

# Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina

Issue 55, Summer 2014

## Message from the President



I do believe that spring is finally here to stay and with it comes many babies naked, feathered, furred and scaled. As we do our best to try and care for the many injured, orphaned and kidnapped patients that come through our doors, lets also try and remember to take care of ourselves by washing our hands and keeping cages, bedding and water bowls clean.

WRNC is here to assist all rehabbers across NC by providing a network of skilled rehabilitators who are willing to help in any way that we can. Training opportunities exist throughout the state such as in Raleigh, NC at the Wildlife Welfare, at the coast in Hubert NC at Possumwood Acres Wildlife Sanctuary, in Winston Salem through Wildlife Rehab, Inc., in Asheville at the WNC Nature Center, and at the Carolina Raptor Center in Charlotte NC. If I left anyone out, please let me know so we can list these training opportunities on our website.

The letter that was sent to the NC State Vet School worked and I'm pleased to announce that we will be moving the symposium back to the Vet School in January 2015. Stay tuned to the website for more information as it becomes available.

Please don't forget to spread the word that WRNC offers Chimney Swift Tower Grants and Cage Building Grants. Please see the links on the front page of our website for details.

The board of WRNC is here to serve all NC rehabbers in any way that we can. Please don't hesitate to contact me with suggestions, comments, etc. (wildfeed2@aol.com.)

-Carla Johnson



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Photo by Larry Sosebee

# CRC Celebrates 30 Years in Latta Plantation Nature Preserve

We've come a long way, baby! Carolina Raptor Center is celebrating 30 years in Latta Plantation Nature Preserve with 30 celebrations over the course of 12 months.

Who would have thought in 1984 that after thirty years in Latta, fixing birds, educating school children and sharing beautiful raptors with the public that Carolina Raptor Center would have grown to what it is today? Carolina Raptor Center moved to its current location inside Latta Plantation Nature Preserve in April 1984 from the basement of the biology building at UNC-Charlotte's campus.



Photo by Jenna Magnuson

The partnership with Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation to lease the 57-acre campus for \$1/year has been a win-win situation from the beginning. The first facilities on the new site were extremely primitive and would definitely not meet current federal guidelines for raptor permits. The "hospital" was literally a 12' by 12' shed and the bird enclosures were built by wrapping chain link fence around trees!



Photo by Jeff Mittelstadt

Today, more than 75 cages of all shapes and sizes house permanent residents and wild birds in various stages of rehabilitation. Rehabilitation enclosures range from standard 16' long holding cages to colossal 100' long flight cages. The  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile Raptor Trail features more than 25 species of raptors, including some non-natives like a King vulture and Eurasian Eagle owls. Conservation issues are highlighted in interpretive signage – central to the center's mission to focus on the conservation of raptors.

Species exhibits including the Owl Forest, Vulture Culture, Family Corvidae and the Osprey Observation Deck, tell a story that starts at the top of the food chain and connects visitors to nature and the unique adaptations of these beautiful birds. In 2014, we dedicated a new exhibit "A Day in the Life of A Raptor Hospital" to explain day to day activities in the Jim Arthur Raptor Medical Center.



Photo by Michele Miller Houck

# Carolina Raptor Center Celebrates 30 Years Cont.

What a difference 30 years makes!

- Almost 18,000 birds treated since patient 0.
- Close to 70% release rate for the birds that live past the first 24 hours.
- Over 1,000 raptors seen in 2012 and over 900 in 2013 – making CRC one of the largest treatment centers in the world for large birds of prey.
- 103 resident raptors live on the Raptor Trail.
- Over 25 species on display daily.

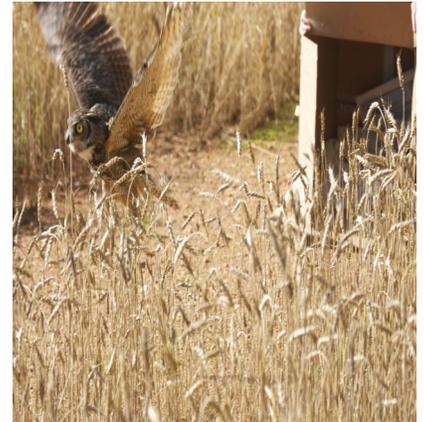


Photo by Jenna Magnuson

It just goes to show you what teamwork, volunteerism, collaboration, persistence, and a lot of blood, sweat & tears can accomplish.

