

# WILDLIFE REHABILITATORS OF NORTH CAROLINA

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## Message from the President by Carla Johnson

Hello WRNC members! If you missed our annual symposium in January, you missed a great time! Our symposium kicked off with our icebreaker, which was run by the NCSU Vet students this year. Special thanks to all who made this possible from the food, door prizes and special decorations. Classes started promptly on Saturday and this year there were several welcomed additions to our symposium. When you arrived, as you crossed the street from the parking deck, there was a food truck located right in your path selling delicious Beignets.

We also welcomed new classes in Urban Black Bear Study, Raptor Pesticide Study, Wildlife Radiology and Creance Raptors on a Leash just to name a few. Tours were given this year by the Turtle team of their clinic and seemed to be a hit by all that attended.

The banquet was held this year at the NCSU University Club (special thanks to Lou Mitchell for setting this up) and our guest speakers were none other than Dr. Greg Lewbart and his wife Dr. Diane Deresienski who took us on a fantastic journey to the Galápagos Islands where their team performed health assessments on marine reptiles.

If you missed the symposium this year, make plans to attend next year (Jan 26 & 27, 2019 with Icebreaker Jan 25) where there will be even more new changes and many new topics and things to learn.

As we all get ready for the deluge of wildlife patients across the state this year, please let me know if there is any way WRNC can assist you in your



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## *Message from the President (cont.)*

wildlife endeavors. Whether it's getting a patient from point A to point Z, or teaching new people who want to become rehabilitators. WRNC was created to assist rehabbers all across NC. If you can get 12 people together who are willing to take our weekend wildlife course, we will bring educators to you for an intensive wildlife course and help the newly-educated rehabbers form mentorships with seasoned rehabbers in their area. If you need help with funds for building a rehab cage, we offer cage-building grants each year for which you can apply. If you have been to other wildlife conferences and have any new ideas for topics/speakers at our annual symposium, please let me know this information also. This is your symposium, so help us make it better each year by giving us your suggestions.

**PLEASE ALSO LET ME KNOW IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP WITH OUR SYMPOSIUM!!!**

We have grown our symposium so big, we have figured out, over the past few years, that we need a lot more people to assist with making the symposium run smoothly. Please contact me at [wildlifed2@aol.com](mailto:wildlifed2@aol.com) if you would be willing to assist with our next symposium. We would love to have you onboard! I promise we will not give you anything too difficult to accomplish.....:0)



Each WRNC symposium is a huge team effort. Our VSL's (Veterinary Student Liaisons) are a very important part of that team.

L-to-R : Taylor Gregory, Suzie Jones, Nicole Himebaugh and Jennifer Heyward (not pictured) helped out with many tasks, wherever they were needed (but especially with AV equipment).

Photo by John Althouse

The Icebreaker on Friday night was well-attended.

Photo by John Althouse



## *Some Of The Unsung Heroes At The Symposium*

*Photos by John Althouse*



**Karen Wetherell (L) and Betty O'Leary.**

Karen has been a big help at the sales table for several years now. Betty, a former staff member at Carolina Raptor Center, drives down from VA every year to attend, teach classes, and meet old friends.



**Keynote speakers Dr. Greg Lewbart and his wife Dr. Diane Deresienski at the Banquet. Dr Lewbart is WRNC's official advisor and liaison with the vet school—without his support none of this would be possible.**



**Vendors like Steve Stone (American Wildlife Refuge) add a great touch to the symposium and often help support their own non-profit at the same time.**

**The staff at NCSU-College of Veterinary Medicine, especially John Cole (sorting badges) spend a lot of time before and during the symposium to make sure registration and check-in run as smoothly as possible.**



## 2018 WRNC Raffle Donor List

Despite some organizational challenges the annual raffle at the symposium was another success. Savannah Trantham and Megan Vande Hei co-coordinated this effort, with help from several other board members.

We would like to thank them as well as the volunteers who stepped up to help out on Saturday during the symposium to organize raffle donations.

