Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina, Inc.

ISSUE 74 SPRING 2020

President's Message

We are entering an exciting new era with opportunities to develop professionally as wildlife rehabilitators and begin caring for several species denied our assistance in the past decades. Slowly but surely, we've all proven ourselves to the Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) and to the NC State Public Health Director (NCSPHD) as responsible, honest, dedicated and lawabiding individuals. The reinstatement of the RVS Rehabilitation Permit process indicates their belief in not only our skills and abilities but our trustworthiness as well. This is an honor indeed, not easily bestowed, but one which can swiftly be rescinded. With this in mind, I urge every NC rehabilitator to think long and hard about what will be required to apply for this special permit. You are giving your promise to accept the duties and responsibilities involved or associated with this level of permit, not only for yourself, but for every other NC wildlife rehabilitator now and in the future. This is not a commitment to be taken lightly for 2020. Your actions, quality of care, record-keeping and documentation will be carefully scrutinized as the pioneers of this new era. You will be setting the example of professionalism and raising the bar for the quality of care standards. The WRNC organization stands behind our rehabilitator members. We do this by providing the necessary training to meet the CE required hours. Members can apply for Cage Grants to build the new caging for RVS species. The Board is putting together plans to possibly travel to different locations throughout NC this year to help reach members who were unable to attend the Symposium in January. We will serve as liaisons between the WRC and the NCSPHD and help you find answers to your questions about obtaining your RVS Rehabilitation Permit. We will investigate possible ways for members to get their pre-exposure vaccinations and boosters as inexpensively as possible. Will everyone apply for this new RVS Permit? Of course not! Many will choose to remain as they have in the past, providing care to the species they prefer and not taking on new animals. They can take in the opossums, rabbits, squirrels and birds and let others focus on the raccoons, bats, skunks, foxes and bobcats. This division of labor will utilize resources and manpower more efficiently and makes sense, given the size of our state and the limited number of trained rehabilitators and where they are located. I encourage everyone to "know your neighbor" and find



out who else is active in your county. Prepare to develop a network list now and find out what each fellow rehabber prefers to care for and how best to contact them. A new decade, new chances, new opportunities, new dreams, and we are all in this together, BUT it still remains the same, in that we are all in this for the animals.

Toni O'Neil, President, WRNC



WRNC Board Members

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Cindy Bailey – Vice President

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Hall of Fame Inductees: Mary & Ed Weiss

Vet Student Liaisons: Sarah Scott-Cruz Sarah Zurbuchen

NSCU Symposium Advisor: **Greg Lewbart, DVM**

Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina, Inc.

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WRNC Symposium 2020 Rolls 'BIG' Numbers!

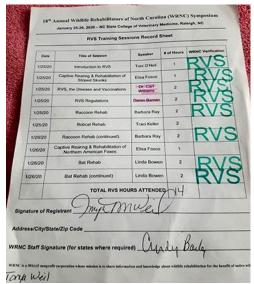
The 18th Annual WRNC Symposium held at the Vet School in Raleigh, NC on 24 – 26 January 2020 enjoyed the largest attendance ever with 315 registrants. Of course, the significant increase probably had a lot to do with the very BIG 2020 change to add Rabies Vector Species to our list of authorized wildlife to provide care for once individual rehabilitators accomplish the training curriculum and meet the housing standards as set forth by the North Carolina Resources Commission in Raleigh. The RVS training was abundantly present and many participants took advantage of the opportunities to get the education and checks in the boxes they need to rehabilitate raccoons, fox, skunks, bats and bobcats. Of course, there were also classes on the two day schedule for beginners and those seasoned rehabbers who wanted to update and refresh their skills too, such as sessions focusing on intro to rehab, songbirds, small mammals (cottontails, opossums & squirrels), enrichment, fluid therapy, feather imping, amphibians and turtle shell repair. WORD ON THE STREET is the "2020 WRNC SYMPOSIUM" was "AMAZING," so much fun and packed with much needed information & training, especially regarding North Carolina's NEW PATH to rehabilitate RVS! WRNC appreciates ALL who came from near and far to attend the multitude of classes offered, to help coordinate all the goings-on at the symposium (ice-breaker, raffle, sales table, meals), to provide knowledge and their professional expertise as creditable guest speakers, to share their personal rehab experiences with others in the field, to bring FREE STUFF to share with those who enjoy that boost in supplies and to display and offer unique wares for independent rehabilitators or centers who need to replenish the varied equipment & supplies it takes to achieve their rehabilitation goals and mission (those VENDORS never let us down!). We want to see you all again next year!



photo by Meredith Broadhurst



photo by Meredith Broadhurst



A Big "THANK YOU" to our RAFFLE DONORS!

