

President's Message . . . We have all heard that "it takes a village to raise a child." That is also true for rehabbing and especially true for home-based rehabbing. Here are some questions that I hope to answer: how does this phrase relate to rehabbing; how does it relate to us being new rehabbers or an experienced rehabber; how do I know if I even need this village? First, let's define how a rehab village compares to a child's village. We can easily relate to a child's village. The phrase "It takes a village to raise a child" is taken from an African proverb and conveys the message that it takes many people in a "village" to provide a safe, healthy environment in which a child can grow and flourish. Now if we want to know how that relates to raising wildlife, just put the baby wildlife in our care where the word child is located. There is not much difference between the two. The biggest distinction is our goal; able to release the animal back into the wild. We know what the word village means relating to wildlife. What types of rehabbers do you want in your village? I will begin by discussing where the very important mentor fits into your plan. If you are an individual home-based rehabber, finding a mentor could be difficult, but you must have a mentor to even file for an apprenticeship license in North Carolina. Your mentor will be the beginning of searching for your village. You will want a patient and understanding mentor who will wrap their arms around the new apprentice with enthusiasm of teaching what they know about basic rehabbing, proper husbandry, and diet/nutrition. They will also have the time it takes to teach a new rehabber. The two need to work very closely during the first year. At this point, you may begin thinking about your strengths and weaknesses. Hopefully, during this first year you will be exposed to other rehabbers. Attending educational/training events and even our very own 2023 WRNC Symposium will be helpful, which will give you the opportunity to network with many different rehabbers during the dozens of classes being held. Education for both the first-year rehabber and the rehabber who has been rehabbing for decades is critical. Google will become your best friend. Before I close, I want to make sure you know there are several ways you can legally rehabilitate. The ideal way to learn rehabbing is working with a wildlife hospital that takes in wildlife who are orphaned or injured. There are several in North Carolina. There are also wildlife centers, which are facilities that take wildlife in from the public, that usually offer a helpline and mostly, utilize volunteer labor. Lastly, and I imagine this is the popular situation, is the home based individual. These rehabbers can belong to a rehab network that is made up of volunteers and is very organized. Finally, the rehabber who lives and rehabs by themselves at home (home based rehabbing) is another choice. All these rehab situations work great. You can understand why some are easier than others.

Humanely yours,



Cindy Bailey

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“Checking In” with Our Wild Neighbors (OWN)

by Adrienne Rumley, Associate Director



That summer morning in the piedmont of North Carolina started just like any other. The sun rose in the east as the humidity fogged up one’s glasses. Insects were buzzing, and the birds were eagerly awaiting their morning meal. As the door to “Our Wild Neighbors” (OWN) unlocked for the first morning duties, it was not long before a car was pulling in the driveway seeking help for wildlife in need. That car happened to be transporting a river Cooter who was unlucky enough to be painfully sporting a fishhook lodged in his nostril. That is just one small aspect of the daily activities Our Wild Neighbors sees. Established in 2017 on Old State Highway in Hillsborough, NC, this small center has grown from seeing 400 animals yearly to well over 1800 so far this year. Our service to the community just keeps growing, but just like many organized shelters or wildlife rehab networks, Our Wild Neighbors began in the confines of one Linda Ostrand’s kitchen. Founder and current Director of Our Wild Neighbors, she, along with a group of like-minded volunteers, came together to renovate a home into the effective and productive rehab center we have today. That tiny group of volunteers has

blossomed to 70 active and dependable volunteers. So, people know we are here now because distressed wildlife requiring care keeps coming and the phone never stops ringing! Fast forward to 2022, Our Wild Neighbors has grown into a full-service wildlife rehabilitation facility by caring for more than just small mammals as was once the focus. While the Virginia

Opossum and the Eastern Grey Squirrel are still the two most common creatures we see, OWN is licensed to admit and treat RVS species, waterfowl, songbirds, reptiles, and even raptors. We have accomplished so much in just a few short years. One of our major philosophies is that working together saves more lives, and one of our major goals is to always network with other centers. We reach out to help other rehabilitators when we can to ease the load and burden on others while helping connect rescues, thereby saving more wild lives. At OWN, we take our daily inhouse goals seriously as we consistently provide professional care and



treatment for wildlife in our care and supervise the complicated and delicate process of integration and release of wild animals back into their natural habitat. I Joined the OWN team in May of 2021 after transitioning from veterinary medicine into wildlife rehabilitation. I worked as a vet tech in emergency medicine for 8 years. With background in zoology and nonprofit management from North Carolina, I simply fell in love with the field of wildlife rehabilitation and

“Checking In” with Our Wild Neighbors (OWN)

(cont.) by Adrienne Rumley, Associate Director

am currently licensed for small mammals in NC. I am proud to move into this role and help organize and streamline medical protocols in the center as well as pioneering the internship program and redevelop the volunteer program. Our center developed an efficacious and powerful internship program and brought four interns onboard from NC State this summer for twelve-week sessions. These Internships, suited for college students in life sciences, pre-vet, conservation, and environmental studies as well as adults simply looking to start a new career, are offered throughout the year. Another great accomplishment for OWN was receiving a NCVMA High 5 grant in 2021 which we used to purchase an anesthesia machine. Community service is paramount to OWN, and we plan on attending more and more community events to raise awareness such as the Eno River Festival, in Hillsborough as we did a few Fridays ago, art walk events, local farmers’ markets and to continue providing school, civic and outreach programs to get the word out that we are here to educate and help our community, as well as our local wildlife. Something new to our center this year were little masked bandits, raccoons! This was our very first year rehabbing them, and due to overflow at other centers, we were blessed (?) with ten this year. We had the best time learning to care for them and enduring all the stress that came along with it! We are looking forward to all the nuances that come Our Wild Neighbor’s way, and we are ready to meet the challenges!



OWN was formed by volunteer licensed wildlife rehabilitators and wildlife enthusiasts. It is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that cares for orphaned and injured wildlife in Hillsborough, North Carolina, and the surrounding counties. The OWN Wildlife Rehabilitation Center is staffed entirely by dedicated volunteers. The center is supported solely through donations from the public. It receives no city, county, state, or federal funding.



