

# ADOPT | TIMES

Issue 4

Autumn 2025



## IN THIS ISSUE...

**Battling mange, sepsis and seizures** – page 5

**Picked up at a car-boot sale** – page 13

**A living legacy** – page 12

# Year of the Fox Cubs

Your adoption helped save more fox cubs than ever!

# INTRODUCTION

## Welcome to your fourth edition of Adopt Times.

If you're reading this, it is because you have contributed to the support of the animals whose stories appear in these pages. Thank you. Together, we all have a part to play in ensuring the future of our extraordinary wildlife.

The summer is beginning to share its space with the first suggestions of autumn; our 'Orphan Season' is coming to an end for another year. 2025 has seen us caring for over 2,000 orphaned youngsters, with our fox cub intake, alone, increasing by 55% on last year.

Out in the wild, it is dispersal season, a time when the year's new arrivals begin to 'fly the nest' (figuratively and literally!) to find territories of their own. Please consider this when you're out and about, especially on the roads as the nights draw in – this year's youngsters will not be as savvy as their older counterparts. Also, football season is starting, so, please, remember to roll up those nets after training/matches.

With the chilly weather approaching, do feel free to visit our online shop – we've plenty of lovely fleecy WAF clothing to keep you cozy and warm!

Wishing you really well,

Lou Cowell  
Managing Director



## Contents

Inside WAF.....	3
Fox News.....	4-5
Hedgehog Headlines.....	6-7
Badger Bulletin.....	8-9
Owl Tweets.....	10-11
Deer Daily.....	12
Rabbit Report.....	13
Pigeon Post.....	14-15
Bat Broadcast.....	16
Your Adoption Impact.....	17



# INSIDE WAF

by Marissa Patrick

I came across the Wildlife Aid Foundation after I found a disturbed nest of baby pigeons. I did not know what to do with them or where to take them, I just knew I had to save them. I have always had a love for wildlife and being out in nature, feeding my garden birds and a resident hedgehog. I knew I wanted to do more to help our British wildlife but was not sure how, so, when I took the pigeons to WAF, I enquired about becoming a volunteer.

This led to me joining WAF in April 2020, within the husbandry team. I have never looked back. It has been the most rewarding job I have ever done! I look forward to my Friday morning shift, every week; seeing the animals and the other volunteers is the highlight of my week. I can honestly say I have met the most amazing people, we all have the same shared love and passion for the animals in our care. We all come together as a team and support each other, it feels like being part of a family, the WAF family.



I feel very grateful to be part of something so special and so rewarding. It's a great feeling to help and give back to nature. Since being a volunteer, I have gained so much knowledge, and it continues to grow each day I am there. It has also opened my eyes to the damage that human impact has on our wildlife, and how important the work is we all do.

Our main objective is to save and rehabilitate injured animals, so they can be released back into the wild, where they belong. Not every story is a happy one, some days can be very emotional, but what makes it worthwhile is when you get to release an animal back into the wild. Watching a fox cub take its first steps out of the soft release pen, having that second chance of being free; feeding and nurturing tiny ducklings and watching them grow, to be released back into their lake; seeing a bird spread its wings and take flight! Those moments are magical, and it is the best feeling in the world to know you have been part of that animal's journey!



Being part of WAF has given me a sense of purpose and ignited a passion in me to continue helping our wildlife thrive for future generations to see and engage with. A world without wildlife is a world without purpose.

### Interested in volunteering?

Scan the QR code to see all the roles we have available.



# Fox News

## Fox cub love story

Little "Kirby" was found by the roadside, bleeding from the nose and infested with over 500 ticks. No exaggeration - they were everywhere: between his toes, in his ears, around his mouth, eyes, and even on his genitals. These tiny parasites were draining the life from him.

Despite being treated with a limited amount of Frontline (safe only in small doses for young animals), carers were still removing 30+ ticks, daily, for five days. While a few ticks might not usually harm a fox cub, the sheer number left Kirby dangerously weak - too weak to even swallow milk.



