

FOLLY

# Wildlife



RESCUE NEWS  
WINTER 2017/18

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Report!

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weasels and stoats

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The Folly Wildlife Rescue Trust is a registered charity dedicated to the rescue, care and rehabilitation of injured, orphaned, sick and distressed wildlife.

The Trust operates primarily in Kent and Sussex, and every year, some 3,500 casualties pass through its door.

Its education programme looks to highlight the many man-made hazards wildlife faces, as well as dispelling the myths and misconceptions that can so easily lead to persecution.

Front cover. A young weasel. All Photos: Sarah Nunn and Folly Wildlife Rescue Trust

# Welcome...

TO THE WINTER EDITION OF  
THE FOLLY WILDLIFE RESCUE  
NEWSLETTER.

## WINTER IS FINALLY UPON US...

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**...AND AS WE KNOW ONLY TOO WELL HERE AT FOLLY, IT CAN BE A CHALLENGING TIME FOR WILDLIFE.**

Young animals in particular, are very susceptible to the cold, and with many food items now in short supply, it can be a struggle to survive. This may not be a problem if your main diet is berries (which are very plentiful this year), but if you rely on invertebrates, fish, or indeed other animals for your food, it can be a real problem.

In very wintry conditions, birds of prey, herons, kingfishers and egrets, will starve, if waterways are frozen for more than a few days, and young hedgehogs (still very much out and about in late November), are very prone to starvation and hypothermia.

With many hedgehogs now being born very late in the season, when invertebrate food supplies are already dwindling, they're unable to build up sufficient reserves of the fat they need to hibernate; soon, starvation sets in, they start coming out in the daytime to search for food, and unless they're spotted and picked up by someone who recognises the warning signs, invariably perish.

We're now admitting large numbers of these 'autumn juveniles', and because the weather has so far been reasonably mild, we have high hopes of pulling most of them through.

We're also seeing a notable increase in general admissions this year - again, down to the mild and dry weather we've been experiencing, but also, because a number

of rescue centres have recently had to close their doors - brought about I imagine, by a combination of having to struggle for funding, and simply being overwhelmed; whatever the reason, it's very sad when it happens.

In the last issue, I mentioned too, that over one two-day period, earlier in the summer, we admitted just under 100 casualties - which was unprecedented, but subsequent to that (and on more than one occasion now), we've been topping the 50 mark; when you think, that every single one of those admissions has to be thoroughly assessed, often x-rayed, then medicated, and housed, you can see exactly what we're up against.

But this isn't a new phenomenon - we've been here before - and as always, we rise to the occasion; we're extremely fortunate to have such fantastic staff and volunteers, and it never ceases to amaze, how so many people are willing to give up their valuable free-time, in order to keep everything running smoothly - we certainly couldn't do it without them!

So, the work goes on (and I don't for a minute, imagine it will get any easier), but with such a fantastic facility, and literally hundreds of people willing it to work, we must be doing something right!





# The Manager's Report

ALL THE LATEST NEWS

**As Dave has already reported, it's been incredibly busy here this autumn, and I wouldn't be at all surprised to see that we've broken a few records. We haven't analysed the figures yet, but I don't think it's ever been as busy as this - very much a case of no room at the inn, and certainly unusual for this time of the year!**

Dave has also touched on the fact that several rescue centres have had to close their doors, which is very sad news, as there aren't nearly enough people doing this work in the first place, but it's a situation we've faced ourselves, on more than one occasion. In the early days, when we still operated from home, the pressure we were under was enormous, but fortunately, we had lots of support, and eventually managed to pull through, but it's certainly not something I'd wish to repeat in a hurry, and we really do feel for them.

Another bit of sad news, is that Antonia Blackler, our wonderful Senior Supervisor, has left for pastures new. Antonia was a weekend volunteer at Folly Cottage for three years before we moved, and when Broadwater opened in 2012, became our first member of staff. As everyone knows, her speciality was rabbits (both wild and domestic), and over the years, she introduced many new innovations (especially with regard to hand-rearing), that helped turn around our success rate with this very difficult species. Our grateful thanks to Antonia, and very best wishes for the future!

