

March 2008

East Sussex Wildlife Rescue & Ambulance Service



Reg Charity: 1108880

www.wildlifeambulance.org



The Rescuer



Two Veterinary Ambulances Needed.

East Sussex Wildlife Rescue and Ambulance Service needs to replace two of its veterinary ambulances. If you could help by donating a vehicle, sponsoring a vehicle or by donating some money to help buy a vehicle it would be extremely appreciated.

lance appears to help rescue a sick, injured or orphaned wildlife casualties. Our ambulances have also featured on programmes such as BBC South East Today, Meridian TV and the BBC's Animals 24:7 as well as in many local and regional newspapers too, so they are a good target for sponsorship.



Pictures:

Above: WRAS's old original Transit ambulance delivering a deer to vets at Heathfield.

Below: The same original Transit ambulance working alongside the RSPCA at the Napoli Oil Spill last year.

Top Right: One of WRAS's newer ambulances attending to a swan which crash landed in a sewage works at Uckfield.

Bottom Right: A WRAS ambulance outside Debenhams in Eastbourne after being called out by the manger to rescue a trapped pigeon.

Our original Transit ambulance is going to need replacing as it is now costing too much to repair each year and our Eastbourne ambulance car is also breaking down too frequently and is unreliable. We need your help to replace them.

Every year WRAS ambulances drive over 50,000 miles across East Sussex and beyond helping to deal with wildlife casualties, they are the life line of our charity and are a welcome relief to members of the public when the ambu-

Our veterinary ambulances carry essential equipment for dealing with numerous incidents ranging from deer caught in netting as occurred only on Tuesday 26th February 2008, or carry medication to deal with oiled guillemots and razorbills to which our vehicles have attended over 100 such birds on the Sussex coastline so far in 2008. Equipment is also stored on board to deal with dolphin and seals working with British Divers Marine Life Rescue. We are also capable of dealing with numerous other incidents from cat attacked garden birds to road casualties.

The vehicles save lives attending between 2 - 3,000 incidents every year.



If you would like to discuss sponsorship or donations please contact Trevor Weeks on 07813-103474 or send a cheque payable to "East Sussex WRAS" to WRAS Ambulance Fund, Ash Cottage, 73 Friday Street, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN23 8AY.

"We need your help to save sick, injured and orphaned wildlife. The busy Spring Season will be here soon. So please help by setting up a standing order for just £1, £3, £5, £10 or more a month—whatever you can afford. Many Thanks." Trevor Weeks, Founder of East Sussex WRAS.

Trapped Deer released at Halland.



This deer stopped to say thank you after being released from a rope swing by WRAS rescuers at Heathfield in 2005.

Trevor was called out to an adult male deer on 2nd January at about 4am after the owner of the property was woken by crashing and banging at the side of their house.

On arrival Trevor was confronted by a rather unusual situation which he had never encountered before. The deer had its antlers wedged between the wall of the house and the slats of the wooden fence. The gap between the house and the fence narrowed causing the deer to become

stuck. "I think the deer probably had a near miss with a car on the main road and panicked and in an adrenalin rush probably flew down the path thinking it could run straight through" commented Trevor.

In order to free the deer Trevor and the owner of the house had to remove a fence panel as it was too dangerous to attempt to gain control of the deer, especially as it was early in the morning and still dark. Trevor also did not want the deer running back

out onto the road.

The fence panel was removed and as the deer realized it could get free it shoved the fence panel backwards throwing Trevor and the owner of the property backwards.

The deer quickly ran off across the garden and away safe and sound.

Luckily the deer was not injured in any way and you could say he had a narrow escape!

Wildlife Guardians — We need you!

WRAS receives calls from all over East Sussex, as a result it is never possible to have one of our ambulances close by to all call-outs. It is sometimes possible for our Brighton vehicle to be in Eastbourne or our Eastbourne vehicle to be in Hastings and so on. This can, especially during rush hour, mean getting to a casu-

alty can take an hour or more. This can lead to casualties running off with severe injuries or being attacked by dogs or cats and especially with oiled birds being chased back into the sea.