Article Photos Courtesy of ‘Our Wild Neighbors’ (OWN)

Attention All Independent Rehabilitators & Wildlife Shelters/Centers; you are invited to “CHECK IN” with WRNC and other Wildlife Rehabilitators across NC. We want to know “What’s up” in your neck of the state **REHAB WISE!**

We Cannot Say “THANK YOU” To Our Raffle Donors Enough!

by Linda Bergman-Althouse

<u>Blended & Beautiful Boutique</u>	<u>Mandi Ray</u>
Jean Chamberlain	<u>Stand for Animals</u>
<u>Carol Kaiser, Wildlife Rehab, Inc.</u>	<u>Backyard Birds</u>
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No act of kindness or generosity, no matter how small is ever wasted!

THANK YOU ALL for helping us make the changes we want to see in our world, because with your continued support, we are able to do more and more every year to help conserve wildlife!

GRATITUDE!



Raffle Photos by Linda Bergman-Althouse

2023 Symposium raffle donations are already in the works. Regular and return donors always step up to help make our annual raffle such a success, and we can’t thank them enough for their ongoing support. The list of the 2022 raffle donors is being run again this issue to give another great big “THANK YOU” and to provide links to their businesses. They support WRNC, and we, in turn, want to support them for their continued caring, compassion and generosity toward our cause. Readers, please visit their sites for some of your needs and wants. Who doesn’t need formula, mealworms, rehab supplies or a unique gift? We also want to encourage new donors to contact our Raffle Coordinator, Kathy Pedrick (@704-400-1569) for information on how they too can give to help support our wildlife rehabilitation platform that includes valuable grant funds for caging, scholarships, chimney swift towers, and training!

Thank you, thank you, thank you!



Cage & Chimney Swift Tower Grants

DEADLINE, 1 NOVEMBER

by Linda Bergman-Althouse & Mary Ellen Rogers

CAGE GRANTS: GREAT NEWS! The WRNC Cage Grant funds have been increased! The WRNC Board of Directors recently voted to increase the Cage Grant award from \$500 to \$1000.00! This is a BIG JUMP that will benefit wildlife rehabilitators across North Carolina. Applications are due by November 1st, annually and open to all WRNC members in good standing (dues paid and no wildlife infractions). You are encouraged to apply for a CAGE BUILDING GRANT in accordance with the eligibility requirements and instructions found on our website. (<https://ncwildliferehab.org/cage-grants>) Preference will be given to those members who have not previously been awarded a WRNC Cage Building Grant. The selection of TWO (2) GRANT RECIPIENTS for \$1,000 each will be made by the WRNC Board of Directors during the annual Symposium (January), and the recipients notified immediately following that decision. Time flies & deadlines arrive before we want them to, so check it out and put your application together to include your plans and projected expenses and submit to Mary Ellen Rogers, WRNC Board Member & Cage Grant Committee Chair. You need this space and lumber costs are not going down any time soon. We've got your back and plus, your wildlife will love you for it!!



Photo Public Domain

CHIMNEY SWIFT TOWER GRANTS: Chimney Swifts, migratory birds that help decrease our dangerously high insect pest population, are in decline due to loss of habitat. Fortunately, Chimney Swifts are well adapted to man-made structures, so it is possible to create nesting habitat specifically for Swifts. Check out the eligibility requirements and access an application at <https://ncwildliferehab.org/chimney-swift-tower-grant/>. As a member of an environmentally active group, an individual environment enthusiast, a WRNC member or nonmember, this is an opportunity to build and maintain a chimney swift tower in your area to entice Chimney Swifts, acrobatic insectivores who vacuum the sky of annoying insects at dawn and dusk, to return to your community each year. WRNC offers up to THREE (3) \$500 GRANTS annually to assist you or your group in the undertaking of this valuable conservation project. A tower must be constructed and maintained in accordance with the guidelines contained in the book "Chimney Swift Towers, New Habitat for America's Mysterious Birds," by Paul D. and Georgan Z. Kyle, which will be provided to you if your grant request is approved and selected. Applications are due by November 1st, annually. Submit your application to Linda Bergman-Althouse, WRNC Board Member & Chimney Swift Tower Grant Committee Chair, 130 Aldersgate Rd, Jacksonville, NC 28546, or email application to lbergmanx@gmail.com.



2017 CST Grant Recipient & photo by Tom Tribble

“No Fishing Gear Left Behind!”

by Linda Bergman-Althouse

People love to fish and so do wildlife! The significant difference between humans and wildlife is wild animals do not need nets, fishing line, lures, hooks, or plastic bags when fishing. Therefore, they leave nothing behind that will harm or kill anyone or anything. Left behind fishing gear kills! Wildlife Rehabilitators know this all too well and cringe every time a seabird, wading bird, grazing bird, mammal or turtle is admitted due to the ingestion or entanglement of fishing litter. It's so painful for the animal and in many cases renders them unable to eat which leads to starvation. Sometimes the devastation is less obvious and cannot be seen without x-rays because the animal has swallowed a hook or lure. This type of injury is so frustrating and heartbreaking to wildlife caregivers because it is human-caused and therefore, preventable. Nets, lines, hooks, crab pots, shrimp traps or any other fishing equipment abandoned by a boater or someone fishing on shore is considered derelict gear, which labels a fisherman or woman neglectful and irresponsible. This type of dangerous litter is usually made of plastic and doesn't decompose in water for possibly hundreds of years.