-Michele Miller Houck & Mathias Engelmann

## UC Davis Wildlife Survey

Students and faculty of the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of California, Davis are conducting a survey, a 10 to 15 minute anonymous, voluntary, and online survey, to assess health risks in terrestrial wildlife rehabilitation workers. Your participation in the study is requested. Anyone who directly works with wild animals or indirectly with their excretions, such as through cleaning/feeding or laboratory sample collection or analysis, whether on a paid or voluntary basis, is eligible to take the survey. Please share the survey link with volunteers, staff, friends, or others working in wildlife rehabilitation. This research project relies on reaching as many individuals working with wildlife as possible. Survey link: <http://www.surveymoz.com/s3/1569715/Survey-to-Assess-Health-Risks-in-Wildlife-Rehabilitators>.

-Submitted By Toni O'Neil

# Duck, Duck & Goose

It's definitely baby season now for all birds, including the ducks and geese in the area. Not only is the public finding lost babies separated from their mothers, but our own Possumwood Acres waterfowl have been showing up in the last two weeks with babies of their own. No matter how carefully we try and locate the nests to remove eggs, they still manage to hide some from us and hatch them.



Photo by Larry Sosebee

Two single babies were brought in, one newborn Mallard duckling and a one week old Canada gosling. We kept the duckling inside for a week to help him grow and gain weight, but were worried about him being lonely, even with a feather duster and mirrors. It just isn't the same not having brothers, sisters, and a mother. The gosling was found and Susan B. tried to introduce him to her domestic goslings but it didn't work out, so she brought him to us. He got very excited when he heard the other goslings outside in the driveway, so we decided to try an experiment.

We took the single gosling and brought him out to the Canada geese with their babies. They all began making noise when they heard the gosling peeping, so we let him run to their babies. He was accepted right away! He's a little bit taller since he's about a week older but so far it is working out well. We are able to spot him and keep an eye on him, but his adopted family has literally taken him under their wing and are keeping him as their own.

We decided to try it with the duckling that evening. We spotted a mother duck with her ducklings swimming in the bog area and waited until she brought them out to eat. Trying to sneak quietly up to them, I guess we made some noise because she scurried them back into the water. I was running after them yelling "Wait, wait!", which of course didn't work but she didn't swim off when they reached the shallow water so I gently tossed the little guy over to the rest of the ducklings and in the confusion of the splashing around and startled babies, the mother rounded up our single duckling and made sure he swam off with the rest of her family. Another successful adoption!

Jennifer Gordon at Carolina Waterfowl Rescue urges caution when trying this, as ducks rarely accept other babies. It may appear to accept the duckling at first, but when he starts peeping she often knows it's not hers and will kill it, as they recognize them by voice. It rarely works, so if you try it, please exercise extreme caution in the event that the mother tries to attack the baby. This can happen sometimes hours or even days later. However, Jennifer states that geese always accept goslings. We are fortunate and thankful that our duckling was the exception to the rule.

-Toni O'Neil

# The Other Bycatch

## THE IMPACT OF RECREATIONAL FISHING EQUIPMENT ON OTHER WILDLIFE



Photo by Larry Sosebee

Dear wildlife rescue professional:

It is widely known by wildlife rescue and conservation professionals that lost or discarded recreational fishing gear poses a risk to other wildlife, but systematic data are limited for documenting the scope and scale of the problem. I am conducting a study whose aim is to assess the problem from the perspective of wildlife rescue and rehabilitation facilities. Such a study can provide valuable data on the range of species affected, species at high risk, and recovery versus mortality statistics. It can also help inform mitigation efforts.

If you are willing to participate in the study, please complete the attached spreadsheet, which is designed to collect summary data on relevant cases handled at your facility. These data will be compiled into a publishable report, the results of which will be made available to all participating facilities.

Thank you in advance for your participation, and for the work you do for animals. The identities of all participating facilities will be kept confidential.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Balcombe, PhD

Executive Director: Humane Society Institute for Science and Policy

Department Chair for Animal Studies: Humane Society University

2100 L Street, NW

Washington, DC 20037

[www.humanesocietyuniversity.org](http://www.humanesocietyuniversity.org)

Forthcoming Conference: Animal Thinking and Emotion (17–18 March 2014, Washington, DC) <http://www.humanesociety.org/about/departments/hsisp/>

–Submitted by Toni O’Neil

# Animal Help Now

AHNow is a non-profit organization that has developed a website and free phone apps for people who encounter an animal emergency. People who use the website or apps answer a few questions about the animal emergency and are directed to the closest and most appropriate help. The website is at <http://www.ahnow.org>. There are also free apps for iPhones and Android phones. There is a video explaining the program at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WotxiLcOr20>. Cur-



Photo by Larry Sosebee

rently Animal Help Now produces the full range of animal helpers (veterinarians, shelters, law enforcement, animal control, rehabilitators, and rescues) for animal emergencies in Colorado and Texas. The next phase of the project is to produce results nationwide for wildlife emergencies. Of course, the core of helpers in wildlife emergencies are wildlife rehabilitators. AHNow has a cooperative arrangement with the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association and is endorsed by the Colorado Council for Wildlife Rehabilitation.