To try and combat this, we have decided to recruit some WRAS Wildlife Guardians, to

help respond and attend on site quickly to keep a casualty secure until one of our veterinary ambulances can arrive.

Volunteers are not expected to be available all the time, but will receive some basic training and guidance. If available they will be expected to drop what they are doing and attend on site as

soon as possible and help take control of a situation until a more experienced rescuer arrives on site. If you are interested in being contacted on an adhoc basis occasionally to help, please e-mail us at...

trevor@wildlifeambulance.org.



A poorly hedgehog being given some oxygen to help its breathing.

International Rescue — Brazil Calling!

Back in January Trevor received a call from a lady in Brazil in the early hours. Initially Trevor thought the call might be a hoax, but the incoming number had an international code and the lady's English was certainly better than Trevor's Spanish!

The lady had found a hedgehog like creature which

was injured and in need of help. Trevor a bit confused and surprised at the rather early morning call, urged the lady to seek veterinary help from a veterinary centre or animal park.

It appears the lady came by Trevor's number by the internet. This is not the first time WRAS has received calls from

abroad. Several years ago Trevor received a call from the former Yugoslavia and also from Hungary.

Although I'm sure Trevor would have been more than happy to go to Brazil, WRAS won't be changing its name to International Wildlife Rescue & Ambulance Service.

facebook

East Sussex WRAS is now listed as a "cause" on the popular facebook website. You can invite friends and colleagues to visit our facebook site and see the latest pictures and information on our charity.

This is a great way to help spread the word about the valuable work our volunteers do. Our facebook site will hopefully lead people onto our website and get them making donations to our work. So please invite all your friends on facebook to visit our cause and help support our work. www.facebook.com

Maz retires due to ill health.

Duty Co-ordinator Maz Marriott has retired from WRAS due to ill health. Doctors have diagnosed Maz as suffering from ME.

Maz has been helping WRAS for the past 7 years and for the last 3 years he has been driving WRAS's Hove ambulance and been one of our Duty Co-ordinators answering over 7,000 calls. "Very few people

are willing to dedicate as much time as Maz has and as a result Maz will be a huge loss" said Trevor Weeks.

Maz has been involved in rescuing oiled birds after the Napoli oil spill in Dorset, was present at the Thames Whale rescue and has helped wrestle deer, foxes, badgers, swans and much more.

"Everyone in WRAS will be

sad to see Maz leave, he will be difficult to replace, and we all wish Maz all the best for the future." said WRAS Chair Sue Wilkinson.

Maz helps free a deer.



Maz helps deal with a stranded dolphin at Lancing.

Oiled Bird Rescue busiest in years!

Late January WRAS received a call from the RSPB to say there were oiled birds washing ashore along the West Sussex and Brighton & Hove coastline.

The Coastguard informed WRAS that the type of oil being found was not the same as that which had leaked from the Ice Prince down in Dorset. Maz and Trevor drove to Brighton and started checking the beaches and over a 3 day period only 20 reports came in, several of them disappeared by the time rescuers arrived or were chased back into the sea by dog walkers.

Several were caught and treated on site before being sent the RSPCA Mallydams

Wood Wildlife Centre at Hastings.

For the last 23 years WRAS has dealt with oiled birds every winter. This season has been one of the busiest in years. Last year the number of calls was very low, less than 100. This year the calls have added to over 250! The number of birds dealt with is lower as we get multiple calls per bird. This year WRAS has even started using the Swan Sanctuary for treating oiled birds as the RSPCA Mallydams Wood became full.

Every year these birds wash ashore covered in oil and organisations like WRAS have to pick up the cost of rescuing, cleaning and treating these casualties. When a major spillage occurs of an oil tanker, the Oil Tankers Federation gets involved and funds are paid to cover the clean up operation. However no money is given to help with the on going clean up operation which takes place every year.

