

President's Message . . .

One of the concerns that the older generation wildlife rehabilitators has is "Who is going to replace us when we can't continue rehabbing any longer?" I had my mind put at ease August 14th and 15th when Jean Chamberlain and I were able to see first-hand who will be following in our footsteps, and we were delighted! As members of the Training Committee, we went to Cornelius, NC for the weekend to conduct a basic wildlife rehabilitation course. It was such a rewarding experience for us to see the enthusiasm of the 25 attendees. Kathy Pedrick, Founder of Deer Track Wildlife Rescue in Denver, NC had contacted WRNC to make arrangements for this training session. As part of WRNC's commitment to teaching people interested in obtaining their Apprenticeship Permit, we packed up our supplies and traveled out to offer our presentations geared for the new beginner. There were 13 sessions with multiple Q&A periods. It was quite fast-paced, and I wish we could have stayed longer – and Jean and I loved every minute of it! We used some of the pre-recorded power point slide shows and interactive presentations, demonstrations with both live and toy stuffed animals, and everyone practiced a few simple skills. The sessions were: Introduction to Rehabilitation, Basic Medical Terminology for Beginners, Rehabbing Opossums 101, Physical Exam with video, Working with Your Vet, Capture and Restraint, Supplies, Rehabbing Squirrels 101, Zoonoses, Rehabbing Cottontails 101, Fluid Therapy, Handling Wildlife Calls, and a brief look at book resources. Of course we also answered lots and lots of wonderful questions, and I feel we left there after making 25 new friends and meeting 25 potential new WRNC members. Hopefully we'll be seeing many of them again at the Symposium in Raleigh, NC in January 2022! This service is offered by WRNC to any area group or person in North Carolina interested in sponsoring a weekend basic beginner training course. We are happy to help bring new rehabilitators into the fold and have them join us in a very rewarding and

challenging profession. Our goal is to increase the knowledge and skills for all who wish to become caretakers for the injured and orphaned wild birds and animals of North Carolina.

..... Toni O'Neil



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“IN-PERSON” WRNC SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULED for 2022 by Jean Chamberlain

WILDLIFE REHABILITATORS, WANNA-BE REHABBERS, VET STUDENTS, WILDLIFE ENTHUSIASTS & WRNC MEMBERS:

WRNC’s SYMPOSIUM will be here soon! It will be held on January 29th and 30th and YES it will be an “IN-PERSON” event, held at the North Carolina School of Veterinary Medicine in Raleigh, NC. GOOD NEWS: we will be able to hold our Icebreaker on Friday evening (the 28th), our banquet Saturday night, sell books, t-shirts and sweat shirts at the sales tables all weekend, and we will have our mega-popular raffle again. If anyone would like to donate to the raffle or bring an item(s) for the raffle, please email: Tonya Weil at barnowl.mom@gmail.com or call her @ 910-430-0794.

This will be our 20th symposium, and that’s exciting, so we plan to make it our biggest and best yet. There will be a full set of classes for beginners, classes for mammal, avian and reptile rehabilitators and classes for advanced rehabilitators and veterinarians. As usual, we will have several hands-on labs that we hope will garner vast interest for those who want that kinesthetic experience. We plan to make this symposium really special and want to see familiar, as well as, brand new faces. We are inviting several well-known experts to speak. Look for more information on the classes and speakers on our website during October. Registration through the North Carolina State University, College of Veterinary Medicine will open in early November. If funds are a little tight for you, but you still want to attend, check out the symposium scholarship opportunity on our website (ncwildliferehab.org) that will cover registration and hotel accommodations for up to three WRNC members. It’s been awhile . . . can’t wait to see you all in January!



EXHIBITORS: Also, we are extending a personal invitation to all wildlife interest groups and the WRNC membership to set up an exhibit table displaying information about your group and the work you do with wildlife. What an opportunity for free publicity and to recruit new volunteers!

You may also sell your wildlife-related merchandise, gift shop items, hand-made crafts - whatever you wish by taking this opportunity to raise money for your animals and your group! Now that we are “BACK” for the symposium - we anticipate even more attendees for 2022. Members and attendees are always looking for rehab items, supplies, t-shirts, books, pictures, etc. to take home from their trip. Jewelry & craft items are also big sellers, as well as yummy baked goods. People spend because it is for a good cause - YOURS! If you or your group are interested in this opportunity, please call Toni O’Neil at 910-326-6432 or e-mail Oneil9734@yahoo.com for the details and exhibitor application. Toni will be happy to answer any questions you may have. You can reserve a table for either one day or both days, and remember, there is no fee to be an exhibitor if you are associated with a non-profit organization or an animal group.

NWRA SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION!

as posted by the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association

WHO DOESN'T NEED MORE: Training, Knowledge, Expertise and Financial Assistance? If you are also a member of the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association (NWRA), please check out this recent NWRA offering!

To all of our NWRA members: we hope you are finding time to relax and enjoy all that the summer has to offer. We are looking forward to sharing some resources that we have been developing to deal with compassion fatigue, and we are also excited to announce that our Scholarship applications are now open! Make sure to apply soon to secure funding for Symposium attendance, educational materials, and more. We are also glad to announce that we have options for tax-exempt organizations in Minnesota and Michigan to register with our online store. Additionally, we have an open call for artists interested in becoming involved with NWRA, and we are accepting Symposium session and poster applications until September 15th.

NWRA Scholarship Applications Now Open Deadline November 1, 2021

NWRA members, other rehabilitators, and veterinary students are encouraged to apply.