None of this would be possible without our generous donors, of course, listed below in no particular order:

***IF YOU ARE AWARE OF ANY OTHER DONATIONS NOT LISTED BELOW*** please contact a board member immediately so we can recognize all donors and their contribution to wildlife conservation.

- ♦ Jimmy Pope, Golden Sands Beach Resort in Carolina Beach - Gift certificate for 2 free nights!
- ♦ Jim Craig - Three framed wildlife pictures
- ♦ The Nature's Way in Ross, OH - Three gift certificates
- ♦ Linda Bergman-Althouse & John Althouse  
Four gift baskets, two pillows and two of John's pictures, framed
- ♦ Ghann's Cricket Farm, Inc. in Augusta, GA - Five coupons
- ♦ Carolina Raptor Center - Admission passes and Kingfisher painting
- ♦ Kevin Geraghty - Five framed wildlife pictures
- ♦ Mike Dupuy Hawk Food, Middleburg, PA - Raptor perch
- ♦ Droll Yankees, Plainfield, CT - Bird feeder



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A Unique Blend of Nature, Soil and Skill.



Please note that a few of the donations listed here were unfortunately not received in time to make it to this raffle but will be held for the 2019 symposium raffle.

## 2018 WRNC Raffle Donor List (cont.)

- ◆ Friends of Western NC Nature Center, Asheville, NC - Family membership, admission passes
- ◆ Carolina Hurricanes Hockey Club, Raleigh, NC - Two free admission tickets to a game
- ◆ National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association, St Cloud, MN - Gift Box



National  
WILDLIFE REHABILITATORS  
Association



- ◆ Mike's Falconry, Gresham, OR



Mike's Falconry Supplies  
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- ◆ Northwoods Falconry, Olympia, WA - Eagle hoods, eagle sleeve, DVD
- ◆ Oxbow Animal Health, Murdock, NE - Food, treats, supplements, bedding
- ◆ ZooMed Laboratories, San Luis Obispo, CA - Reptile care supplies



- ◆ Western Sporting, Seridan, WY



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## 2018 WRNC Raffle Donor List (cont.)

- ◆ NC Aquariums - Admission passes
- ◆ Cape Fear Serpentarium, Wilmington, NC - Admission passes
- ◆ Lazy 5 Ranch, Mooresville, NC - Admission passes
- ◆ Fox Valley, Sun City, AZ - Lg box of mammal formula



Sharing ideas is the primary goal of the annual WRNC symposium.

Photos by John Althouse

## *The Very First WRNC “HALL OF FAME” Inductees, Mary & Ed Weiss by Linda Bergman-Althouse*

On 20 January 2018, while attending the Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina Symposium banquet at the NCSU University Club, Mary and Ed Weiss from Candler, NC, although married for 53 years, were individually recognized for their double-decade years of commitment to wildlife rehabilitation, conservation and to the membership of an organization in which they dedicated so much time, effort and passion. They were both formally and officially inducted into the WRNC “Hall of Fame” for their pioneer endeavors in the field of wildlife rehabilitation. Both were extremely appreciative of the recognition and steps taken to make this happen. Ed stated “This is the best thing that has ever happened to us.” This is how the beginning of each proposal read for our first nominations to the WRNC Hall of Fame:

“Retired Postal Worker and former Scout Master, Ed Weiss, is a staunch advocate for and founding member of the Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina, Inc. (WRNC), formerly known as the North Carolina Wildlife Rehabilitators Association (NCWRA). Since 1999, Ed has been a stellar ambassador for wildlife and thoroughly dedicated to our state wildlife organization, WRNC.” And for Mary; “Mother of eight children, Scout Leader and retired show dog handler (the St. Bernard) for over 30 years, Mary Weiss, is a founding member of the Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina, Inc. (WRNC), formerly known as the “North Carolina Wildlife Rehabilitators Association (NCWRA). Since 1999, Mary has been a steadfast ambassador for wildlife and wholly committed to our state wildlife organization.”