WRAS's efforts to help rescue oiled birds at Brighton has been hindered by the council not giving permission for WRAS to drive along the

seafront, wasting much time walking to find casualties.

Early February saw WRAS rescuers busy with more oiled birds, including 7 calls reporting penguins on the beach! None of them were penguins of course but the usual guillemots covered in oil.

Medics from British Divers Marine Life Rescue were also called in over the 9th & 10th February to help when some 70 calls were received about oiled birds. At one point over 10 volunteers were on beaches looking for oiled birds. Many thanks to everyone involved.

Maz dealing with two oiled Guillemots found near Brighton back in February.





Rescuers Tony Neads and Arron Banks, restrain and cover the Cowden deer so it can be cut free and released.

WRAS rescuers risked serious injury when they went to help a stag caught in the netting discarded from hay bails on Saturday 1st March 2008. A stag somehow managed to get the netting caught in his antlers and as he crossed a barbed wire fence the netting

became caught.

This was the second stag which rescuers had to rescue that week from netting. The first was at Buxted near Uckfield on Tuesday 26th February when a deer's antlers became caught in discarded netting dumped in a woodland.



Arron trying to cut the netting free from the Buxted Deer.

Volunteers rescuers Trevor Weeks, Arron Banks and Tony Neads drove to fields near Cowden just outside of East Sussex to rescue a stag as no other organisations were able to help. "On arrival the deer was jumping backwards and forwards around the barbed wire fence which had collapsed and not been maintained for some time. It was stressed and could-

More Deer rescued from netting!

n't lift its head up very high as it was so badly entangled in the netting and wire" explained Trevor.

Trevor found it difficult to restrain the deer and even received a blow to his leg as he tried to gain control. "This has to be one of the hardest deer rescues I have encountered. The deer was surrounded by small trees and bushes as well as having the barbed wire fence to deal with. Normally we use a 'walk-towards' net and go either side and catch the deer, but there was just no room to use it. As the deer jumped around, I managed to throw a sleeping bag over its head and as it tripped on the wire I managed to gain control and pin the deer to the floor." said Trevor.

"Once the deer was down I took hold of the rear legs and hips and helped control the deer" said Arron one of WRAS's new rescuers, "I am amazed at how strong and powerful they are. I also helped with the deer at Buxted earlier in the week and I was surprised how tightly wrapped the netting was round the antlers. It is very difficult trying to cut through the netting whilst trying to control the deer at the same time."

"The release can be just as dangerous as the capture if you are not careful, Tony and Arron jumped up and cleared the area taking all our equipment with them leaving me with the deer. You have to plan your escape route and ensure it is not the same route the deer is likely to take", added Trevor.

"When Trevor

jumped clear of the deer he uncovered the deer's head. As usual the deer sat up and for a moment they wait thinking we are going to attack them or that they are still stuck and can't get free. After a few seconds the deer realised it was free and jumped up and ran off into the woods uninjured" said rescuer Tony.

Both rescues have been successful for WRAS which is one of the few wildlife rescue organisations in the region which will deal with deer. "Deer are difficult but require a team of at least 3 people, unfortunately as we are a voluntary charity we don't always have three suitable rescuers available to attend, but we always try our best and attend when we can" said Trevor.

WRAS is calling on farmers to clean up their act and not dump netting in the countryside. "I know some farmers which are very responsible and truly care about the environment but some really are in it for the money and will save every penny they can by dumping netting and other waste on their land. If farmers are supposed to be the guardians of the countryside then these particular farmers are not doing a very good job of it" said Trevor.



Buxted Deer caught in netting.



Tim, Trevor and Arron restraining and trying to free the Buxted Deer.

New Equipment & Manager at CCU.