Five \$500 scholarships available to purchase educational publications through NWRA

Up to \$3,200 available for improving wildlife housing

- 16 scholarships available for NWRA symposium attendance, designed to help cover costs of registration, travel, lodging

What you need to know:

Online applications only

- Two signed reference letters required attached to application form
- Find information here: https://www.nwrawildlife.org/page/nwra_scholarships

NWRA is pleased to provide these scholarships to help both people and wildlife. All are funded by generous donors.

Since 1993, NWRA has provided more \$129,600 to more than 214 people!



Busy With Bees by L. Michele Poe

Humans aren't the only living species dependent upon the honeybee for survival. All the wildlife we rehabilitate are too! More than a few wildlife rehabilitators throughout North Carolina have taken on the role of Beekeepers, also called honey farmers or apiarists, along with everything else they do!! So, LET'S TALK ABOUT BEES! The care honeybees need changes with the time of year, just like with other wildlife species. In the winter, a beekeeper's work is minimal because during hibernation bees sustain themselves solely on the honey made and stored during the summer. Ensuring the colonies have safe and well maintained hive boxes and that their food supply remains plentiful is pretty much the extent of needed care. However, during the summer, when local honey starts to show up on shelves and at farmer's markets, we're signaled that the honeybees and the beekeepers have been busy! North Carolina honey is usually harvested in June and July. For honey production, beekeepers give extra hive boxes called "honey supers" to strong colonies. These boxes contain wooden frames of pre-formed honeycomb. After the bees have filled the honey super and sealed the comb with wax, it's ready to be harvested. At this stage, the beekeeper is cautious to leave enough



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honey in the hives so the bees won't starve over the winter. Only the excess or what's in the extra honey supers is removed. The art of beekeeping is more complicated than most of us know and as with other wildlife, unique skills and knowledge are required to provide successful support. Beginner beekeepers are paired with a mentor, by county Agricultural Extension Offices, who help them through the first couple of years, from choosing the best hive location and managing brood diseases to completing the extraction process. "Although honeybees are highly managed and not endangered, they still represent one of the world's most widespread and important pollinators, contributing to both agriculture and wild ecosystems. Any number of factors can negatively influence the delicate balance of a honeybee hive, such as disease, mites,



Photo by John Athouse

irresponsible pesticide use, and habitat loss" asserts Kathrine Gallagher, writer for Sustainability for All. What exactly makes honey local? While there isn't a fixed definition for "local" honey, it typically means a 5 to 100 mile radius from your home. However, the closer to your home the better! Local bees make local honey, which means the pollen they collect and bring back to the hive is all sourced from local plants. "Since many seasonal allergies are caused by these same plants, eating honey that contains that pollen can possibly combat those allergies", explains writer Shahrzad Warkentin in the Amazing Benefits of Local Honey. In addition to potentially fighting allergies, one of the great benefits of raw honey is that it's totally unprocessed. This helps it to sustain more nutrients compared to processed honey since it is directly extracted from the honeycomb. The honey found in grocery stores is often filtered, a process that removes the trace amounts of pollen it might contain. The purer the honey, the stronger its medicinal benefits and potential anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial, and antibiotic properties. It's commonly known that raw honey is beneficial for humans which we've learned can be safely and effectively used in the treatment of wildlife, as well. More wildlife veterinarians and rehabilitators are using raw honey to heal wounds, fight infection and kill harmful bacteria. It's worth mentioning that



Photo by L. Michele Poe

Busy With Bees (cont.) by L. Michele Poe

globally, Manuka honey, made by bees found in the New Zealand Tea Tree and the Manuka bush in Australia, is considered the strongest honey with the most powerful properties out there. Because Manuka honey is not made here, it's rare and very expensive. However, unfiltered honey, the second strongest honey found, is readily available, cost effective, and beneficial to the good health of humans and animals. It's more vital than ever to support local beekeepers who are helping raise and maintain healthy bees. The benefits of local honey far outweigh the ease of buying something processed at the grocery store. From minimizing seasonal allergies to supporting local wildlife, the higher price is worth it. Plus, honey lasts forever, so it's a great investment in your family's future health. For a list of certified beekeepers in your area, contact your county Agricultural Extension Office. It's worth noting that North Carolina has the largest and one of the most active state beekeeping organizations in our country!

Wildlife Rehabber Alert: Local honey might prove to be a helpful "go-to" in your wildlife medicine cabinet!

Routine Beekeeper Duties!

(Photos by L. Michele Poe)



Beekeeper, Michael Poe, performs regular inspections of hive boxes.

BK, Michael, prepares an empty hive box to house a swarm.

Michael Poe & son, Levi, begin to remove the swarm from a tree.

SWARM: A swarm occurs when a bee colony splits as the old queen is replaced. The older queen leaves the hive with roughly half of the worker bees. Swarming is a honeybee colony's natural means of reproduction. When Honeybees swarm, they are typically very docile and not dangerous, because swarming honeybees feed prior to the swarm which reduces their ability to sting. The further bees are away from the vicinity of their nest (or hive), they are less defensive which is another reason why they are less likely to sting.



UNCAPPING THE COMB: Beekeeper, Michael Poe, removes the cap from the comb on one of the hive frames to harvest the honey. And there you have it, Liquid Gold, ready to bottle! It's interesting to note that Honey Bee foragers must collect nectar from about 2 million flowers to make 1 pound of honey. Bees are also extremely important to the planet because they pollinate approximately 130 agricultural crops in the US alone, including fruit, fiber, nut and vegetable crops. Bee pollination adds approximately 14 billion dollars annually to improved crop yield and quality.