WRNC wouldn't be able to add those magical, mega-fun moments at the end of symposium classes on Saturday without the generous 'RAFFLE DONORS' who consistently STEP UP each year! Thank you so much for enriching our annual event! AND here's to getting those business's & individuals' names out there so we all know where the SUPPORT is coming from!

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Face of the "WRNC BOARD of DIRECTORS" Changes





Every year during the Symposium Board of Director's Meeting on Sunday, personnel changes are made; terms expire, new board members are voted in during the general membership meeting at the banquet Saturday night and election of officers takes place. This year, the board had to say "GOOD-BYE" to MATHIAS ENGELMENN and Dr. AMBER MCNAMARA, whose terms expired and chose not to rerun due to their overflowing plates of commitment at this time. Very big

THANK-YOU's are sent to both of these extremely dedicated, passionate and talented wildlife enthusiasts who provided years of assistance to our WRNC membership and the communities they touched. On the flip side, we **WELCOME** three new faces



to the WRNC Board! We've seen them in their element of wildlife rehabilitation for many years and have enjoyed their returning attendance at our annual symposiums; **TONYA WEIL**, Assistant Executive Director at Cape Fear Raptor Center in Rocky Point, NC, **VICTORIA BENSON**, Rehabber, Mentor, Trainer & Organizer for Wildlife Welfare, Inc. for several years and **MARY ELLEN ROGERS**, Director of Sea Biscuit Wildlife Shelter on Oak Island, NC and a 2020 Thomas Quay award nominee. **WELCOME ABOARD!** Thank you for your commitment, and we look forward to working with all of you!

2020 WRNC Grant Awards

CONGRATULATIONS to WRNC Members and Wildlife Rehabilitators, KATHY LILLARD and LINDA VERALDI for their selections to receive a \$500.00 grant each to build enclosures that will enhance their mission of wildlife rehabilitation and conservation. LINDA, from Raleigh, was selected to receive a Cage Building Grant, which she will use to build a soft release cage for Opossums and Squirrels and KATHY, from Edenton, was awarded a grant to build a Chimney Swift Tower, alternative habitat, to encourage our environmental partner, the Chimney Swift, to live, breed, grow and thrive in her wildlife sanctuary community. Kathy & Linda, please KEEP US POSTED on how your projects are going! Cage Grant & Chimney Swift Tower Grant applications are due 1 November annually. For all the details, go to our website: https://ncwildliferehab.org/ to check them out!

2020 WRNC Symposium Photos

WRNC SYMPOSIUM PICTURES are available! So GO FIND YOURSELF and your friends and fella/ow rehabbers! Images (some quite random) from the 2020 WRNC Symposium have been gathered and archived http://bit.ly/31grd6X. Feel free to peruse the gallery and save away the pics of you and your friends (old or new)! Thanks to those who took it upon themselves to capture a few special moments and stepped up to cover the event in the absence of our personal photographer, John Althouse, who was unable to attend this year due to his grandson's wedding in Dallas!! ENJOY!!!! (If anyone has other pics they would like to include in the gallery, please send a message attaching the add-on pics to lbergmanx@gmail.com, and we will get them in there!!)