Recently, a mature Red Eared Slider was admitted to our shelter who had tried to swallow not one but two fishing hooks. We managed to carefully remove the three-pronged hook with bait still attached from his mouth without too much trouble or damage to



tissue, but the long, single pronged hook was so embedded in the roof of his mouth and out the side of his cheek, it required a committee discussion on how best to go about getting that out with minimal damage or risk killing the turtle. He may not have been noticed or made his way to us if he had not become entangled in the line attached to the hooks. Turtles are air-breathing reptiles. When they are caught underwater on a line or in a net, they will drown because they are unable to reach the surface for air. When an animal is entangled in fishing line that has no give, the line wraps tighter and tighter around a leg, wing or neck constricting the blood flow and functionality of the organs,

blood vessels and muscles in that area. A fishhook that an animal desperately tries to remove causes lacerations and tears leading to blood loss, serious infections and limited function in the area affected. Some animals, such as pelicans, live with the discomfort of an imbedded fishhook in their body for prolonged periods of time. We know this because hooks have been found in the backs, underbelly, or legs of pelicans during examinations for other conditions such as wing fractures or frost bite. Some seabirds have even been found struggling to free themselves from each other because they have become entangled together by a fishing line or multi-hooked lure that was carelessly discarded by a fisherman. During the birds' struggle they create even more injury to their legs



“No Fishing Gear Left Behind!” (cont.)

by Linda Bergman-Althouse

and wings as well as possible nerve damage. Birds and other wildlife that become entangled will experience strangulation, starvation, amputation and in many cases, death. Entanglement is a slow and vicious killer! Because



monofilament fishing line is transparent, it poses serious risk to all life, including human swimmers and divers who encounter it. The negative impact of fishing gear waste is huge. Research tells us that the overall populations of seabirds have declined 69.6 percent, which is a loss of about 230 million birds in 60 years. "Seabirds are particularly good indicators of the health of marine ecosystems and when we see this magnitude of seabird decline, we also see something wrong with marine ecosystems." This information gives us an idea of the devastating and overwhelming impact humans are having on wildlife and our environment. So, for those of us who care, what can we do to improve the quality of life for wildlife and our aquatic environment? Get the word out, first

and foremost! Do not accept the truly little thought given to snapping a line when a fisherman's lure is stuck on something. In your travels along beaches and recreational waterways, do the birds and other animals a huge favor by looking around trees and shrubs and notice how much fishing litter is strewn or snagged in vegetation, then carefully remove it, and dispose of it properly. If you are the fisherman, always take all line and fishing gear with you when you leave. The best way for anglers to reduce hookings and entanglements is to avoid casting near large seabird concentrations. If you are in a boat, move to another area. Most piers are large enough for birds to feed in one area, and anglers to fish in another, or take a break - flocks do not usually remain in one area for long. Using barbless hooks or



artificial lures whenever possible can also help. Weight fishing lines to ensure the bait sinks rapidly, before birds can dive for it. Do not leave fishing lines unattended. Do not feed birds or leave bait exposed because it attracts birds. Take leftover bait home so that birds and other animals do not get accustomed to free meals. Fish remains are a problem because most seabirds swallow their prey whole. Swallowing parts of fish with exposed bones can cut a pelican's pouch. Think about starting a program to collect fishing line by constructing and placing collecting bins in the vicinity of your local fishing spots. Please fish responsibly and encourage others to do the same. These are all steps in the right direction for the preservation of our environment and wildlife, as well as public safety. If you encounter an animal that shows signs of

entanglement or has been injured in other ways by fishing gear, please call your local wildlife care facility, and they will provide instructions on how to transport the wildlife victim to their center. It's best not to remove the dangerous fishing gear litter yourself, but to trust the application of a wildlife rehabilitator's knowledge and skills to ensure damage is not compounded during removal. Let's do this for our wildlife – they need us!! Please campaign for “No Fishing Gear Left Behind” everywhere you go and pass this reminder on to every fisherperson in your life!

Article photos by John Althouse & public domain

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Update

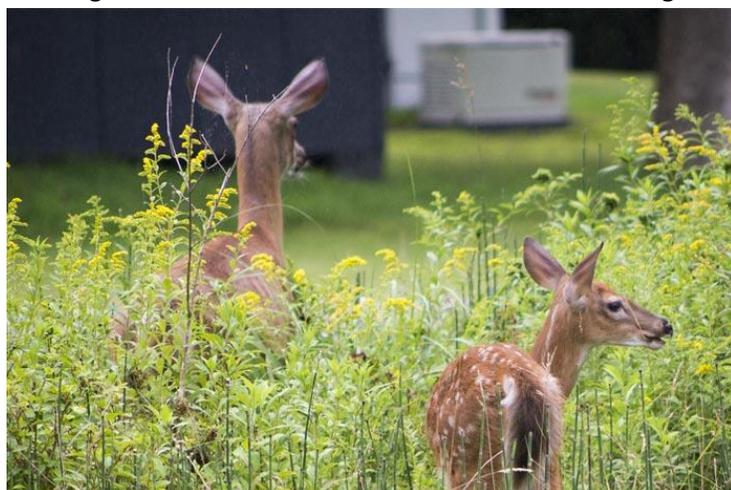
by Falyn Owens, Extension Wildlife Biologist, NC Wildlife Resources Commission

With fawning season mostly concluded for the year, we are now able to look back and see what impacts the novel presence of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and resulting changes to state regulations have had so far. As it relates to fawn rehabilitation in NC, the most important change has been the prohibition of fawn rehabilitation within the Primary and Secondary CWD Surveillance Areas surrounding the confirmed CWD positive deer from Yadkin County this past winter. Additionally, transportation of any deer (or high-risk deer parts) beyond the boundaries of either CWD surveillance area is strictly prohibited. Because live deer cannot reliably be tested for CWD, infected deer can shed CWD

prions in their saliva, urine, and feces for sixteen months or more before showing any signs of illness, and those prions can remain infectious for decades in the environment, these restrictions are essential tools to prevent human-assisted spread of CWD to new areas. The unfortunate reality is that once CWD is introduced to an area, for all intents and purposes that area is contaminated forever. Preventive measures are the best tools we have, where we have the power to apply them. This was the first fawning season since the new restrictions were put into place. With no fawn rehabilitators in



the roughly eight-county area, it was unclear whether the NC Wildlife Resources Commission would see more requests for assistance with fawns found by members of the public. Comparing wildlife health reports from the surveillance area counties going back to 2017, the number of requests for assistance with fawns this year was just about average for that span. What did change, of course, was the nature of the conversations about the best way to help deer. In addition to advising that finders leave or return fawns to their original location, Commission staff worked to educate each person