Sometimes Helping Hurts . . Compassion Fatigue

by Linda Bergman-Althouse

Are you tired? We all get tired, but that's normal, and usually we can tell when we need to take a break. Unfortunately, in our chosen field of wildlife rehabilitation, we can easily become more than tired, but we still press on because there are lives to save, and we know what needs to be done! Let's face it, there aren't that many experienced and licensed wildlife rehabilitators in North Carolina to cover the vast areas we cover. So, we shift into auto-pilot and keep on keepin' on with low or no pay, little notice, high stress and long hours! This, my friends, can very well culminate in compassion fatigue (CF), or what some call "burn-out," which can be debilitating despite being the excellent, seasoned and "God-Sent" rehabilitator you are. Yes, we know what CF is, but most of us don't dare speak of it because we're strong, capable, we can handle it and that won't happen to us. Truth be told, it can, so let's talk about it. Compassion fatigue is a defined concept, as well as, a true condition that can include emotional, physical, and spiritual distress for those providing care to people or animals. It's associated with caregiving, especially providing care to those experiencing significant emotional or physical pain and suffering. So, it stands to reason that compassion fatigue is a serious occupational hazard for those in any kind of helping profession such as wildlife rehabilitation. It should be no surprise that wildlife rehabilitators are deeply caring people with intense empathy for those most at risk and in our case that's wildlife, the underdogs of the underdogs. Compassion fatigue can present in a number of ways, so we must be equipped to take care of ourselves to prevent the onset that can lead to feelings of failure, guilt, self-doubt, sadness, and powerlessness. Indications of compassion fatigue are:

- Loss of sleep
- Reduced sense of efficacy on the job
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling overwhelmed with obligations
- Apathy and emotional numbness
- Secretive addictions or self-medicating in a variety of ways



As a self-assessment, ask yourself these questions; Do you feel emotionally numb or drained at the end of the day? Do you enjoy your work but feel like you have nothing left to give? If you answer yes to both of those questions, you might be suffering from compassion fatigue, and if that's the case, you're not alone. Feeling numb or overburdened in response to the many duties and responsibilities you bear as a wildlife rehabilitator, does not make you less than kind. What you're feeling could instead be what mental health professionals view as compassion fatigue. Anxiety, sadness and low self-worth can also be symptoms of this sort of emotional exhaustion. Often, this stress condition is associated with caregivers such as wildlife rehabilitators, because we continually care for wildlife and witness trauma on a daily basis. So, we are at risk. There is a lot to know about this affliction; how to prevent it, how to recognize it and how to recover from it, but this is a good place to start. Here are some resources to help you take care of yourself:

Sometimes Helping Hurts . . Compassion Fatigue

(cont.) by Linda Bergman-Althouse

NWRA will be offering a free “Compassion Fatigue” webinar for members on Thursday, Oct 7, 2021. More information about this event will be released in their September membership email.

Brandon Hess, who is a certified veterinary practice manager and a certified compassion fatigue professional, offers a multitude of recommendations and online courses to help you understand, recognize and deal effectively and successfully with CF.

WRNC will be offering a presentation on “Compassion Fatigue” during our annual symposium, January 29-30, 2022.

In the mean time, here are a few tips to help you manage stress and hopefully reduce or prevent compassion fatigue as recommended by Brandon Hess:

Increase Your Awareness by identifying your personal stressors in the moment and implementing your individualized preventative or treatment plan.

Set Boundaries by drawing lines in the sand. Minimize what you take home from work so it does not impact you or your family negatively. (Very hard to do as wildlife rehabilitators – but we can reach out for assistance and wean down our physical & mental lists!)

Find Your Balance: Work-Life balance is a term used often in caregiving fields. Make sure your scale isn’t weighing too heavily on the work-side, and find positive life-side activities to keep yourself balanced.

Remember, if you can’t take care of yourself, how the heck are you going to take care of anybody else, (whether they be feathery, furry or scaly!). We need you WELL! They need you WELL!



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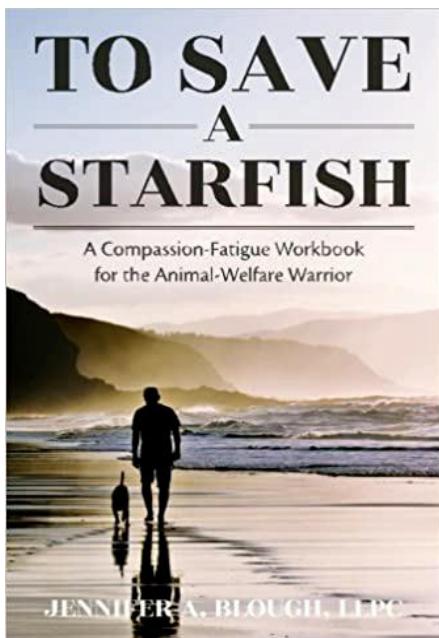


**REHABBING CAN GET
OVERWHELMING!**

Please practice healthy, ongoing self-care while successfully caring for wildlife!

The Book Shelf compiled by Linda Bergman-Althouse

To Save a Starfish: A Compassion-Fatigue Workbook for the Animal-Welfare Warrior by Jennifer Blough



Compassion fatigue is the emotional drain experienced by caregivers of both people and animals. In this invaluable workbook, counselor and animal-welfare expert Jennifer Blough focuses on people who work with animals—and who often don't get the help they need. Through personal stories and exercises, Jennifer assists readers in overcoming care-related issues and regaining a positive psyche. In this workbook, you will learn the symptoms of compassion fatigue and the risk factors for developing it, and you will understand the human-animal relationship. You will discover how to practice mindfulness, meditate, and use progressive muscle relaxation techniques and massage therapy to calm the mind and body. The book will also help you to tweak your thought processes and communicate in a healthy way, while creating limits. You'll even receive tips on using nutrition, physical activity, and rest to help combat compassion fatigue. If you need counseling or group support, the book will guide you in the right direction. After completing the exercises and following Jennifer's expert advice, you will feel recharged and ready to return to helping animals in need.