We are delighted to announce that Tim McKenzie is taking over the running of our Casualty Care Unit at Horsebridge. Alec has been unable to take on the role due to ill health, but I am please to say Alec is returning to WRAS and will be helping to train new rescuers as well as helping out around the unit. Tim has been with WRAS for almost 12

months now and is extending his existing knowledge of UK wildlife rapidly.

The CCU is not fully operational yet, but this is getting closer and closer. WRAS is also now starting to see a decrease in veterinary expenses as a result.

Towards the end of last year WRAS was able to purchase the first set of new

metal veterinary cages which are much easier to clean and more hygienic and comfortable for the casualties.

WRAS would like to thank everyone who has helped get this unit off the ground either by donating or raising funds or by helping as a volunteer.

Veterinary Equipment Donated.

WRAS would like to thank The Cullan Family which has made a grant of £2750 via the Sussex Community Foundation. Members of the Trust will be visiting our unit in April to see where there money has been spent.

WRAS's new fundraising group is looking at grant applications and other methods of fundraising. Ian and Carol Richardson applied for the grant on behalf of WRAS, and



the money has now been spent on purchasing two infusion pumps, a infusion heater, an examination table, and cool touch examination light. (The table and light are pictured above.) This equipment will really help WRAS with its casualty care.

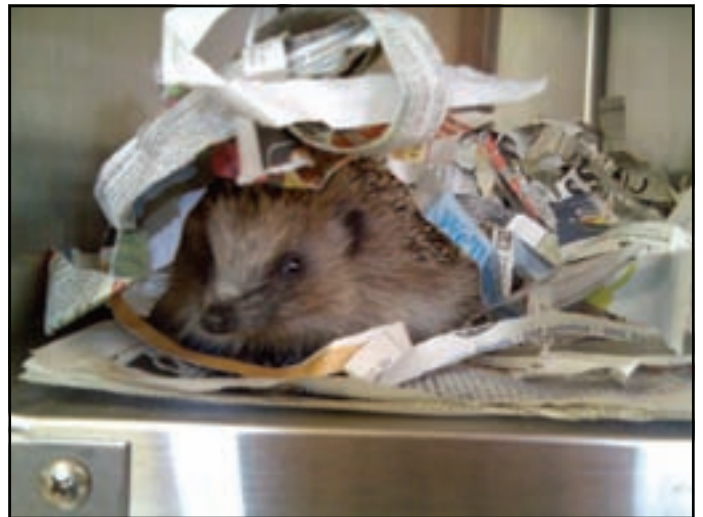
WRAS would also like to thank Eastbourne Borough Council and the Marchig Trust for both giving grants of £1,000 each. Thank you very much indeed.



Hedgehog Thanks from Tim McKenzie

As you probably know, every autumn WRAS gets an influx of underweight hedgehogs that are too small to hibernate. This year, after the problem was featured on television news, WRAS was inundated with concerned members of the public, worried about 'baby hedgehogs' seen in their garden during the day. Most of these calls are genuine casualties and have to come into our unit for the winter. Obviously with only so many

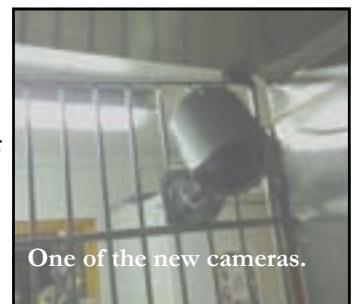
cages available we would have no room for any other animals, so we foster them out to people experienced in caring for hedgehogs. As spring approaches and the time is near to them being released I would like to thank all our foster parents for looking after them all during the winter. I am especially pleased to say we haven't lost a single one! Lets hope they're not too many broken hearts as they let them free back into the wild.



One of the hedgehogs being cared for at WRAS Casualty Care Unit.

New Casualty Monitoring System.

