

Getting Started: Hotline

Volunteering for the hotline is one of the most important ways to help! The hotline is a source of information for the public, and hotline volunteers provide solutions to calls and coordinate rescues and transports when necessary. Hotline shifts are generally 4 hours, if possible.

What You Need

- Phone
- Pen and paper (or some method of taking down information)
- Computer (or an internet connected device to access the Volunteer Portal)

Volunteer Portal

The [Volunteer Portal](#) is a valuable resource for volunteers. This is where you sign up for hotline and rescue shifts, and access contact lists and information such as the WRSOS Volunteer Manual. You should receive log in information via email after attending orientation and becoming a member.

Sign up for a Hotline Shift

The main page on the Volunteer Portal shows the hotline and rescue shifts for the week/month. To sign up for a shift, click your username in the top right corner and select “MyWRSOS”. You then click “Availability” to enter your shift. Generally, you want to sign up for a shift that is empty (i.e. that no one else has signed up for).

Hotline Shift Process

Now that you have signed up for a hotline shift you need to know what to do! This section outlines the basic steps of a hotline shift. You can refer to the [WRSOS Volunteer Manual](#) for more detailed information. If you ever have any questions, contact your hotline mentor.

1. Log on to the [Sasktel Voice Mail Centre](#).
2. Listen to a new message and write down the details.
3. Investigate possible solutions and return the call.
 - Refer to the [WRSOS Volunteer Manual](#) for general information regarding wildlife, common call types, etc.
 - Never guess an answer! If you do not know how to resolve the issue, use the contact list or Facebook Rescue page to call for help.
 - You may need to coordinate the rescue and transport of animals. More information can be found below.
 - Record a new entry in the Portal Call Log.

General information

Dealing with the Public

- Remember to be patient and clear with instructions.
- Some people may be upset with the situation, always remain calm.
- We are only here to offer advice, so if people choose not to take it then we need to accept that.
- Sometimes a caller is emotionally invested and would like to know what happens. It is up to you if you would like to follow up with them.

Answering Calls

Our goal is to keep the animal in the wild and in as little stress as possible. This often means telling people not to intervene.

- Injured Wildlife
 - Make sure the animal is injured!
 - Can the caller take the animal to a target veterinarian or rehabilitator? If not, it may take us time to find a volunteer that is available.
- Baby Wildlife
 - Make sure all possible means of reuniting with the parents have been exhausted first!
 - Does the baby animal look healthy? The parents may leave the nest/den during the day to protect the babies. Many young animals end up being removed from a perfectly normal environment due to concerned people.

Rescues and Transports

Can the caller take the animal to a target veterinarian or rehabilitator?

If not, we can see if a volunteer is available to assist:

1. Check the Volunteer Portal to see if anyone is registered for a rescue shift in that area.
2. Call or text volunteers from the contact list for that area.
3. Post to the WRSOS Rescues Facebook page. Be sure to include what city the rescue/transport is in.

Note: it is your responsibility to ensure that a call is closed. If there is a call that has not been resolved, be sure to log the information on the Portal Call Log and let the next person signed up for a hotline shift to know what is going on.

Conclusion

Volunteering for a hotline shift may seem a bit intimidating at first, but it becomes much easier! It is a fun way to gain knowledge, inform the public and keep promoting healthy human-wildlife interaction.

If you ever have any questions feel free to contact other experienced WRSOS volunteers, as they are more than happy to help.