Check it out at: <https://amzn.to/3yZ0Xhx>

80% 5 star reviews.

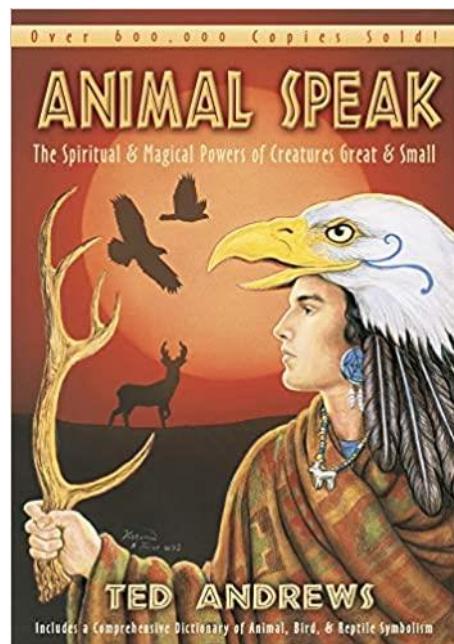
Animal-Speak: The Spiritual & Magical Powers of Creatures Great & Small by Ted Andrews

Open your heart and mind to the wisdom of the animal world. *Animal Speak* provides techniques for recognizing and interpreting the signs and omens of nature. Meet and work with animals as totems and spirit guides by learning the language of their behaviors within the physical world. *Animal Speak* shows you how to:

- Identify, meet, and attune to your spirit animals
- Discover the power and spiritual significance of more than 100 different animals, birds, insects, and reptiles
- Call upon the protective powers of your animal totem
- Create and use five magical animal rites, including shapeshifting and sacred dance

This beloved, bestselling guide has become a classic reference for anyone wishing to forge a spiritual connection with the majesty and mystery of the animal world.

Check it out at: <https://amzn.to/2W8f3Pl> 2,195 reviews & 87% are 5 star



HEY THERE! Reading is a **STAYCATION** where you can visit someone else's world for a while or find those like-minded people you can relate to! "**The BOOK SHELF**" is a feature to showcase a few **recommended books** that you may enjoy. If you have a book recommendation, please email lbergmanx@gmail.com with your personal addition to "**The BOOK SHELF.**" Thanks!

“Checking In” with ‘Sea Biscuit Wildlife Shelter’

by Mary Ellen Rogers, Director

Mary Ellen Rogers, Director of Sea Biscuit Wildlife Shelter (SBWF) in Oak Island, North Carolina states that “Happily, it’s somewhat quiet in Rehab right now at the center, but with six education birds in residency our mini-tours continue to delight guests and satisfy federal requirements. US Fish and Wildlife permits require that our education birds be visible to



The youngest visitors to SBWS are excited to meet the Pelicans up close and personal!



Mary Ellen Rogers (red shirt), Director of SBWS, guide her shelter guests through the outside enclosure area to meet the wildlife ambassadors.

the public and their unique qualities explained during educational programs or tours, so we invite small groups to visit three mornings a week to see and talk about them. We love showing the pelicans to the children!” Shown in the photos are recent SBWS visitors. Like most wildlife rehabilitation centers, Sea Biscuit Wildlife Shelter is a non-profit rehabilitation organization that specializes in the treatment and release of wildlife, mainly wild birds. SBWS is located in Brunswick County,

North Carolina and serves the surrounding areas. When Mary Ellen realized there was no rehabilitation center for local shorebirds in that area who get tangled in fish nets, swallow fish hooks, or are otherwise injured, sick or become orphaned, she founded the shelter in 2007 to provide medical care or treatment for those distressed wild birds in need. Since then, thousands of wild birds have been returned to their natural habitats and thousands of people have been educated about the needs of these amazing animals. Dedicated to birds solely, rather than being a large all encompassing facility, the shelter is located in the lower level of Mary Ellen’s beach house and in her back yard. As most wildlife rehabilitators are keenly aware, caring for injured or sick birds is a full-time job requiring rising before dawn, intense labor and money for food, medication and supplies. Some examples of the early morning tasks and many repeated throughout the day, include preparing the special diets required for the different species of birds, changing the towels in the cages, cleaning the 30-gallon aquarium and weighing the babies. Some of the additional chores include replacing the fresh water into each of the cages, adjusting heating pads and heat lamps for young birds. Many of the birds must be fed by hand and some have to be taken outside for the day. Some of the birds must be tube fed and there are bandages to be changed. Multiple loads of towels require washing and drying and each of the birds’ medical charts must be updated after each feeding. While the Mission Statement of Sea Biscuit emphasizes rescue, rehabilitation and release, it is not surprising that another part of their mission is education. To that end, the shelter houses education

“Checking In” with ‘Sea Biscuit Wildlife Shelter’ (cont.)

by Mary Ellen Rogers, Director

birds that appear at numerous educational programs. None of the education birds can be released to the wild due to the nature of their injuries, yet these birds serve a wonderful function within the human community as ambassadors for the bird world. Sea Biscuit has separate permits from the federal government that allow these birds to remain in captivity. To maintain its status as an education bird, each one must participate in at least twelve programs annually.



Please say HELLO to Sea Biscuit's Wildlife Ambassadors!

