

2025 Course Descriptions

(Additional abstracts will be listed as they are received)

RVS Training

Introduction to RVS Rehab

Speaker: Nina Fischesser

Do you want to rehab RVS? This presentation provides an overview of RVS rehab including the permit application procedure, an introduction to the disease, and a look at some of the pros and cons for rehabbing RVS. This session is designed for rehabbers who are trying to decide if they want to rehab RVS. It also provides the basics for those rehabbers who aren't planning to rehab RVS.

(RVS Rehabilitators, Vet Tech CE)

Wildlife Rehabilitation RVS Regulations

NCWRC

RVS regulations, permit application requirements and procedures, rehabilitator responsibilities, care restrictions, release restrictions, and transport protocols are covered in this session.

(RVS Rehabilitators, General, Vet CE, Vet Tech CE)

Rabies the Disease

Department of Health

Rabies epidemiology, vaccination, titers, testing procedures, and more are covered in this session.

(RVS Rehabilitators, General, Vet Tech CE)

Raccoon Rehabilitation

Ruby Davis

Raccoons: Should YOU rehab raccoons; why or why not? The reality of rehabbing raccoons; the basics and more!

(RVS Rehabilitators, General, Vet Tech CE)

Bat Rehabilitation

Leslie Sturges

This section will introduce the natural history seasonal ecology of temperate North American bat species and touch on management in rehabilitation, including intake assessment and stabilization and a brief discussion of disease issues as time allows. The second half of the session will focus on species, seasonality and neonates through juveniles of the most common species encountered in rehabilitation. Feeding methods, diet selection, housing, conspecifics, monitoring development, and release methods will be discussed.

(RVS Rehabilitators, General, Vet Tech CE)

Skunk Rehabilitation

Ruby Davis

This presentation will discuss natural history as well as simple and successful methods for rearing striped skunks, one of the more common rabies vector species admitted to North American rehabilitators. Topics will include diet and feeding, housing, husbandry, behavioral and developmental considerations and release criteria.

(RVS Rehabilitators, General, Vet Tech CE)

Fox Medicine and Rehabilitation

Dr Miranda Torkelson

Foxes are one of the most charismatic species seen by wildlife rehabilitators. Highly adaptable, foxes are one of the most widespread mammals in the world. They can survive in many environments, but they still have unique rehabilitation needs. In this talk, we will discuss the basic needs of foxes in rehabilitation, common injuries and diseases, medications and treatments, and release considerations.

(RVS Rehabilitators, Vet CE, Vet Tech CE)

Veterinarian Lectures

Opossum Medicine: AWESOME OPOSSUMS – VIRGINIA OPOSSUM MEDICINE AND REHABILITATION

Dr. Antonia Gardner

The Virginia opossum, *Didelphis virginiana*, is North America’s only marsupial and one of the most common animals presented for rehabilitation on this continent. These fascinating creatures are relatively hardy, but have some unique characteristics that can complicate their care. However, with a bit of knowledge and expertise on the species their rehabilitation can be extremely rewarding. This presentation gives an overview of the Virginia opossum’s natural history and special traits. Drawing on her experiences at a large rehabilitation facility that cared for over one thousand opossums annually, the presenter will discuss triage, stabilization, and care of common conditions of orphan opossums, as well as some of the more common injuries and illnesses of adult opossums. The hour will wrap up by presenting a few unusual cases that the author has encountered involving the species.

(Mammal Rehabilitators, Vet CE, Vet Tech CE)

Avian Influenza

Dr. Tracey Ritzman

(Avian Rehabilitators, Vet CE, Vet Tech CE)

Avian Orthopedics

Dr. David Scott

This will be an introduction to the basics of avian orthopedic surgery. The equipment and supplies needed will be covered as well as an in-depth discussion of some of the most commonly performed procedures.

(Avian Rehabilitators, Vet CE, Vet Tech CE)

Fracture Management in Wildlife Patients

Dr. Antonia Gardner

Many presentations about fracture management focus primarily on surgical repair. However, the reality is that many wildlife rehabilitators have limited resources for surgical repair, and many fractures can be managed with cage rest and external coaptation. Selecting which cases are most appropriate for these modalities is paramount for good patient outcomes. This presentation discusses diagnoses and description of fractures as well as stabilization of fracture patients. It details which fractures are appropriate for cage rest and external coaptation, and which ones generally require surgical repairs. It also discusses which fractures generally hold a poor prognosis for release and long-term patient comfort. Finally, long-term management and pre-release rehabilitation of fracture patients is discussed. Although the presenter will focus more on avian cases, mammalian fracture basics will also be discussed.