Although Ed and Mary were inducted during May 2017, they chose to receive their awards during the symposium they had faithfully attended and helped coordinate for many years. At the banquet, Mary and Ed each received an attractive plaque etched with our logo and a citation fitting of their accomplishments to include receiving the first fawn rehab permit from the state for Ed and Mary’s initiative in providing educational opportunities for rehabilitators and educators at all skill levels in her home. The citations were read to them and the banquet attendees during the presentation. They will also receive lifetime honorary memberships within our organization and a permanent presence on our organizational website.

Mary’s citation: “For many years, Mary Weiss, a founding member of Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina, Inc., has been a courageous and unwavering example of commitment for wildlife rehabilitators and the public at



**Photo by John Althouse**

## WRNC “HALL OF FAME” (cont.)

large. Her influence, hard work and persevering will since the year 2000 has helped develop the field of wildlife rehabilitation in our state more fully and continues to grow a positive difference for local wildlife and the many North Carolina communities in which wildlife rehabilitators work. Mary’s selflessness, dedication, passion, tenacity and commitment remain evident, because after all these years, WRNC is thriving and the number of wildlife rehabilitators and educational opportunities in the field have increased which provides more assistance to wildlife in distress. Over the long haul, Mary Weiss was instrumental in securing the credibility and longevity Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina, Inc. (WRNC) enjoys today. Mary Weiss is hereby on this day, May 10, 2017, inducted into the Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina, Inc. “HALL OF FAME.”

Ed’s citation: “Over many years, Ed Weiss, a founding member of Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina, Inc., displayed formidable devotion, generativity and tenacity for wildlife rehabilitators and the public to emulate and has proven that ideas can grow, make a positive difference and become a way of life. Ed’s professionalism, dedication, passion and commitment since the year 2000 is evident because after all these years, WRNC is thriving and the number of wildlife rehabilitators and educational opportunities in the field have increased which provides more assistance to those who carry the rehabilitation torch for wildlife. Ed Weiss’s philosophy of wildlife rehabilitation, untiring drive and strong educational principles helped develop Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina, Inc. (WRNC) into the effective, purposeful and successful organization it is today. Ed Weiss is hereby on this day, May 10, 2017, inducted into the Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina, Inc. “HALL OF FAME.”

It is with great admiration, respect and pride that this remarkable couple be exalted to “Hall of Fame” status and remembered as founding members of the Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina, Inc. as well as, their many accomplishments in the field of wildlife rehabilitation. John Boyle, a reporter from the Asheville Citizen Times recently published a story celebrating the Weiss’s history in wildlife rehabilitation and their recent induction into the WRNC “Hall of Fame.” To enjoy their interview and Mr. Boyle’s article, please access:

[https://www.citizen-times.com/story/news/local/2018/02/17/boyle-column-candler-couples-love-possums-other-critters-leads-hall-fame/343068002/?utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=amp&utm\\_campaign=speakable](https://www.citizen-times.com/story/news/local/2018/02/17/boyle-column-candler-couples-love-possums-other-critters-leads-hall-fame/343068002/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=amp&utm_campaign=speakable)



**Mary receiving her plaque from WRNC then-president Cathy Burns; Photo by John Althouse**

## *Whistle Pigs & Chucklings! by Linda Bergman-Althouse*

*As written for "Carolina Salt Magazine"*

By now, we all know that Punxsutawney Phil from Pennsylvania emerged from hibernation in February and saw his shadow, which means six more weeks of winter, at least, up there! But those of us on the coast of North Carolina received different word when Animal Ambassador Puck, a groundhog from Possumwood Acres didn't see his shadow, which indicates an "Early Spring" for us! Those two will just have to have a discussion and figure it out. We all know that Phil and Puck are groundhogs turned weathermen, right? Groundhogs, also called "Woodchucks," a name originating from the Cree Indian word "wuchak" and nicknamed "Whistlepigs," because



**Stock Photo**

they are known to give a shrill whistle alarm that carries for quite a distance to warn other groundhogs of impending danger, are native to North America including North Carolina and although found more often in the Western part of our state, they have expanded to our Piedmont and Coastal regions more recently. Although these little diggers aren't prevalent yet on the coast, the few who are here can still run into trouble such as an injury or illness that may require rehabilitation intervention at a wildlife shelter in our state. So, wildlife rehabilitators at all our facilities must be familiar with every species that could possibly come through the clinic door, even as rare in our area as Woodchucks may be.