One of the reasons WRAS set up its Casualty Care Unit was to provide a more stress free environment for the casualties. WRAS is very aware that stress can hide problems and also create problems. To this end WRAS is investing in a new CCTV system within the unit to help monitor up to four casualties at any one time. This new equipment will help us monitor how casualties behave when no body is around potentially speeding up the release process. It is only natural for casualties to become timid and quiet in hospital settings when humans are around. The system has already helped evaluate a pheasant's condition, which are difficult birds to observe.



One of the new cameras.



A common seal caught at Cuckmere Haven by WRAS & BDMLR.

WRAS Ambulance used to transport seal.

WRAS's veterinary ambulance has been used to transport two seals from Yorkshire and Humber down to Norfolk for British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR). Trevor is BDMLR's National Co-ordinator, and BDMLR occasionally pays to use WRAS's ambulance to transport rescue equipment and gear for

training courses. Whilst Trevor was at Scarborough on 24th February at a training course, he was asked to transport a 19kg common seal from Scarborough which had been attacked by a dog, and a 23kg grey seal from Easington with an internal parasite problems. Trevor had to restrain the seal whilst the vet exam-

ined and tubed it fluids, helped by Faye Archell, BDMLR's Essex Coordinator. Faye and Trevor drove the seals down the 3 hour journey to the RSPCA at East Winch, Norfolk where there are specialist seal rehabilitation facilities. To find out more about BDMLR and how you could help visit www.bdmlr.org.uk.



Trevor releasing a swan at Uckfield.

Festive Hailsham Swan Rescues.

Christmas eve saw WRAS rescuers busy with swan rescuers. One swan was found in Hailsham and WRAS rescuer Tony Neads responded and was on site quickly. The swan had crash landed on the road and had a near miss with a car. Tony took the swan to our unit at Horsebridge to be checked over.

Within minutes Tim McKenzie the Duty Co-ordinator received another call from a lady at Pevensey who had picked up a swan in the middle of a lane just outside of Hailsham at almost the same time that Tony was dealing with the other swan.

This second swan was collected and the two swans

spent the night at WRAS's Casualty Care Unit to recover and have a good feed.

The following day the swans were again checked over and found to be fit and healthy so they were both taken down to Eastbourne and released, together as it was thought they might be a pair or siblings.



Chickens have a plucky escape!

WRAS had an unusual call to rescue some chickens which fell off the back of a lorry back in February. As a lorry left a closing chicken farm, some of the chickens fell from the lorry scattering around. WRAS was told by the person reporting the incident that the lorry driver was not interested in them and drove off. WRAS attended on site as no one else seemed interested in helping and over four days the chickens were picked up and rescued. Thanks to the Sussex Horse Sanctuary they now have a new home at Uckfield, where they will live out the rest of their days.

Raise money with Everyclick.com

We are pleased that everyclick.com has set up a new homepage for supporters using their search engine to raise funds for WRAS. So far users have raised over £78 for WRAS. You can join them by going to the link listed right, and then selecting everyclick as your home page on your computer.

Every time you log on and

use everyclick.com to search for something on the internet you raise funds for WRAS. It is surprising how quickly those pennies turn into pounds, you can also shop and raise funds too. So please support WRAS via everyclick.com, its easy and free!

<http://www.everyclick.com/east-sussex-wras/388741/0>



‘From the Hospital’ by Tim McKenzie

As you may have seen elsewhere in this newsletter I have recently been appointed as the Manager of the Casualty Care Unit at Horsebridge. I thought it would be interesting for our supporters to have a regular column in the newsletter ‘From the Hospital’ where I can tell you about some of the heart-warming and sometimes heartbreaking stories of our patients.

