

NEWSLETTER FOR WILDLIFE REHABILITATORS OF NORTH CAROLINA

Volume 10 & 11

September/December 2002

A quarterly newsletter produced by the Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina (WRNC). WRNC's mission is to share information and knowledge about wildlife rehabilitation for the benefit of native wildlife. For comments or questions, write to: WRNC, 2542 Weymoth Rd, Winston-Salem, NC 27103.

Continuing Education

- A IWRC basic skill class will be offered in March 2003 at the Schindler Wildlife rehabilitation Center. Contact Joan McMurray at 336-for details.
- The NWRA Symposium for 2003 is March 11-15th in Newport, Rhode Island. Check the website for details – www.nwrawildlife.org.
- Western NC rehabilitators Ed & Mary Weiss have organized another basic training class for anyone interested in learning how to care for injured wildlife. Contact them at ...
- Carolina Raptor Center will hold its annual raptor rehabilitation seminar February 2003. The two day-long classes offer different presentation/workshops. For more information, contact Mathias Engelmann at 704-875-6521 ext. 108 or at mathiasengelmann@birdsofprey.org.
- The Kentucky Wildlife Rehabilitation Association will hold its 4th annual Conference Feb 22nd and 23rd, 2003. Contact Eileen Wicker at 502-491-1939 or at raptors@iglou.com for information.

Disclaimer The opinions, techniques, and recommendations expressed in the articles of this newsletter are those of the author(s) and do not imply endorsement by WRNC.

THANK YOU AND GOODBYE

3 WRNC board members recently had to resign from their positions because of family emergencies and other commitments.

The board wishes to thank Sandra Justice, Barbara Tomlinson, and Melanie Piazza for their time and energy spent on improving this organization. We wish them well in their future endeavors.

1st Annual Symposium

February 1-2, 2003

WRNC invites rehabilitators and associated wildlife professionals to attend its 1st symposium. The symposium will be held at the North Carolina Zoo's Education Center in Asheboro.

Fantastic Sessions:

Physical Therapy

Emerging Diseases

Physical Exams

Fluid Therapy

Turtle Shell Repair

Gardening for Wildlife

Avian Caging

Lead Poisoning

Wildlife Education

Expert presentations on Cottontails, Raptors, Turtles, Squirrels, Songbirds & more

More information is found online at www.newwildliferehab.org.

WRNC SYMPOSIUM 2003

REGISTRATION FORM

Mail this completed form and your check to WRNC, c/o Carla Johnson, 2542 Weymoth Rd., Winston-Salem, NC 27103. The official date of your registration will be the day your payment is received. If you wish to qualify for "early bird" rates, payment must be received by the cut-off date of January 15, 2003.

Payment Schedule

	<i>Received by Jan 15</i>	<i>Received after Jan 15</i>
<i>Member for 2003</i>	\$40	\$45
<i>Non-member</i>	\$65	\$70

Every field with an asterisk (*) must be completed.

*Name

*City/Town

*Zip Code

*Address

*State

County

Telephone

E-mail Address

*WRNC Member? Yes

No

If no, are you be purchasing a membership with your registration?

Yes

No

We hope to see you at the Symposium

WE NEED YOUR INPUT!

There are more than 900 (?) wildlife rehabilitators listed in North Carolina, and only 1983 animals were reported in our first year of collecting data. That would be an average of slightly more than 3 animals per rehabilitator. Come on folks! We know there are more people out there. Lets get some meaningful information.

Please send in your reports to 2542 Weymoth Rd, Winston Salem, NC 27103 or email them to cmjohnso@wfubmc.edu

We need to have a more accurate report on how North Carolina's rehabilitators are impacting wild population animals. Send in your data this January!

Species/common name, Date found, Where found (town & county), Disposition*, Date in, Date out, Reason (cause of injury)

Disposition (R = Released, D = Died, DOA = Dead on arrival, E = Euthanized, EOA = Euthanized on arrival, T = Transferred, I = Institutionalized (educational use), P = Pending)

DATA SUBMISION FORM GOES HERE

The Age of a Bird

by Mathias Engelmann

Knowing the age of a bird undergoing rehabilitation may seem trivial, but this information can be vital when determining diet, handling, housing, or the location or appropriate season to release.