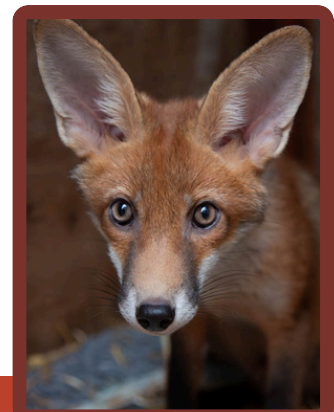
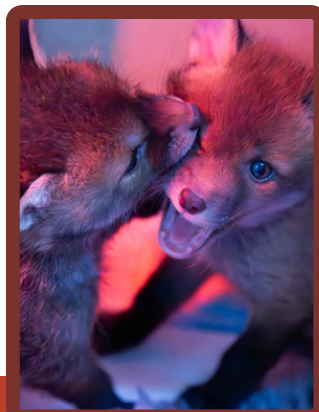
On his second day in care, his home-carer grew increasingly worried. But after 24 hours of warmth, subcutaneous fluids, and honey to keep his sugar up, Kirby finally latched onto the bottle at 10:30 p.m. - a moment so exciting, his carer woke her partner to film it!

Fast-forward a few days, and Kirby was transformed. Stronger, healthier, and needing a companion, he was soon joined by "Olbas," named after the decongestant, due to her raspy breathing and suspected pneumonia. Severely underweight and struggling just to breathe, Olbas was placed in an incubator for round-the-clock monitoring and antibiotics.

Kirby's carer stepped in again, hoping Olbas might become his playmate. But, first, she needed to stabilise. For 24 hours, they were kept apart while Olbas received support care, including three daily nebuliser treatments to ease her breathing.

After 48 hours, the two were introduced, and the bond was instant. Though Olbas wasn't quite strong enough to play yet, Kirby became her devoted big brother, always checking she was warm and safe, and even tolerating her loud, congested snores.

Together, they began their journey of healing, with love, care, and the comfort of each other.



## Battling mange, sepsis and seizures

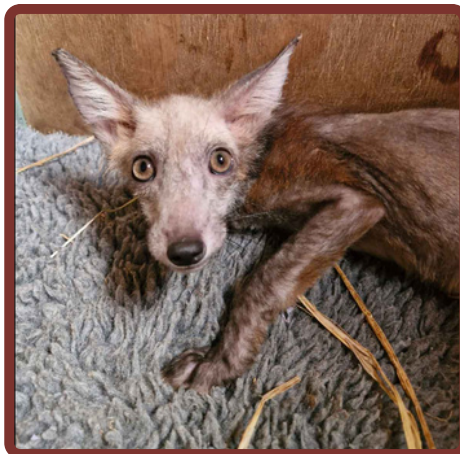
When young Max first arrived, he was in a pitiful state. Initially rescued due to a leg injury, it quickly became apparent what his issue was... severe mange! With large patches of his skin bare and sore, his left knee was also badly swollen with little mobility, making every step incredibly painful.

Initial X-rays brought some relief – there were no fractures – but they did reveal significant inflammation in the tissue around the joint, possibly a result of infection. Aloe vera gel was gently applied to soothe his irritated skin, while the veterinary team began a careful treatment plan.



It soon became clear that Max's battle was not just skin-deep. In his second week of care, he suffered seizures and his condition deteriorated rapidly, showing signs that he was on the verge of going into septic shock. Quick intervention by our vet team, including fluids, antibiotics, and supportive medication, kept him stable. It was touch-and-go for a while, but Max wasn't ready to give up the fight. Day by day, he grew stronger. The swelling in his knee slowly subsided, his skin began to heal and his fur started to grow back. His energy returned and, before long, he was pacing his enclosure, testing his legs and watching the world outside with bright, eager eyes.

After 43 days in our care, the vet gave Max the all-clear. His knee had regained full movement, his coat had grown back thick and healthy, and the once-weak cub now stood tall, fit, and ready for the wild again. We released him back into his home territory – just in time for dispersal season, when young foxes set off to find their own patch of ground.



Since Jan 2024, your adoption has helped....



# 1043

foxes

5

**Did you know?**  
Red foxes can run up to 30 mph, jump six feet high, and use their bushy tails for balance and warmth.

# Hedgehog Headlines

## A prickle of hoglets

The start of this 'prickle' of hoglets' story is heartbreaking. Discovered in the road, where their mum lay lifeless, the four were lucky to have avoided the same fate. Thankfully, the siblings were spotted and quickly removed from immediate danger.