Photos by Sea Biscuit Wildlife Shelter Staff

ABOVE: RED-TAILED HAWKS,

SCARLET & GLENDA

UPPER RIGHT: BARRED OWLS,

BENSON & BOGIE

LOWER RIGHT: BROWN PELICANS,

TIM & TESSA



ATTENTION: All Independent Rehabilitators & Wildlife Shelters or Centers! You are invited to “**CHECK IN**” with WRNC and other Wildlife Rehabilitators across North Carolina with **ADMIT**, **RESCUE** or **RELEASE** stories that are recent or grand memories that stand out for you. We are ALL interested in “**what’s up**” in your neck of the Tarheel State **REHAB WISE!** Just email a short **STORY** with a **PICTURE** or two to **SHARE** in our next WRNC Newsletter. lbergmanx@gmail.com Thanking you in advance for checking in and keeping us in the loop!

Training Opportunities! Never Stop Learning!

"IN-PERSON" wildlife rehab classes as well as virtual are being offered. Always continue to check with the sources listed below for upcoming Wildlife Rehabilitation courses throughout the year. Some of the methods of training will still be virtual, Zoom & webinars, but we are moving toward normalcy and remember, the information and knowledge gained is extremely valuable no matter how we get it!

- The 20th annual **WRNC Symposium** (in-person) is coming up in January 2022. Check our website (<https://ncwildliferehab.org>) for all the details! Registration will begin in November, 2021.
- **Wildlife Rehab, Inc.** is holding a 12 week course, "Introduction to Wildlife Rehabilitation," with a weekly virtual class, to begin February 7th, 2022 and can accommodate anyone, from anywhere. People can register, via the website at wildliferehabinc.org, starting in November.
- **Carolina Raptor Center, Charlotte, NC** CRC offers rehabilitation seminars throughout the year. Contact Mathias Engelmann at 704.875.6521, ext. 108 or at mathiasengelmann@carolinaraptorcenter.org for information.
- **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.
- **ANOTHER WAY TO GO:** The **Wildlife Resources Commission**, Raleigh, NC offers a wildlife rehabilitation apprenticeship program to rehabilitate **baby squirrels, baby opossums and bunnies** through a mentor (that you find and initiate). Apply at <https://www.ncwildlife.org/Licensing/Other-Licenses-and-Permits/Wildlife-Rehabilitation-License#6629589download-the-license-forms>

compiled by Linda Bergman-Althouse

Fun Fox Facts! *compiled by Linda Bergman-Althouse*

- **Foxes are more like cats than dogs.** Similar to cats, foxes are nocturnal and due to their vertically slanted pupils, also cat-like, they have increased visibility in dim light. They can climb trees, use their whiskers to navigate, retract their claws & even stalk their prey, just like cats.
- **A male is called a 'dog fox' while a female is called a 'vixen.'**
- **Foxes live in underground dens.** 1 to 11 pups live in the den with the vixen, while the dog fox gathers food.
- **Foxes are smelly.** A sickly, musty scent comes from the glands at the base of their tails. If you start smelling this around your home or in your crawl space, it may be an indicator that foxes are nearby.
- **Foxes make 40 different sounds** from guttural chattering to howl like screams and everything in between.
- **Foxes are solitary.** They prefer to hunt and sleep alone, except when they're busy raising young in their den.
- **Foxes have impeccable hearing.** They can hear a watch ticking 40 yards away, which helps them identify prey underground.
- **Foxes love to play.** They play alone, with toys, other foxes and other animals — even deer!
- **There are two types of foxes in the Carolinas:** The Red Fox and the Grey Fox. Grey foxes have always been indigenous to the Carolinas, unlike red foxes that were introduced to the area from Europe.
- **Foxes choose one mate to be with for their whole life.** That's right, they are monogamous.
- **Foxes would be great triathletes.** They can run up to 31 mph, jump over 6 ft high fences and can even swim.
- **A group of foxes** is called a skulk or leash.
- **It is ILLEGAL to relocate foxes in North Carolina.** It's always in your best interest to contact a wildlife control specialist before attempting to remove a fox from your property or in your role as a wildlife rehabilitator, before releasing one.



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“Herring Gulls – Pirates or Loafers?”

as written for ‘Carolina Salt Magazine’ by Linda Bergman-Althouse

Adult Herring Gulls are quite common on our coast, and they make themselves comfortable everywhere they choose to be; patrolling shorelines, hanging out in parking lots, the marsh, fish processing plants, docks, rooftops, picnic areas, newly plowed acreage, athletic fields, following whales and dolphins at sea (hoping to snatch small prey driven to the water’s surface), hovering above fishing boats, landfills and even airport runways. However, we hardly ever if never see their babies because they generally nest off shore in areas known to be human and predator free! So, it was quite the surprise when a boater on vacation showed up at the Outer Banks Wildlife Shelter in Newport recently carrying an infant Herring Gull. During the boater’s day on the water, he hauled onto an island’s shore to explore and came across a nest in the sand occupied by the little Herring Gull and unfortunately, two deceased siblings. His boating party decided to stay away from the nest and observe for a while to see if Herring parents were still tending to it. One of the party knew that with seabirds one parent is always at the nest until the chicks are at least a month old. So, after a few hours of waiting, watching and seeing no adults return to the nest, the decision was made to take the chick and find a wildlife rehabilitator to ensure the infant’s best chance at survival. It is believed that due to the intact condition of the two infants that passed, no predators were involved and possibly something had happened to the Herring Gull parents. Our report on the admitted baby Herring Gull is extremely favorable, for he is doing very well. He is comfy in his warm brooder, eating mud minnows on his own and going for swims in his makeshift ocean (the laundry room sink). Herring Gulls, one of the most familiar of gulls, are often referred to as “Seagulls,” when in fact, every gull species carries its own name and identification. As an infant, the chick is a gray-tan and spotted brown, fluff ball with a white tipped black beak and tan legs. Young Herrings take four years to reach full adult plumage and go through several plumage stages that vary in appearance. That is why Herring Gulls are misidentified so often. They tend to look like different gulls rather than one in the same due to their lengthy physical