A large number of animals have already passed through the unit since I took over, ranging from deer to foxes, and swans to guillemots. Our highest number of animals has been the oiled guillemots and razorbills that we rescue off the beaches. All of these are immediately given fluids called lectade and a veterinary product called BCK. This settles their stomachs and soaks up a lot of the oil internally; which is the biggest killer of oiled sea birds. We

have also had a larger than usual number of foxes in, 6 in one day alone, that have been found collapsed in garden or fields. These are very difficult cases to treat, as most have been very ill for some time before we rescue them. It was particularly rewarding recently to return one to a lady’s garden and give her the honour of opening the cage to the completely recovered fox. Another fox that had injuries sustained after being hit by a car has just been released in Hastings after being successfully treated by WRAS.

We are currently releasing on average one animal a day after treatment at the moment, a large number of these being pigeons and doves that have come in with trichomoniasis (canker). Some rescue centres have a policy of euthanasia for these casualties on arrival, as they can be difficult to treat, but WRAS has

an 80% success rate in treating these birds, and releasing them.

Other recent releases include a kestrel suffering from malnutrition and was released back into the wild considerably fatter than when she came in! There was also a hedgehog caught in plant netting that had injured his front legs; a swan with a beak injury, and a magpie with an infected eye. All these went back, fit and well.

At the end of the day, we just want to give all these animals a second chance back in

the wild which they don’t normally get. In future columns I will tell you about other casualties stories, and as we approach the spring, our first orphans (which will need feeding every 3 hours – any volunteers?) Also I will tell you about the extraordinary success rate we have had with our gulls that have come in with broken wings. Again with time, care and treatment, up to 80% of these have been able to be cured and released.

I look forward to telling you more stories ‘From the Hospital’.



We need your help to raise funds!

WRAS has been busy trying to raise funds to keep our service on the road, but this is always difficult especially when our rescuers and volunteers are busy out there responding to call-outs. We need your help and enthusiasm to think of ways in which you can raise funds or even events which you could organise with friends to bring in money. We already have someone running the London Marathon, we have a dog show later this year and last year Eastbourne Veterans helped raise funds for us (see below). Clubs and societies which raise funds for us are brilliant help and we don’t mind attending with one of our ambulances and even Trevor is willing to attend too and take part if he feels brave enough!!! We are also looking at taking part in Eastbourne Carnival this year.

We need your ideas and suggestions. If you would like to organise any event please e-mail Trevor direct at...

trevor@wildlifeambulance.org.

WRAS Charity Dog

Deirdre Hallett is organising a charity Dog Show to raise funds for WRAS. The show will take place on Sunday 27th July at The Dicker Village Hall, Coldharbour Road,

Hailsham. WRAS would like to thank Lifestyle, Langney Domestics, Tatty Matts, Nodding Cobbler and Seaford Fencing for all contributing towards the cost of running the show. More information is available on our website at www.wildlifeambulance.org. If you would like to get involved please e-mail us at trevor@wildlifeambulance.org.

Footballers raises funds for WRAS.

WRAS would like to thank everyone who helped raise money for WRAS at two charity football matches. The first match was between the South East Ambulance Service and Eastbourne United Veterans and the second was between Eastbourne United Veterans and Maresfield Veterans. In total over £230 was raised and every one had fun taking part.



Horrendous Weekend for Swans.

Swans in East Sussex had a rough ride over the weekend 16th and 17th February with rescuers needing to rescue one swan which had been shot in the head, a dog attacked swan, a road casualty swan and one which kids were attempting to kick.

Saturday afternoon Trevor Weeks was called down to Langney Pond in Eastbourne after a swan became trapped in bushes after being chased off by the resident pair of swans. Local residents reported kids trying to kick the swan so it was decided best to free the swan from the bushes and relocate. When releasing the swan at Princes Park in Eastbourne, Trevor spotted a swan with a swelling on the side of its head. A major rescue operation was then undertaken involving 5 rescuers. New rescuer Arron Banks sailed out on a small inflatable boat whilst Trevor using a dry suit waded out. The others rescuers helped from the bank. The swan was cornered by the inlet and was eventually caught.