On assessment, they were all in good health, suggesting their mum was likely struck just before they were found.



With each of them weighing under 100g, they were first in need of some encouragement to eat, making sure each one was getting their fair amount. So, in the capable hands of one of our home carers, they were each syringe fed to get them going, before they were introduced to their first bowl of milk, which we can safely say went down a treat!



Now, the hoglets are safe in experienced hands. They will be fed, kept warm, and cared for around the clock until they are strong, round, and spiky enough to face the world on their own. Yet, there is a bittersweet truth, here: no matter how hard we work to protect them, we can't shield hedgehogs from the dangers of our roads, forever.

For now, though, these four have a second chance and that, at least, is something their brave little mum would have wanted.

Scan the QR code to see this adorable quartet tucking themselves in for bed.



## Strimmer strikes again

Just your daily reminder to check your garden before doing any work to it!

These are just half of the injuries that this hedgehog sustained when she was accidentally struck by a strimmer.

With further injuries to the right side of her face and another to one of her paws, she was very lucky that several of them were able to be cleaned and sutured, by vet Judith.

But having to remain with us for a while, to let the wounds recover, meant she was missing out on her breeding season. And, as we all know, hedgehogs need all the opportunities they can get to have some hoglets!

With sutured wounds helping to speed up the healing process, she was able to be returned to her territory less than two weeks later.



## Balloon syndrome

The moment a member of the public uses the words "he's like a balloon" when talking about a hedgehog, we immediately ask them to bring the animal in.

And as you can see from the photo, you can understand why, this poor adult hog was suffering from Balloon Syndrome.



Balloon syndrome is a condition commonly caused by an underlying injury or infection. Having removed over 100ml of air, the vet team continued to investigate the cause of his condition, where he was discovered to have multiple injuries, including a fracture to his upper jaw, and a collapsed lung.

The trauma he had sustained was, sadly, catastrophic, leaving our vet team with the only option but to end his excruciating pain.

Your adoption, so far, has helped....

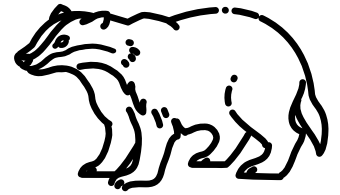
**1286**  
Hedgehogs



**Did you know?**

When hedgehogs are out to forage in the evening, they can travel for up to 2 miles, that's a long way for little legs!

# Badger Bulletin



## Meet Farley & Rusk

One of these badger cubs was, sadly, not like the other when the pair of them arrived.

Meet "Farley & Rusk", aka badger cubs number One and Two of 2025. Discovered, luckily, by the parents of one of our former vets, the sisters were spotted outside of their sett and, whilst Farley appeared bright, alert and had lots of attitude, the same couldn't be said for Rusk, who was much weaker, covered in fleas, and had a worryingly low temperature.

Still a couple of weeks away from being of an age to leave the sett, we had no idea how the pair ended up in their situation. But with both carrying a heavy flea burden (mum would usually take care of this), we suspected they'd been alone for a while and opted to venture out of the sett to try and find mum.

Alex and Lee, two of our trusted rescuers, collected the cubs and scanned the area for any obvious sett and/or parents, but with Rusk struggling, they rightly got the siblings back to the hospital, where our vet, Judith, and rehab manager, Sarah, began the slow process of warming the duo up and providing them with treatment for the fleas, as well as vital fluids.

It breaks our hearts to think how scared the sisters must have been, and what may have happened to their mum. But we are focused on continuing their recovery and giving them the best care possible (Simon would certainly have had something to say if we didn't!). The sisters formed the foundation to our now ten-strong badger clan, and will soon, along with three of their adopted siblings, be heading out to their soft-release site.



# Albie the rarity

When our rescue team got the call about a small, wobbly animal at the side of a quiet country road, we had no idea just how special the find would be. Nestled in the grass was a badger cub unlike any we'd seen in years—creamy white fur, pink nose, and unmistakable ruby-red eyes. Meet "Albie," a rare albino badger.

