

WITH A LITTLE HELP, "63" FOUND HER ROAD BACK HOME

By Terese Evans

This three toed box turtle was released back on her home turf last week.



A HUGE thank you to Merle and Vicki Wilson, from Jesup, IA, who took her back to her home turf in MO!

This turtle came to us in mid June. Her rescuers were a young couple who were visiting family in MO and along the way, they saw a large number of turtles crossing the road; many were hit by cars and died. They found this one still alive and scooped her up and brought her back to IA with them. The turtle was fed bananas for one and a half months. When they went to the local pet store to buy an aquarium, the pet store fortunately asked them to call us at the **Black Hawk Wildlife Rehabilitation Project** for advice.

They wanted to do the right thing and did not realize that what they had done was wrong: to remove a turtle from its home turf and provide a diet deficient in many ways for a box turtle. When

we got her, we dubbed her "63," as she was found on highway 63 in Missouri and I am right off highway 63.

So "63" spent a few months here recuperating. When I contacted the MO DNR, they wanted her back once she was well. She was pronounced well by Dr. Cherney recently and was sent down to MO with a health certificate in hand, in case there were any questions on the way, and the letter from the DNR saying they wanted her back in MO.

We had to figure out how to get her there safely. It was going to be over a 7-hour trip one way back to her home near Rolla, MO!

Merle and Vicki Wilson responded to the challenge and I put them in touch with the young man who brought her here to get more specifics on where exactly he found her.

As you can see in the photo, she was one happy turtle to get back to the wild! Thanks so much, Merle and Vicki and big thanks also to Rachel Shadle for rehabbing her until she was ready to go.

It often times takes a few helping hands to get a wild one back out there. This picture on her release day makes it all so worth it!

To learn more about the MO Box Turtle—check out this site!

<http://mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/outdoor-recreation/nature-viewing/amphibians-and-reptiles/turtles/box-turtles>

If you are in our neck of the woods one day and you find a wild animal who needs help, please get in touch with me: Terese Evans, Black Hawk Wildlife Rehab Project teresedo@gmail.com;

www.bhwildliferehab.com

Thank you to Merle and Vicki for all they did and for sending Wildlife Watch this happy story. Vicki wrote: Here is the box turtle that we took back to her home area near Rolla, Missouri. If you look on a map you can find Rolla about 2/3 of the way down in Missouri. We found a beautiful spot, nicely wooded, along a shallow gravel/rock bottomed creek. When I put her on the ground, she lifted her head, looked around and began to head up a slight rise to the wooded area in search of friends and home. You could almost see a smile on her little face! I hope she has a long, healthy life, many babies, and sunshine on her face every day.

Thank you Vicki, Merle, and Terese for all that you do for wild animals!