

# Handle all wildlife with extreme care

By ART BRIGGS-JUDE  
The Great Blue Heron squatted at the far end of the cage, its long neck tucked in, its head held close to its body. Only the damaged wing hanging limply out of place on that magnificent frame, gave any indication all was not well. The Humane Society inspector opened the wire mesh door. "It's got a broken wing," he said. "But it's such a clean break, I don't think it's been shot. It looks more like the big bird hit a wire. Wait till I get it out here where we can have another look," he continued. As a Deputy Game Warden, I had been summoned there to check out the circumstances and see if indeed this protected creature had been shot. Also as a holder of a Wildlife Service banding permit, I had come to find out if there was any hope of mending and rehabilitating the big heron.

When inspector Henry opened the door and began to reach forward, I started to suggest we get a burlap bag to offer some protection. The words however died on my lips, for the heron had already struck. With a rapier like thrust it had driven its sharp bill at the man's face, opening a bad gash

on one side of his nose, a fraction of an inch from his eye. And although he had some temporary discomfort while it healed, he was fortunate there was no permanent damage. Last week a veterinarian just west of here had a similar lucky miss when two area naturalists brought in a wounded heron for his diagnosis. These incidents involving personal injury to people who are dealing almost every day with animals and birds, points up the fact we all too often do not realize the potential involved when we come in close contact with wildlife.

Ever since the day I tried to rescue a tiny raccoon from a fox terrier, and had it sink its baby teeth in the thick part of my hand, I've been extra careful in my dealings with wild creatures. Yet in all my years of banding birds from tiny hummers to the largest hawks, only one feathered creature ever actually drew blood. Swallows would swoop within a fraction of my head while sparrow hawks would dive so close to my ears they almost brushed my face. Red-tailed hawks tried to discourage banding their young by coming straight in on a frontal attack, but it was the noisy bluejay

that caught me 40 feet up in the top of a maple. There I sat cross-legged hanging on with one hand, trying to work with the other, when that old bluejay sized up the situation and lined up that part of my head where the hair was the thickest. From that time on I made sure my hat stayed in place whenever I climbed to such heights. But while birds like jays, cardinals, and grosbeaks can inflict a sharp bite, its the larger birds that one must be very careful with. When you understand some of the larger winged predators such as Horned Owls can put their razor sharp talons right through a rabbit or a grouse you begin to realize the power they have in those lethal claws. Even the talons of screech owls, and sharp-shinned hawks are so keen they will often penetrate your fingers or wrist, if given the opportunity. And as for children or any one else to pick up an injured creature and try to cuddle it is really courting disaster. Blindness and facial disfigurement are often the result of such innocent action. Then too, with the high incidence of rabies prevalent in Ontario, there is a distinct possibility these cripples may have come in contact with this dread disease. But even healthy hawks and animal predators carry the danger of tetanus in their claws and talons. In fact a puncture wound of this nature is always a prime candidate for lock-jaw infection and a person suffering this type of injury should be taken to medical aid.

Every year in Ontario many people come in close contact with a wide variety of our native wildlife through various reasons. Some are inexperienced hunters who suddenly discover too late that a harmless white tail deer has four chisel sharp hoofs or a set of lethal talons to strike out with. Wilderness hikers and fishermen often find out that all bears are not of the same temperament and while most will run away, others will stand their ground or even become belligerent. Road crossings where autos hit many forms of wildlife puts people near injured animals where compassion must be tempered with extreme caution. Squirrels and other rodents are frequently cornered in garages, cellars and cottages where over-anxious children rush in with possible painful results. And while on the subject of smaller animals, there are few as vicious as the tiny burrowing mole. Just let one get into your buried worm box and you'll know what I mean.

At this season of the year, many migrant hawks follow the flocks of songbirds south on their annual migration flights. Sometimes these feathered predators hit wires or window glass in pursuit of their prey. When this occurs you often find these stunned individuals lying near the house. You, your children, or your pet dog, are all open to possible injury if you do not respect the armament they come equipped with and exercise care in such a situation. Lay a suitable-sized corrugated carton on its side, then with a broom gently ease the injured creature into the box. Then call the Ministry of Natural Resources at Maple or contact this writer for further advice.

