



NEWSLETTER FOR WILDLIFE REHABILITATORS OF NORTH CAROLINA

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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

- Carolina Raptor Center's Raptor Rehabilitation Seminars this August, see page 8 for more information.
- Wildlife Rehab, Inc. will hold their next 11-week wildlife rehabilitation class in Sept. 2003 at Forsyth Technical Community College. For more information: www.wildliferehabinc.org/classes.html
- The NC Wildlife Resources Commission offers a series of workshops called Project WILD in multiple locations across the state. Each workshop focuses on how to integrate wildlife as tools into the teaching of various subjects. Education credits and certification are available for teachers and scout leaders. For more information: www.ncwildlife.org
- The NC WRC also has multiple wildlife centers throughout the state where children and adults can learn more about wildlife in a fun environment. For more information: www.ncwildlife.org

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.

Eastern regional meeting set

The eastern meeting will be on Saturday, October 4th. It will be held at the Outer Banks Wildlife Shelter in Newport, NC. Stephanie Goetzinger will give a water bird presentation and Linda Bergman will conduct a tour of the shelter. Time to be determined. Go to: <http://www.ncwildliferehab.org/east.html> for more information.

Central regional meeting

The central meeting will be on Saturday, August 23rd from 10-2. It will be held at the Bethel United Methodist Church in Winston-Salem, NC. Melanie Wells will give a cottontail presentation. Go to: <http://www.ncwildliferehab.org/central.html> for more information.

Let's ban leg hold traps in NC

Susan McClung

Not only are leg hold traps inherently cruel, they also injure non-target animals. Bob and Jean Chamberlain are caring for a great horned owl that had to have a talon amputated because it was caught in a leg hold trap. It is a very difficult process to get foot injuries in raptors to heal properly. Carla Johnson had another owl whose leg basically fell off when the trap was opened and the bird had to be euthanized. A third owl was sighted near Murray Rd. in Winston Salem with a trap clamped on his leg. He could not be caught and will undoubtedly die a slow and painful death.

Leg hold traps have already been banned in 88 countries and in 5 states. New Jersey and Massachusetts banned them, at least in part, due to evidence provided by rehabilitators of the harm these traps caused to raptors. People trap for "sport," and for money, although statistically the amount of income from trapping is a pittance, generally about 4% of a trapper's total income. Unfortunately, trappers also end up trapping large numbers of what they call "trash" animals, those with no economic value. Every year hundreds of thousands of dogs, cats, birds, and other animals, including endangered species, are "accidentally" crippled, mutilated, or killed by traps. It is estimated that for every single target animal trapped, about four non-target animals are taken. This statistic alone is reason enough to outlaw these horrific devices.

There are various types of traps, but the leg hold trap is the most widely used. When an animal steps on the leg hold trap spring, the trap's jaws slam closed on the animal's limb. The animal is in excruciating pain and struggles to get loose. It is estimated that up to 25 percent of trapped mammals escape by chewing off their own feet. Once loose and maimed, these animals go on to suffer further from predation, blood loss, and infection. Animals that stay alive in the traps linger in pain and hunger for days. How often does the trapper check the trap? State regulations vary; some states require 24 hours, some require one week, and some states have no regulations!

Let's make North Carolina one of the states outlawing these inefficient and cruel devices. Rehabilitators in the eastern part of the state have already succeeded in squashing a request from trappers for a special leg-hold trap season in one of the counties there (see Mark's letter, page 4). Let's keep the momentum going! Please write or call our state legislators. For a listing visit <http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/>

Monkey pox

The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer services has published a factsheet titled, "Monkeypox: Questions and Answers For Pet Stores and Animal Owners".

It is located online at: <http://www.ncagr.com/vet/monkeypox.htm>.

Additional information can be found at the CDC website, <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/monkeypox/>.

From the editor's desk

This newsletter is your tool for reaching everyone else in WRNC. Please feel free to submit comments, corrections, announcements and submissions for future newsletters to Sally Davis at wekaterrapin@hotmail.com or the address on newsletter header on page 1. Next editorial deadline is Friday, Aug 15th.