One very visible species at the hospital this winter, is the woodpigeon, and visitors are often heard to remark 'what a lot of pigeons you have in', and they're not wrong - every other pen seems to hold a woodpigeon (and to a lesser extent, a feral pigeon or collared dove), and although not unusual at this time of the year, we are seeing a lot of them!



All three species are prolific breeders, producing young in most months (with the possible exception of December to March), and for the woodpigeon, autumn/early winter

seems to be their peak time (probably due to the abundance of acorns, chestnuts, ivy and hawthorn berries available) and we're admitting adults and babies on a daily basis; most of the babies have fallen, or been blown from their nests, while the adults have often been clipped by cars, while foraging for food. And talking of acorns, one youngster that came in recently, was found to have 12, suppurating acorns, jammed in its crop (and what a smell!) that fortunately, we were able to remove!

Hedgehog admissions too, are on the rise, mainly due to entanglements in netting, attacks by dogs (and we suspect, foxes), and crushing injuries. In addition, we're now seeing large numbers of very poorly 'autumn juveniles', hedgehogs too small to hibernate, and often badly infected with lungworm (that fortunately, is easily treated); most will now be with us until the spring.



The deer unit has also been very busy, both with fawns, and road traffic accidents, and Chris and Sylvia Collinson, our incredible rescuers, are attending call-outs, seven days a week. The new 4x4 truck is proving invaluable, so a big boost to our operation, and hopefully, is something we can build on in the years to come. Still on deer front, we'd also like to thank rescuer Scott Benton, who's helped out on several occasions, and is now looking to get more involved - very welcome news indeed.

**SO, ONE THINGS FOR SURE THIS WINTER – WE WON'T BE GETTING BORED!**

**Left:**

*This grass snake was one of our more unusual visitors.*

**Top:** *And this red-tailed hawk was another one!*

**Top left:** *A baby dormouse – what a sweetie!*



Happy  
birthday  
to us!

PART  
2

### DAVE RISLEY CONTINUES HIS NOSTALGIA-SOAKED LOOK AT FOLLY'S HUMBLE ORIGINS!

Where was I? Oh yes, it was 2003, and I was just saying that after 10 years, the first cracks in the operation were beginning to appear.

So, what exactly was the problem? Well, for one thing, we shouldn't have even been operating from our home, electricity, water and drainage were just domestic systems, we were living 'over the shop' (so permanently on call), and admissions had gone through the roof; add to that the fact that you couldn't move for rabbit hutches, aviaries and enclosures, and you start to get the picture!

The fact of the matter was, that our position was completely untenable - and that the charity needed its own hospital, on its own site, and soon!

But it wasn't all bad news - we had lots of support, our fundraisers were working full-out, and our small army of volunteers were tireless in caring for the casualties - and if we could put our minds to it, there was still time to save Folly.

So, the answer was staring us in the face, but knowing what you need to do, and being able to do it, were two different things, and it was another year before we had a plan; but at long last, in early 2004, we were ready to take the plunge.

First off of course, we needed a suitable site - and one not too far away from Folly Cottage, as the logistics of running our existing rescue centre, while building a second one, didn't bear thinking about. Secondly, it would need to have some land (as future expansion had to be considered), and thirdly, to have any chance of securing planning, a potential site would need to have some existing buildings; so, for

our purposes, stables, kennels, cattery's, and nurseries would be the best bet.

Having worked out the basics, we turned our attention to how much it was all likely to cost (and more importantly, how we were going to raise the money?). There was a lot to consider, so one of our trustees at the time, Caroline Hart, took on the task of researching funding options, while I busied myself with the issue of land, its availability, and what it was likely to cost.