- Many birds undergo two molts each year, but raptors only have one molt each year.
- Good basic field guides can be invaluable in determining the species, but advanced guides and lots of experience may be needed to age birds correctly.
- If the bird will be banded before release, the Bird Banding Laboratory requires an age for its records and they also want to know how the age was determined.

Here are some of the age codes used in birds:

- L or Local - refers to a young bird which cannot sustain flight yet. This would include downy birds and fledgling-age birds.
- HY or Hatching Year - a bird hatched during the current calendar year that can fly
- SY or Second Year - a bird hatched during the previous calendar year
- AHY or After Hatching Year - a bird hatched prior to the current calendar year (an example would be a red-tailed hawk with rufous tail feathers)

Here is an example to illustrate the sequence:

- A red-tailed hawk hatches in 2000. Its first plumage will feature a barred brown tail. Until it can fly some distance, it would be aged as L.
- Starting at the time it can fly distances, it will be aged HY, until December 31, 2000.
- Beginning in January 2001, it will be called SY. During the summer of 2001 it will molt in the characteristic adult rufous tail feathers, among others. Because all of the tail feathers molt in during one season, they will be relatively uniform in color and wear. The bird will still be aged as SY, even though at the end of the summer it has its full adult tail.
- On January 1st, 2002, it will again age by one year and now be called TY.
- During the spring and summer of 2002 it will replace some or all of those rufous tail feathers. During the fall it may have mixed new and old rufous tail feathers. It will still be called TY for the remainder of the year.

This is a relatively simple case because we knew the year the bird was hatched and because the tail feathers change dramatically in appearance. What if you received an adult red-tailed hawk during the summer of 2002. You know it is an adult because of the rufous tail feathers. Are the tail feathers fairly uniform in coloration and wear pattern? Remember that this tail was either grown in during one summer, a few feathers at a time, or during several molts (in which case there should be significant differences in the color and wear).

Other clues may be important. In red-tailed hawks, the eye color changes dramatically within the first few years of life. Nestlings have light gray eyes, fledglings light tan eyes, and old adult dark chocolate brown eyes. A SY bird may have eyes that are in the transition from tan to brown.

Each bird species can have its peculiarities, when it comes to molting, ageing, or natural history in general. The best way to learn more about this topic is to observe patients closely, record information accurately, and build a good resource library. There are many books, magazine, articles, and even videos, cassettes, and CD-Roms available.

ELECTIONS ARE UPON US

Listed below are Bio's for individuals running for the board of directors of WRNC. Please note that board members are all volunteers and that some out-of pocket expenses are incurred by board members as they travel to meetings and stay in contact with each other throughout the year.

Jean Chamberlain - incumbent

Jean holds a degree in mathematics from the State University of New York at Albany. She taught high school mathematics for several years, went to graduate school for two years and then settled on a career in computer science. She recently retired as an Information Technology project leader. She has traveled extensively and has lived several years in Africa. She and her husband have rehabilitated raptors for about 8 years. Jean is the secretary and webmaster of her local rehab organization (Wildlife Rehab, Inc.), the treasurer and webmaster of WRNC and a webmaster for IWRC.

Ed Weiss - incumbent

Bobby Schopler, DVM – incumbent

Jason Wood – new

ABSENTEE BALLOT

You may cast one vote for up to five candidates by placing a check next to candidates' names. Write-in candidates must be members in good standing that have agreed to serve as Trustees.

The Nominating Committee hereby nominates the following slate of candidates for positions on the WRNC Board of Trustees.

