

# JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

## REPORT ON EXPEDITION / PROJECT / CONFERENCE

**Expedition/Project/**

**Conference Title:** Critter Care Wildlife Society

**Travel Dates:** 10/06/2025-11/08/2025

**Location:** Langley, British Columbia, Canada

**Group member(s):** Ha An Luong

**Aims:** Learn about wildlife rehabilitation and gain hands on experience with animal husbandry

**Photography consent form attached:**  
(please refer to your award letter)

☒ Yes  
☐ No

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### OUTCOME (a minimum of 500 words):-

My experience at Critter Care Wildlife Society gave me a wonderful opportunity to work hands-on with the Canadian wildlife. During the months of June through August, we receive large volumes of orphaned baby animals, some of which injured while others too young to be able to survive alone. I personally cared for skunks, raccoons, bunnies, and opossums, but there were also other animals at the center including brown bears, otters, fawns, and coyotes. My daily tasks entailed feeding, cleaning, keeping records of appetite and weight, and providing enrichment. The most fun part was learning how to milk feed my babies. Each animal required slightly different milk feed techniques which I had to figure out by experience. For skunks for example, it was important to curl their tails towards their bellies to avoid getting sprayed mid feed. In contrast, for raccoons, the difficulty was in accustoming them to the bottle as they were previously used to their momma's natural milk and can be extremely picky.

It was very hard work every day. I started the day at 6am to first feed my raccoons, then fed my skunks at 7am, bunnies at 8am, and opossums at 9am. After three continuous hours of feeding, I can finally feed myself. In between feeds, I clean the enclosures and prepare food for the next feed. On top of doing work for animals, all the interns at the center are accountable for sorting through produce deliveries and cleaning the whole facility. Laundry was one of those tasks that was wholly underestimated. Every day, we go through tons and tons of laundry as we use sheets and blankets for insulation of baby animals. All laundry is to be washed and folded separately to avoid cross-contamination, especially coming from raccoons which can carry a range of diseases including parvo.

Working with animals in such close quarters taught me very interesting things about animal behaviours. I witnessed many innate behaviours that did not have to be learned, especially from skunks and raccoons. The skunks knew how to stomp at signs of danger ever since they could walk. The raccoons knew to dip their hands in water to enhance their sense of touch and also washed their food like adult raccoons would usually do in the wild. Each individual animal had their own personality, and with time, I fell in love with every single one of them. The raccoons were especially entertaining to watch due to their curious nature and impressive hand coordination- some of them can manage to unlatch doors if left unattended.

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Aside from the animals, I made very good friends that I am still in contact with even after the internship has ended. We were a group of 30 interns from all over the world that lived together. We bonded over shared dinners, movie nights, and occasional trips to the beach. Without the other interns, my experience at Critter Care would not be the same.