"Cold-Stun Turtles is the Story These Days"

by Karen Sota, Media Coordinator, Sea Turtle Hospital, TopSail Beach, NC

If it seems like almost every story coming out of our hospital these days is about cold-stunned turtles, it's because the story at the hospital these days is cold-stun turtles. How many turtles? Right now, we have over 100 (103 and probably climbing) patients in house and about 90% of them are recent victims of the cold weather. And if you're wondering where

we put them all, the answer is pretty much everywhere except the gift shop. The majority of the new admits came down from the Cape Lookout area. All but one, a fairly good-sized juvenile loggerhead, are small greens. And as usual they came with pretty heavy loads of mud, sand, barnacles and algae. One of the most interesting is a little guy, or maybe a girl, that came in wearing an "outfit" that was so outrageous it would have gotten the designer kicked off "Project Runway." It's colorful, but beyond that, we have no words. While Jean Beasley examined, triaged and set up the medical protocols for the new arrivals, our volunteers gathered tanks so we could get these turtles out of banana boxes and into water to begin rehydrating. Most were initially





kept on squishy towels for

the first few days while we assessed their physical condition and their tolerance for higher levels of water. It's difficult to describe the amount of work that goes into getting these turtles out of imminent danger and on the road to recovery. Their water is changed three times daily, they are fed twice daily, they are given gentle, soapy baths followed by topical and IV treatment,

and they are showered with love by our staff. During feeding time their water is raised while our volunteers spend literally hours crawling along the concrete floor with food while monitoring them for any signs of

distress. They are checked time and time again during the day and into late night for any problems that might suddenly appear. In addition to the manhours involved, we are using almost 60 pounds of fish and five pounds of squid every day, and these critters are just beginning to get their appetite back. Also, factor in the daily salt requirement (15 to 20 boxes) and the additional water necessary to get to the right salinity (about 4,000 - 5,000 gallons) that will ramp up once we get everybody back into "normal" water levels. Now throw into the mix the fantastic people who attended the cold-stun orientation classes who are now coming in and mostly hanging in there with us the entire 12-14 hour day to help



our regular staff with the work. We arrive in the dark relatively



clean and leave in the dark smelly and dirty. Is it worth it? You bet! And we're not the only ones who think all of this work is worth the effort. There have been two major cold-stunning events so far this winter. The NC

"Cold-Stun Turtles is the Story These Days" continued

Wildlife Resources Commission heads up the monumental task of managing the process; from getting these critters off the beaches to placing them in various facilities for care and planning for their release. You might be familiar by now with our long-term relationship with the NC State School of Veterinary Medicine and our turtle vet, Dr. Harms's work, at their satellite CMAST in Morehead City. All of our North Carolina Aquariums are working along with us to care for cold-stuns: Ft. Fisher, Pine Knoll Shores, Roanoke Island, the STAR Center and Jennette's Pier. Pretty much every state and federal entity that is in any way related to coastal waters pitches in during a cold-stun crisis. Everyone, whether they are employed by one of these agencies or just a concerned citizen who loves the ocean and these wonderful creatures, who are just trying to survive, steps up to help. Just when it seems that



the world has become more cynical and less caring this happens and restores our faith in humanity. Now you know why we keep repeating these basic steps in case you find a cold-stun turtle. Just because a turtle is not moving doesn't necessarily mean it is dead. It might just be cold-stunned. If it's a little guy, gently pick him up and relocate him to a car, garage or other unheated area of your home. Do not try to warm the turtle up — a quick temperature change could send it into shock. We'll send our staff out to rescue any and all turtles, big and small when you give us the word. Call one of the following numbers if you suspect you've come across a local cold-stunned turtle: Hospital contacts are Terry Meyer at 910-470-2880 and Jean Beasley at 910-470-2800. We will also pick up on the hospital line (910-329-0222) if the call comes in during normal hospital hours. The state of North Carolina has a stranding hotline that picks up 24/7. Call 252-241-7367. The Sea Turtle hospital is closed to the public until April. Thank you for supporting us. See you next year!