Three-year term

_____ Ed Weiss
_____ Bobby Schopler
_____ Jean Chamberlain
_____ Jason Wood

Write-in candidates

_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

Ballots must be received by January....2003.
Mail to WRNC, 2542 Weymoth Rd, Winston-Salem, NC 27103

STATE ORGANIZATIONS MEET FOR A "FIRST TIME" THINK TANK

Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina, WRNC is still a fledgling organization that continues to evolve as we look for more ways to provide education, networking systems, and guidance for high standards to the many rehabilitators in our state. Now we have a very special opportunity to meet and interact with other state wildlife rehabilitation associations to discuss state and local trends, issues, and to learn from each other.

In April of 2001 a special ad hoc committee was convened in Minneapolis, MN, to explore the issues surrounding the field of wildlife rehabilitation. The committee is a cross-section of individuals engaged in the field, including individual rehabilitators, presidents of rehabilitation facilities, and elected officers from both national wildlife organizations. The committee's charge was to identify the full range of issues affecting the field of wildlife rehabilitation, and to the best of their abilities, offer guidance and recommendations to improve the care provided by all wildlife rehabilitators.

The group agreed, early in the process, that the most important goal for the wildlife rehabilitation community is to concentrate its efforts on those things that will improve the standard and quality of care to wildlife. Understandably, while many other worthwhile goals for the organizations and individuals exist, improved quality of care was chosen as the primary focus. The group agreed that the membership of national, state, or even local wildlife rehabilitation organizations does not include the majority of individuals involved in wildlife rehabilitation. While many individuals active in the professional organizations have high visibility within their regions, little is known about those who do not belong to either a state or national organization. Many of these rehabilitators are home-based or work with a small network of other home based rehabilitators. These uncounted wildlife rehabilitators handle a large percentage of animals, and the committee believes a special effort should be made to include their opinions, document their needs, and assist them in improving the level of care they provide.

The purpose of the "Think Tank" meeting was to brain-storm about ways of reaching out to all wildlife rehabilitators and to share information in an effort to devise ways of improving standards and the quality of care for wildlife across the board. As president of our association, Nina Fischesser represented WRNC and the Rehabilitators of North Carolina at the Wildlife Rehabilitation Issues Forum held February 15-17, 2002, in Minneapolis, MN. The invitation extended to WRNC to have a representative at this special forum, is yet another step towards our evolving as a State Association and a Nationally recognized organization.

The ad hoc committee sent out a questionnaire to all state associations, for members to fill out. We received ours two nights before the general meeting in January 2002. People who attended the board meeting filled out the survey. This was not even close to being a good representation of the rehabilitators in the state of North Carolina as there were not many folks at the meeting.

We are enclosing a questionnaire for you to fill out. We need as many rehabilitators represented as possible. When we can identify the needs of rehabilitators in our state, we can then begin to meet those needs, and ultimately provide the best possible care for all the wild animals who come to us in need of care. But it takes all of us to be involved in the process. So please fill out the questionnaire and mail it to WRNC.

If you would like more detailed information on the first two meetings held in 2002, please contact Nina at wildcarebr@vistatech.net, or Phone (828) 733-6142.

A new, comprehensive website for wildlife rehabilitation was funded by the Humane Society of the US and is now under the auspices of the IWRC. <http://wildlife-international.org>

QUESTIONNAIRE – page 1

FACTORS THAT COULD LIMIT A REHABILITATOR’S ABILITY TO PROVIDE CARE TO WILDLIFE IN NEED

The following is a list of potential factors that could impair or limit a rehabilitator's ability or effectiveness in providing quality care to wildlife. As shown at the end of the list, room is provided for "other" factors not on the list that you may identify as critical in your area. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Nina Fischesser at (828) 733-6142.

Step 1. Please indicate with an (X) all potentially limiting factors that apply to your ability as a rehabilitator to provide care to wildlife. Please confine the scope of your responses to wildlife rehabilitation activities only - do not include issues relating to care for non-releasables, educational animals, non-native exotic or privately owned or domestic wildlife.