"On examining the swan there was a clear entry and exit wound so we decided to rush the swan to the vets for further assessment" said Trevor, "at the vets the x-ray relieved damage to the swans head, so the swan was placed on a drip for the night and transported up to the National Swan Sanctuary at Shepperton in Surrey for specialist veterinary care."

Early Sunday morning WRAS was called to Kingsway Hove near Hove Lagoon, with a swan which had been run over. Sussex Police looked after the swan saving it from further injury until WRAS Rescuer Tony Neads arrived on site. "The swan was in a bad way and needed veterinary attention

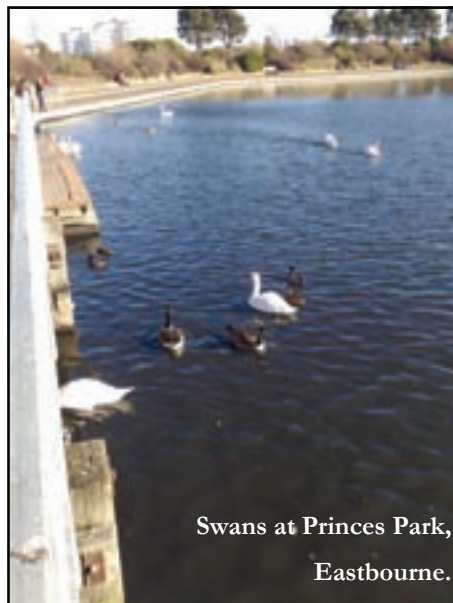
quickly so we took the swan to Coastway Vets for emergency treatment" said Tony. This swan was also delivered up to the Swan Sanctuary at Shepperton for specialist care.

Sunday afternoon, Trevor was called to attend Hove Lagoon after a report of a collapsed swan in the lagoon. The

swan was very lethargic, unable to stand and dribbling. Trevor with the help of one of the local RSPCA Animal Collection Officers caught the swan and examined it on the grass. The swan was rushed in for veterinary care but died shortly after arrival. An examination of the swan showed the swan had typical marks of a dog attacked swan.

"This is the third swan at Hove Lagoon which WRAS has had to rescue in the last few year as a result of the lagoon being drained and dogs being able to jump in and chase after and attack the swans" said Trevor Weeks, "it is dam right cruel to let your dog cause suffering in this way. Personally I wish the swans did not stay at the lagoon as it is just not safe for them, but people feed them and they now won't fly off as a result when the lagoon is drained. However, the blame for this swan being killed has to lay squarely with the dog owner, if you can't control your dog them it should not be off the lead - simple."

When asked about how Trevor felt about the swan casualties over the weekend Trevor replied, "I am sick and tired of picking up the pieces where humans get some sick pleasure out of abusing wildlife. Honestly what pleasure do you get out of shooting a swan - these people must be sick! WRAS volunteers are running around left, right and centre and I can only take my hat off to them for all the volunteer hours they put in clearing up after irresponsible people. The other day a gentleman complained about us raising money for wildlife rescue at a supermarket saying 'what about the children' - this really annoys me because as far as I am concerned cruelty is cruelty whether it is cruelty against children, adults, pets, farm animals or wildlife - and I personally support several charities which fight this cruelty in humans as well as animals. When will it stop!"



Swans at Princes Park, Eastbourne.

Special Will making offer.

Very kindly Hillman, Smart and Spicer have very kindly agreed to offer supporters of East Sussex WRAS a free of charge service to make a basic Will (whether including a legacy to WRAS or not) subject to a minimum donation of £50 being made to WRAS. The offer does not extend to complicated Wills involving Trusts, however they will endeavour to deal with these for a concessionary fee, subject again to WRAS receiving a £50 donation. This offer is for a limited period of time and must be used before May 2008.

Anyone interested in taking up this offer should contact Mr Adrian Sharpin at Hillman, Smart and Spicer Solicitors, 35-37 Gildredge Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 4RX or by phone on 01323-722081.



X-ray showing the swelling and damage to the swans neck.