



Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina

WINTER 2012

ISSUE 49, DECEMBER 2012

WRNC's 11th Annual Symposium January 25 –27th, Raleigh, NC

General Sessions

Enrichment
Considerations for Adult Mammal Care
Waterfowl Rehabilitation
Seabird Rehabilitation
Care for Debilitated/Emaciated Orphans
Fundraising
Capture and Restraint
Animal Imprinting

And more....

Veterinary CE Credit

Songbird Critical Care
Wildlife Parasitology
Wound Management
Small Mammal Emergency
Metabolic Bone Disease
Biosecurity for Patients and Humans
Raptor Medicine
Aquatic Avian Medicine

And more...

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Symposium 2013</i>	1
<i>President's Letter</i>	2
<i>Permits</i>	2
<i>Beginner Basics</i>	3
<i>Image is Everything</i>	4, 5
<i>Tales from the Field</i>	6, 7
<i>Board Nominations</i>	8
<i>Call of the Wild</i>	9
<i>Creature Feature</i>	10
<i>Events</i>	11
<i>Announcements</i>	11

Keynote Presentation -

Walt Sturgeon—"The Wildlife Equivalent to Putting a Man on the Moon"

Hands– On Labs

Songbird Bandaging & Splinting
Mammal Bandaging & Splinting
Large Bird Bandaging & Splinting
Mammal Physical Exam
Avian and Reptile Hematology

And more...

Beginner Track

Introduction to Wildlife Rehab
Wildlife Calls
Introduction to E. Gray Squirrels
Fluid Therapy
Zoonoses
Rehabilitation of Opossums
And more...

WRNC invites rehabilitators and associated wildlife professionals to attend its 11th annual symposium in Raleigh, NC January 25-27, 2012. There are more than forty sessions scheduled appropriate for all rehabilitators at any level! There are sessions designed for beginning and experienced rehabilitators and sessions approved for veterinary and veterinary technician Continuing Education credit. All sessions are open to everyone, regardless of skill level.

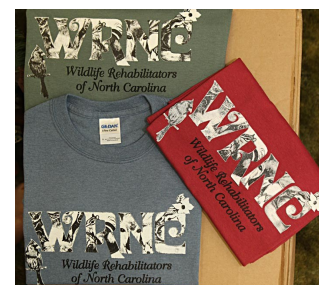
The symposium registration fee covers the Icebreaker event Friday evening, banquet Saturday evening, lunch both days, attendance at the lectures, AND your membership in WRNC for 2013. There is an additional \$5 fee for each of the hands-on labs, which you can select when you register. The workshops are classified by level to help you make your selection. Seats in workshops are assigned on a first come first serve basis. Register early to insure placement in the workshops of your choice.

Visit the WRNC website to register. After you submit your membership information, you will be linked to the Office of Continuing Education at NCSU's Vet School website to enter your registration and payment information. You may pay by check or credit card.

Please see the symposium page on our website for more information on the sessions, workshops, speakers, events and registration:

<http://ncwildliferehab.org/conference/conf2013/conf2013.html>

This is a quarterly newsletter produced by Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina (WRNC). WRNC was organized in 1999 with a mission to share information 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. All material in the newsletter is copyrighted and should not be used or reproduced without permission from the author.



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Letter from the President

Dear WRNC Members and Friends,

I have seen new rehabilitators who attended our last WRNC Symposium gain confidence and develop new skills, and new friendships begin while old friends reconnected. The new year is fast approaching, and plans are well underway for the upcoming Symposium at the end of January (January 25-27) in Raleigh. I am constantly amazed at the quality of each symposium. I always think that we will never be able to top the achievements of the past year, but we always continue to surpass the previous event.

Our organization has grown over the years and so too have all our members. The level of pride we demonstrate as we state, "I am a wildlife rehabilitator serving North Carolina" rises with each passing year. Our professionalism continues to grow and impress others to become more like us. We teach and serve as mentors unselfishly to those taking the beginning steps in this chosen field.

