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# WRNC



Sharing information and knowledge for the benefit of native wildlife

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue 40, June 2010

## Reuniting nestlings



It is frequently possible to return an “orphaned” hatchling or nestling with the parents...[read more](#)

## Deer fawn myiasis



High humidity and warm summer temperatures set the stage for perfect breeding conditions for the Green bottle fly ...[read more](#)

## The makings of a beak



Everyone knows what a bird beak is, but may not have a clear understanding of its anatomy and how it grows...[read more](#)

## Volunteer of the year



Jennifer Gordon was named NCWF Wildlife Volunteer of the Year ...[read more](#)

# Oil Spill 2010

By Carol Kaczmarek

I'm sure that all wildlife rehabilitators are watching with horror the continuing news about the oil disaster off the shore of Louisiana. Each day the news becomes worse as more oil spews out of the downed oil platform. Right now about 200,000 gallons of oil per day. In addition, in spite of the best efforts of many groups, the oil continues to move nearer to land.

So far, not much has been written about the various animals that will be most affected by this disaster and what can be done to minimize the damage to the lives of these animals. What animals are most in danger from the oil spill? Sadly, this happened at perhaps the worst time for this is the height of the bird migration.

**NESTING AND MIGRATING SHORE BIRDS.** Plovers, sandpipers, and oystercatchers are nesting or preparing to nest on the ground on the beaches and barrier islands of Louisiana. They feed on invertebrates and are very vulnerable to oil coming ashore. In addition, this is the time when migrating shore birds are traveling from South America to their nesting areas farther north. This is a vital time as they will need to rest and eat in the oil spill areas. This is the busiest time for migrating. Shore birds and other birds such as raptors are also migrating.

**MIGRATING SONGBIRDS.** Songbirds (warblers, hummingbirds, swallows, and others) fly across the gulf from the Yucatan to the spill areas. They fly 500 miles over open water and they need healthy habitats on both sides of the Gulf to survive their journey.

This is the height of their migration season also. Besides the need for healthy habitats for food and rest, the smoke from the spill could also affect their migration.

**BROWN PELICANS.** The brown pelican was only removed from the Endangered Species List this past year. There is a major nesting area where about 34,000 pelicans are currently nesting in the Gulf at the Breton National Wildlife Refuge. Diving birds are very susceptible to oil spills—they come into direct contact with the oil. It can coat their feathers which may cause the birds to lose warmth and buoyancy, they may also ingest oil when trying to clean their feathers, and finally they can be poisoned by eating contaminated food.

**SEA TURTLES.** Of the remaining species of sea turtles, five of them are found in the Gulf. The oil spill area is one of the only foraging grounds left for the most endangered of the group—the KEMP'S RIDLEY TURTLE and they are in the peak of their nesting season. Other sea turtles migrate through the area or feed in the Gulf which can also put them in danger.

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**WHALES AND DOLPHINS.** A total of 21 whales and dolphins species routinely inhabit the northern Gulf. Two other endangered whale species may also be in the area of the spill. The dangers to whales include getting oil in the filtering structure in their mouths which could lead to starvation and they could get lung injuries from inhaling hydrocarbon vapors. Young whales might ingest oil from nursing on contaminated teats.

**MANATEES.** Manatees are beginning to spread out along the full range of their summer habitat in the Gulf making them vulnerable to contaminated waters. They may not be as affected directly as some other species, but they're very sensitive to habitat disturbances. They also may eat contaminated plant material. they may be affected by inhaling hydrocarbons when rising to the surface to breathe and infants may become ill by nursing from contaminated teats.

**FISH, SHELLFISH, AND CRABS.** The delta estuary is a breeding ground for a many species of fish, shellfish, and crabs. They can be affected in a variety of ways including oil being absorbed by eggs, larvae, and juvenile stages. They may also develop defects in their heart, liver, and other organs. Chemicals used as dispersants can increase potential for tainting fish and shellfish. Again, the prime inshore shrimp season begins in mid-May. Coastal waters around the tip of Louisiana are home to many oyster farms. Oils and hydrocarbons are toxic to oysters and they can persist in coastal sediments for months or even years. The spill will create many financial problems for fishermen and those who work with crabs, shrimp, and oysters.

**NORTH ATLANTIC BLUEFIN TUNA.** Tuna is an especially desirable fish. Overfishing throughout its range has driven their numbers down to an extremely low level. Their stocks have fallen 90% since the 1970s. Tuna return between mid-April to mid-June to spawn in an area very near to the spill. This is where the water is warm and full of nutrients.

**GULF STURGEON.** Gulf Sturgeon are gathering in Coastal areas preparing to migrate upstream to spawn. Oil reaching their congregating areas could be disastrous for the fish. Heavily fished, they are on the endangered species list. Many problems have caused the decrease of sturgeons and contaminates in the water can cause birth defects.