Public Domain Photo



Photo by Linda Bergman-Althouse

maturity process. First-winter birds are gray-brown with a dark tail, a brown rump with dark bars, dark outer primaries and pale inner primaries, dark eyes, and a dark bill, which usually develops a paler base through the winter. The head is often lighter in color than the body. Second-winter birds typically have pale eyes, lighter bill with black tip, pale head and begin to show gray feathers on the back. Third-winter birds are closer to adults but still have some black on the bill and brown on the body and wings and have a black band on the tail, until they finally become the statuesque, white with gray and black wings and heavily built large gull they are meant to be. They are over two feet in length and weigh between 2 to 3.6 pounds, depending on whether they are male or female. Males run heavier. Herring Gulls are larger than Ringed-billed and Laughing Gulls, but not as big as the Great Black-backed Gull. The Herring Gull’s wingspan is 47

“Herring Gulls – Pirates or Loafers?” *(cont.)*

as written for ‘Carolina Salt Magazine’ by Linda Bergman-Althouse

to 61 inches. Their physically mature head and chest are white, back is gray with black wing tips adorned with white dots called mirrors. Their legs are pink, sturdy and sport webbed feet, making them equally adept at swimming, walking on land and flying. Their yellowish bills have a red spot on the lower mandible, and that red spot plays an important role when feeding young. The chick will tap on the spot with its bill to let the parent know it's hungry. This is an innate “fixed action pattern,” so, baby Herring Gulls will peck at any red dot! The eyes of a mature Herring Gull are bright to medium yellow, with a yellow or orange ring around each eye, and those eyes can scope out the tiniest morsel of food from quite a distance. A Herring Gull can be quite loud with a variety of cries and calls that are very high pitched. They are communicators who talk to each other during courtship, to emit warnings, while assigning territory and who also seem to be making noise just for the sake of making noise, but what do WE know since we don't speak the language?!? Adult Herring Gulls will eat just about



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anything (and that might also be what they're squawking about). They are scavenging, opportunistic feeders and effective, lethal hunters. Because their habitat is always close to water sources, marine invertebrates such as mussels, crabs, urchins, clams, squid, crayfish, as well as fish and discarded fish offal are definitely on the menu, but let's not leave out insects, berries, worms, other birds' eggs or chicks, cottontails, carrion and human litter or garbage. They are as smart as a Crow, using tools to hunt such as spreading bread crumbs on the water to lure fish and dropping shellfish on rocks to break them open. They are also very aggressive and will pirate food from another bird's take or catch! To wash it all down, they prefer fresh water, but will drink seawater if they must. The special glands above their eyes excrete excess salt from seawater that would dangerously dehydrate any other animals, including humans. Considerable time between feedings is spent bathing, preening and “loafing.” Loafing is a term animal behaviorists use to describe a bird that isn't doing much of anything, and most seabirds spend many long hours loafing. Pairing, that remains monogamous, occurs during April and May, and both male and female are involved in nest construction. They nest in 10” to 15” wide depressions, with smaller depressions within the nest to hold each egg in place, on secluded shores, or they may choose to wedge nests into rocky crevices on isolated islands. The nest is lined with vegetation, feathers, litter and usually hidden from predators and protected from high winds behind a large rock, log or bush. One to three brown speckled buff or greenish eggs are laid and incubated for approximately 32 days. Herring Gulls lay heavy, large eggs and have the highest hatching success of all gulls. Youngsters are born eyes open, fluffy with brown spots and able to move about the nesting area within a few hours. They fledge at 6-7 weeks but continue to be fed by their parents until they are six months old. An interesting factoid regarding young Herring Gulls is that they are known to pant like a dog to cool off, especially if their

“Herring Gulls – Pirates or Loafers?” *(cont.)*

as written for ‘Carolina Salt Magazine’ by Linda Bergman-Althouse



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parents have nested in direct sun, because their mouth lining is their best means of shedding heat. The longest living Herring Gull claims the record of 32 years of age. We, at the Outer Banks Wildlife Shelter, have stepped into the parent role for our little Herring Gull and will help him grow, get stronger and become capable. When he is tall, mottled gray-brown, hunting and flying he will join his place as one of many in a flock of North Carolina Herring Gulls to enjoy many “bird-days,” and hopefully, break the current longevity record!