The future of environmental education, the preservation of habitats, the quality of life for the non-releasable animals, and the return of wild animals to their proper places rests in our hands. Each and every member of WRNC plays a part in these situations every day of the year. We set the standards of excellence in wildlife rehabilitation and serve as role models for the newcomers coming behind us.

I am proud to have been your President this past year. It has been my privilege and honor to serve in this position, and I am the richer for it.

Sincerely,
Toni O'Neil

Rehabilitation Permit Applications

Recently, there has been concern regarding inspection requirements for new rehabilitators. To ensure that there are no surprises, we wanted to share the email response that individuals receive after submitting their new and renewal rehabilitation permit applications.

The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission thanks you for submitting your application for the following permit/license(s):

** Wildlife Rehabilitation*

Note: A species specific permit or license must be reviewed and approved prior to being issued. Additional information may be requested during the review process to complete application requirements. Upon approval, the permit or license will be mailed.

Your WRC customer number is XXXXXXXX. Please retain this number for your records and proof of license.

WRNC followed up with the Wildlife Resources Commission to get clarification on the inspection requirement. This is the response that we received:

We review all applications and renewals at the time of submission. Once renewals are requested the process can take up to 60 days to complete because the requests are completed on a first come first serve basis to keep it fair. We currently are not having inspections done at the time of renewal. We generally have inspections done on new applications.

Beginner Basics—Reducing Stress

by Jean Chamberlain

Stress is harmful to wildlife in captivity. Rehabilitators should always be seeking ways to reduce the stress on the animals that are in their care. Here are some suggestions to help you begin thinking about how you can reduce stress:

Intake

Intake is a very stressful time for wildlife. The animal is in unfamiliar surroundings and is in the presence of a predator (you). Be careful not to stare at the animal. During the exam cover the animal's eyes. This calms the animal and also allows you to look at it without the animal seeing that you are doing it. Resist the temptation to show the animal to family members and don't let others pet the animal.

Also reduce stress at intake by being organized. Have supplies at hand so that the physical exam will go as quickly as possible. Be ready for the next animal or litter that could come in. Have a box or container ready (assembled, with bedding and water dish in place if needed, etc.) so that after the exam the animal can quickly be placed in a comfortable, warm place away from people.

Feeding and Cleaning

Get your feeding routine down so that animals can be fed smoothly and quickly. Lay out everything needed. For infants, mix and warm the formula before you bring out the animals. For older animals, have their food and water ready. Spend less time doing prep in the vicinity of the animals.

Minimize cleaning time. Use replacement water and food bowls rather than taking them out to clean and refill. Have replacement bedding ready.

Housing

It is important to find substitute littermates for singles, but crowded conditions can cause stress too. Be sure to provide properly sized cages for all the animals in your care.

Homes can be very noisy. Are wildlife in a quiet place? Keep them away from radios and televisions, loud noises, commotion, constant foot traffic, barking dogs and ringing phones. Don't let pets and children have access to the room where wildlife are housed.

Odors can be stressful too. Don't smoke in the room with wildlife. Smoke means fire to a wild animal, and the inability to escape from it causes stress. Also avoid exposing wildlife to other odors that are unnatural for them like perfumes, cosmetics, and scented candles.

When animals are moved outdoors, locate the pre-release cage away from human activity where pets can't come up to it. Provide each animal a place to hide in the cage, and include extra perches and a nest box.

Captivity is stressful for wild animals, however there are many things rehabilitators can do to reduce the stress on animals. It is our responsibility to reduce stress as much as possible. This winter is a good time to step back and take a look at what you could do next year to make the lives of the animals you rehabilitate less stressful.



Image is Everything

by Halley Buckanoff

Everyone has heard the old adage, “actions speak louder than words” or “a picture is worth a thousand words.” Ours is a growing profession, and wildlife rehabilitation isn’t what it used to be and shouldn’t be the same as it was thirty years ago. Public perception is very important and can greatly influence how we operate, whether it be working with state biologists for permitting or generating fund-raising initiatives.