(Avian Rehabilitators, Vet CE, Vet Tech CE)

Neoplasia in Birds of Prey

Dr. Tracey Ritzman

(Avian Rehabilitators, Mammal rehabilitators, Vet CE, Vet Tech CE)

Neurological Disease in Avians

Dr. David Scott

This lecture will cover the various causes for neurologic disease in avian wildlife patients. A handy flow-chart will be provided to assist you in getting a diagnosis in the most efficient and economical way.

(Avian Rehabilitators, Vet CE, Vet Tech CE)

Interpreting Rads of Mammals

Laura Lathan

We will review techniques to optimize your radiographic images of wild mammals, discuss common radiographic findings, and review several case studies.

(Mammal Rehabilitators, Vet CE, Vet Tech CE)

Emaciation: more than “just a little thin”

Dr Miranda Torkelson

Starvation is a common cause of admission to wildlife rehabilitation. Whether a primary or secondary cause of decline, starvation can have serious consequences on the entire body. The emaciated patient has significant needs other than just more calories. In this talk, we will review the effects of emaciation on organ systems of the body, consider the differences in species based on their natural history, and discuss therapeutic interventions.

(General, Vet CE, Vet Tech CE)

Derm Detectives: Conditions of the skin

Dr. Karra Pierce

Using a case-based approach we learn about common (and some uncommon) diseases and conditions affecting the skin of birds, mammals, and reptiles. Discussion includes pathology, etiology, diagnostic techniques, and treatment for a variety of skin conditions. Wounds management is not addressed in this lecture.

(General, Vet Tech CE, Vet CE)

Interesting Amphibian & Reptile Clinical Cases; An Interactive Learning Experience

Dr. Gregory Lewbart

Amphibians and reptiles present unique challenges and opportunities in veterinary medicine and wildlife rehabilitation, often requiring specialized knowledge due to their anatomy, physiology, and husbandry needs. This presentation explores a series of intriguing clinical cases involving these species, highlighting diagnostic complexities, innovative treatments, and novel surgical interventions. Cases include the management of vehicular trauma, successful surgical removal of gastrointestinal foreign bodies in snakes, and wound care in amphibians. Emphasis is placed on interdisciplinary approaches, incorporating basic physical examination, blood work, advanced imaging, pharmacological innovations, and environmental modifications to improve outcomes.

(Herptile Rehabilitators, Vet CE, Vet Tech CE)

USDA Animal Care Updates

Dr. Mary Ann McBride

This session will provide a brief overview of what combination of animals and activities constitute USDA-regulated activities for wildlife rehabilitators and captive permit holders. Time will be available for Q&A with participants

(General, Vet CE, Vet Tech CE)

Galapagos Lava Gull Response

Dr. Anne Goodall

This presentation describes a recent response to injured Lava Gulls in the Galapagos Islands, covering the challenges of traveling with unwieldy medical equipment from North Carolina to a remote island with limited resources.

(General, Vet CE, Vet Tech CE)

Labs and Workshops

Turtle Shell Repair Lab

Dr. Gregory Lewbart

This lab covers different shell repair techniques using shell models.

(Turtle Rehabilitators ,Vet CE, Vet Tech CE, Turtle Rehabilitators)

Avian Physical Exam Lab

Betty O'Leary

This lab covers the basics of avian external anatomy and examination. Student are supplied with bird cadavers and an examination form to practice during the class.

(General, Vet Tech CE)

Large Avian Bandaging Lab

Sunny Cooper

This lab will focus on learning to properly place the most common bandages and splints used in large bird species including raptors. Using cadavers, each student will learn how to place a figure-8 wrap with and without a body wrap, as well as to place splints for fractures of the lower leg (tibiotarsus, tarsometatarsus and digits). Guidelines for when to use each wrap and splint will be covered.

(Vet Tech CE, Avian Rehabilitators)

Fluid Therapy Lab

Instructor tbd

(Beginner Track, General, Vet Tech CE)

Mammal Physical Exam Lab

Instructor tbd

In this class, participants will learn the basic principles and importance of performing a physical examination on small mammals. Attendees will have the chance to practice their physical exam skills on cadavers.

(Beginner Track, General, Vet Tech CE)

Raptor ID

Betty O’Leary

Identifying raptors that come in for rehab can be confusing especially in juvenile plumage. Using a Power Point presentation this class will teach you how to identify diurnal raptors native to the east coast with extra emphasis on juvenile plumage. At the end of the class some raptor cadavers will be used so you can physically see the difference.

