



Jane Charmelo

# out & about

## Wildlife center gets new diagnostic equipment *Updated X-ray machine leads to faster diagnoses*

Animals can't tell us what's wrong when they are hurting or injured, so it's up to the professionals to use their diagnostic skills to figure out what's wrong.

To do that, veterinarians like Dr. Sarah Reich rely on medical equipment such as an X-ray machine to help get an "inside" look at an animal's injury or illness.

Reich and her team at Willowbrook Wildlife Center in Glen Ellyn were able to purchase a new \$35,000 X-ray machine, thanks to a generous estate gift from Glen Ellyn resident Ron Bork—whose donation of nearly \$1 million will help fund animal welfare projects through the DuPage Foundation, according to a Forest Preserve District of DuPage County (FPDDC) release.

Reich said the gift enabled the wildlife center to use the funds with a stipulation being "as long as it [the money] was involved in operations and rehabilitation of animals," as opposed to paying for salaries and other expenditures.

The veterinarian explained that the center chose to purchase this machine to replace one she believes is over 10 years old, and the new equipment has enabled the staff to process X-rays more quickly—which reduces time under anesthesia and stress to the animal.

"It would take a long period of time," she continued, using the computed radiography equipment they had been using, taking from 30 seconds to a minute to develop the X-rays.

"That doesn't seem like a long period of time," Reich said, but staff would have to remove the X-ray plate

from underneath the animal, process it and if necessary, put the plate back and possibly reposition the animal if the X-ray needed to be retaken.

With the new equipment, Reich continued, the plate is under the table and can be processed more quickly.

With the X-ray plate being under the table, "You don't have to move the animal. That stage has been cut out," added the veterinarian, who said the results are immediately visible on a monitor.

She estimates that since the machine was installed in May, the center has taken up to 1,000 or more sets of X-rays, adding that the new equipment is especially timely because April through October is "our busiest season," with new animal babies being born, as well as spring and fall migration.

She said the center treats many fractures "related to humans, unfortunately," such as when an animal is hit by a car or injured by a weapon.

The veterinarian cited examples such as a red-tailed hawk that was hit by a vehicle and trapped in the front grille, and another instance where a squirrel was found to have a fractured skull due to being shot with a large pellet.

Additionally, the new equipment also "allows us to diagnose a wider range of animals," Reich related, from a 9-gram (roughly 0.02 pounds) nuthatch to a 10-kilogram (roughly 22 pounds) swan.

And, she said of the X-ray machine, "The images are much more detailed."

The veterinarian said the center is expected to receive additional funds from the estate to be spent over the

next five years, and one of the items on her wish list is a therapeutic cold laser, which is used to treat a number of conditions, from arthritis to traumatic injuries.

In the meantime, though, she is grateful to have the new X-ray machine to benefit her furry, feathered, reptilian and amphibian patients,

commenting, "It was a great opportunity for us to buy [it]," adding, "We're very lucky."

Willowbrook Wildlife Center, located at 525 S. Park Blvd., Glen Ellyn, treats nearly 100,000 birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians each year, according to the FPDDC.

For information about bringing in

injured native (local or migratory) wildlife, call 630-942-6200 or visit [www.dupageforest.org/willowbrook-wildlife-center](http://www.dupageforest.org/willowbrook-wildlife-center); and to donate to the Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County, call 630-933-7097, email [fundraising@dupageforest.org](mailto:fundraising@dupageforest.org) or visit [dupageforest.org/friends](http://dupageforest.org/friends).



PHOTOS COURTESY OF FPDDC Lombardian Willowbrook Wildlife Center in Glen Ellyn has a new X-ray machine, thanks to a generous benefactor. It will allow for quicker and more precise imaging. Above, volunteer Ashlee Nix (right) and seasonal clinic staff member Lexi Bublitz take radiographs of a juvenile herring gull, while monitoring anesthesia.



At right, a red-tailed hawk is seen in before and after photos. It suffered both an open wing and leg fracture after being trapped in the front grille of a vehicle.



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