



Newsletter Summer 2014

Hello! And welcome to our Summer Newsletter. It's been a pretty manic couple of months since our last bulletin. No sooner had the spring newsletter gone out than we were involved in rescuing 23 rats. Their owner had bought what he was told were two male rats from Pets at Home to keep his male company. Unfortunately both were girls and 19 babies followed a few weeks later leaving the owner utterly overwhelmed. At his request we initially took about half of the rats but he then asked us to take them all. The two mums were quite nervous and it is essential that babies are handled plenty to ensure they are well socialised so they kept us extremely busy! Still, it was a very happy ending as I'm delighted to report that the whole family – Mums, Dad and all the babies – have since found wonderful new homes. We keep in touch with all our homes and have received lots of lovely updates and pictures. Here are just a few of them:

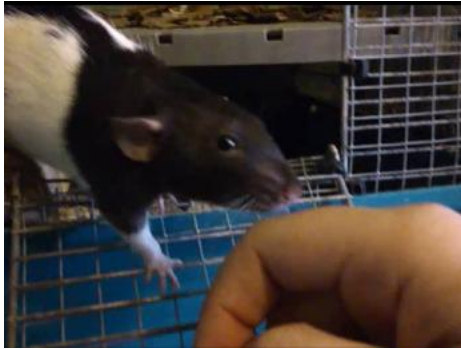


The rats were closely followed by two new degu friends, Bruce and Jackie. They have been much loved pets but their Dad asked us to help out when he needed to move abroad for work.

Then last month we were contacted again by the lady who found Sunday, the woodpigeon we introduced you to in our last newsletter. She had found another injured woodpigeon who she quickly brought in to us. Continuing the theme we called this one Thursday. We



think he had been hit by a car and then attacked by predatory birds as he had bruising and nerve damage to his wing and leg on one side and wounds all over his back. He was very thin and weak on arrival but with some TLC has made a great recovery and is now in an aviary growing his tail feathers before release.



And then there was Summer, a gorgeous little female rat who was found in someone's summerhouse! Initially we thought she might be pregnant and potentially carrying half wild babies but, four weeks on, there are no babies which is a bit of a relief. Summer had a course of antibiotics just in case she picked up anything on her adventures but now has the all clear. Today I introduced her to some other rats – the first she'd seen in at least a month – and she was ecstatic!

We offer lifetime back up to all our animals meaning that should their new home no longer be able to care for them, they are returned to us. Happily, returns are rare but we recently took three girl rats who we homed last September back when their new Mum could no longer look after them. It's lovely to see that they have clearly been very well cared for though – they left here slim and a bit nervous of handling and came back plump and very friendly. Polly, Poppy and Daisy are now looking for a new home.

In the last newsletter we launched our appeal for a new aviary for our resident pigeons. Since then we have been busily clearing the old aviary and preparing the area whilst fundraising. By the time we were ready for it, we had raised about half the money needed. This left us in a bit of a quandary as we desperately wanted to get the pigeons out as soon as possible as they had spent too long indoors. Thankfully a supporter has lent the trust the remaining money needed so we were able to purchase the aviary and get it set up asap. Our three resident pigeons – Galega, Beatrix and Arnie – are now living outside and very happy. Thank you so much for your help in making that happen!



We do still need to raise the remaining costs to pay our supporter back – about £240 so we still appreciate any help with this. We don't have much in the way of reserves – one vet bill can easily wipe them out – so taking the money out of our normal funds would be a huge risk. If you can help, please visit <http://www.starlighttrust.org.uk/aviary.php> for the latest appeal totals and details of ways you can donate. Thank you x

Residents

Since our last newsletter, a couple more animals have joined the ranks of our permanent residents.

Arnie became our third pigeon resident after his wing failed to improve. We're not sure if the paralysis of his wing was caused by an injury or a virus which attacks the neurological system and can cause wing paralysis. We had hoped that some time in the aviary would loosen it up but he still can only lift it a couple of centimetres so he will have to stay here with us.



We also made the decision that Pearl the Syrian hamster should stay with us. In our last newsletter we talked about how she had arrived with a skin condition which had gotten better. Unfortunately the improvement didn't last very long and she was back at the vets having more treatment for parasites and for a fungal skin infection. However, that still didn't do the trick so she had further tests which suggested she actually had Cushing's Disease. Unfortunately, with hamsters being seen as such disposable



pets, those with Cushing's are rarely offered any treatment. We are blessed to have incredibly caring vets who rather like a challenge so Pearl is currently receiving medication. This had led to some quite good fur regrowth, though we remain concerned about her weightloss. Our vets, as well as being fantastic, have also been very kind. Even

so, Pearl's treatment has cost us around £160 so we would be delighted to find her some sponsors.

If you would like to sponsor one of our resident animals you can find out more at www.starlighttrust.org.uk/sponsor.php.

Animals needing homes



Suzie gerbil has been with us since November. She is friendly but a little shy so she would prefer an adult carer.

Vega is still looking for a home with another female or neutered male chinchilla. Vega loves interacting with people though, like most chinchillas, is not keen on cuddles.



Polly, Poppy and Daisy, the rats who were returned to us, are now ready for their new home. They are fabulous girls – very bright and cheeky with lovely, gentle natures. They have accepted Summer, the little stray rat, without batting an eyelid so adding them to an established group should be very straightforward.



Our two degu boys, Bruce and Jackie, are also ready for their new start. They are very inquisitive and sweet little chaps, though a little bit shy at the moment. So they would do best in a home with some degu experience ideally.

Do please get in touch if you have room in your life for some new rodent friends.

Wildlife

We are still in the very busy period for our wildlife work. More than 75,000 people have visited the site over the last few months and we are also dealing with several email or facebook enquiries a day on average. We spoke about problems with people being told to leave baby birds alone no matter what, even though there are circumstances where intervention is absolutely needed. With that in mind we produced a little infographic explaining when to help. The poster is on our website at <http://www.helpwildlife.co.uk/BabyBirdPoster.jpg> and we would be delighted if you could share it on social media or print it off to display in vets and pet shops.

Well, thank you for reading our newsletter and I hope you have found it interesting. We hope to catch you on [facebook](#) or [twitter](#), otherwise we will aim to write to you again in the autumn.

Kindest regards

Sarah & Dave
The Starlight Trust