AHNow respects the privacy of rehabilitators and does not publish any addresses unless the rehabilitator explicitly approves such a publication. There is also a mechanism for rehabilitators to indicate the hours they wish to be called or to opt out of participation in the project. In working with rehabilitators, AHNow and rehabilitators have identified the following advantages of that collaboration: Expediting the process of getting animals the help they need, the data is updated regularly, the public is educated about wildlife emergencies, photo capability is provided to help locate animals and better understand the nature of the emergency, the amount of time rehabbers spend doing referrals is decreased and AHNow and rehabilitators share the same goal, reducing suffering and saving lives!

AHNow has been contacting state licensing agencies to obtain lists of rehabilitators. We have been informed that the list of rehabilitators we obtained from the state of North Carolina is of limited value. Therefore we are turning to your members to contact AHNow directly if they wish to be a part of this resource for people who encounter a wildlife emergency. They can contact AHNow at [info@ahnow.org](mailto:info@ahnow.org). I am happy to provide any additional information or answer questions through email or at 303-439-2426.

# Need Help? Involve the Scouts in Your Area!



Photo by Michelle Ray

Are you familiar with the scout groups in your area? Several years back I met a wonderful lady who is deeply involved in scouting in Lincoln County. She brought an animal in for rehab and received the ten cent tour. As luck would have it, she was extremely impressed as well as touched by all of the wildlife in my care. A few months later she called me up and asked if she could bring a scout group by for a tour to help them receive one of their badges. I was happy to oblige, as I believe that educating kids about wildlife is extremely important.

Over the years Suzanne and her family have brought many scout groups here and have pointed many eagle scouts in my direction for their projects. They have built two huge cages for me that I desperately needed, and have donated supplies as well as their time & effort to help me on many occasions. I truly appreciate their continued support and would encourage other rehabilitators to get to know their local scout groups. It is definitely a relationship that is mutually beneficial.



Photo by Michelle Ray

## Simple Enrichment Ideas

Save those empty cardboard toilet paper rolls! They can be filled with food items and given to some of your animals and birds as enrichment activities, food puzzles and boredom preventers. Fill with hay for rabbits, stuff with peanuts and twist the ends closed for jays and crows, pop in a mouse for a vulture or opossum. The more they have to work at it to get the tasty food item, the more rewarding it is when they finally achieve their prize.

-Toni O'Neil

# Wishes Granted

When I accepted an invitation from Mary Ellen Rogers of Seabiscuit Wildlife Shelter to accompany her to the WRNC Symposium in January of 2013, I was excited, intimidated and very curious. We would be roommates for the weekend, attending classes at the Veterinary College in Raleigh and meeting dozens of other wildlife rehabilitators!

I was a newbie, having just got my permit for small mammals the previous year, after volunteering at Seabiscuit Wildlife Shelter. My husband, Garry, and I had both learned so much from Mary Ellen and decided to get our permits to rehab small mammals. Mary Ellen was busy rehabbing all types of birds, so we decided to take in small mammals.

Our first patients were two domestic ducks from Seabiscuit who needed a place for long term care while recovering from bite wounds and broken legs. We built a 25 foot enclosure with a pond and room for a divider in case other animals needed space. Pretty soon there was another duck that needed sanctuary and we realized that ducks end up in all the wrong places, then in a bird rehab facility and then...well, then what the heck happens to them? They needed a sanctuary of course, so they wouldn't end up in a public park attacked by dogs and hit by cars again. We soon found that domestic bunnies often suffered the same fate as ducklings when the novelty wore off; dumped in a park, the woods, or worse. Sometimes folks found an abandoned domestic bunny and didn't realize it wasn't wild and since their care is similar, maybe we could help. We would rehab wildlife, some domestic species, create a sanctuary for butterflies, birds and plants and educate people on how they can help the environment. And so it began, Tackapausha Wildlife Shelter, a National Wildlife Federation certified wildlife habitat and shelter for small mammals with domestic duck and bunny sanctuary was born.

Soon we were rehabbing cottontails and squirrels and learning every step of the way. Thanks to real hands on training at Seabiscuit with patient guidance and no nonsense education from Mary Ellen Rogers, our shelter was growing and we were learning more with each new case.