about CWD and its long-term threat to deer, as well as the harmful consequences of moving or congregating deer where CWD might be present. Follow-ups with finders indicate that the majority followed recommendations to leave the fawn alone and many situations ended with fawns being successfully reunited with the doe, where in previous years those fawns would likely have ended up with a rehabilitator. Overall, people seem to be understanding when explained the reasons behind the restrictions and want to do the right thing. In cases where fawns in the CWD surveillance areas were definitively orphaned or unable to survive in the wild, Wildlife Officers actively responded to requests for assistance. Since May, nearly 60 CWD samples have

been collected within the two surveillance areas – the vast majority from adult deer. Results from those samples are still pending as they must be shipped out of state for testing. Following its CWD Response Plan, the Commission is currently in “assess the situation” mode, which involves testing as many deer as possible, especially in the surveillance areas, to find out where the disease is currently. As that picture becomes clearer, efforts will shift to “maintenance mode” to prevent human-assisted spread of the disease. We know CWD will spread slowly but surely via natural deer behavior and movement, so our biggest job will be to prevent it from spreading any faster via transport of live deer or high-risk

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Update (cont.)

by Falyn Owens, Extension Wildlife Biologist, NC Wildlife Resources Commission



deer parts out of CWD surveillance areas. Wildlife rehabilitators can help these efforts by continuing to educate the public and others in the rehab community about the CWD restrictions and associated risks of taking in and/or moving fawns. Over the next year, the Commission will continue to create educational resources about CWD for the public, including those directed toward wildlife enthusiasts who do not hunt. It is important for anyone who cares about deer to be aware of and refrain from practices that can accidentally “give CWD a ride.” The Commission’s outreach efforts are only as good as the audience they reach and as you know, getting quality information to the people who need it is a never-ending effort. If you have ideas for getting the word out about CWD, please let us know!

Article photos public domain

Important Resources:

- Recorded CWD Information Meeting for NC Fawn Rehabilitators – May 19, 2022, www.ncwildlife.org/CWD - Up-to-date information about CWD in NC, including answers to frequently asked questions, regulations, surveillance area maps, research, and more.
- Interactive NC wildlife rehabilitator map with CWD surveillance areas marked. This map is maintained by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission and is the authoritative list of current wildlife rehab license holders in the state. Note that wildlife rehabilitator aggregator websites may list outdated information and must be contacted individually by the rehabilitator to request corrections.
- Report wildlife violations such as illegal transport or possession of fawns to wildlife enforcement dispatch at 800-662-7137.
- Report sick-looking deer anywhere in the state, or deer carcasses within the surveillance areas, to the NC Wildlife Helpline at 866-318-2401 (Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm) or hwi@ncwildlife.org.

For detailed questions about CWD and fawn rehab restrictions, or suggestions on how to improve WRC’s outreach about CWD, contact Falyn Owens, Extension Wildlife Biologist, at 919-616-2208 or falyn.owens@ncwildlife.org.



Falyn Owens

New Development: "The second positive CWD case in Yadkin County is within the existing surveillance area boundaries since it was found one mile from the first discovery. However, if another positive is found further away, the surveillance area boundaries will be redrawn to maintain the recommended 5-mile radius around any positives for the Primary Surveillance Area and 30-mile radius for the Secondary Surveillance Area." For more information:

<https://www.ncwildlife.org/Connect-With-Us/second-deer-in-north-carolina-tests-positive-for-cwd>

“The Love for All Living Creatures is the Most Noble Attribute of Man” Charles Darwin

Passing the Torch!

by Karen Sota, Volunteer Media Coordinator, Sea Turtle Hospital

Surf City's Sea Turtle Hospital's regular staff always looks forward to a bit of a break during the summer when their college interns arrive for their twelve-week program. However, this year has them hopping. Not only with turtle care,



nesting activity, and tours every day but also working with the kids from Sea Turtle Camp based in Wilmington. This concept of an immersive program to learn about sea turtles was the creation and collaboration of Jen Civelli, a long-time hospital volunteer, and the hospital's founder Jean Beasley in efforts to "Pass the Torch."

Campers work alongside and under the supervision of interns learning to know the turtles by name and begin to recognize the distinct species and personalities exhibited by each turtle. There are many hands-on opportunities with the hospital's patients, along with some classroom-type of work. This year, the interns cooked up something pretty stimulating for the camper's two day's program. On the first day, interns use a plush turtle to introduce the stranding report. This intake form is completed by the individual responding to the stranding and the information is often supplemented when the turtle arrives at the facility. Information includes the date and location of the strand, weight and measurements, species and any identifying tags or markings. Injuries and the general condition of the turtle are also noted. Using calipers and other tools of the trade the campers learn how to complete the form which becomes a



permanent part of the patient's file. A copy is forwarded to North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission for aggregate data collection on North Carolina sea turtle activity. On day two the students are informed the hospital has received a call reporting a turtle stranding, and they are all going along for the recovery. They are loaded into the hospital van with typical recovery items like tanks and towels and driven to the front of the building. But wait, there is a stranded turtle out there. They need to get to him quickly because he is all tangled up in fishing gear and may have swallowed a balloon. Though it's actually our intern Michael in a furry mascot suit that really does need rescuing, students rush over to the turtle, gently untangle him, and hoist him onto one of the

transport carts used at the hospital. The victim is wheeled into the hospital where the students complete the stranding report by noting all the required information. It looks like this turtle is basically in good shape and thankfully, hasn't

Passing the Torch!

(cont.) by Karen Sota, Volunteer Media Coordinator, Sea Turtle Hospital

been out in the sun too long. The last step is releasing turtle Michael, from his turtle suit, back into the wilds of the hospital. We have found this to be a creative and engaging way to have kids learn about the rescue part of our work. If you spot a nesting mama or anything unusual such as an injured or stranded turtle, please call our director of beach operations Terry Meyer at 910-470-2880. If she is not available, you may call the hospital during operating hours at 910-329-0222. We will take the information and will send a trained volunteer to meet you to assess the situation. The State of North Carolina hotline for stranded, sick, and injured turtles is 252-241-7367 and is open 24/7. Please note that all our work with sea turtles, at the hospital and on the beach, is authorized by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission, ES Permit 22ST05. The public tour schedule is Monday-Friday, Noon-4 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and Sunday from Noon-2 p.m. Tickets must be purchased in advance through our website at www.seaturtle-hospital.org. Select the date, time, and number of guests in your party and purchase your tickets. We limit the number of guests each time to make the experience more enjoyable. We are not able to accommodate walk-ups for tours once we sell out for the day. Please keep in mind that summer and early fall traffic can be very heavy, especially on the weekends so plan your arrival accordingly. If you are coming only to our gift shop, you can enter through the single door to the left of the main entrance. Hope to see you soon!



