

VOLUME 6

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COCHRANE ECOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

LIBERTY

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- ☞ Help to fund a project
- ☞ Fund a rescued animal \$100.00
- ☞ Become a Member \$50.00
- ☞ Become a Volunteer

BLACKFEET SWIFT FOX REINTRODUCTION SUCCESSFUL



Since 1998, the CEI has reintroduced 123 captive bred swift fox on Blackfeet tribal lands in Montana, USA, up to and including the fifth release in 2002. The reintroduced population has been monitored but, due to lack of sufficient funds, monitoring was limited and information gained sparse. The field-work for 2002 fo-

THANK YOU ESRF, SHARED EARTH, IWC, ELSA CANADA, DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE, THE BLACKFEET NATION, NF&WF and other individual funders too numerous to mention.

cusSED on the productivity of the swift fox population by locating fox sign and the distribution of active natal dens. Radio telemetry was used to track swift fox radio-collared since 1999. In total 10 new active swift fox natal dens were

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WILDLIFE RESCUE & REHABILITATION

THANK YOU TO OUR MEMBERS AND THOSE WHO FUND OUR RESCUED ANIMALS, WITHOUT YOUR HELP AND MONEY WE COULD NOT RESCUE, REHABILITATE AND RELEASE THESE WILD ANIMALS

This year we have been inundated with fawns, far more than any other year! This may be partly because the venison farmers



will no longer accept orphaned fawns from the AB government. We have had our fair share of birds come in, water fowl and wading birds and raptors, like this little fellow who was sent to us by Banff National Park

PUBLIC EDUCATION

The CEI is represented on the Board of Directors of the Alberta Wildlife Rehabilitation Association, AWRA, which is the umbrella organization for all wildlife rehabilitators in Alberta. This means that AWRA is in the process of developing Guidelines to govern the treatment, captive management and release of orphaned and injured wildlife in Alberta. These guidelines will be accepted for this purpose by the government of Alberta.

We continue to visit schools and other venues to talk about what we do at the CEI and to teach people about our native wildlife. The CEI offers field trips...as these junior high school students are experiencing in the picture... We also provide field work experience for under graduates, graduates and post graduate researchers. This year we had researchers from Italy, Mexico, Brazil, and the UK, as well as Canada working at the CEI and down in Montana.

The CEI was asked by the Federal Government to come to Ottawa to speak to the committee on environmental sustainability about the Species at Risk Act, SARA, which was



a very interesting experience! Thanks to IFAW for also funding this trip.

We hope, in 2003 (and given that we get the funding to do so) to set up an interactive educational website which will show researchers working in the field, and what techniques are used.

WILDLIFE RESCUE & REHABILITATION (CON'T)

Laurence the Big Horn lamb was another animal sent to us by Parks Canada. He was born on the forecourt of the Kilmory Lodge in Waterton village (where he is known as "Mory"). His mother died giving birth to him. Lawrence grew up with deer fawns so I was a bit worried that he may not know that he was a big horn sheep. The park wardens of Waterton National Park came to collect him for release this fall...they drove him back to the park, and into the back lands looking for a herd of Big Horn Sheep and soon found some. A half-curl ram lamb the same age as Lawrence, although considerably smaller, was grazing on the verge so they stopped the horse trailer and opened its doors for Lawrence to jump out...which he did. He had no doubt about what he was either...he trotted up to the ram lamb and started to butt heads with it. After some mutual head butting the two of them trotted off up the mountainside and started grazing with the herd. A very satisfactory outcome!



PUBLICATIONS FROM CEI RESEARCH

SMEETON, C. 2000. BLACKFEET SWIFT FOX REINTRODUCTION, RESULTS OF THE FIRST YEARS. CARNIVOR 2000, DENVER, CO. USA NOVEMBER 12-15, 2000

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SMEETON, C. 1999. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF SWIFT FOX REINTRODUCTION TO BLACKFEET TRIBAL LANDS, MONTANA, USA. *REINTRODUCTION NEWS* No. 18, IUCN ISSN 1560 – 3709 NAIROBI, KENYA.

SMEETON, C. 2000. BLACKFEET SWIFT FOX (*VULPES VELOX*) REINTRODUCTION: RESULTS OF THE FIRST TWO YEARS. *ENDANGERED SPECIES UPDATE*. VOL. 18, No.4. UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, ANN ARBOR, USA

SMEETON, C. 2001. *OTTER MANAGEMENT AT THE COCHRANE ECOLOGICAL INSTITUTE*. NORTH AMERICAN RIVER OTTER, *LONTRA (LUTRA) CANADENSIS*. HUSBANDRY NOTEBOOK, 2ND EDITION. EDITOR, JAN REED-SMITH, JOHN BALL ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN, USA

SMEETON, C. AND K. WEAGLE. 2000. REINTRODUCTION OF SWIFT FOX (*VULPES VELOX*) INTO GRASSLANDS NATIONAL PARK, SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA. *ORYX*. 34(3) 171-179

SMEETON, C., WATERS, S.S. & DAVIES, L. IN PRESS. CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT OF ORPHANED BLACK BEARS (*URSUS AMERICANUS*) INTENDED FOR RELEASE. IN: *THE EVALUATION OF BEAR REHABILITATION PROJECTS FROM A CONSERVATIONIST'S VIEWPOINT*. L. KOLTER, J. VAN DIJK & T. THOMAS (EDS.). OUWEHANDS ZOO, RHENEN, THE NETHERLANDS.