Off Color – No Joke . . . Update! *by Linda Bergman-Althouse*

In the last issue of our WRNC Newsletter, we reported on songbirds showing up mid-May at rehab facilities with pale mouth membranes, unable to eat heartily, going blind and ultimately dying. We sought answers and found none, but with so many rehabbers in North Carolina reporting the same occurrences, we figured this issue must be wide spread, and it was. In July, 2021 National Geographic reporter, Natasha Daly, published an article entitled *“What we know about the mystery bird death crisis on the East Coast,”* to report on the same issue. Because hundreds of songbirds had gone blind in several states along the east coast, “experts in the field raced to find out why and wildlife rehabilitators continued to give their avian patients dignified deaths.” Intense studies have been conducted in D.C. and 12 states from Florida to Connecticut. Adult birds and fledglings were presenting with crusty or oozing eyes, could not stand without shaking and losing their balance and eventually dying or being euthanized. Early on, researchers ruled out West Nile and avian influenza. Continued testing on thousands of specimens ruled out bacteria such as salmonella and chlamydia and various herpes viruses. It was even thought that this pandemic could be blamed on the emerging 17 year Cicadas, because they are linked to a fungus that produces a toxin called cathinone and birds eat Cicadas. The Cicadas were let off the hook when it became apparent that the bird epidemic is much larger than the Cicada emergence range. And besides, the Cicadas died during June, but birds are still showing signs of illness: robins, blue jays, grackles, starlings and cardinals. No matter what treatment plans Wildlife Rehabilitators administer, the birds are still dying. Rehabilitators who were interviewed all echoed the same sentiments and frustrations. “It was horrible to watch. There’s nothing sadder than a blind bird. They know they’re in trouble and don’t understand altruism, so anything a human does to help, only scares them more.” Cases seem to be decreasing at this time, but a definitive and solid answer to what has happened to our songbird populations along the coast has not been found. Current findings are “inconsistent or inconclusive.” The investigation continues and researchers request that you reduce spread by cleaning your feeders more often (just in case it could be a human-linked toxin), and if you find a dead or sick bird, take photos, make note of its symptoms and location, and report it to the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center’s [online portal](#). To read Natasha Daly’s article go to: <https://on.natgeo.com/3gmqkm3>



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WRNC GRANT DEADLINE – NOVEMBER 1ST!

by Linda Bergman-Althouse

CAGE GRANT: Three \$500 grants may be awarded annually to help defray costs for three current (dues paid) Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina, Inc. (WRNC) members to use for cage building. WRNC requires that these cages be built to meet the current IWRC/NWRA "Minimum Standards Guidelines". Applications are **due by November 1st**, annually. All WRNC members in good standing (dues paid and no wildlife infractions) are encouraged to apply for a Cage Building Grant in accordance with the eligibility requirements and instructions found on our website: <https://ncwildliferehab.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2019-WRNC-Cage-Grant-Application.pdf>. Preference will be given to those members who have not previously been awarded a WRNC Cage Building Grant. The selection for the three grant recipients will be made by the Board of Directors in December and the recipients will be notified immediately following that decision. Recipients will be announced in the newsletter and at the annual symposium banquet. **SUBMIT APPLICATION** to Mary Ellen Rogers, WRNC BD Mbr & Cage Grant Chair, 1638 East Beach Dr, Oak Island, NC 28465 or seabiscuitshelter@yahoo.com.



Photo by Linda Veraldi

CHIMNEY SWIFT TOWER GRANT: Chimney Swifts, migratory birds that help decrease our dangerously high insect pest population, are in decline due to loss of habitat. If you are a member of an environmentally active group, an individual environment enthusiast, a WRNC member or nonmember, you may want to construct and maintain a **Chimney Swift Tower** in your area to entice Chimney Swifts, acrobatic insectivores who vacuum the sky of pesky insects at dawn and dusk, to return to your community each year. Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina, Inc. (WRNC) offers up to **three \$500 grants** annually to assist you or your group in the undertaking of this valuable conservation project. Applications are **due by November 1st**, annually. To check out the eligibility requirements and apply for a Chimney Swift Tower Grant go here: <https://ncwildliferehab.org/chimney-swift-tower-grant/>. **SUBMIT APPLICATION** to Linda Bergman-Althouse, WRNC BD Mbr & CST Grant Chair, 130 Aldersgate Rd, Jacksonville, NC 28546 or lbergmanx@gmail.com.



Photo by Edward Hahn

2021 WRNC Chimney Swift Tower grant recipient, Edward Hahn recently partnered with Wake Audubon and the City of Raleigh, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department to construct the tower pictured left and located at Horseshoe Farm Nature Preserve, a beloved nature preserve that typically receives 48,907 visitors per year. WELL DONE!

Outer Banks Wildlife Shelter (OWLS) Releases Bald Eagle in Honor of Longtime Volunteer, Danny Nicely by Cheryl Burke, Carteret County News-Times

The Outer Banks Wildlife Shelter, in Newport, wanted a special way to memorialize longtime volunteer Danny Nicely, who died June 3, 2021 of a heart attack. OWLS employees and volunteers joined with workers from Wild at Heart Wildlife Sanctuary of Richlands recently to release a rehabilitated juvenile bald eagle on Mr. Nicely's property, which he used for 12 years to care for orphaned and injured wildlife. OWLS Executive Director Brooke Breen said the property is already home to a nesting pair of adult bald eagles, which the newly released young bird will need to learn from as it continues to mature. "This just seemed like the most fitting way to honor Danny," Ms. Breen said with tears in her eyes after the fledgling was released on the 3-acre tract near Newport. "This was the best thing I could think to do for him." Mr. Nicely's widow, Margaret, and three of his children joined for the release, agreeing it was the perfect way to remember the wildlife rehabilitator known for his love of animals. "I'm happy and sad. He would have enjoyed seeing this," Ms. Nicely said. She added that when her husband died, he was caring for about 30 animals on their property, including deer, ducks and geese. Ms. Nicely said she was unable to keep up the care, so the animals were turned over to OWLS. As for the young bald eagle, Ms. Breen said volunteers rescued it April 15 after receiving a report of a fledgling raptor hanging out at the Sanitary Fish Market and Restaurant in Morehead City. "When we did pick it up it was severely emaciated and not well," Ms. Breen said. After catching the bird, OWLS contacted Wild at Heart Wildlife Sanctuary Director Tonya Weil, who has a special permit to rehabilitate bald eagles. "We do not have an eagle permit at OWLS, so we took it to Tonya at Wild at Heart Sanctuary, where they specialize in eagles," Ms. Breen said. "All we can do for an eagle is emergency care up to 72 hours." Ms. Weil said her sanctuary receives all the bald eagles along the coast of North Carolina and many from adjacent states. "We currently have nine bald eagles, and we just received one recently from South Carolina," she said. Ms. Weil said the eagle rescued by OWLS was "extremely hungry and emaciated when we received it. He was born this year and somehow got separated from his parents. He was fledging, but should have still been with his parents. We have no idea what happened to the parents. He may have had a parasite load and some lead, which is common in eagles. Every eagle we receive we treat for parasites, but there was no lead actively in his system." She said about 80% of the eagles she receives have lead poisoning and many don't survive. "The main source of lead is from deer carcass," she said. "When hunters shoot deer with lead bullets they spray into the deer meat and guts. So even if the carcass is removed but a hunter guts the deer and leaves the guts, eagles can absorb lead through the guts." In addition, if a deer is shot but gets away and later dies, eagles will feed