(Avian Rehabilitators, General, Vet Tech CE)

Biosecurity Lab

Sunny Cooper & Milan Starr

As wildlife rehabilitators, we encounter animals that harness the potential to pass zoonotic disease, parasites, and other unpleasanties during their recovery. In this workshop, we will review the best practices in hand hygiene, uses of personal protective equipment, and clinic operations to prepare you for care of patients that may carry illnesses such as highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), rabies, etc.

(General, Vet Tech CE)

Possum Wheel Workshop

Linda Veraldi

Participants will build an opossum wheel to take home.



(General)

General

Intro to Songbird ID and Diet Needs

Tara Frost

(Avian Rehabilitators, Vet Tech CE)

Looney Loons: The Rescue and Rehabilitation of Common Loons

Andrew Baughman

Loons are known for their complex and unique natural history. This can often make their rehabilitation tricky. Many of us are well acquainted with the fact that loons do not do well in captivity. Luckily, there are quite a few tips and tricks that can be used to help increase their chance of survival. This lecture includes information such as identification, natural history, feeding tips, housing, common ailments, and more!

Avian Rehabilitators, Vet Tech CE)

Basic Rehabilitation of Eastern Cottontails

Jessica Anderson

Eastern Cottontails are among the most common small mammals that require rehabilitation; however, many people feel overwhelmed or afraid to care for these animals due to their stressful nature and the perceived difficulty of their care. In this presentation, we cover basic natural history, rehabilitation techniques, and some tips discovered over the last decade in rehabilitating Eastern Cottontails to help you feel confident and prepared to get started or potentially improve existing protocols!

(General, Vet Tech CE)

Hazards of Wildlife Rehabilitation

Linda Bergman-Althouse

(General, Vet Tech CE)

Raptor Ambassador Candidacy

Colleen Hartman

Choosing the right candidates for education and exhibition is essential to ensuring their well-being in human care. While various qualities make a non-releasable raptor suitable for life under human care, not all are ideal candidates. When evaluating a raptor for placement, it is important to assess their physiological, behavioral, and psychological traits to determine the best role for them and to understand the potential impact on their long-term welfare.

(Avian Rehabilitators, Vet CE, Vet Tech CE)

Social Media For Wildlife Rehabilitators

Jessica Anderson

In this day and age, social media is hard to get away from. While it can be an amazing tool to help wildlife rehabilitators fundraise, find volunteers, and raise awareness to help prevent wildlife conflicts, it can also work against us when used improperly. In this presentation, we'll talk about the various social media sites available and their benefits, best practices to make sure you're conveying the right messaging, tips and tricks on how to get more engagement (and thus supporters!), and things to avoid!

(General)

Is Mentoring for You

Tonya Weil & Rebeka Kriston

Training the next generation of wildlife rehabilitators is quite a responsibility, and our state needs experienced and seasoned wildlife rehabilitators with the expertise to do just that. If you have been a rehabilitator for a while and would like to pass your knowledge and skills on to others, we need you, North Carolina wildlife needs you and potential wildlife rehabilitators need you! So the question is, would you like to be an invaluable mentor? Do you qualify? Learn about North Carolina’s new wildlife rehabilitation apprenticeship requirement to help you decide. If you’re considering mentoring an apprentice, this class will help you see if your toolbox is equipped with the right background and teaching tools to do that!

(General)

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(Avian Rehabilitators, General, Vet Tech CE)

Natural History of Small Mammals

Kathy Lillard

It is essential to know the natural history of the animals we rehab to give them proper care. This presentation covers the natural history of the 3 small mammals rehabbed by beginners in North Carolina: squirrels, opossums and cottontails. It covers their characteristics, habitats, activity patterns, feeding habits, ecology, population dynamics, behavior and social organization.

(Beginner track, General, Vet Tech CE)

Is it a Bird, Mammal or Amphibian I Hear?

Jean Chamberlain

Do you know the songs, calls and other sounds made by the wildlife around you? Jean will challenge you to identify common wildlife sounds.

(General)

Best Practices for Volunteer Management

Maggie Stein

This presentation will showcase the structure of the Carolina Raptor Center’s Volunteer and Internship programs. Special emphasis will be put on changes made within the last three years in response to post COVID-19 programmatic conditions. Through reviewing the best practices for volunteer management at the Carolina Raptor Center, I hope to spark ideas for volunteer programs of other wildlife rehabilitation

and conservation education organizations.

(General)

Impact of Hurricane Helene on Wildlife

Falyn Owens

Hurricane Helene has made unprecedented impacts to western North Carolina in ways that may take decades to fully understand. Initial surveys show a drastically changed landscape in critical areas for some of our state's imperiled species, including the eastern hellbender, Cerulean Warbler, Gray bat, and bog turtle. As is the case with any change to the landscape, some species will be disadvantaged while others will benefit, and how each species responds will be challenging to predict. I will share what we've learned so far in the aftermath, and how the NC Wildlife Commission and partners plan to assess and mitigate the negative impacts of this historic event.