BLACKFEET (CON'T)

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located. Radio telemetry was undertaken from the ground and aurally. A number of collars were located from those individuals released in 2001. Radio collars from 1999 were still active until July but collars from 2000 had apparently ceased to function. Based upon collected data, we have survival of 75% over 3 years for reintroduced captive-bred adult swift foxes and of 50% for reintroduced juveniles. Live-trapping in August was undertaken at the request of one of our funders, but was rather unsuccessful due to the time of year and abundant food supply including an epidemic year for grasshoppers! The intention was to trap and collar adult foxes in order to ascertain survivorship and movement and to aid in the locating of natal dens in the future. The CEI's hair-trapping project, a partnership with the National Forensic DNA Research Centre in Ontario, has produced some interesting findings and demonstrated that no contamination of samples occurs through the use of the CEI designed hair-traps. These traps are designed so that wild swift foxes will willingly enter and exit them, leaving hair samples behind. These samples are analysed for their DNA, which will give us knowledge of both individual animals and their parentage. The future of successful swift fox re establishment on the northern plains of North America lies with the Blood (Kainaiwa) Tribe of Alberta. We hope to work in partnership with them in a swift fox reintroduction on their tribal lands. Blood tribal land lies next to Waterton National park (Canada) which adjoins Glacier National Park (USA) providing a protected corridor of suitable prairie habitat joining the Blackfeet MT, USA, and Blood, AB swift fox reintroduction sites. This is a First in swift fox reintroduction in North America.

BLACK BEAR REHABILITATION



BLACK BEAR RELEASE PROGRAMME. Our orphaned bear cubs, Jemima and Juneau, (above and below) were successfully released where they came from, north of Edson., Alberta. They were radio ear-tagged so we were able to monitor how they did after release, and they did very well! Jemima and Juneau's ear-tags have stopped transmitting now, Both made their own territories and both hibernated over their first winter in the wild...thank you Canadian Pacific Railways, WISPA Canada, and Zoocheck for contributing towards this project. We have completed construction of our orphaned bear facility and have another bear, LiMA, to be released in 2003..Thank you, Lisa Flaman and her friends at the U.of Alberta for having a huge party to raise the funds for Lima's radio ear tag!



RESEARCH INITIATIVES AT CEI

FUNDING SUPPORT NEEDED, PLEASE HELP!

COCHRANE ECOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

P.O. Box 484
COCHRANE, ALBERTA
CANADA T4C 1A7

PHONE: 403-932-5632
FAX: 403-932-6303
EMAIL: CEI@NUCLEUS.COM

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WWW.CEINST.ORG



BIODIVERSITY SURVEY AND ENDANGERED SPECIES RECOVERY PLAN, SWIFT FOX BLOOD RESERVE, ALBERTA



INTERACTIVE EDUCATIONAL FIELD-WORK WEBSITE



BLACK BEAR REHABILITATION AND RELEASE RESEARCH



BADGER RESEARCH



DNA FINGER PRINTING AND ECOLOGICAL GENETICS FOR SWIFT FOX

ENDANGERED SPECIES MANAGEMENT IN CANADA

The Species at Risk Act, SARA, when ratified, will be the first Canada-wide Endangered Species Protection Act, but will only apply to lands under federal jurisdiction, or to endangered migratory birds. This is an unsatisfactory arrangement and encourages provincial duplication...for example there already is a national Swift Fox Recovery Team, which Alberta, Saskatchewan, and the federal Gov. as well as the

CEI, have representation on, but Alberta is proposing establishing an Alberta Swift Fox Recovery Team as well, and then Saskatchewan will probably want to do the same. The establishment of AB and SK swift fox recovery teams, in addition to the national Swift Fox Recovery Team seem superfluous to me. If you agree with me, please write to your provincial governments and tell them so. As there are 415 at risk species in Canada now, imagine the cost!

BADGERS IN CANADA

The North American badger, *Taxidea taxus*, is now classified as endangered in B.C. and Ontario and as a Species of Concern in Alberta. Little or nothing is known of its behaviour or habitat requirements, other than it likes open country and can be found from the high mountain meadows to the flat lands of the prairies. Badgers are well known earth as movers, digging out their prey, ground squirrels, pocket gophers, and mice. Their excavations are essential as nesting sites, burrows, or escape terrain for other endangered species like burrowing owls and swift foxes, but their active digging also gives a false idea of their numbers, as it is hard to believe that one quite small mammal could move such enormous amounts of earth. They have been accused of being a danger to livestock and vehicles because of the holes



they make, but they are far more beneficial than detrimental to the Environment. The CEI is now working to find out as much as possible about badgers and how to protect them. THANKYOU BAGER DAYLIGHTING for your help.