

GETTING TO KNOW WILDLIFE – One Tiny Skunk



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Although we no longer do wildlife rehabilitation, the animals we have cared for are never far from our minds. We hope by sharing their stories, you will come to have a new appreciation for local wildlife and the rich biodiversity we enjoy in this region.

On an evening many years ago in mid May we received a call about a baby skunk. The caller had seen the mother moving her babies, carrying them one by one in her mouth across their backyard. During one of her trips mom was startled and dropped one baby.

Not sure what to do they called the Centre.

Knowing mom would do a much better job of raising the baby and having had success in the past, we decided it was

worth trying to reunite. The baby was warmed up by placing it on a hot water bottle and then it was put back where it had been found in the hopes that mom would return.

Unfortunately, mom did not return and the skunk was brought into the Centre for care. The baby was a little female with her eyes still closed, weighing only 60 grams. She easily fit in the flat of my hand. Although she only had a small amount of fuzz, her black and white coloration was already clearly visible.

She took to her bottle feedings like a fish to water and before we knew it she was growing like crazy. One day we noticed she was favouring a hind leg. A vet trip and x-ray revealed a break in the leg. It was thought since she was so small when she came in that the formula did not have sufficient calcium, resulting in weaker

bones. Since she was growing so rapidly and her bones were so fragile the leg could not be splinted. A calcium supplement was added to her diet, but there was nothing more we could do but leave it and hope it would heal on its own.

Her injury did not seem to slow her down and she continued to grow and to our relief the break quickly healed. She was then mixed with other skunks about her age. She would play and chase even the larger skunks around. It was wonderful to see this skunk that was so tiny when she came in, now running around and stamping her front feet at her cage mates. She would walk around with the typical skunk wiggle. It was easy to forget her rough start.

Before doing any animal-proofing, remember that baby skunks will not be coming out of the burrow until the first to mid-July.

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