

2021 Beginner Class Instructors

Victoria Benson, MT(ASCP)

(Medical Math for Small Mammal Rehabbing)

Victoria is a graduate of UNC-CH and a registered Medical Technologist with 35+ years of clinical and research experience in microbiology and oncology biology laboratories. This extensive scientific background aids in her passion for wildlife rehabilitation; microscopy, identification of parasites, accurate laboratory calculations, and familiarity with the metric system, among other things, are all tools that help ensure the successful outcome that we all strive for.

Victoria has been an active rehabber and mentor/trainer with Wildlife Welfare, Inc. for several years, and is delighted to be able to devote more time now that she is retired and no longer has to transport baby animals on a Triangle Transit bus to her job at UNC-CH!

Linda Bergman-Althouse

(Medical Math for Small Mammal Rehabbing)

Linda began volunteering at the Outer Banks Wildlife Shelter (OWLS) in Morehead City, pursuing her passion in wildlife conservation and rehabilitation twenty-five years ago. She achieved her certification as a state wildlife rehabilitator and continues to actively volunteer at OWLS, working clinic in rehabilitation, coordinating and accomplishing field rescues and mentoring new volunteers. Linda has been presenting wildlife classes on issues and topics relative to the field of wildlife rehabilitation such as "Squirrel Ailments," "Anything & Everything Squirrel," "Alternate Habitat for Chimney Swifts," "Professionalism," "Hazards of Wildlife Rehabilitation" and "Treating the Human Animal" for many years as requested by coordinators for wildlife symposiums and conferences held in our eastern region. Linda is proactively concerned with the loss of wildlife habitat due to progressive development in Onslow and its surrounding counties and regularly attends community and civic meetings to voice those concerns through education, as well as, rally support. Linda holds a Master of Science degree in educational psychology. Linda grew up in rural Macon County, Illinois with many chickens, cats and dogs, but after 27 years of residency calls North Carolina home. She is Eastern Illinois University Alumna, an author, a retired U.S. Marine, College Psychology Instructor, Industry Training Developer & Line Build Designer, Wildlife Rescuer and Rehabilitator, current board member and Vice President of Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina, Inc. (WRNC) and staunch advocate for animal rights and conservation of our natural resources. Linda resides in Onslow County, North Carolina with her retired Marine & Professional Photographer husband, John, and three (indoor only) cats; Seven, Shadow and Frizbee.

Jean Chamberlain

(Mammal Physical Exam)

Jean has been a rehabilitator for about 25 years, specializing in raptors for 20 years. Jean presents many

wildlife education programs each year in the Forsyth county area. She organizes and helps teach the wildlife rehabilitation course at her local community college. She designed and teaches WRNC's Basic Course and chairs the committee that plans the symposium each year. Jean is past president for WRNC, is on WRNC's Board and is the treasurer and web administrator for WRNC. She created Raptor ID on IWRC's website and is on the Curriculum Development Committee for IWRC's courses. Jean is also active in the Forsyth Audubon Chapter, participates in several area bird counts, the Climate Watch nuthatch survey, and coordinate the Pilot Mountain Hawk Watch each September.

Nina Fischesser

(Working with Your Vet)

Nina Fischesser has been a licensed rehabilitator since 1991, was the founding WRNC president. She works with Avian, small mammalian, and reptilian native NC species. She holds a MA in Environmental Education and Communication from Royal Roads University in Victoria, BC Canada, and a BA in Therapeutic Recreation from Southern Illinois University. Nina has been employed for 15 years at LeesMcRae College in Banner Elk, NC, as Director of the May Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, teaching wildlife rehabilitation and wildlife education through experientially based program as a BS in Wildlife Biology: Concentration Wildlife Rehabilitation. Nina was employed by the North Carolina Outward Bound School as a field instructor for 11 years, and is a strong believer in experiential education through wildlife rehabilitation and wilderness adventure.

Melisse Hopping

(Medical Terminology)

Melisse has been a licensed rehabber for almost 20 years. She has taught wildlife rehab classes at Forsyth Tech in Winston -Salem and has taught classes at the symposium for several years. She has presented sessions at schools and local organizations. She is on the board of WRNC, and Owl's Roost Wildlife Education, a local nonprofit organization.

Carla Johnson

(Handling Wildlife Calls)

Carla has been rehabbing for over 25 years and is on the board of WRNC. She has coordinated wildlife rehabilitation classes through the local community college in Winston-Salem, NC and presented countless environmental education programs to the surrounding community. Carla is on the symposium committee and helped put together and teach the refresher course taught by WRNC. In her spare time, she rescues dogs from puppy mills and natural disaster situations, is the Southeastern Region coordinator, treasurer as well as one of the board of directors for Chihuahua Rescue & Transport, a national 501(c)3 organization and enjoys working to place unwanted hairless dogs.

Toni O'Neil

(Introduction to RVS Rehab)

Toni O'Neil has been rehabilitating since 1991 and specializes in songbirds, shorebirds, raptors, and waterfowl. She has teaches the Wildlife Rehabilitation courses through Coastal Carolina Community College in Jacksonville, NC and the online courses through the Animal Behavior Institute. Since 2003 she has been the Founder and Executive Director of Possumwood Acres Wildlife Sanctuary in Hubert, NC.

Paige Person

(Cottontails)

Paige Person received her BS in Conservation of Natural Resources at NCSU. She is one of the original founders of the Heartwood Montessori School in Cary NC. She spent most of her life involved with her horses until she fell in love with rescuing small mammals. Paige is on the board of WRNC and is a rehabber, mentor and instructor with Wildlife Welfare in Raleigh. She is head of Wildlife Welfare's training team...teaching classes to train new rehabilitators and providing advanced training classes for current members. She enjoys mentoring new rehabbers and taking them under her wing each season.

Paige works full time and devotes most of her time away from work to nurturing our native wildlife. She has a special love and interest in cottontails. She enjoys being involved with other compassionate likeminded animal lovers and making a difference. She is a lifelong learner, which is one of her favorite parts of rehabbing.

Ann Rogers

(Medical Math for Small Mammal Rehabbing)

Ann has been a licensed home rehabilitator of small mammals since 1988. She has been federally permitted for songbirds since 1991. She is a board member of both Wildlife Welfare, Inc. and WRNC. She has a degree in mathematics from Duke University and retired from her job a software developer in 2000. She is the mother of two adult sons, a Boston terrier, two house sparrows, and two pet mice, who all travel in a motorhome with her and her husband when they take extended trips.

Linda Veraldi

(Opossums 101)

Linda has lived in Raleigh for 37 years with her husband Sam, and two children and has always had a passion for anything with four legs. Originally from New York State, where as a child she always had dogs, bunnies, and horses. She was rehabbing before she knew it was a "thing". Finding Wildlife Welfare, Inc. and becoming a licensed Rehabilitator was a dream come true. As she enjoys rehabbing opossums, squirrels and bunnies, she has found her passion with opossums. She has been officially rehabbing for a few years and last year she joined the Wildlife Welfare, Inc. Opossums Training Team and has loved sharing her passion for opossums with new rehabbers. She loves to educate and inform everyone she meets about the amazing opossum and wants to launch a crusade to re-educate the public about their abuse and mistreatment and how truly wonderful they are to have around.