Groundhogs are large pudgy-bodied mammals of the rodent family that weigh in at 5 to 12 pounds and can reach two feet in length. They are covered with coarse fur that ranges in color from brown to reddish or yellowish brown with a silver shine on the tips of their hair. Their head is short and wide. Groundhogs are well adapted for digging with their short, powerful limbs and five curved, thick claws on each foot. They will run on all fours and frequently stand on their hind feet to survey the area or sound the alarm. Their tail is densely haired, slightly flattened and one-fifth to one-third of the animal's total length. A groundhog's ears are short, broad, rounded and well haired, and their eyes are circular and small. Besides the high-pitched whistle they are known for, they also

## *Whistle Pigs & Chucklings! (cont.)*

squeal when fighting, produce low barks and produce an unusual teeth grinding sound. They are diurnal animals which means they are most active during the early morning and late afternoon hours and not at night. Groundhogs have been observed climbing trees near residential areas or standing in open country at the edge of woodlands, but never too far from their burrow entrance. So they are comfortable in a variety of habitats such as pastures, brushy woodlots, open woods and areas along stream banks. Although they prefer forest habitats, the choices of under deck patios, sheds, in gardens and anything surrounded by wood or brush in residential areas are not ruled out. Woodchucks have adapted well to human activities such as agriculture and urban development. There-



**Stock Photo**

fore, taking up residence close to humans can become a problem for home owners when you consider the type of property damage groundhogs are capable of as they dig networks of burrows under houses, sheds or any manmade structure. Please keep in mind that it has been stated by Humane Society professionals that it would take a lot of woodchucks working over many years to create tunnel systems that would pose any significant risk to a structure. However, groundhogs leave their mark everywhere they go by chewing, gnawing, digging and causing the disappearance of tasty flowers, fruits and vegetables. Gardeners are usually not too happy with their presence. Woodchucks enjoy a strict herbivore diet and prefer the more tender parts of new growth from a variety of wild and cultivated,

succulent plants such as clover, alfalfa and grasses.

They hibernate during the winter from November until February. Mating occurs in March or April, and four to six young are produced after a 32-day gestation period, and of course, like all furry mammal babies, they are adorable! The young, called “Chucklings,” are born blind, helpless, toothless, almost naked and weigh one to two ounces, and because they are mammals, they will nurse for about 3 months. Between 3 to 5 months the youngsters will leave the birth area and head out on their own to burrow their own den. Groundhogs become sexually mature at one year and can have two litters annually. Although groundhogs are the most solitary of all marmots, which are burrowing rodents, several individuals may occupy adjacent burrows or dens. Burrows with den chambers 20 inches to three feet below ground will have five to eight entrances/exits to enable rapid escape from predators, such as coyote, fox, bobcat, eagle, cougar, dog, wolf and man. Snakes pose the most threat to infant groundhogs. Despite this little plant lover’s tendency to wreck a garden and dig tunnels that could compromise some structural integrity, they also do some good in the world! Although an indirect benefit, groundhogs’ burrows become homes for animals such as fox and skunks who feed upon mice, grasshoppers, bugs and other menacing creatures that