**OTHER ANIMALS.** This includes mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and other species. When the oil reaches the shoreline, it can cause problems for local mammals such as raccoons, opossums, squirrels, and other small mammals can become ill from contaminated food, and oil on their fur. Other animals can also be contaminated. The results of this contamination is not really known at this time.

What can we do to help in this disaster?

- Many organizations are looking for help, especially for trained volunteers. Many are accepting applications over the internet.
- Money donations may go to a variety of organizations including the Audubon Society and the National Wildlife Federation, as well as many local organizations
- Dawn Dishwashing Liquid is offering to donate a dollar to two rescue organizations for each bottle of Dawn purchased ([dawn-dish.com/savingwildlife](http://dawn-dish.com/savingwildlife)). You must go online to activate the donation.
- You can send a message to President Obama using form letters from the National Wildlife Federation and the Sierra Club.
- For up-to-date news, Twitter has a number of sites providing information on the spill.

## Spotlight



**Maria Rush, Outer Banks Wildlife Shelter, Newport,**

**NC**

### **How did you get started rehabbing?**

I was influenced and encouraged to rehab by a friend who moved here from California. She was a falconer's apprentice and had her state and federal permits.

### **How long have you been rehabbing?**

Since 1998.

### **Who was your mentor or who is someone you admire.**

Stephanie Goetzinger (former Director of the Outer Banks Wildlife shelter, where I work) and Lessie Davis. They were

both my preceptors in wildlife rehabilitation.

### **What animals do you work with?**

Birds, mammals and reptiles. Being on the coast, I work a lot with sea birds such as Gulls, Pelicans, Cormorants, Northern Gannets and marsh birds such as Great Blue Herons and White Egrets. I basically treat all animals indigenous to down east, coastal North Carolina, except the rabies vector species.

### **What animal do you enjoy working with most?**

I am known around here as the “Dove Girl.” I have developed an affection for mourning doves and they for me, I guess. I don’t really have a favorite animal to work with, although I can think of a few least favorites looking at the scars on my hands and arms. I remember a Northern Gannet that was a real handful.

### **Do you have a favorite rehab experience?**

It’s funny how all I can think of is the worst experience. I was reluctantly swimming after a pelican in the ocean in January!

### **Besides working with wild animals, do you have any domestic pets?**

Yes! Here’s my list .... an African grey, a ring-necked dove, two parakeets, a cockatiel, two pigeons, a guinea pig, two rabbits, a dog, two cats and guppies. All are rescue animals. Even the fish!

### **Any non-animal family members?**

My supportive husband, Keith.

### **What are your hobbies?**

Nature walks, bird watching, butterfly gardening, playing the viola, violin and guitar.

### **What do you feel is your greatest accomplishment?**

Utilizing the years of experience I’ve gained throughout my many years in wildlife rehabilitation and applying what I’ve learned to all aspects of my life are real personal accomplishments. I cherish the knowledge achieved and medical skills developed as a clinic supervisor, the interpersonal skills I’ve honed mentoring volunteers, my ever growing appreciation for what nature means to me and all the personality traits that have become me over the years, such as tenacity, can-do attitude and compassion. But I must say, longevity in the field of wildlife rehab is something at the top of my accomplishments list, as well.

### **What do you like about being part of WRNC?**

I like my affiliation with WRNC because it has become the wildlife rehabilitator in the field’s organized voice to relay rehabilitation concerns to state agencies and a vehicle to keep those lines of communication open. I also like having yearly conferences to address professional development and education and to network with fellow rehabbers.

### **Since you are multi-faceted and extensively experienced rehabber, in your opinion, where do you think the greatest need for improvement lies in the rehab community?**

I feel all wildlife rehabilitators should always conduct business in a professional manner when dealing with the public; this includes knowledge, speech and attire.

## Tales from the Field

### “Sited at the Crossroads”

by Linda Bergman, Outer Banks Wildlife Shelter

Years ago, I was heading to a very rural area in down east North Carolina on a wildlife rescue call. An elderly woman told me she was working in her garden when she came across a “huge” bird she thought was an owl. He couldn’t fly but was still alive. She also explained her eye sight wouldn’t allow her to drive anymore and putting the alleged owl in a box was not doable. So, I asked her to put a clothes basket over him until I could get there. I had an address and a map, but neither was helping me find my way to the lady’s country home, and she wasn’t answering her phone (probably outside with the owl). After rolling up and down all roads leading her way at least three times each and searching for land marks she gave in her directions to no avail, I resorted to pulling into a drive to ask someone. In the country, everybody knows each other, right? The little white house with the welcoming front porch swing looked pleasant enough, so I chose that one. Before I could get beyond the driveway to the front yard, a large man in over-alls came out the front door with a shotgun positioned at the ready. The barrel was pointed directly at me. My body froze in place while my mind raced in reverse. He said and quite sternly, “You don’t belong here.” I responded with, “yes sir, you’re right. I’m in the wrong place, sorry,” as I walked backward to my car and scrambled to get inside. He stayed in that same position, with the shotgun butt embedded in the crook of his shoulder until I couldn’t see him anymore. Thank God I have GPS now!!! Oh, the owl? I finally found the ‘nice’ lady and after turning down the sweet tea she offered (guess I was still a little shaken and a whole lot paranoid), the injured Great Horned Owl and I headed east to the shelter.