Article photos courtesy of The Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center

When we speak about conserving nature, we are really talking about taking care of our future, because nature provides essential resources for our survival and enjoyment, and we must pass this concern to others, everywhere!

Where are the young "Wildlife Warriors" you would like to showcase? Email a picture and short write-up to lbergmanx@gmail.com to include them in our next newsletter!

“Room Enough To Do What We Will”

by Mick Scott, Editorial Page Editor, Winston Salem Journal



Last year I flew to the West Coast to meet some foxes. Three Russian domesticated foxes: Victor, Maksa (short for Maksamilian) and Mikhail. It was a dream come true. I got to watch them up close, pet them and hold them. They live at the Judith A. Bassett Canid Education and Conservation Center, a not-for-profit home for canids (dogs, foxes, etc.) in the arid shrub brush about 90 minutes east of San Diego. They are part of an “ambassador” crew of canids that sit and interact with people, allowing us to learn about them firsthand. As both of my regular readers know, I’ve been obsessed with urban foxes for some time now. They live around us, in spite of us, thriving. They are wild and playful. And they’re just, gosh darn it, such beautiful creatures. So, when I first learned that some Russian domesticated foxes lived in the U.S., I knew I’d have to go meet them someday. In brief, these foxes are the product of a 60-year scientific experiment to see if fox behavior could be modified by intentional breeding. The result is a group of foxes with little aggression or fear, who like people. (More here: www.pbs.org/newshour/science/domesticated-foxes-genetically-fascinating-terrible-pets) I was hosted by the foxes and two of their human expeditors: David Bassett, who founded the center with his wife, Amy (and named it after his mother, a long-time animal advocate), and behavior specialist and trainer Melissa Beeson Dixon. They took me to a shaded, fenced enclosure where the ambassadors knocked on the door, one by one, to be admitted. The first was Victor, a classic red

fox, eager to see who I was. He was willing to sit on my lap and have his back scratched for as long as I would scratch it. Maksa came next, all smiles and sweetness. She placed her front paws on my leg and leaned in so I could scratch her chest and shoulders. She nibbled at the band around my wrist. What a flirt. Maksa is also a red fox, by species, but her fur is mostly white with red and black markings, the result of selective breeding. She is stunning. Mikhail, called a silver fox because of his coloring, came next, looking alert and mischievous. I could imagine him leading the way down a trail: “Come on, let’s go!” Last was Ishy, an American red fox with marbled coloring that they let hang out with the Russians. I was warned, though, that while she wasn’t aggressive, she was not interested in being petted, so I kept my distance. I didn’t really do a lot with the foxes aside from stroke their fur and admire their beauty. I fed them chicken bits from the flat palm of my hand and got on the ground to follow them around. These foxes wouldn’t be good pets, Bassett told me. Despite their comfort around people, they have destructive tendencies when it comes to furniture, and they can’t be housebroken. They are still wild and unpredictable and might run away and get in trouble. I was introduced to other canids who live there: a Papua New Guinean singing dog; a wolf who leaned his 100 pounds against me; and an enclosure full of younger Russian foxes who aren’t yet ready to be full ambassadors. I sat next to their fence, and several came up to me



“Room Enough To Do What We Will”

by Mick Scott, Editorial Page Editor, Winston Salem Journal

for a scratch or to nibble on my fingers. I also saw, from a distance, Vinnie, a silver fox who was rescued from a fur farm.



She is still learning that she is safe now. As I drove back to San Diego, I thought about the foxes and their unique personalities, about their coarse and musky fur. I thought then of a hundred questions I wish I'd thought to ask, about their upbringing and their habits. I thought about the wild foxes I see in Winston-Salem, how different their lives are — and how endangered they can be by our presence, if we're stupid. And I thought about time. I had been anticipating this visit for months and it was over in a flash. It wasn't enough. I need to scratch Vic some more. I need to hold Maksa's floppy paws and see if Mikhail knows how to answer the dog's play bow. This visit was a trial run. I'll have to go back.

(Mick Scott is a wildlife enthusiast, novice astronomer, and fox trotter! He was a student in the virtual 12-week Introduction to Wildlife Rehabilitation course, provided by Wildlife Rehab, Inc. (WRI) last year.)

Photos submitted by Mick Scott and article reprinted with permission

“We Hear You!”

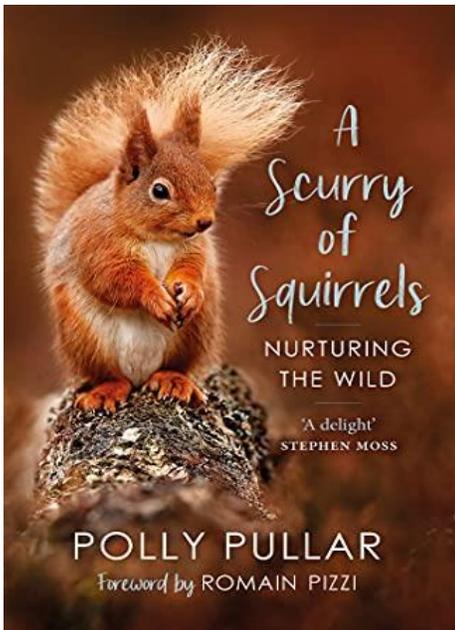
by L. Michele Poe

Wildlife Rehabilitators of NC listened to your comments about needing direction to fulfill NC's mentor/apprentice requirement and in response to the need, we've formed a **Mentor Program Committee!** Individuals wanting to pursue a NC Captivity License for Wildlife Rehabilitation are required by the Wildlife Resources Commission to work under a qualified mentor's supervision for a minimum of twelve-months. Our team's vision is to identify, develop, implement, and maintain a Mentor/Apprentice Wildlife Rehabilitation Program by setting minimum and consistent standards statewide. Lots of work is ahead and your input is needed. We are presently in phase one of the work plan which is to identify NC wildlife rehabilitation organizations and