## *Whistle Pigs & Chucklings! (cont.)*

would destroy a farmer's crops. A groundhog's expert digging skills also brings healthy and nutritious subsoil to the surface. The presence of Woodchucks has been responsible for unearthing artifacts such as pottery and stones that archeologists then claim as a new dig site. This unique animal with a variety of names, is very interesting to watch, but if you encounter a groundhog, it is best NOT to make or attempt physical contact, because they can bite and may carry certain zoonotic conditions that can be passed from them to you. Observation while keeping your distance is always the best policy. In zoo environments or wildlife sanctuaries where non-releasable groundhogs serve as Education Ambassadors, their recorded life spans have reached 9 to 14 years, but the average life expectancy for a Woodchuck in the wild is only 2 to 3 years. If by chance a "WhistlePig" reaches 5 or 6 years in the wild, that is considered an extremely long and lucky life!



"Puck greets spectators after emerging from his den to announce an early Spring. Puck, a wildlife ambassador and permanent resident of Possumwood Acres, Hubert, North Carolina, made his appearance to the delight of students and faculty at the Thompson Early Childhood Center, Friday morning February 2, 2018. For many of the students this is their first time seeing a ground hog." [John Althouse / The Daily News]

## *Training Opportunities*

### **The Wildlife Center of Virginia “Call of the Wild” 23rd Annual Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference**

Nov 16-18, 2018. details at <https://www.wildlifecenter.org/call-wild-conference>

The **IWRC** offers a variety of courses. See details at <https://theiwrc.org/courses>

Examples include:

- ◆ **Pain and Wound Management** - Albuquerque, NM on April 8, 2018
- ◆ **Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation Course**—Albuquerque, NM, April 6-7, 2018

### **CRC Rehabilitation Seminars**

Carolina Raptor Center will offer two one-day rehabilitation seminars on Oct 6 & 7, 2018. If you would like to be on the mailing list, please email Mathias Engelmann at [Mengelmann@carolinaraptorcenter.org](mailto:Mengelmann@carolinaraptorcenter.org).

Tentative list of topics includes:

Saturday — Imping, Bandaging, Case studies, Physical Therapy & Anesthesia, Tour of hospital

Sunday — Re-nesting raptors, Release Evaluation, Feathers & Aging, Clinical Pathology, Q&A with Dr. David Scott

**Wildlife Rehab Inc.** in Winston-Salem, NC offers an 11-week course (1 night/week) at **Forsyth Technical College** in the spring and fall.

<http://www.wildliferehabinc.org>

**Coastal Carolina Community College** in conjunction with **Possumwood Acres** offers a 6-month course in wildlife rehabilitation. See details at <https://www.coastalcarolina.edu/>

Look for listings in The Continuing Education Schedule under the “Veterinary Office Assistant” section

**Wildlife Welfare** in Raleigh, NC offers training courses. Check them out at <http://www.wildlifewelfare.org>

## *WRNC Cage Grant Awarded*

*by Mathias Engelmann*

A \$500 cage grant has been awarded to Linda Ostrand of Hillsborough, NC. Linda has both state and federal permits and has been a rehabilitator for over 30 years. Her non-profit “Our Wild Neighbors” takes in over 400 animals a year, mostly mammals. She is a great resource, constantly training new volunteers and always available to offer assistance to other rehabilitators.

Linda recently obtained property to develop a stand-alone wildlife facility. The planned 8’ by 8’ cage will be constructed this spring and bolted together for easy disassembly if needed.

As of February construction has already begun. We wish Linda good luck and will feature a photograph of the finished cage in the fall issue of this newsletter.

## *WRNC Emergency Disaster Committee In Action*

*by Linda Bergman-Althouse*

WRNC’s board awarded \$500 to Carolina Waterfowl Rescue in Indian Trail NC after last fall’s devastating fire at their facility. Several dozen birds perished and others were injured. We hope that this contribution has assisted in the recovery process in some small way.

The Emergency Disaster Committee accepts proposals year-round from WRNC members that have urgent financial needs after natural disasters or other major emergency situations arise that involve wildlife facilities in NC.

The board can also take action without a formal proposal or request for help, as was the case in this instance.