When you search for *wildlife rehabilitator* or *wildlife rehabilitation* on the internet, most of the pictures that come up are of people feeding cute baby animals — fuzzy cottontail bunnies, wobbly-kneed deer fawns, little infant squirrels holding firmly onto a formula-filled syringe.

Images such as these may perpetuate the myth that wildlife rehabilitators are “bunny huggers!”

Wildlife Rehabilitation



what my friends think
I do



what my
family thinks I do



what the
public thinks I do



what other animal care
professionals think I
do



what I think I do



what I really do



Image is Everything (Continued)

While pictures are one aspect of the image of wildlife rehabilitation, another is naming exotic or wild animals maintained in captive care, including those that may be releasable. It is common practice for exhibit and education animals that will never be released again to be named, whether those names are made public or not. But it may be misleading for rehabilitatable wildlife to be named, (and those names made public) as the public may associate naming an animal with it being treated as a pet.

Many of us use social media sites not only to advertise and educate about our wildlife neighbors in need but also to share our success stories. We show images and tell tales, but there are two sides of any communication—perspective and presentation. We can control our presentation but we can't always control the perspective on the receiving end.

Animal care professionals have struggled with these themes for some time. It is important to maintain professionalism in the public eye to avoid losing respect for the hard work that we do because of misperceptions and/or misrepresentations within our own field. Avoid sending mixed messages to the public; avoid “do as I say, not as I do” imagery. Our actions impact everyone around us—the wildlife we care for, our fellow wildlife rehabilitators, as well as public opinion. With each picture we post, each public interaction, each communication amongst ourselves as professionals we must ask ourselves, “What message am I sending?”

Pearl of Wisdom—Recycle and Reuse!

by Toni O'Neil

Be creative with items that normally would be thrown away.

If you take care of crows and vultures, you know how intelligent they are. They need toys to keep them mentally stimulated and to prevent them from picking their cages and perches apart from boredom.

- Have your family, friends, and volunteers look for items they normally would throw away as "junk" and use them for enrichment items.
- Ever get those fake car keys in the mail as part of an automotive company publicity campaign?
- Put a lot of them together and make a key ring that jingles.
- Use advertisement CD's as shiny toys.
- If you get medical supplies from your local hospital or doctor's offices, use the unwanted portions, caps, pieces, etc. as toys.

The odder shaped they are, the more colorful they are, the better toys they make!

AVMA's Wildlife Decision Tree

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has developed a free downloadable or printable PDF wildlife patient flow chart. This one page chart has live links incorporated if accessed online and includes a section to fill in state and federal wildlife authorities' phone numbers. This is an excellent resource for your area veterinarians and as an AVMA produced document, should be recognized as a best practice tool by veterinarians. For best results, getting this directly to veterinarian(s) rather than to office staff or receptionists is recommended. The flow chart is available at:

https://ebusiness.avma.org/EBusiness50/ProductCatalog/product.aspx?ID=451&utm_source=smartbrief&utm_medium=email.



Tales from the Field - Saving Snappers

by Savannah Trantham

The morning of May 8, 2012 started out just like any other with babies to feed, animals to check and cages to clean. In the midst of the busy chores several arrivals made their way through the doors; a few cottontails that had been found in a yard, a couple of baby birds that had been blown from their nest, and a box turtle that was found crossing the road. As things started to settle down for the morning and we began to get into a routine for the day we received another injured animal that needed our immediate attention.

The day was feeling like a good one, with all of the animals that had come to us through the morning hours getting settled and needing some extra TLC. All of these animals were going to be just fine and would soon be back in the wild, something that makes all of us smile and feel good about what we do as rehabilitators. Although the cottontails, birds, and the box turtle that had been dropped off in need of some attention were going to be just fine - the latest arrival of the day, a 30 pound Common Snapping Turtle, was not going to be as lucky. The large snapper was found sitting on the side of the road by caring individuals who stopped to help her. We knew upon receiving her that her chances were slim. Looking through the tub that she was delivered in we could tell that her initial injuries appeared to be the result of being hit by a car. She was missing her top mandible all the way up to her eyes and a portion of the bottom mandible as well. She also had a large fracture to the carapace that ran parallel with and over her spine. She was taken into the examination room and as I pulled her out of the container for a closer look I felt eggs moving around under my fingers, and my heart sank even further. I hated the thought of having to euthanize this animal. It was saddening that a turtle as large as this was hit while on the road, and considering her size I knew she had to be pretty old. Due to the extent of her injuries, the decision was made that the best option would be to humanely euthanize her.