NEW Veterinarian Student Liaisons Onboard (VSLs)



A VETERINARIAN STUDENT LIAISON (VSL) applies to work with WRNC board members to serve as a point of communication between the wildlife rehabilitation community of North Carolina and the North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine. Usually, two liaisons are selected by the board members of the WRNC. As they serve on WRNC's Board, they commit to helping plan the annual symposium at the Vet School in Raleigh, contact presenters and coordinate veterinary student volunteers for the annual event held every January. They also generate and facilitate veterinary student interest and involvement in wildlife rehabilitation and facilitate communication between the board members and



the veterinary school as requested. WRNC values their dedication, generosity and hard work throughout the year and especially at symposium time. We must say GOODBYE to our previous VSL's, BRANDI CLARK and HALEY STRATTON and thank them both immensely for their assistance to our organization. We now WELCOME ABOARD 'VSL SARAH ZURBUCHEN' and 'VSL SARAH SCOTT-CRUZ!' Thank you, Sarah and Sarah, for taking on this commitment during your very busy educational lives, and we look forward to working with you both!

"Keeper of Dreams"

as written for 'Carolina Salt Magazine' by Linda Bergman-Althouse

In North Carolina we do not concern ourselves with the presence of free roaming lions and tigers but bears, OH MY!! A 300-pound black bear was recently seen running through a playground in Eastern North Carolina, and



only a few days earlier, an adolescent black bear visited a Community College Campus. Since these bear sightings are so close to home, it's best that we get it all out on the table to keep ourselves, as well as the bears, safe. We don't get many calls at the Outer Banks Wildlife Shelter in Newport regarding Black Bears, which is the only bear species found in North Carolina, but when we do, it's usually a "What do I do?" call about sightings in their yard or at a business. Our advice is always focused on safety such as don't keep your garbage cans close to the house and do not leave pet food on the deck when you know bears are in the area. We also provide phone numbers for county wildlife control officers who are authorized and have the means to tranquilize and relocate bears, if necessary. Black Bears once dipped to very low population levels in the 90's, but the comeback of the American Black Bear is one of wildlife management's greatest achievements in our state. It's thrilling for many of us to view bears from a distance (key word – distance), but you should never approach it, try to feed it or leave food out for the bear. When you feed a bear, you are training a bear to expect hand outs from humans, and a trained bear is not a tame bear. Black Bears are omnivores, but approximately 75 to 85% of their diet is vegetable matter. Common foods in our area include clover, dandelions, tubers, wild berries, persimmons, pecans, acorns, wild oats, honey and the larvae of ants, bees, hornets and other insects. Our coastal bears also rely on agricultural crops such as wheat, soybeans, peanuts and corn. Black Bears are not very effective predators but will occasionally snag a prey animal. When natural foods are scarce or if they have experienced human hand outs, they can be attracted to homes, campgrounds or garbage dumps. Once a bear has

"Keeper of Dreams" continued

been lured by people into bad habits, it becomes a danger and will probably have to be killed, an enormous loss of an extraordinarily majestic animal and just as huge a loss for people who want to responsibly enjoy observing a bear. Yes, they are unique and intriguing, but they are still wild animals, large and capable wild animals, and this magnificent animal should be treated with healthy respect. Black Bears in North Carolina are usually black with a brown muzzle and a white patch on its chest. They have five toes on each foot with curved claws at the end of each toe enabling them to feed on insects and grubs in rotting logs. Although their eyesight is poor, they are adept at climbing, swimming, digging and running and have been clocked at 35 miles per hour. Bears prefer large expanses of uninhabited woodland or swampland with dense cover. In the east, lowland hardwoods, swamps and marshes provide good bear habitat because these terrains offer necessary travel paths, escape cover and natural foods that bears need to grow strong. Male bears, called boars, grow significantly larger than females and can weigh 500-600 pounds. However, North Carolina history gives Craven County props for the

largest and current world record Black Bear tipping the scales at a whopping 880 lbs! Females, called sows, generally average between 250–300 pounds and usually birth two to four, 8 to 10 oz cubs in the January time frame, who grow quickly on mother's milk. Their dens are usually built in tree and ground cavities or in hollowed-out logs, which they line with leaves, sticks and grasses. The cubs emerge from their den in early March but stay close, as they will continue to be nursed by Mom and stay with her for almost eighteen months. By the time they reach six months they weigh between 10 to 15 pounds, not much larger than an average house cat. This time of year, cubs will be roaming with their Mom, and females guarding their young will

