

The Marmoteer

UPDATES ON THE RECOVERY OF THE VANCOUVER ISLAND MARMOT



A New Face

The story of the Vancouver Island Marmot is a remarkable one, and I am very excited to play a part in that story, albeit a mostly backstage one. Viki Jackson, the Foundation's long-serving Executive Director is beginning a hard-earned retirement, and passed her mantle on to me. My name is Adam Taylor, and I look forward to sharing with you the challenges and successes, the bumps and celebrations, in our effort save a species from extinction.

Though new to marmots, I do bring experience in endangered species conservation. For the past 8 years I have been the Executive Director of Habitat Acquisition Trust, a local land trust that conserves natural areas and species in Victoria.

For me, the opportunity to help the marmot was too great to pass up.

Vancouver Island Marmots are special in many ways, and their story gives me hope for the future of other endangered

species struggling to hold on in a changing world.

Conservation in these times is never without challenges. New threats are emerging that jeopardize our still tiny population of Vancouver Island Marmots. For instance, climate change appears to be changing the marmots' alpine habitats.

Despite that, I remain optimistic about the marmots' future. Extremely so even. A community of supporters has launched and sustained a rescue of the Vancouver Island Marmot that is working. It is the support of donors like you who have made the work needed by biologists like Cheyney Jackson and Mike Lester, and wildlife vets like Malcolm McAdie, possible.

The Vancouver Island Marmot is part of our fabric in British Columbia; in all of Canada. I am humbled and grateful to the over 4000 donors who contribute annually towards saving the Vancouver Island Marmot, and I look forward to working with you to ensure that the marmot has a secure future.

Adam Taylor
Executive Director



Fall 2016 Newsletter





Roll out the welcome mat! We released 13 marmots from the Calgary Zoo this year to bolstering small colonies in the Strathcona Park region. *Photo by Oli Gardner.*



The Foundation's Field Coordinator, Cheyney Jackson, sits down for a moment to survey Haley Bowl; home to an important marmot colony. *Photo by by Martin Gregus Jr, © One 50 Canada Society 2015*

Wishing Viki Well: Marmoteers write to say "Aholo"

On the occasion of Viki's retirement, many of you took the time to write her a farewell letter. Here are just a few of the wonderful notes we received.

"You deserve to feel proud as you pass the flame to your successor Adam. It is so encouraging to see how the right actions can return a threatened species to a sustainable population. Bravo Viki!"
-Bridget H, Ontario

"Thank-you for writing about the interesting lives of the various marmots during the years, inspiring me to contribute towards their welfare."
-Florence D, B.C.

"Thank you for your dedication in increasing the marmot population. What an incredible story that has transpired since 2002."
-John & Sharon M, Saskatchewan

Marmots face challenges in Strathcona Park, but we're here to help

We were very concerned this spring when our field work revealed that 36 marmots had died in Strathcona Park. For most species, that kind of loss isn't a problem, but when there are fewer than 300 Vancouver Island Marmots in the wild, it is a big concern. However, it is a problem that we have faced before, and we know that, with help, the marmot population can get back on track for recovery! Helping that Strathcona population recover quickly has been a big focus for us this year. Here's some of what we've done to assist the marmots in recovering as quickly as possible:

Marmot Releases: We released a total of 17 marmots to Strathcona Park. Nine of these marmots came from the Captive Breeding Program, and the rest are wild born marmots from the large colony at Mt Washington. These marmots will join the survivors in Strathcona, who have established homeranges and burrows. If past experience holds true, then we can hope for improved survival in the future. We also released an additional 10 marmots to Mt Washington, where they can learn to live in the wild for year before being moved next year into the more remote Park.

Supplementary Feeding: While it is a little counterintuitive, early spring feeding probably may not help marmots survive winter, but it may help them produce large and healthy litters. Marmots eat many different plants, but in the early spring food can be lean. While most marmots survive this belt-tightening time, these trimmer marmots do not have babies as often as plumper marmots. Our hope is that feeding will increase the number of marmots that have babies each year, and ultimately bolster the wild population.

Investigation: We spent the summer gathering data as we always do, but this winter we will be paying especially close attention to anything that might give us clues to new ways to respond to challenging weather or changing conditions.

Next spring, our field crew will be setting up marmot feeders, preparing marmots for release, and checking on the marmots' health. All of this has been made possible by your generous support. *Thank you!*

Releasing Marmots

A critical part of our recovery effort is releasing marmots into wild colonies. It is difficult and stressful experience for both the marmot and the staff caring for them. In the photo to the right, Mike Lester is preparing to release "CP3O" and "Beru" to the Frink Mountain colony in Strathcona Park.

The box Mike is readying will help guide the marmot into the burrow. Once they've found the burrow, the marmots will typically hide for a while; sometimes as little as 15 minutes, but many won't venture outside for a couple hours. Once they do however, they seem very curious about their new surroundings.

At Frink Mountain, we hope that CP3O and Beru will settle down and become productive members of the colony, perhaps breeding as early as 2018. However, we know that not all marmots stay put, and its possible that one or both marmots will move to a different colony in the region. *Good luck CP3O and Beru!*



Mike Lester readies for a marmot release. The box will guide the marmot into its new burrow. *Photo by Marina Gray*

Name-a-Pup Contest Winners!

Each fall we offer you a chance to name a real marmot pup to thank you for your support. Winners receive a beautiful plush toy and their chosen name is bestowed upon a wild born marmot the following spring. The 2015 winning names were:

Hector	Howard	Kay	Ellen
Lorraine	Cheri	Fleming	Johann
Cortez	Pauli	Nutmeg	Wilma
Daisy	Pixie	Francis	Willow
Rudy	Violet	Percy	Fiona

This spring and summer our field crew assigned these names to new marmots as they found them in the field. Keep an eye out for them in our newsletter, on our website, or on Facebook and Twitter!

Enter for our 2016/17 Draw!

Check your fall mailing or contact us for details on how to submit a name.



You can make a world of difference



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Yes, I want to help the uniquely Canadian marmot with my special gift!

Enclosed is my donation of :

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$500 Other \$ _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ PROVINCE _____ POSTAL CODE _____

I prefer to pay by:

Cheque (payable to Marmot Recovery Foundation)
 Visa Mastercard

CARD NUMBER _____

EXPIRY DATE _____ / _____

SIGNATURE _____

Thank you for your support!



I would like to join the **Adopt-a-Marmot Club!**

I will receive a poster and official adoption certificate and help our marmots year round with my monthly pledge of:

\$10 \$15 \$20 \$25 Other \$ _____

I authorize the Marmot Recovery Foundation to deduct the above amount each month from my bank account by personal cheque (marked VOID) or by credit card (please provide card information at left)

I understand I can change or cancel my pledge at any time.

Special Gift Adoptions

I want to adopt a marmot as a gift for a friend with
 a one-time donation of \$120; or
 my monthly pledge (above)

Please mail the tax receipt to my address and send a gift letter and adoption package to:

GIFT NAME _____

GIFT ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ PROVINCE _____ POSTAL CODE _____