(Beginner track, General, Vet Tech CE)

Compassion Fatigue

Linda Bergman-Althouse

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 because 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 autopilot and keep on keepin' on! This, my friends, can very well culminate in Compassion Fatigue, 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 do not dare speak of it because we are strong, capable, we can manage whatever we need to, so that won't happen to us. Truth be told, it can, so let's talk about it. This segment of training explores what can lead to Compassion Fatigue, how to recognize it, resources to help you move through it and what behaviors and steps we can take to prevent it.

(Beginner track, General, Vet Tech CE)

Beginner

Introduction to Wildlife Rehabilitation

Tara Frost

Want to start Rehabilitating Wildlife? There are a few things you need to know to make sure wildlife rehabilitation is for you. This presentation covers the basics of rehabilitation, such as pros and cons, basic care, and expectations, to prepare beginners for what rehabilitation involves.

(Beginner Track)

Applying for an Apprentice Permit

Rebeka Kriston & Tonya Weil

The NCWRC has a new online procedure for applying for permits. Applying for your first permit as an apprentice can be very confusing. This presentation will go through the procedure step by step.
(Beginner track)

Basic Medical Terminology and Math for Beginners

Ann Rogers

Have you ever been to pick up an animal from a veterinarian and feel like you are hearing a different language as they go through the patient’s condition and prognosis (likely outcome or future for patient)? Well, medical terminology is like a new language for many new, or non-medical rehabilitators. This lecture aims to teach some of the more common terminology, used in caring for wildlife in the rehabilitation and veterinary settings. This session will also explain the basics of all things “number-related” in the rehabilitation of wild animals. The target audience is the novice rehabber, but even many seasoned rehabbers need help in understanding how to do drug calculations. We will try and make this easy to understand!

(Beginner Track, General)

Zoonosis: Sanitation/Keeping it Clean

Carla Johnson

This presentation covers the causes, modes of transmission, description of common zoonoses, symptoms of infection, and most of all, prevention.

(Beginner Track, General, Vet Tech CE)

Handling Wildlife Calls

Carla Johnson

'My dog has brought me a baby bird.' 'I don't think the mother rabbit is feeding the young in the nest in my back yard.' 'There's a bat in my chimney.' Carla covers many of the calls frequently received by rehabilitators and vet offices.

(Beginner Track, General, Vet Tech CE)

Opossum Rehabilitation

Melisse Hopping

Natural History.
Capture, handling, assessment, housing.
Feeding, weaning, release.
(Beginner Track, General, Vet Tech CE)

Rehabilitating Grey Squirrels 101

Paige Person

This presentation will prepare you to raise baby gray squirrels from intake to release. It does not cover basic pinky care which is more advanced. We will cover feeding and formula preparation, solid foods, housing stages, enrichment and some common squirrel ailments. This class is for new squirrel rehabbers but experienced folks may also find some useful information to add to their tool box.

(Beginner Track, General, Vet Tech CE)

Capture & Restraint of Small Mammals & Birds

Kim Diaz

This class covers species-specific behavioral patterns, proper containment methods, and safe handling techniques to protect animals and handlers.

- Learn essential techniques for safely capturing and handling injured wildlife, including songbirds, small mammals, and non-venomous reptiles
- Understand how different species react to human approach and handling
- Minimize capture myopathy and stress-related complications during restraint
- Demonstrations will include the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and specialized handling tools, with hands-on instruction for proper restraint techniques across various species

(Beginner Track, General, Vet Tech CE)

Keynote Speaker Address

Making Bones Talk

Susan Andrews

Faunal analysis or zooarchaeology is the study of animal bones excavated from archaeological sites. Bones can not only tell archaeologists what food people ate but provide information related to trade patterns, animal husbandry techniques, environmental issues, cooking and butchery practices, economic conditions, and belief systems.

“Making Bones Talk” will look at each step of faunal analysis from excavating and identifying the bones to determining what information can be gained from them. To see how animal bones can influence the interpretations of archaeological sites, faunal analysis from Jamestown Fort (Virginia) will also be discussed. As the first permanent English settlement in the New World, food played a critical role in the survival of the first colonists from 1607 to the 1620s. The identified bones have revealed essential information about the “starving time” at Jamestown, how trade relationships with local tribes changed over time, how the environment affected their food choices, and how livestock herds became established in the New World.