While I worked with the veterinarian to get everything that we needed, I just couldn't stop thinking about the eggs that she carried and whether there was a chance that they could be viable if taken from her and placed into incubation. I bounced the idea off of several other folks working with me that day, as well as the veterinarian treating her, and the unanimous response was: "The chance is very slim," or "You would just be wasting your time." Those answers were not acceptable to me! I continued to run through my head that snappers only move from the water to lay their eggs and we were just starting into the season where they would become active in their quest for a great nesting place to deposit their eggs here in the mountains of WNC. Surely this is why this female was out of her river crossing the road! I made the decision that once she was euthanized I would remove the eggs and give them a chance. Even if they didn't hatch or remain viable, I had given them the opportunity to do so, and if just one hatched it would be able to have a chance in the world as a large snapping turtle. After she was euthanized, a wonderful volunteer helped as we removed 52 little eggs about the size of a ping pong ball and placed them into vermiculite to incubate.



Snapping turtle eggs will incubate anywhere from 55 to 155 days from the time they are deposited into their nests depending upon environmental factors such as how much sun the nest gets, how warm it gets, predators, floods, and many other situations that can effect a turtle nest. I knew that there may be no chance that these eggs would develop but I was prepared to give them all the time they needed. All 52 eggs were fully developed and looked good and now only time would tell if they would survive. Over the weeks to follow the eggs were checked daily, the substrate misted 2-3 times a week and some eggs that had collapsed had to be removed. I watched each week hoping that just maybe the remaining ones that had not collapsed or discolored would stay strong and ultimately hatch.

Tales from the Field (continued)



On the morning on August 9th I pulled the incubation container down to mist and check the eggs only to find not just eggs, but 3 quarter size snapping turtle hatchlings crawling around the vermiculite and 6 other eggs beginning to pip! At that moment I knew I had done the right thing in giving these eggs a chance! Over the course of 8 days, 41 of the initial 52 eggs hatched. Over the course of incubation, 10 of the eggs collapsed and were removed along with one egg which never progressed. This egg appeared to be a partially formed hatchling that appeared to have stopped developing. All 41 of the hatchlings were marked with numbers for identification for recording their weights and monitoring their growth. They will all be head started until next spring when they are a little larger and will hopefully have fewer predators. Then they will be released back along the same river where their mother was found. Each time I look at them I am reminded by these little turtles, they are the reason that I am a wildlife rehabilitator!





WRNC Board Nominations

WRNC Board members serve for three year terms. Terms are staggered so that there is a continuity of board members and not all board members' terms expire at the same time. Each year spots open up on the Board. Board members are nominated by their peers, and voting takes place during the annual General Meeting held during the Saturday Banquet of the WRNC Symposium. Members must be present to vote, and board members are selected by majority votes. The new Board members are announced at the end of the Saturday Banquet and are formally welcomed to the board at the Board meeting that occurs on the Sunday of the Symposium. Additionally, Board officers are selected at that time.

This year, there are five open seats on the WRNC Board. The Nominating Committee (a subset of the WRNC Board of Directors) has accepted and reviewed nominations throughout the year. Currently, there are six nominees: Jean Chamberlain, Sue Heritage, Kathy Lillard, Toni O'Neil, Michelle Ray, and Michelle Richards. The Nominating Committee is in the process of completing paperwork and checking references for the candidates. When this application process is completed, nominee bios and pictures will be sent out to all members prior to the election and will be posted for everyone to review during the symposium.

We look forward to learning about this year's candidates for the WRNC Board, and we hope to see all of our members at this year's Symposium to decide on the new leadership for our organization.