independent rehabbers so that strong and continuous communication can be achieved. Presently, the Mentor Program Committee consists of nine WRNC Board members who are committed to the task, but we need your help. Look for more details in upcoming correspondence and in the meantime, we welcome the names of any individuals or organizations you may know of to add to our working contact list. Please email Committee Chair, Michele Poe, at mpoe5674@gmail.com, to share or receive information. We are ready to hit the ground running with your help! Please access the following link to provide valuable information regarding what YOU THINK is important to build into our Wildlife Rehabilitation Mentor Program: <https://forms.gle/kWwdW4ySFcvMwrKs9> Thank you. Public Domain Photo

A Scurry of Squirrels, Nurturing the Wild, by Polly Pullar



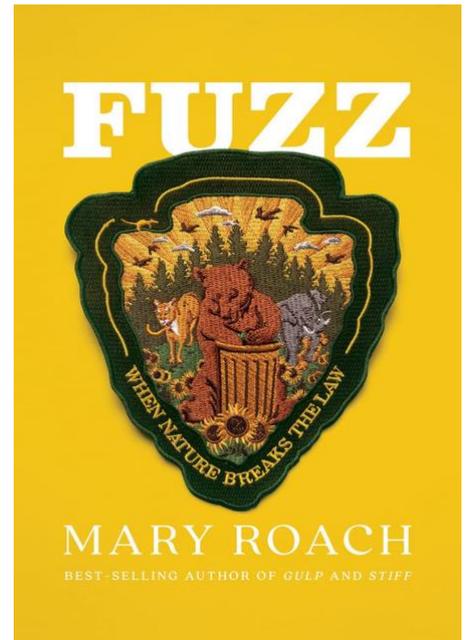
Polly Pullar has had a passion for red squirrels since childhood. As a wildlife rehabilitator, she knows the squirrel on a profoundly personal level and has hand-reared numerous litters of orphan kits, eventually returning them to the wild. In this book she shares her experiences and love for the squirrel and explores how our perceptions have changed. Heavily persecuted until the 1960s, it has since become one of the nation's most adored mammals. But we are now racing against time to ensure its long-term survival in an ever-changing world. Set against the beautiful backdrop of Polly's Perthshire farm, where she works continuously to encourage wildlife great and small, she highlights how nature can, and indeed will, recover if only we give it a chance. In just two decades, her efforts have brought spectacular results, and numerous squirrels and other animals visit her wild farm every day. A Scottish delight, a "Scurry of Squirrels" is part history, part natural history, and part memoir.

89% five-star ratings

[Check it out at: https://amzn.to/3CJvGDO](https://amzn.to/3CJvGDO)

FUZZ, When Nature Breaks the Law, by Mary Roach

What is to be done about a jaywalking moose? A bear caught breaking and entering? A murderous tree? Three hundred years ago, animals that broke the law would be assigned legal representation and put on trial. These days, as New York Times best-selling author Mary Roach discovers, the answers are best found not in jurisprudence but in science: the curious science of human-wildlife conflict, a discipline at the crossroads of human behavior and wildlife biology. Roach tags along with animal-attack forensics investigators, human-elephant conflict specialists, bear managers, and "danger tree" faller blasters. Intrepid as ever, she travels from leopard-terrorized hamlets in the Indian Himalaya to St. Peter's Square in the early hours before the pope arrives for Easter Mass, when vandal gulls swoop in to destroy the elaborate floral display. She taste-tests rat bait, learns how to install a vulture effigy, and gets mugged by a macaque. Combining little-known forensic science and conservation genetics with a motley cast of laser scarecrows, langur impersonators, and trespassing squirrels, Roach reveals as much about humanity as about nature's lawbreakers. When it comes to "problem" wildlife, Mary finds, humans are more often the problem—and the solution. Fascinating, witty, and humane, Fuzz offers hope for compassionate coexistence in our ever-expanding human habitat.



[Check it out at: https://amzn.to/3e4wdpz](https://amzn.to/3e4wdpz)

87% 4 to 5-star ratings

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 **BOOKSHELF**" is a feature to highlight 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!

“An Ugly Surprise, Avian Pox”

by Kelsey Gaylor, Executive Director, Possumwood Acres Wildlife Sanctuary

The warm, humid weather brings wildlife rehabilitators many fun surprises and also, not so fun surprises throughout the summer season. Unfortunately, ugly Avian Pox thrives in muggy conditions, and North Carolina is known for “muggy” from time to time. Avian Pox spreads through many bird species from feeders to prey and occasionally predators. It is also known to be transmitted by mosquitoes. Avian Pox is a mild to severe, slowly developing virus. There are two types of Avian Pox. The most common form you will see is referred to as dry or cutaneous. Avian Pox presents with wart-like lesions on the featherless part of the bodies of birds such as around the eyes, which can create vision obstruction. Legs and digits can become encased by the growing diseased tissue. This form will develop slowly and persist for one to four weeks. As they heal there may be some scarring and other damage, such as blindness, loss of digits or malformations of the beak. The damage left behind can result in the need for euthanasia if the bird’s capabilities are severely



Photo by Kelsey Gaylor



Photo by Kelsey Gaylor

affected. Bacterial infections are considered a secondary infection due to the virus. Let me share with you a Flicker’s story. This just broke our hearts at Possumwood Acres from the moment this bird arrived. His fight to live was admirable and unbelievable, but unfortunately, he did not make it. As you see in the picture there are growths and even damage to the beak. This is what is called Wet Pox, which is usually more severe than Dry Pox. Once the Pox virus has made its way into the mucus membrane there is not much you can do. It will lead to respiratory infections and cause suffering. The growths will block the airways and start to cause deformities. In the majority of these cases, we have made the decision to euthanize the affected bird as it is what is best for the patient. There is no absolute cure

for Avian Pox. The use of supportive care can make a dramatic difference for these patients. To help with lesions you can use an iodine solution to clean them. This seems to dry the lesions making them smaller over time. When trying to save a bird’s life who presents with Avian Pox, fluids and antibacterial medications are also helpful. In addition, a quarantine system should definitely be utilized, especially if you have Avian patients who could pass the affliction to your wild bird ambassadors or other patients. It is imperative to sanitize as you move from patient to patient in your wildlife shelter or sanctuary. Wearing appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE gear) when handling the infected patient will help