It soon became apparent that it wasn't going to be easy; land was not only very expensive, but the types of property we had in mind were few and far between; and as for cost, we were probably looking in the region of 100,000!

But as all this was somewhat hypothetical, we simply put the problem on the back burner!

On the funding front though, Caroline, was having more success; during her investigations, she'd come across the Carifran Wildwood Trust, who a few years before, had raised £400,000, to purchase a 1600-acre valley in the Scottish Southern Uplands (with a view to restoring its forests to the way they were 6000 years ago). That in itself was impressive, but even more so, was the way they'd gone about it, adopting a visionary 'Founder' system, whereby supporters of the idea, would commit to funding £250 towards its purchase; this struck us as a good a plan as any, so without further ado, we promptly pinched their idea, and set about shaping it to our own needs!

So, the final plan, was to purchase a site, obtain planning permission, put in the services, and then erect some basic buildings; all this, we estimated, would cost £185,000 (and we'd worry about turning it into a wildlife hospital later), but at this stage it was still only a plan, and even raising these initial funds (that meant attracting sponsorship for 750 units), seemed to be a bit of a tall order.

But we didn't have a choice, and in the spring of 2004, more in hope than expectation, The Wildlife Centre Project was launched, and we were on the way!



*The original Folly ambulance in 2009*



*Patrons, Jeff and Sandra Beck (and roe fawn) at Folly Cottage in 2005*



*Annette with chocolate fallow fawn, 2005*

**NEXT TIME:  
MY GOODNESS, IT SEEMS TO BE WORKING!**



PART  
1

# Behind the scenes!

**There's something fascinating about being able to see 'behind the scenes' – where does that door lead to, what do they use that room for, and how can I get to see what no one else can see; let's face it, we're all a bit nosy at heart, and the hospital, with its locked doors, hidden corridors and tucked-away nooks and crannies, offers plenty of scope for a bit of snooping around!**

Earlier this year, as part of our education programme, we took part in the British Hedgehog Preservation Society's Hedgehog Awareness Week, an annual event that looks to highlight the growing plight of the nation's favourite mammal; we usually do something every year, but this time round, we thought we'd be a bit more adventurous!

After some discussion, we settled on (amongst other things) offering 'behind the scenes' tours;

people are always asking if they can see 'round the back', so it looked quite promising.

As this point, I have to say, that on these occasions, we're not exactly overwhelmed with visitors – 50 to 60 if we're lucky, so we didn't exactly have high expectations anyway!

And of course, you can't have crowds of people where there are sick animals - it wouldn't be fair, and it doesn't work, but if you keep to small groups – say, half a dozen people at a time, you can do so without a problem.

So, 'Behind the Scenes' tours it was, and that we thought, was that!

When the day finally dawned (it was actually the afternoon, but 'dawned' sounds better!), you can imagine our surprise when processions of cars began to arrive; our little car park was soon full to the brim, but fortunately, we had an overflow car park; but then, very soon, even that was overflowing, and we knew we were in trouble!

Within an hour, all the refreshments had gone, the tombola had completely dried up, and the face painters were out of crayons, but it was a lovely sunny day, there were lots of other things to do, and everyone took it in good part.

But getting back to the point, what really threw us, was the incredible interest for the behind the scenes tours - the queue was soon 50 deep, and before long, we had to draft in extra staff to cope with the numbers!

At the end of the day (well actually, it was three hours), we'd raised a very respectable £1400 (and it would have been even more if we hadn't run out of everything), but it was a good exercise, and we learnt a lot about holding big events when you don't have the facilities - including, don't do them again! But on the plus side, everyone went away knowing a lot more about hedgehogs than when they came in, and on balance, it was a very successful afternoon!

On the back of all this, we now think, that we may at some point, be able to offer some small, but exclusive, behind the scenes tours, that would not only satisfy people's curiosity, but at the same time, enable us to raise some valuable funds - it'll take some thought, but we may have some news on this plan next time!