(**ALL WRNC MEMBERS:** If you have a “Tales From The Field” rehab story to tell submit it in 350 words or less to Jean Chamberlain at [jean@ncwildliferehab.org](mailto:jean@ncwildliferehab.org) for inclusion in the next quarter’s newsletter)

## Beginner Basics

## News Briefs

### Casey's Esbilac Study

Some wildlife rehabbers saw serious GI problems and slow growth when feeding formula made with 'new' Esbilac® powder to wild mammals last year. An extensive report on the causes is posted at [www.ewildagain.org](http://www.ewildagain.org). The report includes ideas about preventing or reducing GI problems if rehabbers plan to use Esbilac® powder for wild mammals based on rehab experience and scientific tests.

Since wild mammal babies are arriving every day, please get the word to mammal rehabbers who do or might use Esbilac® powder. Put on rehab lists — and cross post. Email. Call. Facebook. etc. The info can help prevent formula related problems with juvie mammals in rehab!

### 7000 Mile Nonstop Flights

Biologist Robert E. Gill Jr. was able to implant transmitters in bar-tailed godwits and track flight. The godwits traveled nonstop over 7,900 miles — the longest nonstop flight ever recorded. Scientists are finding that other species of birds can accomplish such feats of endurance.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/25/science>

### Climate Change Threatens Bird Populations Reported

For the first time, an Interior Department report adds climate change to other factors threatening bird populations.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/13/science/earth/13birds.html?emc=eta1>

### Maybe Birds Do Smell

An Indiana University Bloomington study found that compounds present in the preen oils of birds suggest that individuals possess a unique odor. These differences in smell could be affected by behavior, parental care and even contribute to individual identity. (*Behavioral Ecology*, 2010; DOI: [10.1093/beheco/ari011](https://doi.org/10.1093/beheco/ari011))

### Ethics Case Studies

## *Deciding right from wrong*

**Case Study # 14** The wildlife rehabilitator loves working with birds; she worked so hard to get a Federal Permit. So far she has 2 robins, a cardinal, 3 mocking birds and a yellow bird in rehabilitation. She takes a photo, for her records, of each bird at admission and just before release. There is not much information on the yellow bird. It was found in the county off Hwy 64. It could be a goldfinch, a flycatcher, an oriole or some kind of warbler. She takes the bird to a golf course for release hoping it is a goldfinch. Later she shows the release picture to a friend who IDs it as a prothonotary warbler. "Did you release it by the river or at the Mill Pond? They are special and live in a riparian habitat." her friend asks.

- How does this relate to the Wildlife Rehabilitator's Code of Ethics?
- Which Code (s) might apply?
- How can this be resolved?
- Other questions/ issues?

### Answers to previous ethics case

#### Case Study # 13

It's that time of the year-BABY SEASON! And, the clinic is full of 39 baby songbirds, possums, and bunnies. The wildlife rehabilitator also receives a baby least tern into rehab. "Terns are precision; I'll put down a mirror and some mealworms for it. "Gads! I have so much to do: write case studies & a presentation for the Symposium, prepare presentations for the Rotary Club (they make great donations) a Bible School program for some kids, a program for the Preservation Society and an oil contamination presentation next week!" "I'll get up early & clean, clean at night after dark and rely on volunteers to do the feeding so I can work, that's it. This stuff has to get done." Two days later, when she returns to the center from the Bible School Presentation the tern is dead and cages are filthy, and the birds don't look well.

Which Code (s) might apply?

**Code # 7-** Place optimum animal care above personal gain.

### **Pearls of Wisdom**

### **RVS Reminder**

Don't forget to log your RVS calls at [http://www.ncwildliferehab.org/rvs/call\\_log](http://www.ncwildliferehab.org/rvs/call_log). We encourage rehabilitators to submit all cal



Photo by Cathy Burns

This outdoor rabbit hutch can be moved around the yard into different locations – hook it up to a tractor and pull it to the new place.

received on RVS species (raccoon, fox, skunk, bat or coyote) : those calls where there may be contact with the animal and those where there may not; those where you answer questions, give advice or refer the caller to someone else.