From the moment Albie arrived, we knew he would need a little extra care. We're monitoring him closely to make sure he stays strong and healthy. Thankfully, this little cub has already shown us he's full of spirit, eating well, growing in confidence, and enthusiastically "redecorating" his pen by pulling apart straw, tossing his enrichment toys around, and generally creating a mess that only a badger could love.



His journey may be a little different from that of most badger cubs, but with your support, we can ensure he has every chance to grow into the strong, wild animal he was born to be.

A few weeks after Albie arrived and he was fully stable, he was introduced to a few of our smaller cubs, so he could gently be integrated into badger clan life. Once we were sure he had found his place with them, the group of four was moved in with the big guys, where you can now watch them in their final stages of rehabilitation. In just a few weeks, half of the group will head out to their soft-release site.



Your adoption, so far, has helped....

# 96

Badgers

**Did you know?**  
Weighing in at around 8-12kg, badgers are the UK's biggest living land predator.

# Owl Tweets



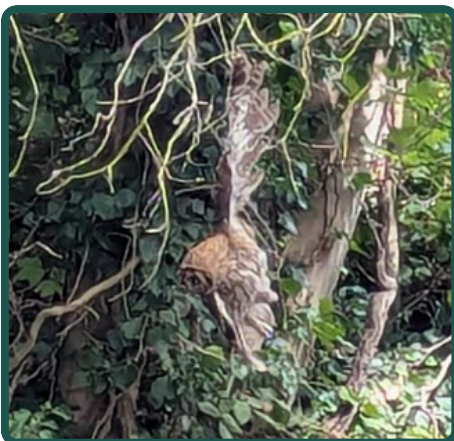
## Fishing line fiasco

This year, we have seen over 50 patients arrive in care as a direct result of becoming entangled. String, wire and netting are the most common culprits, but for this tawny owl, it was fishing line, and, sadly, it is far from the first time it's happened.

The owl innocently flew up into a tree to perch but, instead of perching, found himself with fishing line wrapped around his left wing, leaving him dangling over a lake. Our friends at the RSPCA got the call, and ARO Sam came to the rescue, with some extra help from the environment agency and their boat.

Using a net and a long-reach cutter, Sam held the net underneath the owl; whilst the fishing line was cut above the owl, Sam was able to catch the owl in the net and bring him to safety. As we were unsure how long he'd been entangled and having seen the images of how he was trapped, we were expecting the worst, but on initial assessment he had somehow come away with just minor feather damage. We know all too well, however, that ligature wounds can take up to 10-days to show themselves. So, sadly for him, he had to remain with us until we were sure no wounds broke out.

After 12 days in care, and some initial shoulder swelling that needed to resolve, this very lucky tawny made a full recovery, and was able to be released back to his home range.



Since January 2024,  
your adoptions have helped

**71**  
Owls

Did you know?



The eyes of an owl are not true "eyeballs." Their tube-shaped eyes are completely immobile, providing binocular vision.

## Little owls take over

Our brood of little owls has provided us with the best poses for the camera, this year.

The very first arrival of the year, affectionately nicknamed "Jekyll," had quite the dramatic entrance. He was discovered by an inquisitive spaniel, along a countryside footpath. With no sign of a nest nearby, despite a careful scan of the area, it soon became clear that Jekyll was on his own. That twist of fate made him our very first owl orphan of the season.

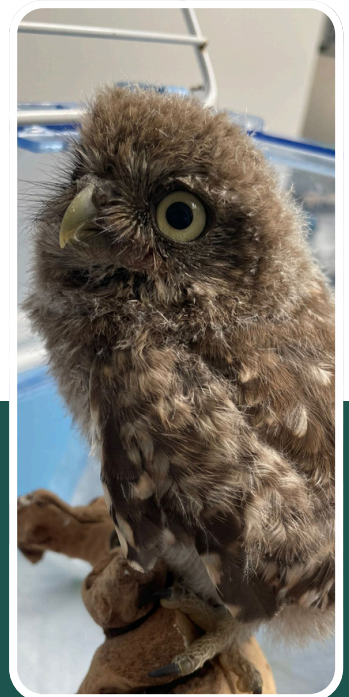
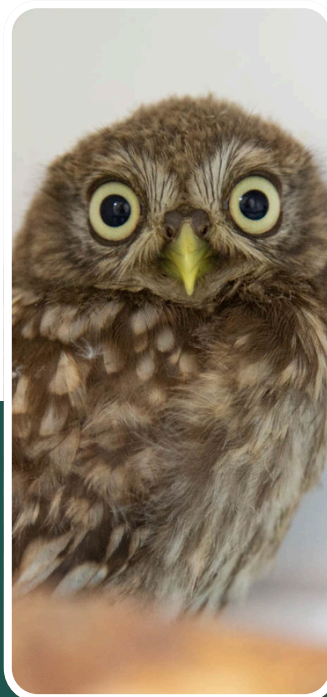


