

GETTING TO KNOW WILDLIFE

Orphaned Fishers



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In the spring of 2002 we got a call about a dead adult fisher on the side of the Thomas Dolan Parkway, near a bridge by the wetlands. The caller had seen it the night before, but this time as they passed by they thought they saw two smaller ones near the body. They were unable to stop and would not be back in the area until that night. Luckily a colleague and I were nearby and were able to check it out.

After about an hour of searching the two young fishers were found and with a bit of skill and a lot of luck we got them into carriers.

This would be only the second time the Centre cared for young fishers. In 2000 we received our first orphaned pair. It was exciting to witness

and learn up close about these amazing animals.

After their rescue the fishers settled in quickly, although their shy and wary nature always shone through. Even though they loved their formula, they still had to be coaxed out from under their blankets at mealtimes. Once out, they would happily sit on your lap and eat their formula from a syringe. As soon as their tummies were full and their faces were washed they would scurry behind their large carrier for a little wrestle and play time with each other. They grew very quickly and within a few weeks were ready for their large outdoor cage. Their climbing ability amazed us all as not only were they fast but their agility was unbelievable.

Twice a day we would enter their cage to feed them, each time they would hide in their nesting box until we left, then they would take their food,

dish and all, inside. When we returned later we would find the empty dish that had been tossed out. Even when we had to handle them for vaccinations, they still just wanted to get away from us.

Of course when people heard we had fishers we got all kinds of gasps. More than one person called them vicious creatures. This was not our experience at all. Fishers are very intelligent animals. They are amazing hunters that eat small mammals, birds, occasionally porcupines and sometimes pets. Fishers are about the size of a house cat, weighing around 10-18 lbs.

It is important to remember that we share our spaces with other species and it is good to be proactive in our approach to co-existing with them. With fishers this means taking measures to keep our pets safe, instead of blaming wildlife for simply trying to survive.

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