Photo by Linda Bergman-Althouse



Wild at Heart Wildlife Sanctuary owners Tonya and Chris Weil of Richlands remove a young bald eagle from their vehicle with assistance from intern Will Hudson. The eagle was released on the property of longtime Outer Banks Wildlife Shelter volunteer Danny Nicely of Newport, who died in June. (Cheryl Burke photo)

Outer Banks Wildlife Shelter (OWLS) Releases Bald Eagle in Honor of Longtime Volunteer, Danny Nicely (cont.) by Cheryl Burke, Carteret County News-Times

on that meat as well. "They make ammunition that is not lead and we encourage hunters to use that instead," she said. "Not only are eagles and animals that feed on deer carcass getting lead poisoning, but humans are slowly getting poisoned if they eat the meat." If an eagle is treated in time, they can survive lead poisoning. "We lose more than we release," she said. "So it's always rewarding when we get to release one." The eagle rescued by OWLS was fattened up at Wild at Heart Sanctuary, where it also completed flight-conditioning training. "We use a creance line and tie on jesses

(leather anklets used in hawk and falconry training), and let him fly," Ms. Weil said. "He is now ready to be released." The fledgling did not yet have the characteristic white head associated with bald eagles. Most birds attain the classic pattern between their fourth and fifth year. Ms. Weils and her husband Chris normally release the birds, but this time they decided to allow an intern, Will Hudson, to do the honors. After removing the eagle from the vehicle while about 20 people watched from a distance, Mr. Weils removed the eye covering as Mr. Hudson held the bird tight to his chest. He carefully held the bird's legs to protect himself from the long talons. Once the raptor was acclimated to its surroundings, Mr. Hudson released the eagle, which quickly flew



Photo by Cheryl Burke

away and up into a grove of trees on the property. Many of those watching recorded the event on their phones. Mr. Hudson said he was excited about his first release. "That was amazing," he said after he watched the eagle disappear into the distance. "I was actually kind of nervous." Those watching, including Mr. Nicely's children, said it was the perfect way to honor the man who cared so deeply about wildlife. "I'm thrilled," his daughter, Mary Beth Barts, said. "I just keep thinking he would have liked to have been here."

Mr. Nicely, 70, worked for the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries for 32 years. After retiring, he worked with several law enforcement agencies as a firearms instructor. Danny will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him clear across the state!



Photo by Cheryl Burke

WRNC Membership Renewal by Ann Rogers

REMINDER: DON'T FORGET to pay the annual \$15 dues to renew your WRNC membership! The fiscal year runs from May 1 through April 30 of the next year. Regardless of when we receive your dues during a year, the fee will cover that period of time. Remember, this change was made in 2019 to avoid confusion when the dues payment was formerly included in our symposium registration. Benefits for dues-paying members include:



Photos by John Althouse

Reduced symposium registration fee	Option to appear in Wildlife Rehabilitator Directory
Access to Newsletter archives	Directory Information Made Available to the Public
Access to Membership Directory	Eligibility to apply for Cage Grants

Go to our website, to the Join/Renew link at http://www.ncwildliferehab.org/.../member_application..... Belonging to Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina, Inc. helps expand your network with other rehabilitators across the state so we all can share skill sets and knowledge with each other through face-to-face contact and formalized course load. Also, our annual symposium provides the necessary training for new permits, as well as our annual renewal requirements. WRNC worked for years to encourage the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) to allow RVS licenses among our ranks, and we were instrumental in its ultimate adoption and implementation. With our sustained developmental growth, WRNC has become a centralized training hub for North Carolina Wildlife Rehabilitators, as well as rehabbers from surrounding and more remote states. Please visit WRNC's website today to renew your membership!



Quinto's Comedy Corner by Linda Bergman-Althouse

QUINTO SAYS: YOU might be a WILDLIFE REHABILITATOR ...



IF . . . A delivery of **EXPIRED** produce & meats from your local grocer causes you to do the **HAPPY DANCE!**

IF . . . you know who is just about to be released in the woods!



Photo by John Althouse

On a serious note, **QUINTO** wishes to pass along the wise words of two of his closest forest friends:

Smokey the Bear, "Only you can prevent Forest Fires!" & **Woodsy Owl**, "Give a Hoot – Don't Pollute!"

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.

Quinto wishes everyone a . . .

"FABULOUS FALL SEASON & CONTINUED HAPPY & SUCCESSFUL REHAB!"

WRNC Newsletter Schedule

Do you have a wildlife-related idea you would like to share with the WRNC membership? Please submit it to our 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 prior to:

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

WRNC Newsletter Editor & Copy Editors

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