Over the following weeks, three more little owls joined Jekyll, each from a different background and nest site. Their reasons for coming into care varied, with one even being the victim of a predator attack, while others had simply found themselves in less than ideal situations.

Each was thoroughly assessed and, once given the all-clear, together, they spent some time with one of our home carers, being closely monitored to ensure they were feeding well, steadily gaining weight, and developing the strength they'd need to thrive.

Once they had passed the stage of needing regular support, their journey back to the wild could really start. All four owls were transferred to our soft-release site, where a 100-metre aviary awaited them. This spacious enclosure, complete with natural foliage, perching spots, and plenty of room to stretch their wings, provides the perfect stepping stone between hand-rearing and full independence. Here, the young owls can safely practice flying, strengthen their muscles, and, most importantly, begin to learn the essential skills of hunting for themselves.

Young owls begin to disperse in late summer to early autumn, so it won't be long, now, until these agile little birds will finally fly free.



# Deer Daily



## A living legacy

Sometimes, nature just has other plans.

Deer are now having young, and this tiny day-old roe fawn was our second of the season. Sadly, the first was attacked by a dog, and had passed away on arrival. But "Hershey's" story was out of everyone's control.

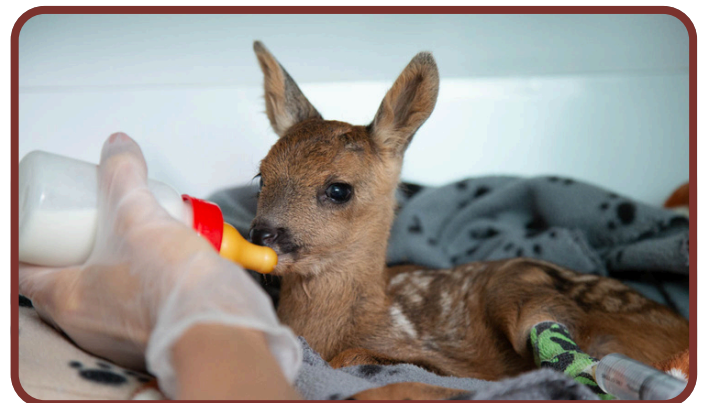
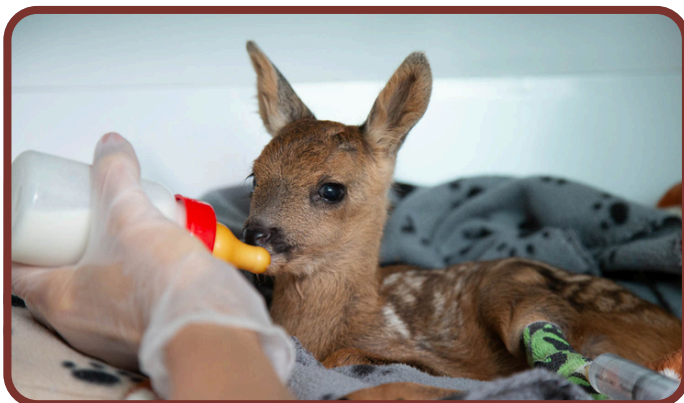
Our reception team received a call about an adult roe that appeared to be in distress whilst giving birth. Volunteer vet, Matt, and vet nurse, Carina, headed out to assess the situation. Once on the scene, it was evident the mother had been struggling for a long period of time to birth her second fawn, which, heartbreakingly, had already passed away. The risk of infection and level of flystrike to the adult resulted in the difficult decision to humanely euthanise her, to prevent any further suffering.



