

Long before I began working at Red Creek Wildlife Center, bats were my favorite mammals. I admired their intelligence, agility, and the vital role they play in our ecosystem. But I had no idea just how demanding bat pups could be—until I started raising them myself at Red Creek.

Baby bats, called pups, are among the neediest orphans we care for. Bat season begins in early June, and the younger the pup, the more frequent the feedings. For the first few weeks, they require round-the-clock care—every three hours. That means waking up at 1 a.m., 4 a.m., 7 a.m., and so on, all through the night and day. Each feeding lasts at least 30 minutes, so sleep comes in short, two-hour increments at best.

Caring for them at all hours means I get the pleasure of transporting these adorable creatures to-and-from work every day, even caring for them on days off.



Keeping them warm is critical. To ensure their needs are met at all times, three incubators are used—one for transport, one for home care, and one at the rescue—totaling over \$2,500 in equipment.

At one week old, they start using what we call "mealworm pacifiers"—as unappetizing as it sounds, it's the perfect first step toward eating solid food. By four weeks, their tiny canine teeth emerge, and they begin transitioning from formula to mealworms. At this stage, they develop fur and start regulating their own body temperature, allowing them to move from incubators to a larger mesh enclosure.

By late July or early August, we begin the delicate process of teaching them to self-feed. Once they reliably eat on their own, it's time for the next big milestone—flight training.

Watching them take their first real flights is nothing short of inspiring. Inside an outdoor flight enclosure, young bats gain strength and confidence, refining their aerial skills and practicing essential hunting behaviors. As soon as they can catch their own food, they are ready for release—typically by mid-August. That's when we return them to the wild near an established colony ready to welcome them "under their wings."

Raising these pups is exhausting, but every sleepless night is worth it. Seeing them transform from fragile orphans into strong, capable fliers reminds me why we do what we do. Each tiny wing that takes to the sky is proof that the effort—and the support of people like you—makes all the difference.



Ruby-throated Hummingbirds

Weighing just 0.6 grams—less than a dime—a baby ruby-throated hummingbird is one of the most delicate patients we care for. These tiny nestlings require feeding every 20 minutes from sunrise to sunset, mimicking the constant care they would receive from their mother. Their diet consists of a specialized formula replicating nectar and protein-rich insects essential for proper growth. Keeping them warm and hydrated is critical, as their tiny bodies lose heat rapidly. After weeks of careful feeding and flight training, these remarkable birds take to the skies, ready to embark on their incredible migration journey.





Milk Matters: Feeding Orphaned Mammals

Did you know that each species of mammal has unique milk requirements? Some need a high-protein, low-fat diet, while others require the opposite. Feeding the wrong formula can lead to serious health issues, which is why Red Creek Wildlife Center provides species-specific milk replacers to every orphan in our care.

We purchase high-quality powdered formulas in 20-pound 5-gallon pails from Fox Valley Nutrition, ensuring our young patients receive the best possible nutrition. With the hundreds of baby mammals we raise each year, our milk budget alone reaches nearly \$10,000 annually—a vital investment in their survival and future.

Donate Today



RedCreekWildlifeCenter.com

Nursing Squirrels: Red, Gray, Flying, and Chipmunk.



Wild Fosters: Nature's Best Teachers



While our dedicated staff works tirelessly to raise and care for the orphaned wildlife that comes through our doors, another group of heroes plays a vital role—our non-releasable foster parents. These wild animals, unable to return to nature themselves, step in to teach young ones of their own species the skills they need to survive.

As much as we provide expert care, we can't teach a bird to fly, a fox to hunt, or a fawn to navigate the dangers of the wild. Some species are also highly vulnerable to imprinting—mistaking humans for their own kind. A wild animal that associates people with food and safety is at great risk once released. That's why, whenever possible, we rely on wild fosters to do what only they can.

When a foster parent isn't available, we take extra steps to prevent harmful imprinting, using mirrors, foster siblings, or minimizing human interaction. Every effort is made to ensure these young animals grow up wild—right where they belong.



Reptiles: Nature's Independent Hatchlings

During baby season, our team dedicates countless hours to caring for young birds and mammals, ensuring they have the best chance of survival. But reptiles? They're a refreshing change! Unlike their feathered and furry counterparts, hatchling snakes and turtles come into the world fully independent, requiring no parental care at all.

We often receive concerned calls about tiny turtles, no larger than a quarter, found alone. In most cases, we can reassure people that this is completely natural—no rescue is needed. Many reptile eggs are laid in loose soil, leaf piles, or under logs, where they incubate without any help from their parents. The young reptiles that do come into our care are typically sick or injured, not orphaned or abandoned like the birds and mammals we so often see.

Reptiles may not need a mother's care, but when they do need help, we're here for them!



Thank you for allowing us to share these moments with you.

Your support makes our work possible, and every kindness—big or small—helps wildlife in need. As spring brings new life and fresh beginnings, we invite you to be part of the journey.

Wishing you a season filled with warmth, beauty, and the joy of nature.