- Time available to provide wildlife care (rehab animals only)
- The cost of providing wildlife care.
- Availability of veterinary assistance.
- Communication/interaction with other rehabilitators.
- Availability of support staff (paid staff, volunteers, others).
- Communication/interaction with the public.
- Availability of information and training opportunities for rehabilitators.
- Availability of supplies and equipment.
- Communication/interaction with local state wildlife officer/game warden.
- Communication/interaction with state wildlife agency central office staff.
- Availability of wildlife rehabilitation facilities/caging.
- Human health and safety considerations.
- Restrictions placed on certain species (for RVS, other wildlife diseases, etc.).
- Communication/interaction with local federal wildlife officer.
- Communication/interaction with federal wildlife agency regional permit office.
- Transporting of animals needing assistance.
- Disposition of non-releasable animals.
- Communication/interaction with veterinarians.
- Availability of release sites.
- Time committed to answering information requests from the public.
- Availability and awareness of minimum standards for wildlife rehabilitation.
- Regulations imposed by federal, state or local agencies.
- (Other)_____

QUESTIONNAIRE – page 2

Step 2. Now, please go back to Step 1 above and circle the X's (or boldface or capitalize the X's if responding via email) next to the 3 most important things that serve as constraints or limitations to your ability to provide care to wildlife in need.

Primary contact name and phone number for questions about the information provided above:

Please send the completed questionnaire to WRNC, 2542 Weymoth Rd, Winston-Salem, NC 27103. or email to <_____> on or before _____, 2002. Thank you.

(This survey was adapted from a similar study conducted in New York in 1991 as published in "Characteristics, Activities, and Attitudes of Licensed Wildlife Rehabilitators in New York" by William F. Siemer and Tommy L. Brown, Human Dimensions Research Unit, Cornell University, May 1992.)

Internship At the Blue Ridge Wildlife Institute

By Brooke Jenkins

To call the Blue Ridge Wildlife Institute (BRWI) utopia is a little extreme, but it could be about five minutes down the mountain. BRWI is not only rehabilitation for the animals, but also rehabilitation for the people who work there.

Six students from all over the United States came to BRWI for a purpose all of their own. Only two knew each other beforehand, Jenna and Elizabeth, both from Boerne, Texas. They go to school at Texas A&M Corpus Christi. I also attend school there, but did not know them until I arrived here. Maki is from Japan and studies zoology at Washington State University. Suzy is from Ohio and Jonah, our only male intern, is from Vermont; they both go to Warren Wilson.

Each of us came with the knowledge that we would rehabilitate sick and injured animals, to practice the code of nonmaleficence. We knew what we were coming to do, but not the extent of how much we would learn. The first week everyone feared would never end. All six interns stayed at the clinic from 7 am to 8:30pm, Monday till Sunday, working their hardest to learn the rounds; the same schedule of a typical home-based rehabilitator in the summer months. Now that there are only a few days left in the internship we feel like cramming as much of this place in as we can before we have to return to our normal lives. Over the ten weeks we learned how to give medication, what types to give, and the purposes for giving them. We learned how to tube feed ducks, crows, baby broad-winged hawks, and baby opossums. We learned how to properly hold a squirrel and a red-tailed Hawk, and how to catch a crow. We had to learn to get over the fear of doing unusual things. We faced the fear of heights by climbing 70ft up three tall ladders to a swaying tree house. He had to endure cutting up frozen mice, drowning live crickets, and cleaning up diarrhea and dirty cages. These tasks had to be done for the sake of the animals and there wasn't any escaping it.

This summer was about learning to let in and let go. Sometimes we were able to nurse a dehydrated, emaciated newborn, such as a tiny Chimney Swift, back to health and watch it grow from a nestling to a fledgling, to a juvenile. After all the dedicated work put into rehabilitating these birds, we were

Continued on page 9

able to witness their beautiful release back into the wild. Each of us had the chance to actually take a bird in our hands, hold it for the last time, let go and watch it soar into the sky. It is an experience that I will never forget, that brought me to tears then and still does now as I think about it for it was so beautiful.

