Greenwood Wildlife Rehabilitation Center
July 25, 2022
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Pigs don’t fly – but this whistlepig did

A Yellow-bellied Marmot hitched a ride all the way to Toronto, Canada, after a family came to Colorado for a mountain adventure in Aspen.

The surprised family discovered the animal in their camper once they were already home. They brought the critter to local rehabilitators at Toronto Wildlife Centre. Unfortunately, this species of marmot is not endemic to the area. Wildlife rehabilitators in Canada discussed the treatment and return options for the stranded whistlepig with Greenwood Wildlife Rehabilitation Center and Pauline Schneegas Wildlife Foundation – two Colorado organizations willing to facilitate its return to Aspen. For the past few weeks, the organizations corresponded over the best diet and husbandry for the displaced marmot. The critter needed to return home, but several international obstacles stood in the way. After innumerable hours of organizing permits and booking passage, Toronto Wildlife Centre tucked the mammal onto a flight back to the U.S.

Tessa Parrish, a licensed rehabilitator from Greenwood Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, commented, “It was very cool to watch all of these organizations come together and collaborate to get this marmot home.”

The marmot landed in Denver at 10am on July 22nd. After the long flight, she had an hour's drive back to her original range near Aspen, Colorado. The folks at Pauline Schneegas met with Greenwood Wildlife to pick up the marmot and hold her overnight while she recovered from a stressful day. The following morning, this worldly whistlepig was released back into the Rocky Mountains she came from, likely relieved to be home.

The ordeal was surely traumatic for this Yellow-bellied Marmot, but with the compassion of numbers rehabilitators, volunteers, and the cooperation of international agencies we were able to get her back to her native land. Every year, these high-altitude furballs hide on top of car engines, accidentally taking the ride of their lives. These situations can be prevented by checking under car hoods and campers before departing from mountain excursions. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Greenwood Wildlife Rehabilitation Center is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that is devoted to the rehabilitation and release of orphaned, injured and sick wildlife. We are the largest wildlife rehabilitation center treating mammals, birds, and waterfowl on the Front Range. We treat thousands of animals annually and over 200 different species have come through our doors since we were founded in 1982.*

*We also provide outreach programs for audiences of all ages regarding rehabilitation, humane solutions to human-wildlife conflicts, and how you can help Colorado’s wildlife.*