## *Survey Contest—The Winner Is...*

*by Carla Johnson*

A big “Thank You” to everyone who filled out the symposium survey and dropped it off on their way out. The board looks at every single one of them to determine how to improve the symposium experience and plan for next year.

Did you notice the following caption on the survey?

**Enter a Drawing to Win A Free Lunch or a Free Lab of your choice in 2019**

A random drawing of all entries gave us a winner - Toni O’Neil! Congrats!

## *Important dates in 2018*

Next **PROPOSED** WRNC Symposium: Saturday & Sunday, Jan 26th & 27th, 2019 with an Icebreaker on Friday, Jan 25th

Deadline to submit a \$500 Chimney Swift Tower Grant Application: **Nov 1st, 2018** (NEW DEADLINE)

Deadline to submit a \$500 Cage Grant Application: **Nov 1st, 2018** (NEW DEADLINE)

## *WRNC Newsletter Schedule*

Do you have a wildlife-related idea you would like to share with the WRNC membership? You should think about submitting it to the editors for consideration. How about a relevant article you found somewhere? Send us a link so we can ask for permission to reprint it. Email all articles, ideas, comments and questions to:

Mengelmann@carolinaraptorcenter.org

The WRNC newsletter is published four times a year. The deadlines for submissions are:

**March 1st      June 1st      September 1st      December 1st.**

## *Vivid T-shirt Colors A Hit At 2018 WRNC Symposium in Raleigh!! by Linda Bergman-Althouse*

Symposium 2018 unveiled TWO new, crew neck WRNC T-Shirts in KIWI (lime green) and HEATHER CARDINAL (an acid wash, red) and they sold like hotcakes (or should I say, beignets!) They were a hit! The new T-shirts (green & red) range in multiple sizes from small to XXL and sell for \$12.00 each. The remaining inventory of CHESTNUT BROWN are \$10.00 each. Our comfy and warm, INDIGO BLUE Sweatshirts remain available for \$20.00. If you did not pick up one (or more) pieces of WRNC apparel at the symposium, they can still be purchased throughout the year by contacting the WRNC T-Shirt Guru, Linda Bergman-Althouse, at lbergmanx@gmail.com. If you have been collecting WRNC T-Shirts from the beginning, you should have a rainbow of seven colors by now!!!!



**Photo by Linda Bergman-Althouse**

## Species Profile – Cooper’s Hawk, Part I

by Mathias Engelmann

The Cooper’s Hawk (*Accipiter cooperi*), abbreviated COHA by the American Ornithological Union, is a relatively common breeding bird in the Carolinas. The COHA is a medium-sized hawk with relatively short, broad wings and a very long tail. In flight, this bird is extremely fast and very maneuverable which makes sense since it hunts mostly birds.

COHA’s have adapted very well to residential areas and are attracted to song bird feeders installed in many yards. This proximity to humans does pose a risk, however. At Carolina Raptor Center (CRC) we admit a significant number of COHA’s following collisions with windows, cars, fences and other structures.

COHA’s are migratory across the northern portion of the population and will head south for the winter. In the Carolinas we typically see an influx of these migrating birds during the fall months.

The following observations are based on almost 1,800 Cooper’s Hawks admitted to CRC between 1982 and 2017.

### Identification

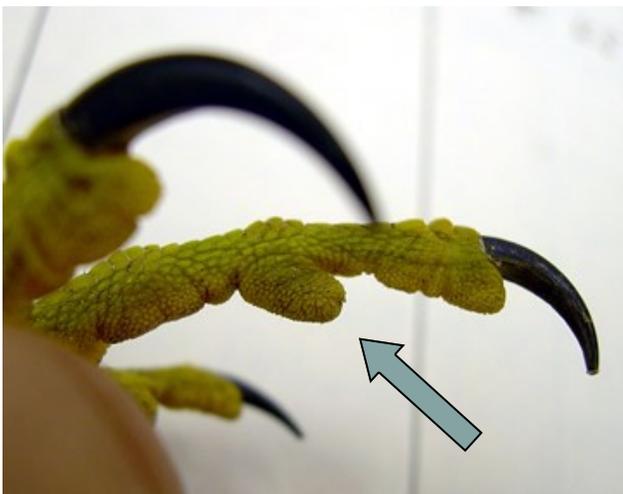
Up-close, COHA’s can be differentiated from most other hawks by a relatively short, compact beak, long slender legs and toes, and a very long middle front toe (#3). That #3 toe also has very pronounced fleshy pads along its underside, right about in the middle of the toe. COHA’s are very