Attending the WRNC Symposium was an opportunity to get wildlife rehab education from experts with years of experience and build a network of rehabbers to contact for help in the future. I hoped all of the WRNC members would be as cool as Mary Ellen and I wasn't disappointed! It was a great weekend of education, full of new friends and a wealth of shared knowledge

Through 2013 I continued to learn from our experiences at TWS and worked frequently with Mary Ellen at Seabiscuit as well. When she suggested attending the 2014 WRNC Symposium together I happily agreed. This time I learned that WRNC offered a cage grant and decided we should apply. Much had



## Wishes Granted Cont..

changed since we first started the shelter and there was never enough cage space or funding for all of our shelter needs. We submitted our application and began to dream of what we could build if we were approved for the grant.

Just before attending the 2014 Symposium, we were notified that our grant was approved! The Symposium was again a great experience and even more exciting, having been selected to receive the cage grant. More friends were made, more knowledge shared and the feeling of seeing now familiar faces as well, made being a WRNC member even better. We are happy to say that our cage has now been completed, thanks to the generous grant provided by the WRNC!

With the grant, we were able to purchase materials to build a cage/room to house various species of wildlife. Garry builds all of our caging and shelter structures. The space is 12x7x8 with a floor of concrete pavers, walls of  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch hardware cloth and a sliding entrance door. This space allows us to cage bunnies, gray squirrels, flying squirrels and opossums inside with the option of removing all cages to house larger animals such as an adult opossum with ease.



The cage/room is located beneath our home which is built on pilings, making it safe from the elements and it is next to the existing duck sanctuary which creates a peaceful atmosphere for wildlife patients who will hear and see natural sounds and creatures nearby. The space is predator proof and easy to keep clean. The sliding door saves space and eliminates hinges which can pinch tiny animal feet. Its location allows sunlight to enter the room and enough shade to keep it cool on the hottest days, and it is protected from wind and rain.

We are completing the adjacent area with a floor of concrete pavers, storage and work space and a sink. This will allow us even greater efficiency in our operations, making it possible to work smarter, cleaner and more productively.

Thank you WRNC, for enabling Tackapausha Wildlife Shelter to take this important step to improve our facility. Your confidence has helped us to complete another phase of our plan to help injured and orphaned wildlife recover and return to the wild. We are proud to be a part of WRNC and look forward to many more symposiums full of opportunities to learn and share wildlife rehabilitation experiences with all of you.

-Margeaux and Garry Deatsch, Jr./Tackapausha Wildlife Shelter

# Mis-Taken Issues and Identity Thefts

Well, it's that time of year again ... and the baby bird season is upon us. Like migrations, this is an annual event, as well as the resulting "May Madness" and "June Jitters" that the avian rehabilitators go through this time of year.

We put up with "birdnappings" almost daily - people afraid that the neighbor's cat will kill the healthy fledglings in their yard and insist that you take the babies in to "keep them safe". They do this without any thought to your limited time, manpower, and resources that must be spent on the injured and truly orphaned little ones.

There is a little humor that seeps in now and then to keep my spirits up during this busy time. I've already had a few cases where someone insists they know what they have found because, after all, they saw it on the internet. It doesn't matter that I try and explain that they have something totally different - who are they going to believe - my long time experience in this field - or what they read?

So the baby pelican turned out to be a baby pigeon (it was found on the beach, so I can see why they made that assumption), the baby crow was really a baby grackle, the baby blue jay was an adult titmouse.

Just remember - never turn a species away that the public is calling about - because it may not be what you expect when it arrives!

Taking in something new can also be a very rewarding experience and opportunity to learn about caring for a brand new species. The other rehabilitators are happy to assist you with information and care instructions and will walk you through it step by step. They will also most likely accept it if you need to transfer it so it can go with others of its own kind if they have some already at their location.



"Tweet Tweet"

Photo by Michelle Ray



"What am I?"

Photo by Bonnie Graham

# Keeping Records—How Important Is It

Well, there are those pesky state and federal reports to fill out at the end of each year. But the need for good records goes way beyond that. As rehabilitators we are constantly experimenting with new treatments. If you're not writing it down, how will you be able to determine success or failure? And how will you be able to reproduce successful treatments in future patients? Chances are that there are interns and volunteers helping out. No matter how many people work at your facility, it is important to provide consistent care for the animals. How will everyone know what to do and how to do it? They should all be instructed in the same manner and everything they do should be recorded somewhere, somehow.

If you want to be taken seriously as a wildlife rehabilitator, you need to keep some basic records on every patient. You don't need a fancy system, but keeping records on a database of some kind makes a lot of sense. At CRC we have used everything from paper records to "Excel" spread sheets, "Access" databases and now a custom-designed database. Whatever system you have, it needs to be easy to use by everyone, serve your purpose and make your life easier.