Overheard by Jean

Here's a bit of humor I heard the night before last. I went to this family's house to pick up a red-tailed hawk that had been hit by a car. The hawk had coughed up a pellet and the father asked what it was. I explained what it was and his daughter chimed in with "oh, I digested one of those at school in science class."

Rehabilitation or Reinfection?

Dr. Bobby Schopler

Without proper disinfecting of cages, bowls, feeding syringes, floors, perches and counters, a rehabilitator's home or center can turn into a disease distribution center instead of a place of recovery. Animals can pick up diseases present within the walls of a center and, upon release, infect unexposed populations. If proper disinfecting does not occur, we can easily sicken animals brought to us, making rehabilitation worse than being left in the wild. The question is what disinfectant to use and how to use it.

Too much disinfectant is hazardous to the health of the animals we are protecting and to us. Too little will have no effect on the bugs we are trying to destroy. There are many different disinfectants on the market: alcohols, halogens, aldehydes, phenolics, surface-active compounds, biguanides, and ethylene oxide. How do you choose the right one and its appropriate concentration without going broke in the process?

Actually, one of the most effective disinfectants with the widest spectrum is one of the cheapest and easiest to find. Bleach kills bacteria, including spores, as well as, fungi, and viruses. However it also corrodes rubber and metal, and is toxic when inhaled. Bleach is rendered ineffective if any significant organic debris (feces or food) is left on the surface being cleaned. It works best at an alkaline pH and works faster when diluted with warm water. The maximum dilution that is still effective is 1:30, bleach:water. When using this concentration it is important to leave the solution in contact with the surface for a minimum of 30 minutes. After disinfecting, it is very important to rinse any residue off of the now disinfected surface.

When bleach contacts skin or scales it can cause burns, so be sure to rinse all surfaces thoroughly after application. Bleach also irritates the lungs and increases susceptibility to pneumonia for any animal exposed to bleach fumes. Yes, that includes you! Diluted bleach is volatile and breaks down rapidly in the presence of light. Make fresh solutions daily and keep them in opaque containers until use. Make sure there is plenty of ventilation whenever disinfecting with bleach.

Iodophors such as Betadine can be used at a very dilute level for disinfecting. 500 ppm is sufficient for most contaminants, if left in contact for 20 minutes or longer. Advantageously, organic materials do not counteract iodophor potency. Also, iodophors are effective at many different pH levels. A drawback to these iodine compounds is that many people develop reactions to the iodine after extensive contact. Iodophors also stain plastic after prolonged contact or at high concentrations. Combining iodophors with alcohol increases their effectiveness.

Many quaternary ammoniums (quats) are on the market as well. These chemicals tend to cost more than bleach and iodophors. Additionally, they have a slightly diminished spectrum. Quats can't kill either bacteria such as proteus and pseudomonas or bacterial spores. Presence of organic material, soap, or hard water all decreases a quat's effectiveness. Finally, they must have a prolonged contact time with the surfaces being disinfected.

As you consider how you will disinfect your equipment, counters, bowls, and floors, keep in mind several key factors. Organic material needs to be removed before disinfecting. There is no magic bullet we still need to use elbow grease. Contact time is important for all disinfectants to work. Ventilation is important when using caustic disinfectants. Residual caustic disinfectants must be rinsed off objects before they contact animals. Only through meticulous care in hygiene and proper disinfecting can we insure that we are not causing harm to the animals we rehabilitate, to ourselves, and to the wild animals that come into contact with the animals we release.

A letter from Mark Ansley

The intercom pipes, "Mark, line one." I answer, "Hello?" The caller in a highly excited state spouts, "Have you seen the paper?" Startled, "No, why?" The caller says, "There's an article about trapping foxes, because they're killing quail and spreading rabies. Do you think it will pass?" In disbelief, "That ain't gonna happen." The caller, "But it's already been sent to Raleigh." Realizing that this is for real, I respond, "Give me a while and I'll call you later." I grab the paper. Its headline reads. SPORTSMEN HOPE TO RID AREA OF FOWL COMPETITOR---- THE FOX

That's how the Eastern Wildlife Center, EWC, found out about a proposal to have a countywide season, apart from the legal season, allowing leg hold trapping of foxes. The reason initially was "Supporters say the county is overrun with the animals, which can carry rabies and prey on rabbits, wild turkey and quail." I was astounded. How could a measure come through the county commissioners, get passed and sent to Raleigh for legislative approval in one night, with only bird hunter input.