**Adult Cooper’s Hawk**

similar in appearance to Sharp-shinned Hawks but significantly larger and heavier (see weight ranges under Sexing)

Like all hawks in the genus *Accipiter* and a few other raptor species, the mucous membranes of the roof of the mouth are not pink but rather dark blue or almost black in coloration. The large eyes and brightly colored irises give them a piercing stare. They are definitely intense birds and their high-strung nature makes them somewhat of a challenge to rehabilitate. On the other hand, that personality trait means they exercise very well on their own, so getting them back into shape following any major trauma is not usually a problem.



**Enlarged fleshy pad on the underside of the toe, most pronounced on the middle toe**

**All photographs by Carolina Raptor Center**

## *Cooper's Hawk (cont.)*

### Age

As with many hawk species, juvenile and adult plumages differ significantly. Juveniles have a tan chest with long, narrow vertical dark brown markings, a solid brown back, a brown striped tail with wide stripes, and a yellow iris (nestling have a light gray to pale yellow iris). Adults have a reddish brown chest with fine horizontal barring, a solid gray back, a gray-and-brown striped tail and a dark yellow, orange or ruby red iris .



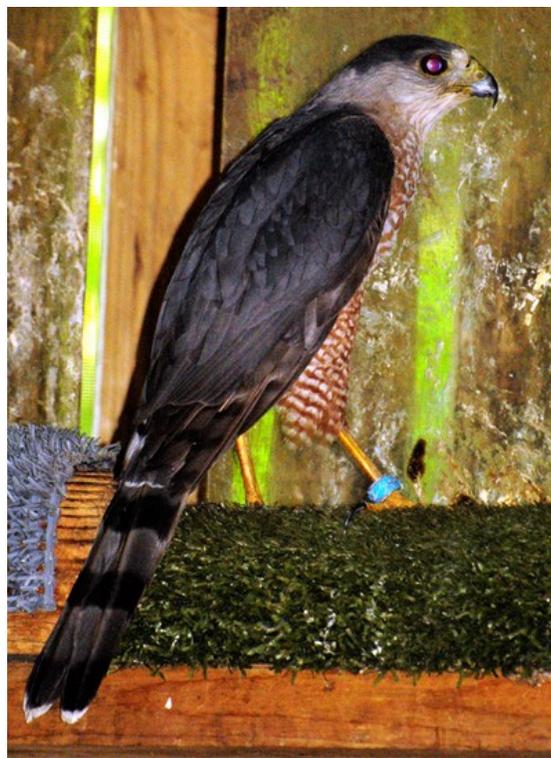
Juvenile



Notice colored leg bands applied to distinguish cage mates



Adult



## Cooper's Hawk (cont.)

The iris color changes from light gray in nestlings and recent fledglings to pale yellow in hatching-year birds to yellow and orange in second-year birds. Older adults (2 - 3yrs +) have ruby red irises.

### Sexing

The combination of weight and keel score will allow for an educated guess about the sex of a particular individual, if it is fairly healthy. At CRC, we use a keel score ranking of 1-5, with 1 denoting an extremely emaciated bird and 5 an extremely well-muscled or possibly even obese bird.

- ◆ Males with a healthy keel score of 3 or 4 weigh on average 300-350 grams.
- ◆ Females with a healthy keel score typically weigh 450-550 grams.