Personally, I like to keep learning. And since my memory is not what it used to be, I rely on the record system to keep track of interesting facts, unusual injuries or new treatments. Good records make it easier to review cases and tabulate numbers like admission weights. This is especially important if you plan on sharing your experiences with others through articles or presentations.

—Mathias Engelmann

## Articles and Photos Needed for Newsletter



Photo shopped image by  
Unknown

The editors would like to invite everyone to please submit articles and photos for the upcoming newsletters. We would like to write about things that the membership would like to see. Any input that you have is greatly appreciated. Please e-mail to [mrinbfe@att.net](mailto:mrinbfe@att.net).

—The Editors

# Dan River Wildlife Kill Reporting

With thousands of tons of coal ash in the Dan River, what are local nature lovers to do if they see dead or dying wildlife along the river? Report it, to [www.epa.gov/region4/duke-energy/contact.html](http://www.epa.gov/region4/duke-energy/contact.html).

There have already been scattered reports of dead turtles in the Dan River, and the question of the spill's affect on wildlife came up Tuesday night during a meeting with members of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's first responders.



Photo by Thinkprogress.org

People said they are concerned that creatures that live in and near the Dan River might die as a result of Duke Energy's coal ash spill at the closed Dan River Steam Station in Eden, N.C.

Lilibeth Serrano, public affairs specialist with Fish and Wildlife Service, this week said the "most effective way to submit wildlife observations" related to the spill should post them on the EPA's website set up for the spill.

The EPA is acting as the lead agency coordinating cleaning up after the spill, Serrano said, and would see that every member of the team that needs to see the report would get it.

Reports can also be sent directly to Fish and Wildlife Service ecologists working on ecological health assessments of the Dan River spill via email. In North Carolina, write to ecologist Sara Ward at [Sara\\_Ward@fws.gov](mailto:Sara_Ward@fws.gov) and in Virginia contact biologist Susan Lingenfelter at [Susan\\_Lingenfelter@fws.gov](mailto:Susan_Lingenfelter@fws.gov).

Both also may be reached by phone, but Serrano warns that winter storms might mean the offices are closed and the message might not get read or responded to as quickly.



Ward can be called at (919) 856-4520, ext. 30 and Lingenfelter at (804) 693-6694, ext. 151. Serrano said that Ward, who has been at the spill site this week, did follow up on the reports of dead turtles, sending people out to check the areas where the dead turtles were reported, but could find no carcasses.

To date, no fish kills have been reported.

Photo by Unknown

# RVS Call Reporting

We would like to remind everyone to keep track of all RVS calls and inquiries, and report to them in the WRNC websites RVS log area. We are all extremely busy this time of year and realize that this may be cumbersome, but the importance is significant in trying to get the ban on RVS rehabilitation lifted. If you find the website format too time consuming, you can simply send the information in a word document to [mrinbfe@att.net](mailto:mrinbfe@att.net).



Photo by Michelle Ray

WRNC can't do anything to help the animals, nor the rehabbers who want to legally care for the bats, raccoons, foxes and skunks in NC unless there is unified cooperation from our members. This is the ammunition that is needed. We have faith that one day we will be allowed to care for these animals again. In the meantime, encourage the unhappy finders to call Raleigh and voice their opinion.

We feel that if we can get the public behind us on this issue and make the state understand that we are more qualified to assess the potential for rehabilitation, that it will be more safe for the public. It is imperative that we be able to show the state just how many calls we receive each year, and how many well meaning members of the public are likely taking matters into their own hands with these babies, thereby



Photo by Larry Sosebee



Photo by Michelle Ray

putting themselves and anyone they allow the animal to come in contact with in possible danger. It is a totally preventable scenario if the state will cooperate with the wildlife rehabilitators and allow a special, strictly run, RVS category of rehabilitation based on the success in other states that allow this program. The Health Department should be pleased that this problem would be taken out of the public's hands and into the hands

of specifically trained individuals with pre-exposure shots, training, caging, and education. Just the bad PR factor alone for the Wildlife Resources Commission from the people complaining about killing raccoon babies they found would go away. The first step to winning this battle is to collect the data to present to the state. We can't do this without the participation of all of the rehabilitators.

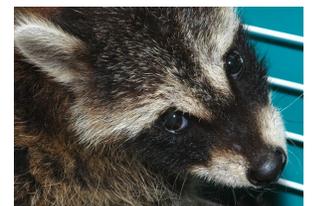


Photo by Unknown

-Toni O'Neil and Michelle Ray