Not every case was a success, however. Sometimes we would get overwhelmed with death and all we could do was scream that this was not fair. On occasion, when the prognosis looks good for a certain animal, tragedy will strike. We would come early in the morning and find some special bird dead in its box. So many factors were involved in keeping these animals alive, and at times it was hard. A bird could have aspirated fluids, have a bacterial or viral infection, get loose or one time got caught in the door. We had a few cases where the animal was just not warm enough, even though we took it home with us for extra care. All of us have learned just how fragile life really is.

Even with the heartache of loosing some of the birds, I can say the summer was the best experience I've ever had. The bad balanced out with the good, and I take so many memories home with me. We were able to enjoy Nina's cats and dogs, going to the schools for programs, or teaching the junior interns what we knew. When we had the time we would hike to the gorge or the falls, watch the sun rise. I was able to hold Lady Bird, the red-tailed hawk, and a saw-whet owl, talk about Woody, the piliated woodpecker, at a program. Nina and I have stopped on the highway to help many box turtles cross the road. We have also been able to assist Dr. Hoggard in surgery, go on expeditions with Sandra, do saw-whet owl research with Corrie, and take in all of Lessie's knowledge. I never knew how personally attached I would become to wild animals or that I'd be able to identify the call of a woodpecker, a robin, a blue jay, a Carolina Wren and hundreds of other species out in the wild.

We became familiar with the personalities of each bird we housed. Eastern Bluebirds are quiet and adorable when they are getting fed. They don't squawk like starlings do. Blue Jays will dive into their water dish and splash everyone and everything. Elizabeth said House Wrens were like little old ladies who sit in a group and bicker. We were blessed with the Titmouse, who terrorized all the Doves in the Combo Cage. Sasquatch, the Great Horned Owl, really was great. We took him to programs and he sat like a king on his perch.

Rehabilitation was not only for the birds but for all of us too. Whatever world we left behind we learned to cope with here, and enjoy a little bit of what Heaven must be like, here on Earth. Happiness has crept through me like the bright sunrise over the mountain. Whatever we lacked back at home we were blessed with here. We became a family, the interns, Nina, Cheryl, Sandra, all of Alpine Towers, everyone involved with us this summer. Those who have never experienced time completely alone were able to do so on Solo, three days and nights in the woods. We enjoyed the Service groups helping us through the summer. All the interns became really close to each other, true friends. Nina became a mom and we her children. We all ran around with the electricity of happiness, knowledge, and freedom. Sadly, in a few days the internship will end and we will return to our homes far away. Bless the day we can all meet again.

For me, this place creates the urge to laugh a bit longer, to trust in people a little easier, to look more clearly at life, to love oneself more efficiently, and to cry a lot harder when all is done and I must return to the life that led me here.

If you are interested in learning more about the Blue Ridge Wildlife Institute's Jr. and College summer internships please contact Nina Fischesser at (828) 733-6142, or check our web page at www.wildcarebr.org

WRNC Directory

An updated edition of the directory is in the planning stages. New and renewing members will be included up until the date of the conference in February 2003. The directory should be mailed to all members by June 2003.

If you have interesting cases, innovative techniques or any other tips you would like to share with the readers, please send us the information.

All submissions will be edited for clarity and contents, and suggested revisions will be sent to the author for approval prior to printing.

CONFUSED ABOUT WEST NILE VIRUS?

You're not alone. This summer and fall, the virus has received incredible amounts of press coverage and every dead bird in North America is all of a sudden suspect. Check the NWRA website (www.nwrawildlife.org) for a link to a Cornell University site with a wealth of information. It is difficult to keep up with this disease that seems to be spreading like wildfire. It is also easy to blame every bird with neurological signs on WNV.

The NWRA has recently compiled a bibliography for papers published in the first 18 volumes of the annual proceedings. Over 350 papers are listed by author and cross-referenced by topic.

WRNC Board members, contact information, officers, committees, and terms

Happy Holidays!

WRNC
2542 Weymoth Rd
Winston-Salem, NC 27103

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED