

WILDLIFE REHABILITATION IRELAND



Steering Group Report

For the period ended 30th April 2016

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Company information

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Chairman's Report

Wildlife Rehabilitation Ireland (WRI) was established with a long and ambitious list of aims and objectives which we feel will help support the care, welfare and rehabilitation of Irish wildlife, and provide support and training to those who care for wildlife when injured, orphaned or in need. Following a 5-year period of activity as a non-registered body, on the 5th of January 2015 Wildlife Rehabilitation Ireland (A company limited by guarantee, without having a share capital) was formed. In August 2015 WRI were delighted to receive our CHY number, many thanks to Paul Warren, Chartered Accountant, Upton Ryan, for his assistance with this.

Legislation

Since WRI's inception we have worked with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) on various wildlife related issues. Since 2014 we have been in discussions with the NPWS regarding the implementation of an Annual Wildlife Rehabilitation Licence for wildlife rehabilitators taking in large numbers of animal casualties. The survey WRI carried out in 2013 revealed that wildlife casualty numbers are in the thousands every year so the current situation requiring a licence for each bird /mammal, is obviously impracticable and a new system is required. The NPWS have agreed to a pilot study of an annual licence to a select few rehabilitators to evaluate feasibility.

Courses

The International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (IWRC) Wildlife Rehabilitation Course was as popular as previous years, but in addition caught the attention of teachers of the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) Animal Care course which now includes a wildlife module. Due to this welcome addition to their course, we were invited to deliver the IWRC course to the students in their own colleges. We also provided one or two grants per course to individuals who would otherwise not have been able to attend.

Research

The report on the Pine Marten Post Release Monitoring Project; 'Observations of two released rehabilitated Pine Martens *Martes martes* from Letterkeen Wood, Co. Mayo with reference to habitat use.' carried out in 2012, was finalised this year, with input from Derek McLoughlin, Emma Higgs, Sam Birch, Aleksandra Borawska, Carmel O'Dwyer, and Clyde Hutchinson. Dr. Derek McLoughlin; a consultant ecologist based in Co. Mayo, provided training in the use of radio tracking equipment to the project volunteers. Derek gave a presentation on the project at the Pine Marten Symposium in Galway in 2014. More info can be found at: www.wri.ie/pages/News-pinemarten.html

Education

WRI was asked to talk about wildlife, and recommend other wildlife speakers for a variety of institutions this year including, St. Brigid's Boys National School, Millstreet Country park, University College Dublin's School of Veterinary Medicine's new and thriving Wildlife Society, and Louth Meath FM (LMFM) radio. We were delighted to be able to help and to recommend some excellent wildlife specialists.

In August 2015 WRI invited one of Ireland's foremost wildlife photographers to provide a Wildlife Photography talk for the general public in Ashbourne Library, Co Meath, for Heritage Week.

Then in September, because we had brought Mick Moran (Head of Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation Unit in INTERPOL) from France to Ireland to speak at the Wildlife Crime Conference, he kindly also provided a radio interview and an additional talk at the conference, on online safety of young children.

Chairman's Report, cont.

Survey - rehabilitators

A second Wildlife Crime and Casualty survey was sent out to wildlife rehabilitators this year to find out what changes there had been in casualty numbers or conditions, and a second Wildlife Casualty & Poisons survey was sent out to veterinary professionals. Sadly, the returns were poor this year so this has been taken into account and future surveys will be conducted more thoroughly with follow up via telephone.

Survey - crime

Prior to the 2015 Wildlife Crime Conference, WRI launched an online reporting survey to record 'Your experience of Wildlife Crime in Ireland'. WRI was looking for feedback from the general public in order to address any issues that may hinder the reporting of, or investigation into wildlife crimes in Ireland. The results were collated and formed part of the afternoon panel discussion session at WRI's Irish Wildlife Crime Conference in September.

We want to thank all those who took the time to fill in the survey, and have left it online to accumulate more data that will hopefully aid those who are trying to encourage the reporting of wildlife crimes in Ireland. If you have ever reported a wildlife crime we would still encourage you to fill in the survey, the conference has passed but the data can still be put to good use. The survey can be found at: www.surveymonkey.com/s/RKPGQZ5. We can't fix the problem if we don't know what it is.

Social media

The three websites we now have are all being well utilised, as is WRI's facebook page. Google analytics indicates that www.irishwildlifematters.ie has an average of 200 hits per day. www.wri.ie has an average of 50 hits per day, and www.wildlifecrime.ie currently has an average of less than 20 hits per day. The latter website is due to be officially launched in 2016 and we expect usage to rise once people become aware of it. We will also be doing a large mailshot of the wildlife crime brochures to libraries, schools, Garda stations etc in 2016/17 to increase exposure.

Finances

The 16 month period to 30th April 2016 was a good one for WRI in terms of fundraising. We are a charity with no paid staff, one unpaid director working full time, two unpaid directors working part time and roughly ten part time volunteers.

During the period we ran nine wildlife courses, and hosted our largest conference to date. We charge admission to all of the these events in order for us to cover costs, the speakers all generously gave their time for free to speak at the conference, and we were very pleased to receive sponsorship from the Environmental Protection Agency, National Parks & Wildlife Service, Heritage Council and Meath County Council.

Any finances accumulated are ploughed straight back into WRI's numerous activities, and allow us to continue to help support the care, welfare and rehabilitation of Irish wildlife, and provide support and training to those who care for wildlife when injured, orphaned or in need.

It has been an extremely busy but hugely satisfying period for the Charity as we have taken on and accomplished an impressive list of activities which has left us in a position to focus next year on our biggest and most ambitious project; that of the creation of an Irish Wildlife Rehabilitation and Teaching Hospital.

WRI activities - 2015

The main object for which Wildlife Rehabilitation Ireland was established is: to advance education and benefit the community by the conservation, protection and promotion of wild animals and their environment and education; research and encouragement of field studies in that regard; and the protection of the natural world by providing resources, educational opportunities, and support for wildlife rehabilitation in Ireland.

Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation Course



IWRC Wildlife Course delegates

The International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (IWRC) is the leading developer of professional training for wildlife care providers in North America and internationally.

In 2011 the IWRC teamed up with Wildlife Rehabilitation Ireland to provide a unique opportunity for Irish people to participate in the IWRC's Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation Course.

The two day training course concentrates specifically on the theory and practice of wildlife rehabilitation.

The 2011 Course was so successful that we wanted to offer it on a regular basis in Ireland so with the IWRC's assistance we now have an Irish IWRC Instructor.

Since 2011 WRI have run these Courses on a regular basis. Places on the Course are highly sought after, which is a great indication of the level of interest in wildlife in this country.

Since Jan 2015 WRI has run nine of these courses.

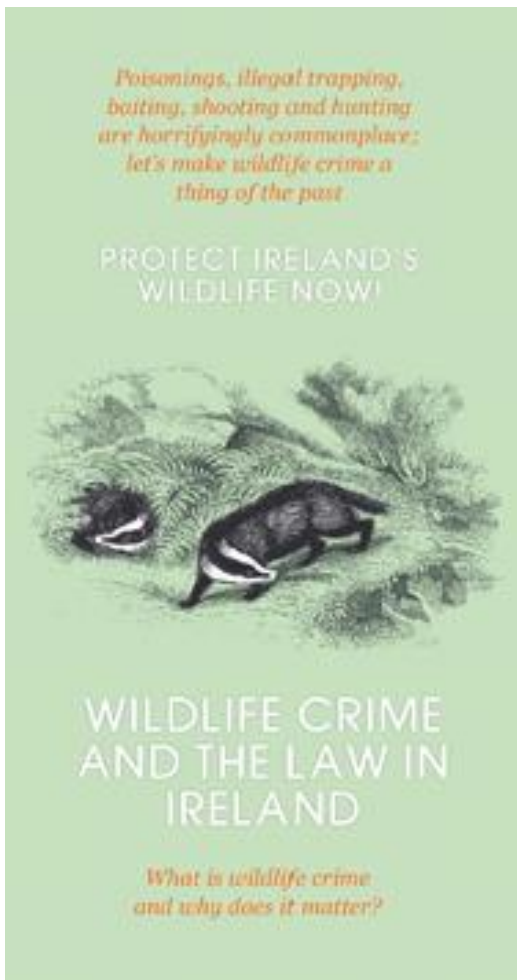
Six of the courses were open to the general public; the other two were delivered specifically to Monaghan and Killester Further Education colleges at the request of the lecturers of the Animal Care Courses.

The Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation Course details can be accessed at www.wri.ie/wildlife-course

Irish Wildlife Crime website



Wildlife Crime Ireland website



Wildlife Crime brochure

In August 2014 WRI met with retired National Parks and Wildlife Service Conservation Ranger; Val Swan, to discuss the idea of an Irish wildlife crime website. Val is widely considered to be Ireland's leading authority on Irish wildlife legislation, and is still called upon for advice from NPWS staff, even 4 years after his retirement from the service!