*I wonder where this leads to?*



*What's in here then?*

**CAN YOU HELP?**

Did you know that you can now adopt Hetty, one of our disabled hedgehogs? Not to take home, I hasten to add, but to help pay for her care (and the care of many other injured and sick hedgehogs too).

We currently admit around 500 a year (considerably down on the 750 we were seeing 10-years ago) and with many of them needing extensive veterinary treatment, it's an expensive process.

An adoption costs just £25 a year (and £15 a year thereafter if you wish to continue), and you'll receive a colour certificate, Fact Sheet, soft hedgehog toy, and Folly fridge magnet. An adoption makes an ideal present (or even a gift to yourself!), so see our online shop for more details!

# Deer Update



It's been another busy year for the deer unit (and it's not over yet), and at the time of writing, the number of call-outs has passed 200; but at least it's been made easier this year, by having the new 4x4 rescue truck in the mix, as the team are now able to get right up close to the scene of an incident, rather than having to lug all their equipment (and sometimes even a deer!) across a muddy field.

Once again, the bulk of the call outs are for deer vehicle collisions; these are very common at this time of year, especially at dawn and dusk, when deer are moving to and from their feeding grounds; if you are out on the roads at this time, keep a careful eye out, and even more important, keep your speed down.

Other calls involve deer attacked by dogs, entangled in netting, or caught on fences, and occasionally too, we receive reports of them 'trapped' in gardens; what's usually happened, is that a deer has left it a bit late, heading for home, or finds its escape route blocked by the milkman; as the traffic starts to build, there's really no other option but to hunker down for the day in the nearest garden; you can't 'rescue' a healthy deer (a very perilous thing to attempt), so we have to explain to callers that the safest option, is to leave the animal quiet, wait for dusk, and then simply open a garden gate;

nine times out of ten, it will be gone in the morning.

One of the more dramatic rescues Chris and Sylvia have carried out this year, involved two fallow bucks, that had become entangled in electric tape. During the rutting season, bucks will designate their territory, by thrashing shrubs and small bushes with their antlers, and then marking these with the scent glands

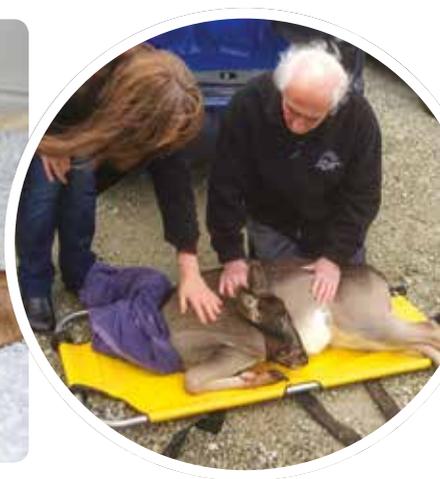
situated on their face and head; to a deer, a fence post with electric tape fixed to it, is just another shrub, so there's a very real danger of them becoming entangled.

On this occasion, the unit was called out by the RSPCA, and Chris was able to use the pneumatic dart gun to sedate them, and cut them free; but sadly, one was so badly injured, it had to be put down.

As well as their rescue work, the team have also been extremely busy this year, hand-rearing, injured and orphaned fawns; the survivors will eventually go back to the wild, but getting to that stage is a long, and time-consuming business, involving much hard work.

To lighten the load, we're now looking to set up a group of volunteer fosterers to help with the hand-rearing, so if you have a few hours a week to spare, during May to July, and fancy something really different, we'd really like to hear from you!





**CAN YOU HELP?**

If you'd like to help our work with deer, why not consider a donation towards it? Veterinary care, replacer milks, feed, bedding and of course running the rescue vehicle, costs thousands of pounds a year.