aggressively protect her babies from any perceived threat, including you. You never want to get between a mother and



her young. If you see a cub, pay attention, don't go anywhere near it, and know that the mother is not far away. Bears are intelligent, have keen senses of smell and hearing but fairly poor vision. They can usually see movement but might not be able to determine what it is. A Black Bear may appear to be docile and uninterested in your presence, but all wildlife can be unpredictable. Park Rangers and wildlife biologists advise that if a black bear approaches you, get big by waving your arms and also get loud, but do not run or climb a tree! They are faster and more efficient at both those physical activities than humans. Make as much noise as you can; clap, yell, throw rocks or bang on something. If you are holding food, throw it as far from you as possible. Black bears are generally shy and when you stand your ground they will avoid the commotion in most cases. A human's change in attitude or perception will help keep people and bears safe. Bears do not have to be perceived as dangerous animals, but they are also not cuddly pets! Willfully approaching a bear within 50

yards is illegal and a violation of federal regulation that can result in fines and arrest. In the grand scheme of things, humans and bears were not really made to interact. According to Cherokee Legend, a bear is a "Keeper of Dreams," so in that same spirit of romancing the wild, it would be best to maintain a dream's distance to ensure your own safety and that of the bear's.

(all stock photos)

"RVS" Frequently Asked Questions

QUESTION: Do I have to have my rabies immunizations before I submit my application?

Answer: Yes

QUESTION: Where can I take a Rabies Vector Species (RVS) course?

Answer: WRNC is scheduling courses where there is a need. Contact Jean Chamberlain at <u>ichamberlain1@windstream.net</u> if you are interested in taking or hosting a course.

For more RVS FAQ's please visit: https://ncwildliferehab.org/rs-faq/



Quinto's Comedy Corner

by Linda Bergman-Althouse

QUINTO SAYS:

You might be a WILDLIFE REHABILITATOR if

"what you find in POOP has become very interesting to you!"

Oı

"you are concerned about getting arrested by the NARC team because someone hands you a suspicious looking shoe box in a Diner's parking lot at 10:00 pm!"

Or

"you find yourself holding your pen or pencil like it's a feeding syringe!"

QUINTO wishes you all a "HAPPY 2020 & HAPPY SPRING!"

WRNC MEMBERSHIP! If you have a one-liner that describes the unique life and double-down passion of a Wildlife Rehabilitator (tell it like it is!) and you'd like to share with QUINTO for his column, please send it to lbergmanx@gmail.com.



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

Linda Bergman-Althouse at: lbergmanx@gmail.com Thank you!

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

March 1st June 1st September 1st December 1st

Training Opportunities! Check Them Out!

- Wildlife Rehab Inc. in Winston-Salem, NC offers an 11-week course (1 night/week) at Forsyth Technical Community College in the Spring and Fall. http://www.wildliferehabinc.org
- **Coastal Carolina Community College** offers a 6-month course in wildlife rehabilitation. See details at https://www.coastalcarolina.edu/
 - Listings are in the Continuing Education Schedule under the "Veterinary Office Assistant" section.
- Carolina Raptor Center, Charlotte, NC
 CRC offers rehabilitation seminars throughout the year. Contact Mathias Engelmann at (704) 875-6521, extension 108 or at mathiasengelmann@carolinaraptorcenter.org for information and to register.
- Wildlife Welfare, Inc. in Raleigh, NC offers training courses. Check them out at http://www.wildlifewelfare.org
- **IWRC** offers a variety of "In Person" and "Online" classes from 'Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation' to 'Zoonoses.' Check them out at https://theiwrc.org/courses For more detailed information, you can call 866.871.1869.
- Wildlife Resources Commission, Raleigh, NC offers a wildlife rehabilitation apprenticeship program. To rehabilitate baby squirrels, baby opossums and bunnies through mentorship apply at https://www.ncwildlife.org/Licensing/Other-Licenses-and-Permits/Wildlife-Rehabilitation-License#6629589-download-the-license-forms

WRNC Newsletter Editors

Linda Bergman-Althouse	Jean Chamberlain		
Victoria Benson	Carla Johnson		
Ann Rogers			