A Case of Mistaken Identity....or Not?

By Toni O'Neil

We've all had calls about creatures that turned out NOT be what the caller claimed it to be.... the baby vulture that was really a pigeon, the weird hawk that was a nighthawk, the eagle that was a chicken! You get a call, roll your eyes, and mumble, "Yeah, right!" But sometimes that isn't the case at all. We at Possumwood Acres have been fooled twice now, in really amazing ways, with the latest being just this month.

The first time occurred a few years ago - and the puffin was really a puffin! It washed up on Topsail Beach, and a little girl looked it up online to figure out what it was. She told me that was what she had, and of course I didn't believe her. I was shocked when I discovered she was right!

Just a few weeks ago, we received a call about a grey animal under a trailer, and our first reaction was that it was going to be an opossum. But the lady claimed that it wasn't an opossum and insisted she knew what it was. So we asked a volunteer to go out and investigate and explain to her why it would be okay to have the opossum just stay and live underneath her home. But instead, we were the ones that were surprised to learn that the grey animal really was a chinchilla! Obviously someone's pet from its friendly behavior, the little guy now has a proper home where he belongs.

So when you take those calls and are ready to disbelieve what the caller claims to have found, give a little thought that maybe, just maybe, they might be correct!



Call of the Wild– Problems with “Hoot” Owls

by Tammy Greevers

Have you ever handled a call from someone who seemed distressed by the presence of owls near their home? In one such case, a caller described a “hoot” owl that had been “harassing” him for two days and would not leave his house. This led him to think there was something wrong with the owl and it needed to be rescued. Of course, before we proceeded with this rescue, we made sure the animal was indeed in need of our help.

A few good questions to ask:

1. Can it fly?

If the caller is unsure, advise them to take a bed sheet or towel and flap it near where the owl is. This way the caller is not endangering themselves and the question can be answered. If the owl cannot fly, advise the caller how to safely catch and bring it to a rehabilitator.

2. Does its attitude seem depressed or unresponsive? Are its behaviors normal?

If the owl's attitude is bright, alert, and responsive and it is exhibiting normal behaviors, such as abilities to fly, perch, and defend himself, he most likely does not need assistance. Our caller in question soon was able to see that this owl did not need our help. After asking him whether it could fly, the caller misunderstood our advice and demonstrated how one *should not* check an owl's ability to fly. Instead of flapping a sheet, he threw a coat at the owl, which provoked the owl to mantle back. With a little more discussion, more information about this owl's abilities was determined, such as flight from the roof to the porch railing. So with our questions finally answered, we know the owl can fly, is BAR (bright, alert, responsive), and exhibits normal species behaviors.

So why do owls stick around? Three possible explanations exist. The first two on the list require the assistance of a rehabilitator, while the third does not and might explain the behavior of our “hoot” owl.

1. Injury

Many possibilities exist for how the injury was obtained. Owls may be injured when hunting larger prey items or from strong winds during a big storm. If the owl was found near a roadside, it may have hit or been hit by a car. Eastern screech owls (*Megascops asio*), often referred to as “baby owls” by callers, will often swipe the side of cars while hunting for flying insects that are attracted to bright headlights.

2. Emaciation and/or Debilitation

Especially at this time of year, hatch yearlings are leaving the nest (as late as September!) and dispersing to find new territory. About half of these owls will not survive to see their second year, one reason being starvation. Limited availability of prey species and/or inadequate skills to hunt may lead an owl to become emaciated, which in turn decreases the owl's chances for survival. These owls are usually found on the ground, weak and depressed with limited flight due to atrophy of the pectoral flight muscles.

3. Defense

Owls may become nuisances and/or aggressive when they are protecting their territory, mate, young, or food source. Free range birds can be easy pickings for owls and may encourage them to stick around. Mating season can bring about aggressive behaviors, including dive bombing, and begins as early as January when pair formation begins.

As with any wildlife call, do your best to determine if the animal truly needs help, and educate the caller about wildlife behaviors and to appreciate the wild animals that they encounter.