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## Hamlet of Vandorf Population

VANDORF — The population target for the hamlet of Vandorf is 350 people, Mayor Eldred King told The Tribune this week, and that's the maximum. At present, the figure is around one hundred. The Hennessey subdivision is moving ahead and one other, east of Woodbine Avenue has been approved. A third has been proposed but not okayed. A property, one mile north of Gormley, has received draft plan approval as an industrial zone. The site, at lot 4, conc. 3, is owned by Dorbank Investment. A ten acre parcel at lot 1, conc. 4, has been redesignated industrial, Mayor King explained. Rather than establish zoning on the entire Gormley-Vandorf area, the Town feels it better to deal with applications on an individual basis as Official Plan amendments, the mayor said. He agreed that completion of Hwy. 404, west of Woodbine, could have a definite bearing on future build-up in the community.

## Assaulted

STOUFFVILLE — The operator of the Stouffville Restaurant in the A & P Plaza was allegedly assaulted, Friday night, when he attempted to stop a patron from leaving until he paid for his meal. John Fouldis told police he asked a 20 year old Scarborough man for his money, and was struck. A suspect was arrested a short time later on Main Street. He will appear in Newmarket Court, Oct. 30.

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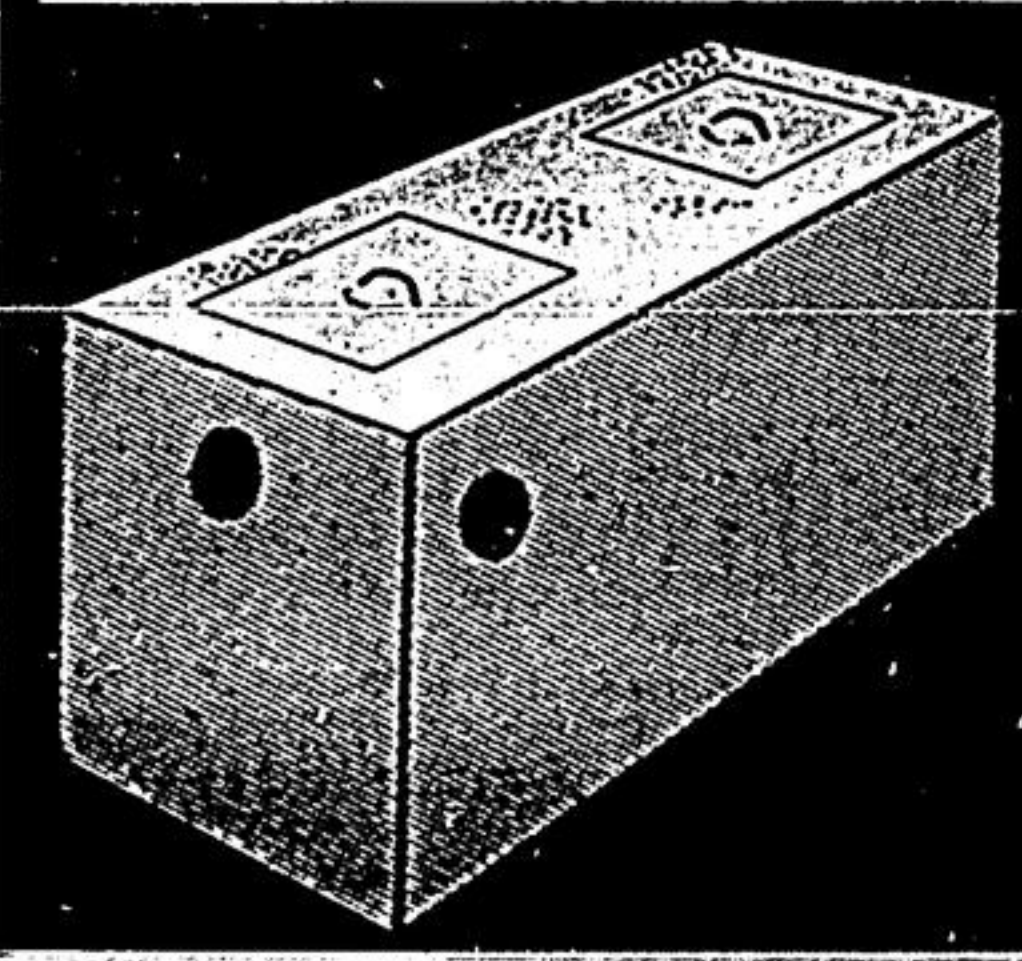
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