One commissioner had asked to wait until the NCWRC was asked, but another said it would take too long and the bill had to be submitted before the deadline. So off it went with a unanimous vote.

Our first move was to fire off a letter to the editor about the secretness of the proposal and to rebut the facts stated to the commissioners. We had one case of rabies last year. Habitat destruction, not foxes, is the main cause of the loss of fowl. The turkey flock numbers are strong. Finally, in season in Pitt County you could harvest 8 quail, per hunter, per day. Over the next several days, more letters were sent to the editor from other rehabbers, vets, and fox hunters that disagreed with the bill, albeit the fox hunters for different reasons.

We then called our commissioners. I talked to the chairman who stated that she was taken by surprise when the proposal was brought to the floor for voting. She would be interested in facts from NCWRC on populations and what specifically EWC was against. She also assured me that these would be brought to a public hearing at the next meeting. We had two weeks.

I called the director and vice-president of EWC to plan our attack. All of us agreed that leg trapping was a bad way to control animals. Our vice president informed me that the real reason for wanting live trapping was to sell the animals to hunt clubs for use in training their dogs. This is done often in Pitt County, but that is another story. After all, the fox was doomed either way. I emailed associates across the state to call their representative and voice concern. Unfortunately, I received only one reply. You see, other legislators don't want to vote for something that is normally just sent through. If they hear complaints, even one, they shy away. Anyone that has watched politics knows that apathy gets things passed. Shame on us!

We called several legislators including the speaker of the NC house. The general feeling in Raleigh was to suggest to the local commissioners that they reconsider and give some factual reasons for it. Thankfully our county commissioners withdrew it. Here is how we encouraged that action through facts and public opinion. We sent a letter to every commissioner debunking all the statements made and provided the facts to support our position. We made sure it was put in every commissioner's info packet supplied by their county manager. We then called and had members in several districts let them know by voice what our position was and why. We then researched further for facts on populations of birds, foxes, rabies carriers, NCWRC opinions, and if there is a true need to use a leg hold trap.

We discovered many interesting things. Number one, a landowner can trap during season all he wants without a license, so why weren't they concerned enough to trap them? Number two, pelt prices were \$2.00,

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hardly worth it, and that's the reason it wasn't being done in season now. Three, off the record, officials acknowledge the intent is to sell the live animal at \$75.00 a pop because supply is the problem. Four, because of rabies, the import of farm-raised foxes is forbidden. Selling them is illegal, but is widespread in the east. We are still not clear how this could ever be accepted, but that is for another day. Five, County Government, folks, is strong stuff. The constitution is very clear on state's rights, as is our state constitution on county rights. I called the Eastern Division Chief in Raleigh and got all the help we needed. They kept referring to the Fox Wars of the 70's. Habitat was the chief culprit in loss of quail, rabbit and turkey. Turkeys were hunted out. Studies show that counties with trapping and those without had the same numbers. Foxes can only get pullets for a few weeks a year, hardly a major food source. Gut exams of foxes showed a much higher proportion of rodent, insect and fruit. Places that increased habitat got increased numbers. This last was right from NCWRC. We then prepared a speech to be given at the meeting at the requested time.

We had an ace in the hole. A few weeks before a German Sheppard had limped home with a leg hold trap. EWC got the call and sent it to our warden. The next morning the trapper was busted checking other traps. The commissioner who had introduced the bill was unaware that this had happened in his own district until we brought it up in our speech. We also presented NCWRC facts and stressed that the last case of human rabies in this state was 50 years ago. The main thing we pounded was leg holds and cruelty. We've seen owls, ducks, and hawks in the traps or with a foot missing. The bill was voted on 7 to 2 to be recalled and addressed by a wildlife council, appointed by the commissioners. The council's job will be to present an alternative to the bill. That is where we are now.