Resources:

Link, Russel. "Living with Wildlife: Owls." Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife. 2005. Web. 23 Nov. 2012 wdfw.wa.gov/living/owls.pdf

Owl. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2012. Web. www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/436310/owl



Photo Courtesy Valerie H. Schindler Wildlife Rehabilitation Center



Creature Feature –Chimney Swift

by Carol Kaczmarek

There is nothing like a nest of a baby chimney swifts to bring even the most accomplished wildlife rehabilitator to his knees---BABY CHIMNEY SWIFTS ARE VERY DIFFICULT TO RAISE.

DESCRIPTION. Sometimes called flying cigars because of their shape, chimney swifts are seldom seen perching. In fact, they can be heard before they are seen. Their plumage is a blackish, sooty grey and brown, with a slightly lighter throat, breast, under wings, and rump. They have long swept back wings that are longer than their body. They have short tails and very short legs. They have an all-purpose bill and brown eyes. Females and juveniles are very similar to the males.

FEEDING AND DRINKING. These birds eat small flying insects (especially gnats, mosquitoes, flies and termites) on the wing. They usually feed in groups flying close together making a high pitch chipping noise. Two parents and their offspring will consume 12,000 insects every day. They drink (and bathe) by skimming across a water source. The sound of Chimney Swifts feeding is not music to everyone's ears. In fact, the very loudest sounds are made by the chicks when they are being fed by their parents.

BREEDING AND REPRODUCTION. The breeding season is May to July. The male and the female build a half cup nest together. The nest is made of twigs cemented with saliva and fastened to the inner wall of a chimney (or sometimes in a cave or hollow tree). They have only one brood per year. The female lays 2-7 white eggs. Both parents incubate the eggs for about 19-21 days. The young hatch after 28-30 days. When they fledge, they remain around the nest and both parents continue to feed the fledglings until they are ready to be on their own. Swifts will begin migrating in August. Therefore, it is important to integrate hand-raised Chimney Swifts with wild ones at a roost site before migration begins.

DISTRIBUTION AND HABITAT. Chimney Swifts are migratory and are protected by the Migratory Bird Act of 1918. They can be found breeding in spring in the Eastern US and lower eastern Canada. They are long distance migratory birds traveling south to areas as far as Peru. They are in decline due to habitat destruction. When the first colonists came to the New World there were many large trees with tree cavities; the colonist used the trees. The swifts learned to use man-made structures such as chimneys and air shafts in place of the trees.

SURVIVAL AND STATUS. Chimney Swifts use man-made structures to build their nests in, creating some human/swifts problems. Homeowners may start hearing some very loud sounds coming from their chimney and may find a nest or chick on the floor of the fireplace. It is important that a rehabber know how to advise rescuers the best way to handle that type of emergency and where to direct them for assistance.

RESOURCES:

- Peterson, Roger. A Field Guide to Birds. 4th Ed. Houghton Mifflin. 1980. p.204.
- Terceira, Stan. Birds of the Carolinas Field Guide. Adventure. 2001. P.97.
- Stokes, nature guides. A Guide to Bird Behaviors. V.I. Little. 1979. P.85-94.
- Chimney Swifts. http://identify.whatbird.com/obj/231/overview/chimney_Swift.aspx





Calendar of Events

• **International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council**
Continuing Education, Online Courses
<http://theiwrc.org/continuing-education/online-training>

Submit, questions, comments, and articles to:

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Visit us on the web: www.ncwildliferehab.org

Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/wrnc

Announcements

The 2013 Symposium Raffle will be better than ever before!

Your dollars will stretch farther, as we've increased the number of tickets you will get with each purchase.

Tickets: \$1.00 each – or 6 tickets for \$5.00

(and yes,)

13 tickets for \$10.00

even better.....

28 tickets for \$20.00 (best value!)

This squirrel house was one of our biggest prizes last year, and we are lucky enough to have another one donated as a prize for the 2013 raffle! Big thanks to Board Member Linda Woodruff's husband, Gary, for making—and donating—this item!