But, nestled in the undergrowth, was her first-born fawn, weak and cold, the fawn had already gone 24 hours without milk and warmth from her mum. The vet team headed back to the centre, with Hershey in tow.

Over the following 48 hours, she received intensive care, whilst keeping warm, snuggled in blankets, under a heat lamp. IV fluids were administered with additional vitamins and electrolytes to help her body recover. We were over the moon when Carina managed to bottle-feed her some milk replacement and, as they say, the rest is history.

Fully stabilised, Hershey was able to be transferred to specialist deer carers, where we hope she recovers from her difficult start and, one day, is free to roam, back in the wild.



# ~~Rabbit~~ Hare Report



Picked up at a car-boot sale



In a single day, we surpassed last year's entire intake of brown hares, but, despite their undeniably adorableness, the three leverets (that's the name for baby hares), sadly, didn't need to be admitted at all.

At around a week old, they had been picked up at a car boot sale and handed to the organiser. Unfortunately, because no one knew exactly where they had come from, we were unable to return them to any possible nesting site where, we're sure, their mother spent days frantically searching for them.

Hares give birth above ground; the mother then leaves her young and returns only once every 24 hours to feed them for only a few minutes. While this may seem risky, it's actually a survival strategy: her absence helps avoid attracting predators to the nest, and the leverets' coats keep them incredibly well camouflaged.

We completely understand why someone might think they needed rescuing, but, sadly, this well-meaning action meant they had to grow up in care. With nothing (thankfully) wrong with the leverets, they were given rehydration fluids by the vet team, before being transferred to a home-carer for one-on-one care.

Needing such a specific diet, leverets can be very difficult to hand-rear, with gut-stasis being a huge issue for both rabbits and hares, and, sadly, as a result, two of the leverets didn't make it. However, after 59 days in care, the surviving leveret, looking much more like an adult, was able to be released, back to the wild.



# Pigeon Post



## Fallen from nest

We interrupt your regular scheduled programming to bring you this adorable photo of Buzz and Lightyear! Due to GDPR, we can't explain exactly why they're called this, but it doesn't matter, because, seriously, have you ever seen such adorable-looking pigeons?!

The siblings are with us as a result of falling from their nest, earlier this month, and their yellow fluff tells you all you need to know about their age - they're not quite ready for fledging, yet. Sadly, falling from nests is one of the most common reasons of admission for pigeons, due to their, well, frankly, terrible nest-building skills - looking like just 5 twigs layed across each other, it's no surprise that even a light-wind can result in a collapse.

Whilst, ideally, the pair would be in the safety of their nest site, learning all they need for survival from their parents, and enjoying a wild and free life, they, instead, will be with us for a few more weeks, yet. Over those weeks, they'll continue to practice their flapping, balancing, and short hops - tiny pigeon workouts that will, one day, turn into strong, confident flights.

With a little more time and a lot more growing, Buzz and Lightyear will be ready to take to the skies and join their feathered friends. Having each other as company will certainly help them learn good feral pigeon-etiquette and, thus, integrate more smoothly, upon release, into an already established flock.



## When nature strikes

Believe it or not, it's not actually very often that orphaned patients are, in fact, orphaned. Sometimes it's the case that the parents just haven't returned, nests have been destroyed, the adults have been disturbed, resulting in them abandoning their offspring, or we're not given the full location of where the orphans have come from, which means we can't return them.

Sadly, none of the reasons listed above are true for these tiny ferals!



Instead, the nestlings became orphaned because of their parent being, sadly, attacked by a sparrowhawk. A member of the public witnessed the whole ordeal and scooped up the two siblings, bringing them to us for safety. Obviously, predation is a part of nature and, whilst we are saddened that these youngsters won't get to learn vital skills from their parent, we're glad to see them still get a chance to live a wild and free life, in the future.

## Early Fledge Adventure

We're not sure sliding down a conservatory roof is a usual part of the fledging process, which would explain why this collared dove, then, didn't seem to go anywhere. Early fledging is one of the common reasons we see a whole host of bird species, here at WAF. But, that's not the only issue that faces early fledging collared doves.