EWC has a seat on the board. We could have had three, but I am sparing them me, as a few of you would understand, although I was asked. There's an open seat for a federally licensed rehabilitator and a member may do that. Gus Keel DVM will represent our interests.

Trapping is still legal in season by a permitted trapper and that cannot be revoked. However we can limit the cruelty for depredation problems. We can limit the months in which you can do it. Also, if you limit trapping to fur collection only, you take away the incentive to trap.

41 counties now allow snare trapping during special seasons. It was eloquently said by a citizen at the second meeting, "Lets try to be better than other counties." I encourage you to look into your own county laws. EWC is a rehab organization, not a wildlife lobby group. However, we felt this time we had to step in. Out of it came good, plus a wildlife board for future considerations. Not bad.

WNV and raptors

Information from Erica Miller, DVM, Tri-State Bird Rescue in Delaware and President of NWRA
(submitted by Nina Fischesser)

We only have two educational birds (we actually lost our RTHA to WNV last summer), and have decided to not vaccinate them at this time. Preliminary tests with the equine vaccine show that it is at best only about 40% effective. The new avian vaccine, the one they used in the condors, looks much more promising, at least 80% effective. It is supposed to be on the market later this summer, so I think we are holding out for it. No one has any idea of the potential negative effects of giving both vaccines. Certainly the owls, hawks, crows and jays are the highest risk species. If you can't protect them from mosquitoes and you have the funding to do so, you may want to go ahead and vaccinate them.

Starting a New Wildlife Center in the Piedmont

Dr. Bobby Schopler

You ever think about opening a wildlife center?

Here's the recipe:

Ingredients

1 group of dedicated rehabilitators, veterinarians, lawyers, planners, architects, business people, builders, artists, photographers, videographers, writers and press

Steps

- Mix thoroughly and let sit 2 weeks until board forms
- Incorporate
- While you wait, file your 501 (c) (3) papers
- Add financial support and plenty of media coverage
- Let simmer while coordinating 6 PR events, and 3 fundraisers
- Let money rise for 2 months. You'll need plenty!
- Get the word out that you are ready to receive animals and serve

This recipe worked for The Piedmont Wildlife Center. We incorporated a little over several months ago, got our 501 (c)(3) status approved in March, raised over \$130,000 worth of donations and contributions, hired Bobby Schopler, DVM, PhD as Director in January and wildlife veterinarian Cheryl Hoggard, DVM in April. And we are off to the races. So far we are functioning out of a network of rehabilitators homes and area veterinarian's clinics, but we will have our own site in the near future. Our hours of phone answering are 9-6 every day, but we are working with animals 14-15 hours a day. The dream is materializing and the Piedmont Wildlife Center is doing business. Our long-range goals are to have triage centers throughout the piedmont and across the state, an educational building, a rehabilitation center/hospital, a nature trail, and to pursue scientifically the study of wildlife rehabilitation. Our summer internship positions have been filled and our fall internship is available. We are doing some school programs and will continue to educate grade school children through the summer. Our website is very active www.piedmontwildlifecenter.org. The site includes information about becoming a member, upcoming events, opportunities to train, work, and volunteer, as well as, some of our interesting case stories.

Did you like Bobby's article?

Every rehabber has interesting cases, innovative techniques and other tips to share. Please send us the information.

All submissions will be edited for clarity and contents, and suggested revisions will be sent to authors for approval prior to printing. Please see page 2 for how to contact the editor.

Pox virus and raptors

Information from Erica Miller, DVM, Tri-State Bird Rescue in Delaware and President of NWRA
(submitted by Nina Fischesser)

Iodine on the lesions is the best treatment. If any lesions open, a systemic antibiotic like amoxicillin or Clavamox isn't a bad idea to prevent secondary infections. I've played around with various immunostimulants, from Acemannan to Echinacea, but haven't seen any definitive improvement. However, I suppose they don't harm the birds.