**Top right:** Some of the babies.

**Above left:** A very young fallow fawn

**Left:** Our vet examines an injured roe deer

**Above right:** An injured roe; the mask is to help keep it calm.



# Fundraising Stuff!

**WITH CHRISTMAS JUST AROUND THE CORNER, LIZ CHANDLER GIVES US A RUN-DOWN ON THE FESTIVE FAYRE, AND SOME OF THE OTHER FUNDRAISERS THIS YEAR!**

**It doesn't seem all that long ago that I was writing about our spring fundraising achievements – hasn't the time flown by – and I'm pleased to report that the summer ones have been top notch too!**

## **HAYSDEN COUNTRY PARK**

In August, David, one of our fundraising volunteers, organised a family fun run at Haysden Country Park in Tonbridge, raising an amazing £275. Over 50 children walked and ran around the lake, many in fancy dress, and everyone had a wonderful time! Afterwards, there were competitions and goody bags for all - it was a great success and we'll certainly be doing it again next year. Thank you to the volunteers and Park Wardens at Haysden for their support and help on the day.

## **DRAGON BOAT RACE**

In September, a brave and enthusiastic team of Folly staff and volunteers, took to the water for Bewl Water's Dragon Boat Race. Dressed up, and named 'The Fancy Pigeons', they

battled it out in style, raising over £700 in the process!

## **WALK FOR WILDLIFE**

Our annual Walk for Wildlife followed shortly after, and this year, took in a new route, that included the beautiful Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk, and Harrison Rocks. The way was led for Folly by 11-year-old Ellie, and her faithful dog Annie, who walked 6 miles to raise over £400! The weather was kind, and it was lovely to see new faces, and meet some of our supporters, who between them, raised a record-breaking £1335!

## **BIRD BOX**

Our thanks too, to Julie and Luka, who recently became involved with Folly through volunteering, and their Bird Box building initiative to raise funds! Luka, 13, has also designed a fantastic leaflet to promote the project, and it only costs £10 to make one (taking about 30 minutes). Suitable for all ages, contact Julie on 07584 013763 to book yourself a session!

## **JAMES GREEN**

Especial thanks to James Green, a teacher, who this summer, donated the proceeds of his private tuition fees to Folly, raising an incredible £1000 in the process!

## FRIEND OF FOLLY

Did you know that you can help Folly for as little as £2 a month? By setting up a standing order, you will become a Friend of Folly, and receive a lovely fridge magnet, behind the scenes tour, and twice-yearly newsletter. This vital support will help ensure our work with wildlife continues in the years to come. See our website for details, or contact us for a form.

## HETTY THE HEDGEHOG

Need a unique gift idea? We've just launched a new adoption scheme, and for just £25, you can adopt Hetty the Hedgehog. You will receive a personalised certificate, Fact Sheet, fridge magnet and soft hedgehog toy. They make a great gift (or you can even treat yourself!). Adoptions are available through our Online Shop, or you can contact us for a form.

## QUIZ NIGHT

Our Quiz Night will run on Saturday 24th February 2018 at Langton Green Village Hall. It's just £10 a ticket, and includes a hot meal - a fun-filled night to be had by all! Booking is essential, so contact Liz on 01892 543213, or email fundraising@follywildliferescue.org.uk

**LASTLY, I WOULD LIKE TO SAY A VERY BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR FUNDRAISING VOLUNTEERS – QUITE SIMPLY, THEY MAKE IT HAPPEN!**



**Above:** The fancy pigeons in action!  
**Right:** Matt, Ellie and Annie starting their walk!

## EXTRA!

### THE FOLLY FESTIVE FAYRE!

Open every Saturday until 16th December 10.00 - 4.00, plus, Late Night Shopping, Thursday 7th December 5.00 – 8.00.

Why not come along – there are lots of gift ideas, Christmas cards, and even refreshments. We'd love to see you! Please note – the hospital will not be open for viewing.

### TW LOTTO

We've joined TW Lotto!  
Tickets cost £1 a week, and Folly get 50%.  
Prizes up to £25,000.  
Sign up at [www.twlotto.co.uk/support/folly-wildlife-rescue](http://www.twlotto.co.uk/support/folly-wildlife-rescue).



### FOLLY WILDLIFE RESCUE ONLINE AUCTION

Join our page on Facebook, and just like eBay, you can sell items you no longer want, with all the proceeds going to Folly!



# It's Q&A time!



## **A QUESTION WE'RE OFTEN ASKED IS 'SHOULD I BE FEEDING WILDLIFE?' HERE'S OUR TAKE ON IT!**

I may not be the best person to answer this, as for years I was myself a bit of a wildlife - feeding obsessive; you start with a bit of food for the foxes, and before you know it, you're feeding every rat, badger, squirrel, and feral cat in the district; in the end I was even feeding a herd of deer!

But things quickly began to go wrong; the foxes started fighting, there were rats everywhere, the badgers dug up the garden, and if you shone a torch, 25 sets of deer's eyes were reflected back at you; before long, even the local poachers realised there was no need to drive around half the night - they just had to wait outside our house, and the deer would come to them!

And as for birds, I probably caused the demise of far more than I saved, as sparrow hawks soon began to pick them off them with frightening regularity; in addition, some unforeseen visitors, in the shape of hundreds of gulls, turned up, and in the end, it was like being at the sea side!

But sanity eventually prevailed, and I gradually managed to cut the feeding down to a more manageable level; we still have plenty of birds, but the sparrow hawks, that were taking such a toll of them, are now rarely seen.

Another unpleasant consequence of feeding wildlife, is that you will eventually attract rats, and whereas one or two aren't a problem, ten, twenty, or thirty, are a different matter, and once you have them, it's almost impossible to discourage them.

Whether or not to leave food out for hedgehogs, badgers and foxes, is also a dilemma; it's very nice to think you're helping these animals, but the fact of the matter is, there's plenty of natural food available, and by feeding on a regular basis, you're making them dependent on your hand-outs; territories will shrink (as more animals move in for a piece of the action), stress levels rise, and the help you think you're giving, can actually make them more susceptible to injury and disease.

With regards to feeding the birds, good hygiene is essential, as mouth canker, thrives around dirty feeding stations and drinkers. It's also a good idea, at least once a week, to move your feeders and bird tables to new positions, as this will help confuse the sparrow hawks.

In very hot, dry weather, a supply of fresh water, is just as important as food, while at any time of the year, foxes and badgers will appreciate scraps from the dinner table - but really, just as a weekly treat.

And finally, and if you want some really good advice - never be tempted to feed the deer!



# How to help!

## **I'M SURE MOST OF YOU WILL BE FAMILIAR WITH THE TERM 'AUTUMN JUVENILE HEDGEHOG', THAT'S APPLIED TO VERY SMALL HEDGEHOGS, TOO SMALL TO HIBERNATE.**

Underweight, and severely undernourished, these youngsters (some barely weighing 150g, and often at death's door), are wildlife emergencies, so if you ever see one out in the day, do pick it up and phone us for assistance; at the time of writing this, in mid-November, we're admitting them every single day.

But the numbers do vary; some years, we may only see 50, while in others (and this year appears to be one of them), it can be well over a 100. As you can imagine, this places a huge strain on our resources, as apart from needing veterinary treatment, we have to feed them, and because they are so small, it's likely they'll have to be kept here until the spring.

Autumn juvenile hedgehogs are the subject of our Christmas Appeal this year, and in order to be able fund their treatment and care, we're now asking our supporters to consider making a seasonal donation.

We're also launching an appeal for cat food (wet or dry), as we go through hundreds of cans, sachets and packets a month, so any donations will be very welcome indeed - but only the non-fish varieties please, as the fish-based ones tend to cause digestive problems.

And it's not just hedgehogs we're feeding; badgers, small mammals, and birds of all descriptions, will be patients here over the coming months, and with many suffering from starvation, and hypothermia, a good diet can make all the difference to their chances of survival.

So, if you live local to the hospital, you may want to drop something off at reception (and supermarkets, pet shops, and feed stores, offer a wide choice of these foods), or, if you prefer to shop online, our Amazon Wish List, has lots of good ideas, including the following:

Cat food, dog food (both wet and dry, but the non-fish types).

Wild bird seed, peanuts, mixed corn, duck pellets, Excel Junior and Dwarf rabbit food, hamster food, Bogenia (a soft-bill food), Tropicana Hand Feeding Formula

Cheese, eggs, Farley's rusks, mealworms

So, there you have it, and if you want to help with a donation too, you can either use the enclosed form, phone us with your debit/credit card details, or make one online via the website.

Any support you can give this Christmas, will go a long way to helping wildlife in need, and there can't be many Christmas presents better than that!



*Yum yum!*



*The food in here is nearly as good as in the wild!*

# Weasels & stoats



## WEASELS AND STOATS – SO WHAT EXACTLY ARE THEY?

Well, both species are members of the Mustelid family, which of course includes polecats, badgers and otters, and notable facts, include the weasel being the family's smallest member, and the stoat being 'famous' as the source of ermine - the white fur, that was for centuries, utilised to make ceremonial robes for royalty; and by the way, only the fur of stoats in Scotland, Wales and the west of England, turns white in the winter!

But one thing they both have in common, is their ferocity; stoats are able to overcome much larger adult rabbits with a bite to the base of the skull, while weasels, although their prey consists mostly of mice and voles, are more than capable of taking on a rat.

In appearance, they are very similar, except that the stoat is larger, and has a black tip to its tail – although if you live in Ireland, it isn't a problem, as weasels aren't found there!

Both species produce their litters (known as kittens, or kits) during the spring and early summer; 4-6 babies for weasels, but up to 12 for stoats, and there is also one important reproductive difference - as stoats (like badgers), utilise delayed implantation of the embryos, so although they mate in May and June, the young aren't born until the following year; and here's a nice fact about stoats - males will enter the nests, and mate with the tiny females, even before they're weaned.

Here at Folly, we see both species, but nearly always babies or newly - weaned youngsters; adult admissions are very rare. Regarding these babies, it's very likely that the mother has, for some reason or other, been moving her young, and dropped one of them; then, if its lucky, someone finds it, and brings it in for hand-rearing; in the case of the youngsters, predation

is the likely cause (and both species are preyed upon by owls, foxes, and even cats), but that the animal has then managed to escape.

This year, ace fosterer, Margaret Kidd, has had the job of rearing the young of both species, and puppy replacer milk is the food of choice; it's usually given off a dropper (or even a spoon), as they won't suckle a teat; but interestingly, even while their eyes are closed, these babies will also take pieces of flesh.

If the babies are already weaned, rearing is straightforward; a large glass tank, equipped with lots of hidey-holes, meets their needs, and a dish of chopped-up chicks, mixed with puppy rearing milk and vitamins, is all that's needed.

What does take some getting used to though is their smell - all mustelids, emit a bit of a pong, but weasels, and especially stoats, are something else; and it isn't helped by their fondness for stashing old food and bits of bodies amongst their bedding - charming habit I'm sure!

But despite all this, Margaret loves them to bits, and it must be extremely satisfying to see all that hard work, come to fruition, when eventually, her little charges are returned to the wild!

## STOAT AND WEASEL FACTS!

**SIZE:** Stoat; up to 29cm.  
Weasel; up to 22cm (plus tails).

**DIET:** Stoat; rabbits, but also other small mammals and birds. Weasel; mice, voles, birds, small rabbits, frogs, lizards.

**BREEDING:** Stoat; one litter of 5-12. Weasel; one to two litters of 4-6.

**COLLECTIVE NOUNS:** Stoat - a caravan.  
Weasel - a gang, pack, or confusion!