The idea of having a website such as this came from the lack of online information regarding what constitutes a wildlife crime, and who to call when a person happens across one.

Education and awareness raising were highlighted at WRI's 2013 Irish Wildlife Crime Conference as having a vital role to play in fighting wildlife crime so WRI took it upon ourselves to produce a website and accompanying brochure for exactly that reason.

It took one full year of hard work and research to finish these two projects, with invaluable assistance from Val, and the encouragement and willingness to share information by the individuals responsible for the UK wildlife crime website; www.birdersagainst.org

Wildlife Crime Ireland www.wildlifecrime.ie offers:

Basic information on wildlife crime

Links to further information

Advice on Recognising & Recording a wildlife crime

Contact details for Reporting a wildlife crime

Hopefully these two resources will reduce some of the confusion surrounding what constitutes a wildlife crime and who to report it to; and subsequently facilitate recognition, recording, and ultimately reporting, by the general public in relation to wildlife crime.

2015 Irish Wildlife Crime Conference



Dr. Barry O'Donoghue NPWS



Mick Moran An Garda Síochána and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)



Mairead McGuinness MEP



Superintendent Martin Walker An Garda Síochána

In 2013, WRI hosted Ireland's first Wildlife Crime Conference, which brought together members of An Garda Síochána (AGS), National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), veterinary practitioners, animal welfare & conservation groups and general public, to raise awareness of, and discuss the various issues surrounding, wildlife crime in Ireland.

Following on from this event, WRI hosted a second two day Irish Wildlife Crime Conference in September 2015.

One of the aims of the 2015 conference was to highlight the work 'behind the scenes' i.e. the extraordinary lengths that dedicated wildlife crime enforcement staff such as NPWS staff go to in order to bring wildlife offenders to court. If the general public and government officials are made aware of the work that goes on day and night in the fight against wildlife crime, we believe it will encourage reporting and investment of time and resources into wildlife protection.

Positive developments and successful wildlife crime prosecutions rarely get national media attention so this conference provided a platform for groups to publicise progress made either via collaborations between organisations, increased reporting of crimes, training courses initiated, or a noted change in the public's perception of the importance of protecting wildlife.

The 2013 conference was, as was to be expected; a sobering event in reflection of the then wildlife crime situation in Ireland; the 2015 conference, in contrast, showed that where there's a will there's a way, and presented a very much more positive and hopeful outlook. As with the first conference, the second conference brought together an extremely diverse audience of over 140 delegates and 30 speakers, for a weekend of talks and practical sessions, and again the conference was addressed by national and international speakers and addressed a wide variety of issues including bird poisoning, poaching, badger baiting, forensics, and the use of illegal traps and snares.

Ireland has made great strides since the 2013 Wildlife Crime Conference. Wildlife crime reporting and prosecution is a multi agency cooperation, and recently, Irish farmers are becoming active in reporting poaching and illegal hare coursing despite threats of being targeted by criminal gangs.

Hopefully this second conference will continue to enhance collaborative working amongst all wildlife protection and enforcement groups and agencies, and ensure that wildlife crime will receive the priority that it truly deserves. Conference details can be found at this link www.wri.ie/conference

Wildlife in University College Dublin Veterinary Hospital

Wildlife seen, treatment and outcomes in Irish veterinary hospitals and clinics

Dr O. Clyde Hutchinson, Yvette Durcan and Emma Higgs
Wildlife Rehabilitation Ireland, Duleek, Co. Meath



For the first time, 110 Irish veterinary clinics and hospitals were surveyed to assess the number and treatment of wildlife seen, treated and outcomes. The data can be also be used as a sensor for any potential emerging infectious disease, which could potentially...

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Veterinary Wildlife Health Survey



UCD vet students

"..sorry, but do we actually have many injured wild animals?"

In order to improve the wildlife situation in Ireland, it became obvious that we had to prove to the veterinary college and veterinary council of Ireland that there was a problem that needed solving. To this end WRI embarked on our first Irish Wildlife Health Survey of veterinary professionals.

This survey was an opportunity to gather valuable data to find out how many injured wild animals were seen by veterinary professionals over the course of a 12 month period, and allow for a better picture of any emerging infectious diseases which could have potentially disastrous consequences for animal production and wildlife in Ireland.

The 116 veterinary clinics who participated in this study, reported an estimated total of 2,989 animals seen in one year alone! This data was only the tip of the iceberg in terms of the real numbers of wildlife casualties out there. It was now obvious that veterinary professionals needed to be taught about wildlife. University College Dublin's School of Veterinary Medicine invited us in to teach!

After discussions with the exotics and physiology lecturer in UCD; David Kilroy, and Technical Officer - Catherine McCarney; WRI were delighted to be invited to give a 3hr practical/wet-lab session to UCD vet students in October 2015.

UCD's vet college is the only Veterinary School on the island of Ireland. Exotics is taught in the veterinary curriculum but this was the first time wildlife treatment and first aid was specifically requested. Tina Swindle, Lilian Collier and Rania Mikhail, all RVN's, had their hands full teaching 60 enthusiastic vet students.

The Veterinary Wildlife Health Survey details can be accessed via this link www.wri.ie/pages/data.html

Extract from our Statutory Accounts

Income & Expenditure Account for the period ended 30th April 2016

Income	51,085
Expenditure	(39,845)
Surplus for the period	<u>11,240</u>

Approved by the board on 23rd February 2017 and signed on its behalf by:

Emma Higgs
Director

Ann Greene
Director

Our full Statutory Accounts are available on our website www.wri.ie

Balance Sheet as at 30th April 2016

	Apr 16 €
Current Assets	
Cash at bank and in hand	22,775
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	(2,179)
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Net Current Assets	20,596
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Total Assets less Current Liabilities	20,596
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Reserves	
Pre Incorporation funds	9,356
Income and expenditure account	11,240
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Members' Funds	20,596
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The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective January 2015) relating to small companies.

We, as Directors' of Wildlife Rehabilitation Ireland, state that -

- (a) the company is availing itself of the exemption provided for by Chapter 15 of Part 6 of the Companies Act 2014,
- (b) the company is availing itself of the exemption on the grounds that the conditions specified in s.358 are satisfied,
- (c) the members of the company have not served a notice on the company under s.334(1) in accordance with s.334(2),
- (d) We acknowledge the company's obligations under the Companies Act 2014, to keep adequate accounting records and prepare Financial Statements which give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company at the end of its financial year and of its profit or loss for such a year and to otherwise comply with the provisions of Companies Act 2014 relating to Financial Statements so far as they are applicable to the company.

Approved by the board on 23rd February 2017 and signed on its behalf by:

Emma Higgs
Director

Ann Greene
Director

WRI websites

Wildlife Rehabilitation Ireland

WRI has developed a website which offers rehabilitation guidelines, standardised wildlife casualty and volunteer forms for rehabilitation establishments, wildlife career options, publications and further education - all of which aim to facilitate individuals actively involved in rehabilitation and/or conservation.

Wildlife Rehabilitation Ireland's website can be accessed at www.wri.ie

Irish Wildlife Matters

WRI produced the wildlife first aid website 'Irish Wildlife Matters' (IWM) which was launched in May 2010. Its purpose is to address the lack of easily accessible information on Irish wildlife rescue and first aid. IWM provides an easily accessible, online overview of the rescue methods, medical treatment, rehabilitation and release procedures for the most commonly seen species of Irish wildlife casualties.

Irish Wildlife Matters website can be accessed at www.irishwildlifematters.ie

Wildlife Crime Ireland

In 2015 WRI, in association with retired NPWS ranger Val Swan, produced a new wildlife crime website and wildlife crime information brochure that were launched at the Irish Wildlife Crime Conference 2015. This website is a comprehensive site for the general public to get information on what to do and who to call for help in Ireland should a wildlife crime be suspected.

Wildlife Crime Ireland's website can be accessed at www.wildlifecrime.ie

Acknowledgements to conference funders and supporters

The 2015 Irish Wildlife Crime Conference was supported by grants from:

- the Environmental Protection Agency under the 'EPA Research Programme 2014-2020 - Event Support' Amount 3,000 Euro [Project Code: 2015-CONF-62];
- the National Parks & Wildlife Service, sponsored by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Amount 3,000 Euro;
- the Heritage Council, sponsored by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, under the 'Community Based Heritage Grant Scheme'. Amount 2,500 Euro [grant reference number CBH04976];
- and Meath County Council 'Festival and Event Grant Scheme 2015' Amount 500 Euro

Donations and support in-kind for the 2015 Irish Wildlife Crime Conference were gratefully received from the following organizations:

- Roughan & O'Donovan – ROD
- Maxi Zoo
- Andrew Kelly photography
- Willow Farm Ceramics
- Martina Scott Designs
- Bat Conservation Ireland
- Natural History Book Service
- Vincent Wildlife Trust
- Irish Wildlife Trust
- Butterfly Conservation Trust
- Kildare Animal Foundation
- Heron Gallery
- Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime (PAW N.I)
- Birders Against Wildlife Crime