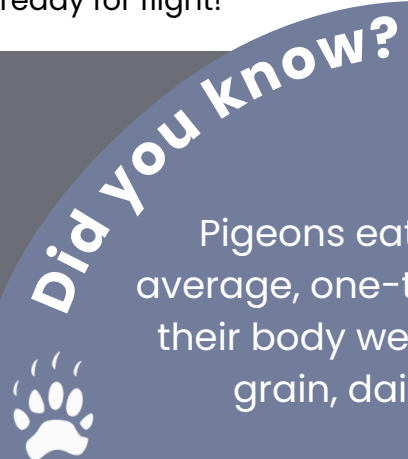
As the species isn't actually native to the UK, but, instead, originate from the sunnier climates of India and West Asia, the reduction of sunlight here in the UK, can often result in the low production of calcium and, in turn, cause collared doves to develop soft beaks and bones, which can then lead to deformities and fragility in their skeleton.

Thankfully for this guy, though, he's showing no signs of the condition and is well on his way to being a little more ready for flight!

Your adoption, so far, has helped...

# 1781

Pigeons



Pigeons eat, on average, one-tenth of their body weight in grain, daily!

# Bat Broadcast



## Cat vs Bat

We don't think we need to tell you who came out on top, although, saying that, we don't know what the cat looks like!

But, sadly, this adult pipstrelle has sustained a puncture wound to his left wing. Our vet team was able to clean the injury and apply surgical glue to the tear, which will help it heal, quicker. He's now in need of a few days antibiotics, so he'll remain in care whilst he receives a course of medication, as well as some time to allow the wounds to heal. Luckily for him, he's a bat, and they heal super quickly!



## Fixing a fracture

Wing fractures are one of the most frequent injuries we see in bats, which is understandable with such tiny fragile bones. This one, sadly, had sustained a break to his left radius, due to a predator attack, and required surgical intervention - no easy task with their miniscule skeleton.

Thankfully, our vets have become dab hands at bat orthopaedics, and were able to successfully secure a surgical pin in place, which allowed the fractured bones to heal in a straight line.

Under the expert care of Steve from Surrey Bat Rescue, the pipistrelle needed weekly check-ups to ensure there were no complications and the pin was doing its job, all whilst also ensuring the bat was coping well.

After just a few short weeks, Steve was able to begin the pipistrelle's rehabilitation, helping him to rebuild his flight strength, before releasing him back to his home range.



Your adoption, so far, has helped...

# 56

Bats



Bats can live up to 41 years in the wild, still able to chase down flying insects for dinner.

# Adoption Impact

At Wildlife Aid, we work with nearly 200 British wildlife species, and your support plays an important part in rescuing and rehabilitating them all. Let's dive into the wild world of some other quirky critters we get to help.



Just look at that little face! Okay, it's not the cutest, but anything with the name 'slow worm' probably isn't going to have cuteness in its favour.

As you can see, he's lost the end of his tail - he actually came in with the tail still partially attached. Having been picked up by a cat, we were able to clean the opening and offer him a safe space to rest whilst he recovered. But, the coolest part... his tail will eventually grow back!

This is a Northern goshawk! Looking very similar to a sparrowhawk, but weighing A LOT more, this usually elusive, deep forest-dwelling bird was found collapsed in the middle of Guildford, with a visible head injury and more injuries to her keel and back.

After 3-weeks in care, she finally began flying again, but in order for her to fully regain her flight strength, she was transferred to another wildlife hospital that had a much larger flight aviary available for her.



This young mouse and his two siblings - who had arrived the day before - were found in a garden. That's it, that's their story. Genuinely. The three were brought to us, which, in itself, is understandable because all three still had their eyes closed. But observing any orphaned animal for a period of time is so important, to ensure they are, indeed, orphaned. The trio is currently in the capable hands of our care team, who will be responsible for feeding them, every couple of hours; wish them luck.

Found in a car park, this lonely tufted duckling is a little late to the party. With the majority of our ducklings now living their best lives, out in the wilds of Surrey, "Tufty" will need to be given the all-clear before we can mix him with any of the small number of mallards we still have.

Usually found in freshwater lakes and ponds, where they feed on aquatic invertebrates, plants, and molluscs, Tufty was certainly far from these types of habitats!





Thank you so much for your continued support.  
If you've enjoyed reading our patients' stories,  
scan the QR code for more.



Follow us for more - @Wildlifeaid