Western meeting's suggestion

At the recent western regional meeting it was suggested that the newsletter have a "Tip of the quarter".

Does anyone have one for the upcoming issue?

Contact the editor, see page 2.

Helping the "abandoned" fawn

Dana Sims

When a doe gives birth, usually to two fawns, she does not stay with her babies during the first couple weeks of their lives. She places them in what she considers to be good hiding places, typically putting each of her youngsters in a different location. That way if a predator comes across one of her little ones, it won't necessarily find the other. It is while these little guys are lying alone that people stumble across them and think they have been abandoned. Sometimes the fawn genuinely needs assistance, sometimes not. In order to help the person determine if the fawn needs help a rehabilitator should ask:

- Is the fawn quiet or crying? Although sometimes the fawn is quiet simply because it is too weak to cry, normally a quiet fawn is a good sign. One that is crying incessantly probably does need help. An occasional bleat now and again does not qualify!
- Are there flies around the fawn? This is almost always an indication that the fawn is in need of help. Of course all of us have flies irritate us now and again when we are outdoors, but numerous flies, particularly the green ones, buzzing around a fawn is a bad sign.
- Do you see any sign of diarrhea in the form of anal staining, blood, broken bones, etc? This, of course, is a no-brainer. Any of these means the fawn needs assistance.
- Is the fawn sitting sternally or lying on its side? If the fawn is in a normal "deer sitting" position, that is a good sign. If it is lying on its side, particularly if it doesn't sit up when you approach, that would indicate a problem.
- Did a dog drag or chase the fawn? Dogs do terrible harm to little fawns. Normally they attack them around the anal area; sometimes they grasp them by the chest and shake, causing internal injuries. But even if the dog(s) does not get his jaws or teeth on the fawn, he can kill it by chasing it for too long or too far. We are all familiar with "capture myopathy." It can prove fatal in any animal, but particularly a deer.
- Asking if the fawn looks thin is not a good way to determine if the fawn needs help because all fawns look like beanpoles! Only someone who regularly deals with fawns can tell, by looking, if a fawn is underweight or just naturally skinny.

So the bottom line is that if the fawn is very small, sitting quietly in a grassy or wooded area, has no flies, blood, diarrhea, or obvious injuries, and looks healthy and happy in spite of being alone, he should be left just that...alone! He is simply waiting for mom to return so he can fill his belly with her warm, rich milk. Do not advise the person to sit back and watch for mom as she can detect the person much sooner than he can detect her and she will not go to her baby as long as she knows someone is out there. If the person insists, suggest a return to check on the fawn a half day later. If it is still there and still quiet and peaceful, it should be left alone. If the fawn is gone, then all is fine. If at the second check its situation has worsened then they should bring it in and get it to a licensed fawn rehabilitator immediately. As always with any species we get calls about, tell them not to give it milk (or Oreo cookies!). Just keep it warm and quiet, in subdued lighting, away from dogs and humans. As tempting as it is, they need to keep the neighborhood from coming over and posing with the fawn for pictures, petting the fawn, etc. If you need to, use the old *E.coli* scare!

Continued on next page

If an injured fawn is found, DO NOT chase the fawn down. If they cannot quickly and easily get the fawn wrapped in a sheet and put in a pen or carrier, they should, as hard as it is to do, leave it alone. Chasing will kill it; if it can run, it at least has a chance to survive. You may later find the fawn in a more weakened condition where you can then easily capture him. Also, if they put the fawn in a dog lot or similar area and it "goes crazy" trying to get out e.g. banging into the walls, RELEASE IT, unless you are in a position to tranquilize it. Otherwise, it will break its neck.

If you have any questions about fawns or deer, feel free to contact the state's fawn coordinator and fellow rehabilitator Dana Sims of Kindred Spirits Wildlife Center at (336) 376-8602. She has been a state and federal rehabilitator for over twelve years and has been assisting the state with their fawn program for eight years.

Request for neotropical songbirds

The Blue Ridge Wildlife Institute (BRWI) is seeking 'young non-releasable' neotropical songbirds for educational purposes. We use them in a classroom setting, so it is important to try to acquire young individuals in the summer, so that we can work with them while they are fledglings or younger, getting them accustomed to being around humans and public situations. Please no amputees.