Photo Public Domain

decrease the spread. The patient will need everything to be its own specific items (nothing shared), such as cage area, tweezers, medication syringes and individual perching bowls for water and food to avoid cross contamination. Ensure a disinfecting solution soak is consistently used for all the Avian Pox patient’s treatment items when performing daily cleans



Photo Public Domain

and even after the care. Birds with mild infections may only have a few growths that minimally affect their health status. These lesions can persist from one to four weeks, and if mild, the bird will survive, and the nodules will heal potentially with some scarring. True, it is a nasty looking affliction, but if mild and given appropriate care and monitoring by those of us trained to do so, they can make it, and of course, that is what we want!

'Rescue & Return' - from the NCSU Vet School

by Holly Amato, WRNC VSL

One evening a limping Canada Goose was spotted near the Veterinary School pond. During our examination of the goose, we found that it had a degloving injury on its hurt leg but no serious bone trauma. We contacted 'Our Wild Neighbors (OWN)' in Hillsborough, and someone was able to pick up the goose and transport it to a wildlife rehabilitator



that evening. OWN personnel bandaged the hurt leg and after several weeks of wound care and cage rest, the goose had healed. I received a "ready to go" call and brought the goose back to the vet school to release it where it was found, hoping it would be welcomed back to goose family and friends. I opened the transport container near the pond where the rest of the geese swam. The goose slowly waddled to the water and plopped in. Immediately, it swam up to the rest of the geese and flapped its wings as if in celebration. Another goose emerged from the flock, and they swam off together, arching their necks towards each other and excitedly honking. Soon the rest of the geese broke out in honking; they must have been welcoming their companion back to the flock and rejoicing at the reunion of the pair! I sat there by the pond for some time after, in awe of what I

had just witnessed. It seems that many wildlife rehabilitators get started due to a connection with animals that is beautiful and hard to explain. I think moments like this allow us to rekindle our emotional connectedness with the creatures that we work so hard to protect and remember that we are not so different from other species after all.

Training Opportunities! Never Stop Learning!

IN-PERSON and virtual Wildlife Rehab Classes are always being offered. Continue to check with the sources listed below for upcoming training opportunities throughout the year. Some of the methods of training will still be virtual, on-demand & webinars, but all information and knowledge gained is of value – no matter how it is presented!

- **Wildlife Rehab, Inc.** holds a 12-week course, "Introduction to Wildlife Rehabilitation," with a weekly virtual class. Check with them to see when their next training course is. wildliferehabinc.org
- **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, 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

Wildlife Rescue Story from the 'Not So Rich & Famous!' by Linda Bergman-Althouse

Calls came in weeks before the young Red-tailed Hawk was finally captured and admitted for care. The reports were all the same, "I see this hawk sitting on the ground, for hours at a time, in the grassy area by a small stream right next to our building on Henderson Drive in Jacksonville. I can almost walk right up to it." With every call, I dispatched myself to check out the situation since I live right around the corner from Henderson Drive. Each visit, I managed to get very close to the raptor, who then flew away quite capably up and over the treetops. The thought at the time was, she's just young and hunting for snakes or toads along the stream. I was told the people working in the area enjoyed seeing the bird every day and affectionately referred to "their big bird" as 'Henderson Hawk.' The day came when an employee called to say she was standing right next to the hawk, took a picture with her phone and sent it to me. She was, in fact, standing



right next to the wild hawk which is highly unusual and potentially dangerous. I hightailed it over to Henderson Drive and was able to walk up to the hawk, pick her up and place her in a kennel cab for transport to our shelter with no resistance, from the hawk anyway. Her eyes were dull and sunken, and she was as light as a couple feathers. Her emaciated chest could barely support her heavy, drooping wings. I knew she was starving and suffering from malnutrition. Then, suddenly, people from the surrounding buildings emerged and ran or walked hurriedly toward my car. There must have been over a dozen people, and they were yelling, "What are you doing with



our bird, or where are you taking our bird?" They were terribly upset that I appeared to be kidnapping "their bird." These were the people who had probably never called. I explained to them that "it is not normal for me or anyone to be able to walk up to a hawk, let alone, pick it up. There must be something wrong that needs to be addressed and treated." It took quite a bit of 'rehab-splaining,' but they all, finally, seemed to understand (or give-up) and wanted what was best for "their bird." Since the mortality among first year hawks is around 70%, my theory was she lacked hunting skills and definitely, needed help. At the shelter, 'Henderson Hawk' got healthy, eventually graduated from hunting (mouse) school and became quite the stunner with a fuller figure and intense, bright eyes as you can see!!

Photos by John Althouse

"Roly-Poly" Rodents compiled by Linda Bergman-Althouse

TEN THINGS you may not know about Groundhogs (GH), also called Woodchucks! 1-They are true hibernators, fattening up in the warm seasons and snoozing for most of the winter months. 2-While hibernating, their body temperature can drop from 99 to 37 degrees, safely. 3-Their hibernating heart rate slows from about 80 bpm to five. 4-Breathing slows from around 16 breaths per minute to as few as two. 5-During hibernation—150 days without eating—a GH will lose no more than a fourth of its body weight thanks to their lower metabolism. 6-During warm seasons, a groundhog may pack in more than a pound of vegetation at one sitting, which is much like a 150-pound man eating a 15-pound steak. 7-To accommodate its bodacious appetite, woodchucks grow upper and lower incisors that can withstand wear and tear because they grow a sixteenth of an inch per week. 8-If properly aligned, a woodchuck's upper and lower incisors grind away at each other with every bite, keeping suitably short. 9-Woodchuck burrows, which the animals dig as much as 6 feet deep, can meander underground for 20 feet or more, usually with two entrances but in some cases with nearly a dozen. 10-Burrows provide groundhogs with their chief means of evading enemies, because the rotund little guys (just before hibernation, a hefty woodchuck may tip the scales at 14 pounds) are too slow to escape most predators in a dead heat: their speed is only 8 mph, while a hungry fox may hit 25 mph.