**Help us document the extent of the RVS problem in North Carolina!**

## **Cage Grant Open to Board Members**

WRNC awards up to 3 cage grants each year. Since only 2 applications were received by the application deadline, board members are now eligible to apply for the 3rd grant.

## **Raffle committee formed**

WRNC has formed a committee to plan and conduct the symposium raffle. Toni O'Neil and Kathy Lillard co-chair this committee. If you are interested in joining the committee contact Toni O'Neil at [Oneil9734@yahoo.com](mailto:Oneil9734@yahoo.com)

### **Board of Directors Meeting minutes**

The minutes of the May 5th meeting of the Board of Directors are found at <http://www.ncwildliferehab.org/admin/board-meeting-minutes/BOD-meeting-16May2010.pdf>

## **Mourning Dove** – *Zenaida macroura*



**Two methods of feeding nestling mourning doves: Tubing & Bottle feeding**



**Description:** Doves are mid sized (12”), trim bodied birds with a small head and long tail. The larger of this species are called pigeons, smaller ones doves. All are strong, fast flyers. The wings produce a fluttering whistle or wing whorl” when they take off. The monomorphic adults have black spots on the upper wings, pinkish wash below. In flight they show white tips on the outer tail feathers. Juveniles have heavy spotting, or scaled effect on the wings. They are monogamous.

**Weight Range:** 95 to 140 grams

**Range:** Common throughout the U.S. Our most abundant dove found in a variety of habitats.

**Natural History:** Breed from deserts to open woodlands, in agricultural areas with scattered trees and in suburbs. They nest on the ground and up to 40 feet high in trees. They have 2-3 broods per year and have been documented to have as many as 6 broods in one year. They may breed year-round in the south. Though often considered non-migratory, it has been documented that mourning doves do migrate, south, west, and north, in circular migrations; some going as far south as Panama.

**Adult Diet:** Granivore. 99% of the diet is seed including waste grain from cultivated fields. The diet also includes some native berries, fruits and insects, eaten while foliage gleaning. Micronutrients are provided from dirt picked up while ground gleaning. In wildlife rehabilitation offer a good quality commercial seed mix. Varieties of seed include: millet, thistle, cracked corn, sunflower seed, rolled oats, canary seed, alfalfa sprouts, berries, and grit or ground oyster shell. Some small insects may also be offered.

**Nestlings:** Altricial and downy. The short white down is sparse & stringy, with yellowish skin showing through. The young DO NOT gape. Young are tended by both parents and fledge at 13-15 days. They are fed regurgitant, “crop milk”, sloughed cells of the adult crop, by both parents for the first 3 days. Then they are fed “crop milk” mixed with seeds. By days 6-8 they are fed entirely seeds regurgitated by both parents. In wildlife rehabilitation offer seeds mixed with the hand feeding formula and put a pan filled with dirt or sand sprinkled with seed in the cage to encourage self feeding skills. Preferred formulas for feeding young doves include, but not limited to: Exact, MACMilk, diluted FoNS diet.

**Fledglings:** Mourning doves fledge at day 13-15 and eat on their own within 24 hours. They are supplemented, occasionally, by regurgitated seeds from both parents. Juvenile plumage is attained by day 13.

**Juveniles:** Though they are independent at this age in the wild, they will beg from parents and the wildlife rehabilitator. Seed can be sprinkled on the bottom of the aviary for self feeding. In wildlife rehabilitation they will frequently beg to be hand fed long after they can eat independently. Doves require dishes more than 1" deep as they drink through their nares. Continue to supplement, and monitor weight daily. Young mourning doves are completely independent by day 25-27.

**Rehabilitation Notes:** Activity Aviary requirement=16' x 8' x 8'. Provide shelves as well as natural branches for perching.

### Common Problems:



Trichomoniasis (canker). Always check the mouth of mourning doves and pigeons. "Trich" presents as a white or yellow-white cheesy substance in the mouth. It is easily treated, with carnidazole, in the early stages. Monitor weight and keel for starvation or emaciation, secondary to Trichomoniasis.

If parents have been killed or died with Trich, young birds may leave the nest searching for food. Emaciation/dehydration frequently results. Treat appropriately.

Doves and pigeons are prone to crop stasis; the crop does not empty. This may be from: overfeeding, incorrect formula, cold formula, or formula that has soured.

Because they forage in suburban lawns, they are prone to pesticide or fertilizer poisoning. Mourning doves will lose their tail feathers, "Fright Molt, when grabbed by a predator. Capture doves with a towel to prevent fright molt.

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and knowledge about wildlife rehabilitation. The opinions, techniques and recommendations expressed in the articles of this newsletter are those of the authors and do not imply endorsement by WRNC.

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### Join us online!

WRNC has set up a listgroup on Yahoo! for members to share information, ask questions, network and get to know each other.

To join, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WRNC/> or send an email to: [WRNC-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:WRNC-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

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