BRWI is a Non-profit organization dedicated to Wildlife Rehabilitation, Education, and Research. We are fully permitted for rehabilitation and education.

Please contact Nina Fischesser at:

Blue Ridge Wildlife Institute
(828) 733-6142

PO Box 69

Jonas Ridge, NC 28641

Wildcarebr@vistatech.net

www.wildcarebr.org

Improve your raptor rehabilitation skills

Carolina Raptor Center's Raptor Rehabilitation Seminars will be offered during the summer for the first time this year. The two daylong classes are independent of each other. Participants signing up for the advanced class are expected to be somewhat familiar with wildlife rehabilitation principles or have some practical experience in the field.

The basic class is Saturday, August 16th, the advanced class is Sunday, August 17th. Class size will be limited to around 16 participants, to allow for in-depth discussions and hands-on work on live and dead specimens. Tentatively, the topics for each day are as follows.

Basic: Record keeping, Cleaning and Sterilization, Supplies and Equipment, Cage construction, Tail wraps

Advanced: Imping Feathers, Physical Therapy & Exercise, Evaluating Radiographs Evaluating for Euthanasia, Beaks & Talons

Anyone interested in attending or to obtain more information, please contact Mathias Engelmann at Carolina Raptor Center at (704) 875-6521, extension 108 or mathiasengelmann@birdsofprey.org

NWRA Symposium in Newport, Rhode Island

Mathias Engelmann

I had the good fortune to be able to attend the 2003 annual symposium of the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association in Newport, Rhode Island in March. The weather was a little cool, what you might expect in March in RI, and we did get some snow flurries one day.

More than four hundred rehabilitators from the US, Canada, and beyond gathered for four days of presentations, workshops, roundtable discussions, exhibits, and networking. With over one hundred presentations, there was something for everybody. General topics included anatomy, fluid therapy, song bird care, reptile and amphibian care, water bird care, mammal care, caging, public education, veterinary care, homeopathy, permits, diseases, parasites, physical therapy, identification, the list goes on.

Some of the more sobering topics included:

- A challenge from Ed Clark for rehabilitators to step into the role they are better qualified for than almost anybody else, keeping an eye out for new diseases emerging among native wildlife, recording, and reporting them
- The problems associated with the exotic pet trade, including turtles in Asia, and how rehabilitators can assist
- Euthanasia in wildlife rehabilitation and how to deal with the emotional aspects

The new products forum was a fun way to learn about innovative uses for things you already have and cheap things you can get locally.

If you are planning on going, and I would encourage every rehabilitator to attend a NWRA or IWRC conference at least once every few years, I suggest you start your question list weeks in advance. If you're anything like me, you'll be amazed by how many questions you'll have.

While there, take advantage of the opportunities. Sit down with experts in your field over lunch or during a break and get their opinions and advice. Take lots of notes, gather copies of all the handouts, get phone numbers and email addresses from other attendees. You'll use them for a long time to come.

A national symposium is a great way to get many questions answered in a short period of time. In fact, you'll probably leave the conference completely overwhelmed by the amount of information presented. By the last day, it becomes difficult to stay focused. Or, as someone put it, "the brain is full."

For those of you thinking you can never afford to attend such as meeting, I hope you will reconsider. It might take some effort, but you can reduce the cost in a number of ways.

- For starters, if you agree to give a presentation at the meeting, the registration fee will be waived.
- Check out other housing options besides the host hotel. At this meeting, I found a hotel at half the price, but it did involve taking a 15 minute bus ride, which cost about \$1.50 one way.
- You can also share a room with a friend or colleague.
- Meals can be expensive. I know that every rehabilitator is an expert "scrounger". Take a small or collapsible cooler on the trip. Find the nearest grocery store and stock up on sandwich supplies.
- Finally, find cheap airfares through one of several web sites. You might not have the best seat on the plane and you might arrive late in the day, but it can save you \$100 or \$200!