“Bone Breakers”

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

Sometimes mistaken for an Eagle, the Osprey is a large fish-eating bird commonly found along the coast and near freshwater lakes and is the second most widely distributed raptor species in the world behind the Peregrine Falcon. The Osprey is found everywhere on earth except Antarctica. It’s not often that Ospreys are admitted to the Outer Banks Wildlife Shelter in Newport because they usually manage to stay above the fray and out of the way of humans. However, when it does happen, it is usually a human interference incident, which was the case when two infants were admitted to the shelter a while back. Their nest, aboard a Virginia boat, was not discovered until the captain docked in North Carolina. Although adult Ospreys do not handle captivity well, a youngster’s demands focus on food, development, and protection which our shelter is very experienced in providing. Ospreys are brown on top with a bright white underside, dark specks on the wings, and dark bands on the tail feathers. The head is white with a dark mask across yellow eyes, reaching to the sides of the neck. Their beak is black, with a bluish fleshy upper mandible membrane, and their feet are white with black talons. Its toes are of equal length and the talons rounded, rather than grooved, which is something they have in common with owls, including their outer reversible toes. It is a large raptor, reaching more than two feet in length and



71 inches across the wings. Male and female Ospreys are similar in appearance, but the male has a slimmer body and narrower wings. Their wings and legs have adapted over time to enjoy and exhibit great joint flexibility. An example of this limberness occurs when flying towards a bright light such as the sun. They are able to bend the joint in their wing to shield their



eyes from the light to aid safety while flying. In flight, the Osprey’s arched wings and drooping "hands," give it a gull-like appearance. Their call is a series of dainty chirps described as *cheep, cheep* or *yewk, yewk*, but if disturbed by activity near the nest, the call becomes more of a sharp and frenzied whistle, *cheereek!* Ospreys have picked up a few nicknames over the years. You may have heard them referred to as Sea Hawks, Fish Eagles or Fish Hawks which all come from inferences of keen eyesight, agility, timing, strong talons, and expertise in catching fish. The names have also been attributed because they choose nesting sites near bodies of water that can provide an adequate food supply. The bird’s common name, Osprey, is derived from the Latin word *ossifragus*, meaning “a bone breaker.” Fish make up 99 percent of their diet, so these feathered, aerial bone breakers certainly, handle

“Bone Breakers”

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

dietary fish bones better than humans do. Occasionally, the Osprey may prey on rodents, rabbits, amphibians, other birds, and small reptiles. Ospreys have vision well adapted to detecting underwater objects from the air. A meal is first sighted when the Osprey is above the water up to 130 feet. The bird hovers momentarily and will then plunge feet first



into the water. On occasion, an Osprey will immerse entirely in the water, which is a rare behavior for raptors. With those reversible outer toes, sharp spicules on the underside of the toes, closable nostrils to keep out water during dives and backwards-facing scales on the talons which function as barbs to help hold its catch, they are well suited to be impressive fisher birds. While in flight, the Osprey will orient its catch headfirst to ease wind resistance. Ospreys reach sexual maturity and begin breeding around the age of three to four, usually mate for life and return to the same nesting site every year. The nest is a large pile of sticks, driftwood and seaweed built in forks of trees, rocky outcrops, utility poles,

artificial platforms provided by preservationists or found on a small offshore island. The female lays two to four eggs within a month and relies on the size of the nest to conserve heat, but both parents help to incubate. The eggs are

whitish with splotches of reddish-brown and are incubated for about five weeks before hatching. Newly hatched chicks weigh in at 1.8 to 2.1 ounces and will fledge in 8 to 10 weeks. Once the young are hatched, the male Osprey takes responsibility for providing food. When food is scarce, the first chicks to hatch are most likely to survive. These large, rangy hawks have adapted well around humans and have rebounded in numbers following the 1970’s ban on the pesticide DDT, although still considered a threatened species. The typical lifespan is 7 to 10 years, though individuals can age



20 to 25 years. The oldest recorded wild Osprey lived in Europe and is estimated as reaching the age of thirty. In North America, Bald Eagles are the only major predators of Osprey eggs and juveniles. However, the more common predation by an Eagle is stealing the Osprey’s catch rather than a family member. Eagles often force Ospreys to drop fish they have caught and steal them in midair. Watching Osprey tending to their nest and offspring is a wonderful way to spend a morning or afternoon; another way to safely enjoy our coastal wildlife! Bring your binoculars!

Article Photos by John Althouse

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. Remember, this change was made in 2019 to avoid confusion when the dues payment was formerly included in our symposium registration. Benefits for WRNC members include:



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

Visit our website, at <https://ncwildliferehab.org/membership-renewal/> to join or renew. Belonging to Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina, Inc. (WRNC) 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 formal training. 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!



Photos by John Althouse

Quinto's Comedy Corner by Linda Bergman-Althouse

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

IF . . . you are more afraid of being bitten by a chipmunk than a coyote!
(Those chipmunks bite hard!!)

IF . . . you know that when a Squirrel plays Scrabble with a Raccoon the Squirrel will always win! (Why?) Because a Squirrel has the 'Q.'

IF . . . you know who deposited this "thank you" in the outside critter bowl. (Who?)

(A Fox! First thought was a possum, but the security camera doesn't lie!! – and the fox makes this deposit quite often!!)



Photos by John Althouse

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 would like to share with **QUINTO** for his column, please send it to lbergmanx@gmail.com

Quinto hopes everyone is having a . . . HAPPY & SUCCESSFUL BABY SEASON!

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

Linda Bergman-Althouse	Editor	L. Michele Poe	C-Editor
Jean Chamberlain	C-Editor	Ann Rogers	C-Editor
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