

# The Needs of Wild Animals

One of the most valuable aspects of the Niagara Escarpment is that it provides a magnificent variety of great habitats for animals and birds. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) lists the Escarpment's habitats as "Great Lakes coastlines, cliff edges, talus slopes, wetlands, woodlands, limestone alvar pavements, oak savannahs, conifer swamps and many others. These habitats collectively boast the highest level of species diversity among Canadian biosphere reserves, including more than 300 bird species, 55 mammals, 36 reptiles and amphibians, 90 fish and 100 varieties of special interest flora."

That the Niagara Escarpment continues to achieve this despite its location close to the most heavily populated and industrialized part of southern Ontario and in fact, all of Canada, is an important reason for its designation as a UNESCO biosphere reserve. UNESCO identifies conservation and development as important interconnected functions.

Yet proximity to and interactions with human activities can be harmful to animals. You would think that caring for hurt birds and animals would be a necessary aspect of UNESCO designation. If you came upon an injured or apparently orphaned

animal, would you know what to do? Where to go?

It turns out that there are many organizations in Ontario that care for wildlife, and a good number are close to the Niagara Escarpment. Yet they are independently run and supported, and sometimes struggle with a lack of resources. Although most are authorized by Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, wildlife rescue centres receive no government funding.

Our cover story in this issue looks at what some Escarpment-area wildlife rescue centres need, and easy ways that we can help, from learning what to do if we find an animal in trouble, to the kinds of support these centres can use: funds, volunteers and sometimes, goods like linens and food. We all may be able to help return wild animals where they belong: in natural wild spaces.

## Also Featured

Rescues of another kind are featured in our article by Peter Meyler, who shares the history of Black people who escaped slavery in the U.S. by fleeing to Canada. Peter looks at several places in the Niagara Region that have connections to The Underground Railroad.

Photographer Joseph Hollick uses history to compare his contemporary photos of some of the many waterfalls in Hamilton, with images of those same falls from about 100 years ago.



The coyote named Samson in a carrier on his way to being released back on his home farm. Photo provided by Procyon Wildlife.

Joe has so many photos of waterfalls that he was easily able to provide wintry shots. Sit by a warm fire and look at his scenery!

With Christmas and other gift-giving celebrations fast approaching, we present a sustainable option for purchases: antique and vintage items from some antique shops along the Escarpment. The wealth of their treasures makes something old look highly desirable.

As a service to those who follow politics, we wrap up our federal election questions

to the parties, with a map of Escarpment ridings and the newly elected federal representatives. You may find it interesting to see at a glance, who is looking after our Escarpment at the national level.

*Alonia*

**Gloria Hildebrandt**

*P.S. The Niagara Escarpment provides what wild animals need: wild spaces.*

## Let us know what you think!

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