



Britain is a nation of animal lovers. From the cute and cuddly to slimy and scary, we love them all.

Some of us have a passion for our pets, the animals that become part of the family. But here at the Wildlife Rescue and Ambulance Service, they are wild about wildlife.

London is home to millions of people but it's also home to many wild animals and sometimes they can get hurt.

Here at the centre, the staff look after injured or very young animals and then hopefully get them well enough so they can go back into the wild.

It's hard work looking after them. The first task of the day is serving breakfast.

Most of the people who work here are volunteers. None of them are paid. They help out and provide their time for free, for the love of the animals.

**Joe:** Hi Barry.

**Barry Smitherman:** Hi Joe.

**Joe:** I'm here to help.

**Barry Smitherman:** Great. There's a spare broom here.

**Joe:** Great. Thank you very much. So tell me about the rescue centre, Barry.

**Barry Smitherman:** Primarily our work here is to care for sick and injured animals and birds and where possible release them back into the wild where they belong.

**Joe:** And you're a charity, aren't you?

**Barry Smitherman:** Yes, we are. Obviously we rely upon donations to keep the work going, by people coming and visiting us at the centre and seeing some of our animals and kind donations from the public.

**Joe:** And with this many animals here there's obviously a lot of work to do.

**Barry Smitherman:** Yes, yes, it's not easy. There is always a lot to do.

**Joe:** Well, let's get going.

**Barry Smitherman:** Good idea.

Loss of natural habitat has led to wildlife and humans living in closer proximity to each other than ever before. When man meets animal, it's the wildlife that often comes off worse. Road traffic accidents, poisoning and attacks from domestic pets often cause injury.

When the animals are first brought in, they often need treatment here at the animal hospital. Let's go and visit some of the patients.

June takes care of the baby animals. Some of the tiny ones need a lot of attention.

**Joe:** So what's wrong with this hedgehog, June?

**June Smitherman:** This hedgehog was attacked by a dog and it's got two wounds: one underneath, one on top.

**Joe:** And what sort of treatments are you going to give him?

**June Smitherman:** Well, I'll give him a course of antibiotics. Hopefully that should make him better.

**Joe:** And will he be released into the wild?

**June Smitherman:** Not this one because this one's not going to be fit enough so this one will stay with me until next year.

Now it's a big moment as one of the little hedgehogs is going to be released back into the wild.

When this little chap arrived he wasn't strong enough to feed but now he's well enough to survive in the wild. The big question is: will he want to leave?

Well he's not too sure at first. But now he's made it back to where he belongs - in the wild.

And it's thanks to this and other rescue centres across Britain that more animals are free to be wild again.