By comparison, healthy female Sharp-shinned Hawks typically weigh 125-150 grams and healthy males 90-100 grams.

A measurement called the wing length (formerly called wing chord) will give a definitive answer about the sex in 95% of all individuals. The wing length is easily measured if the primaries (outer flight feathers) are in good condition. With the wing in the naturally folded position, measure from the wrist to the tip of the longest primary **WITHOUT FLATTENING** the wing.



**Measuring the wing length**

- ◆ Males – wing length 215 - 248 mm
- ◆ Females – wing length 244 - 283 mm
- ◆ Notice a slight overlap between the sexes (Pyle, BBL).



**Above - iris color progression from nestling (top) to juvenile to young & older adult**

## *Cooper's Hawk (cont.)*

If the wing length measurement is borderline, we measure both wings and in some cases the answer is “unknown”. If your patient is missing the tips of the outer primaries (# 7 and # 8) you will not be able to obtain an accurate measurement but can possibly still get an idea on the sex.



**Close-up of wing chord measurement technique**

### **Behavior**

COHA's are very quick, high-strung, and can be vocal when stressed. They are “escape artists” and deserve the respect of everyone who enters an enclosure or attempts to handle them. They will bounce off enclosure walls trying to evade a handler. They are very good at self-exercising and will attempt to fly, even with appropriate wing bandages in place. COHA's can be aggressive towards other individuals and we typically house them alone. (see Housing).

If we need to house two COHA's together, because of a housing shortage, we will select individuals of the same sex and comparable abilities. The exception to the one-COHA-per-cage rule is a group of nestlings or siblings of similar age. They typically get along, at least through the nestling stage.

If they are feeling well, COHA's tend to “Raise their Hackles” and will vocalize when threatened or handled.

**To be continued in the next issue**

## *WRNC Chimney Swift Tower Grants Awarded – FUGATE & SCHAGER!* by Linda Bergman-Althouse

Two Chimney Swift Tower Grant applications were selected by the WRNC Board of Directors to receive a \$500.00 check each to help fund the construction of an appropriate tower build in their respective areas which will provide alternative habitat for and encourage the presence of our environmental partner, the Chimney Swift. A copy of the book “Chimney Swift Towers, New Habitat for America’s Mysterious Birds” accompanied the financial assistance sent. The awarding of a Chimney Swift Tower Grant to both Martha Fugate of Asheville and Roxann Schager of Chapel Hill was announced during our symposium banquet at NCSU University Club on January 20, 2018.

Martha is known to be a nature lover, an environmentalist and conservationist who keeps her acreage natural and who wants to help grow the population of Chimney Swifts. She has always involved herself in community concerns, as well as, environmental issues.

Roxann is known to love all animals and also has acreage that she keeps natural and allows no chemicals on her property. Roxann has a pond she keeps stocked with fish mainly for the wildlife. She loves watching birds, especially at the lake, skim for insects. She has wanted to build a Chimney Swift Tower for a long time because she is always rescuing Chimney Swifts from her stove pipe. She knows that they eradicate insects such as beetles and mosquitoes and wants to keep the birds safe and coming back to her property. We wish Martha and Roxann much success in their Chimney Swift Tower builds, can’t wait to see their finished products and hope we receive word of Chimney Swifts moving in soon!

The WRNC Chimney Swift Tower Grant program can award up to 3 tower grants per year and the submission deadline for next year’s applications is November 1, 2018. (The date was changed during our last board meeting from 5 January to 1 November, annually). A copy of the application and eligibility requirements can be found on our website: <http://www.ncwildliferehab.org/>



**2017 WRNC CSTG winner Tom Tribble, Black Mountain, NC**



**2017 WRNC CSTG winner Bob Cherry & the High Country Audubon Society in Valle Crucis, NC.**

## *Newsletter Editors*

Linda Bergman–Althouse

Jean Chamberlain

Mathias Engelmann

Carla Johnson

Ann Rogers

