

Any Port in a Storm By Cindy Williams



September was a really tough month for disasters in the US. There were already major fires in the West and Northwest, Hurricane Harvey had just struck Texas and Irma pounded Florida. Then Maria came along and flattened Puerto Rico. With so much destruction it's hard to imagine being able to make a difference to the victims of such catastrophes. But federal agencies and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are geared up for such events and soon swooped in to help. Since Hurricane Katrina in 2005, pets have been included in most disaster plans (I volunteer with a few national disaster teams who help companion animals during such disasters). However, it occurred to us at Lakeside that the wildlife caretakers might be outside that bubble of help. So after Harvey hit Texas, we geared up to see if we could make a difference within our own circle of expertise.

After making a few inquiries I was able to track down an organization in Dallas that was helping to coordinate supplies for those rehabbers in the path of the storm. Kathy Milacek is the Director of DFW Wildlife Coalition, an organization that answers wildlife phone calls in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. She was able to assist me in pinpointing what specific supplies we could collect and identifying organizations to receive those donations. Not only that, one of her volunteers was headed down to the affected areas and could help deliver supplies! All in all we collected over \$3,000 worth of species-specific formula (for baby bunnies, opossums and squirrels mostly) as well as much-needed medical supplies to combat infection and illness (most baby squirrels were coming in from the flood waters with aspiration pneumonia). Much of the supplies were from Friends of Lakeside Nature Center, but a special thanks also to Debby Barker, Veterinary Center of Liberty (Lori Rohlfling, DVM) and Rockhill Veterinary Clinic (Patricia Stewart, DVM) for their generous donations. I was able to drive the supplies down to Dallas and Kathy transferred them to her volunteer who finished the trip (and also let me sleep overnight on her couch/futon). Thanks to the efforts of all these individuals/organizations we were able to help Gulf Coast Wildlife Coalition and TWRC

Wildlife Center get back on their feet and care for the smallest victims of Harvey.



Lakeside always provides a "port in the storm" for Missouri wildlife who need a helping hand. This month we had an unusual bird that was a new one on me - the Sora, a shore bird that is a type of Rail (similar to a Virginia Rail). The Sora is native to freshwater marshes in North America and is known to spend summers in northern Missouri and migrate through our area headed toward their winter homes in the Southeast US and Mexico (and parts farther south). This little cutie had

an injured foot and luckily was able to be released in a relatively small time frame so he could continue his southward journey. Shorebirds are notoriously difficult to rehab since they tend not to eat on their own and force feeding them is stressful on the animal and the caretaker alike! So we were glad to send him on his way as quickly as possible.



We also got to care for a Flying Squirrel this month. Flying Squirrels are not overly common in our area (I've never seen one in the wild) but they are known to frequent the metro area and it's not unusual for us to see one or two in the course of a season. They are much smaller than our Eastern Gray Squirrels and Fox Squirrels and as you probably already know they cannot fly - they are more actually gliders since they use the flap of skin on the sides of their bodies to catch the air as they leap from a tall tree. So they tend to go more down than

up, but more slowly and deliberately than their more common cousins. This little one got a fill up of formula before being farmed out to a home rehabber for more care.

The volunteers and staff at Lakeside provide a little help for our Missouri native animals in need, and this month we were able to extend that help to our neighbors in the south to help them weather their own storm. Thanks for all the donations and volunteer hours that helped (and continue to help) make that happen.