

The Owl Rescue

by Grace Stapper

'It was a week before Christmas, and outdoors it was dark,
We hopped into our van to check out the lights in the park.'

Okay, in this manner it will take me way too long.



Dave, and helpers (on behalf of Russell Police Village), had strung lights on the drystone bridge in MacDougall Park and we were going to check them out. Merrily on our way, when a thump against the side of the van gave us a scare. We turned around and there in the middle of the road sat a dazed Eastern screech owl. The large beseeching eyes in this small owl said it needed help. Gently we put it into a shopping bag (good idea to keep them in the van), viewed the festive lights on the bridge and returned home.

Now what to do? Checked online and saw that the Wild Bird Centre would answer our call. The advice was to keep the owl enclosed in a box and bring it there in the morning. Early next morning we brought the owl for medical attention (my husband weighed the 102 km return trip, against the life of the owl, and the owl won).



The staff at the wild bird care centre took great care of ‘our owl’ and kept us informed. Upon hearing the owl referred to as file #12-50, we decided that just would not do. The family was polled for a suitable name and Kevin was chosen. We learned many things about this small ‘eared’ screech owl, including that it weighed in at a healthy 220 grams. This changed things as it was an indicator that Kevin was a likely a she (males weigh considerably less).

A week later we were informed that Skeeky (formerly Kevin, now re-named by a grandson who says it sounds better than Screechy) was ready for release and we were asked if would like to be involved. It’s best for release to be in the vicinity where the bird was found. You guessed it, Hub went the distance and brought the screech owl back here.

As a number of family members watched, Skeeky was quick to zip into the duck nesting box when presented with this possibility. We wondered if she would like it here and stay, so kept an eye out for her. Everyone was thrilled when several days later we saw her face peeking through the hole in the nesting box, as she basked in the sunshine. We have seen her again and hope she will stay healthy and nest here.

Patty, the education program manager at the centre (www.wildbirdcarecentre.org), left us with the following message:

“Thank you for reaching out to learn more about how you can be a good neighbour to Kevin and all her friends”.

