

REGION OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
RÉGION D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

Our File/N/Réf.
 Your File/V/Réf.

DATE 5 October 1998

TO/DEST. Co-ordinator
 Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee

FROM/EXP. Councillor Molly McGoldrick-Larsen

SUBJECT/OBJET **WILD BIRD CARE CENTRE
 REQUEST FOR FUNDING**

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

That the Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee recommend Council approve funding for the Wild Bird Care Centre in the amount of \$40,000.

BACKGROUND

The Wild Bird Care Centre (WBCC) has been in existence since 1981, and has treated, rehabilitated and cared for more than 50,000 wild birds. This represents 80% of all injured, sick or orphaned wildlife found in the National Capital Region. Additionally, the Centre's educational component includes school presentations, tours, newsletters, displays, and a Web site, which has generated calls from all over Canada, the US and even Europe.

The Centre responds to approximately 25,000 telephone calls per year from homeowners on issues such as the handling of an injured bird, bird-proofing homes, and feeder care and placement in winter.

The WBCC has presented no financial burden to any level of government for 17 years. The work being accomplished by the Centre represents a considerable saving in time, money and manpower to any level of government while providing much relief of wildlife problems to the region.

However, the Centre's operations have been stretched beyond the limits this year for a number of reasons.

- Due to the January Ice Storm, bird admission numbers soared and cleanup and repairs at the Centre were considerable and ongoing
- Tree damage and cleanup have created havoc during the nesting season. Four hundred juveniles were admitted to the Centre, compared to 145 in 1997
- Abnormally warm spring and drought-like conditions experienced in the Region created a deluge of bird-related calls from the public and bird rescues. About 1,000 birds were admitted with dehydration problems
- The Centre has experienced an increased demand for Centre's hotline services. The Centre normally receives 2,000 during the month of May. This year, it responded to double that amount.

The WBCC's annual operational costs are in the range of \$160,000. In the past, these costs have been covered through public donations and fundraising efforts. Donations in the first quarter were down considerably - \$10,786 as compared to \$35,782 - partly due to individual ice storm expenses. The increased workload for staff and volunteers this year has made it impossible to mount any fundraising efforts.

In order to avert closure of the Centre, the City of Nepean made a one time grant of \$15,000 in June. However, the Centre is still seeking assistance in offsetting the devastating loss in revenue and increased demand for services that commenced with the impact of the ice storm.

Like the Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre, which Council approved funding for in the amount of \$51,100, the Wild Bird Care Centre is a resource in the Region that offers much relief of wildlife problems in the Region. The Centre is a 'feather in the Region's cap' in terms of tourism and environmental education, and not one we can afford to lose.

*Approved by
M McGoldrick-Larsen*

FINANCE DEPARTMENT COMMENT

No funds remain in the 1998 provision for unforeseen account. Subject to Council approval of this grant request, funding may be allocated through a pre-commitment from the 1999 Provision for Unforeseen budget.

*Approved by T. Fedec
on behalf of the Finance Commissioner*