

Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina

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 overalls 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 for inclusion in the next quarter’s newsletter)