

# GETTING TO KNOW WILDLIFE

## ONE LUCKY DEER



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Even though we no longer do wildlife rehabilitation, the animals we have helped over the years are never far from our minds.

Just after Christmas one year, on what we had hoped would be a quiet morning, we received a call from a family that had pulled an adult deer from the Ottawa River.

Although not something we would ever recommend the average person attempt, this family managed a very effective rescue. They were well experienced with the water and ice conditions having lived there for many years and using a boat were able to safely get the deer to shore.

The deer was suffering from hypothermia and shock and although it was only semi-conscious, we instructed the family to bind its legs together. We were glad we did. On arrival

at the Centre, while carrying her inside, she revived enough to let out a loud bellow while thrusting her long legs and sharp hooves in all directions.

The first order of business was to get the 50-kilogram doe warm. A tent was constructed around a large indoor cage, directing the warm air from a heater to where she lay. She continued to shake uncontrollably from fear and hours spent in the freezing water. We monitored her response for the next few hours and eventually the shaking subsided as her internal temperature rose.

After changing wet blankets, we left her overnight with deer feed and apples. Happily, the next day we found her standing, eyeing us with caution. We knew that we had to return her to the wild as soon as possible but that she would die of stress if we attempted to restrain and transport her anywhere.

The decision was made to create a channel, along with floor mats to give her secure

footing, that would guide her from the cage to the outside compound leading to a gate and freedom. Finally, with a little prompting, she slowly left with just a short glance back as she headed for the gate. We figured the Centre's location on the Greenbelt with a connection to the Ottawa River corridor would get her back to familiar territory.

The next day, a doe and two bucks were spotted at our bird feeder. We think it was her as she appeared less nervous than the bucks, probably having decided the accommodation was up to snuff.

This will be our last column for the season as our four-legged friends have the good sense to lie low for the winter. We hope to return next spring with more tales from the wild.

The Centre, as a volunteer organization, depends on donations and issues charitable receipts for its education programs. See the website below for information.