

Wildlife Tales

2022 VOL. XXIII No 1
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Center News

2021 was a busy and challenging year

We received so many orphaned and injured young animals in 2021 that we sometimes despaired as to whether we could keep up with the demands. At times, during peak baby raccoon season, ours was the only facility in central Florida that was accepting any raccoons. Some how we managed to survive the ordeal although I personally had to work some 16 hour days. Most importantly, many innocent lives were saved and restored to pursue the free life they so deserved.

Under the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission rules, I am allowed to have 10 sub-permittees who, on their property, care for wildlife patients admitted to our facility. I would like to recognize them for their support, caring, and devotion: Nathalie Barnhart, Jennifer Fletcher Odom, Ethel Huggins, Thressa Jones, Esther Plummer, Jennifer Rosenfeldt, Stacy Russo, Terri White, Mike Melone, and Shellie Gilliam. I also want to recognize Lindy Williams for her assistance during 2021. Photo: Baby bobcat, Maxi, at WRC, 2021



Please visit us at our web site: www.wildlifecenterflorida.org

Arrivals and Releases

Bobcat



Maxi was resting in her hammock when I took her photo, and I believe that she wanted to return to her nice cat nap.

I received an injured female baby bobcat from Lt. Maxwell Edson. He responded to a call in Clermont after construction equipment accidentally ran over a bobcat den, killing three babies and injuring the fourth. Upon examination after her arrival, I noted that one of the baby's toes had been severed; and the foot was very swollen. I began giving her antibiotics immediately, and within a few days, the paw was back to its normal size. Dr. David Jourdenais examined the baby bobcat for us and was pleased with her progress.

After a month of care, I turned "Maxi"(named in honor of Lt. Maxwell Edson) over to volunteer sub-permitee, Shellie Gilliam, who has had experience with raising bobcats in the past. She had proper caging and food sources in order to provide adequate nutrition, exercise, and training that Maxi would require.



Maxi grew quickly in care and learned how to be a wild bobcat.

Arrivals and Releases

Raccoons

We admitted more than 150 infant and juvenile raccoons in 2021. Raccoons are one of the more expensive wild animals that we receive for care. The Center purchases special formulas, feeding bottles, nipples, vaccines, puppy chow, and grapes. When first admitted, raccoons must be quarantined due to the many communicable diseases that they could have. This requires housing them in separate areas and rooms for 30 days or until they are old enough to receive their vaccinations. Special measures must be taken so that no cross contamination occurs. All of my sub permittees have their pre-exposure rabies shots and complete training in raccoon care.



A baby raccoon at WRC cuddled with his furry toy animal. Most of the baby mammals love their fuzzy stuffed animal toys.

These siblings were ready for their bottle feeding of Fox Valley raccoon formula. At this age, they were also introduced to Purina Puppy Chow and grapes.



Arrivals and Releases

Eastern Gray Squirrels

Once again, we received a multitude of baby orphaned gray squirrels in August and September. I am grateful to Esther Plummer for going on rescues and raising more than two dozen babies at a time. Our bottle feedings just for squirrels were 2 hours, 4 times per day at the peak of the season. That doesn't leave much time for other duties, but we managed.



E. Gray squirrels in care 2021



Arrivals and Releases

Southern Flying Squirrels



I only raised 6 flying squirrels this past season, but they demanded a great deal of time and effort none-the-less. I do love to watch them grow up and become little acrobats. On a tv nature program, they said that flying squirrels love fungus and mushrooms so much that they will travel miles to seek them out. After a rain, I always gather mushrooms from the yard for the flying squirrels in care (and for the gray squirrels as well). They also love natural foods such as acorns and wild hickory nuts which I bash open with a hammer as they are so tough to open.

S. Flying squirrels in care 2021



Arrivals and Releases

River Otters

Five baby otters came in for care and were a lot of fun as always. We are able to nurse them on Fox Valley formula for beavers and otters. They develop very well on it and like the taste, too. Once they are old enough, we supplement their diet with whole fish which are cut into bite sized pieces. Otters are fed the fish without deboning or gutting so that they receive proper nutrients that they need, such as calcium. We also supplement with vitamin B complex if the fish have been frozen. It doesn't take long before the fish can be provided whole rather than cut up, and the otters' teeth make quick work of their meals.

Arrivals and Releases

Birds



Director, Carol Hardee, posing with an immature bald eagle brought to the center on a Sunday night by an FWC officer. He was so grateful to find a rehab that was still open after 8 PM and willing to help.



Tiny nestlings require constant care and feeding.

An injured barred owl also needed help.

Arrivals and Releases

Virginia Opossums



Many infant opossums were admitted to WRC in 2021. When they are under 60 grams, I tube feed them their formula, while over 60 grams can be taught to lap formula from a shallow dish or lid. Opossum young are cared for until they are about 12 inches in length at which time they can be released.

Cottontail and Marsh Rabbits



Baby bunnies are so cute and delicate. We receive about 50 cottontail and marsh rabbits per year.

Arrivals and Releases

White tail deer

In 2021, we rescued more than a dozen baby white tail deer fawns. Some were injured or sick, some were orphaned, but all were in desperate need of care. Lindy Williams, Jennifer Odom, and Esther Plummer all were instrumental in saving these precious lives. Many of the babies required fluid therapy and medications in order to be saved. Without the help of these individuals, the fawns would have perished. I am so grateful to have these ladies on my team of volunteers.



Orphaned fawn in care



Ron Hardee comforted a fawn at the WRC.



A bottle of warm formula does the trick.

WISH LIST

Foods: Dry Pedigree, Purina, or Science Diet Puppy food, unsalted roasted peanuts, shelled pecans, any unshelled nuts, wild bird seed and sunflower seeds, any brands of dry dog or cat foods, and fresh acorns are greatly appreciated for the squirrels in care.

General Supplies: copy paper, infant “receiving blankets”, small size “Catac” nipples and “Miracle nipples” for feeding squirrels

Cleaning supplies: laundry Tide pods, paper towels, especially Bounty and Viva brands, dryer softener sheets, black, heavy duty trash bags with ties, Charmin bathroom tissue, liquid dish soap, liquid hand soap, gallon size zip-lock freezer bags with zipper closures, spray cleaners such as “409”, “Pine Sol” for cleaning floors.

Monetary Donations are always necessary to keep us stocked on formulas, meds, vaccines, and foods for the wild patients in our care.

When you place an order with Amazon online, you can make a donation to WRC which won't cost you anything. Just go on Amazon Smile and choose WRC as your charity. We are on their list of non-profits which receive a percentage from purchases when designated by the buyer. I always do this when I order, and it adds up. Amazon sends the amount earned to our business checking account every three months.

S. Flying Squirrel



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If you include the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Central Florida in your will, please be sure to use the legal name and address of our Center as listed in this newsletter.

Thank You To The Following:

We thank the dedicated staff of Disney's Animal Kingdom- Hospital Manager, Lori Grady, and all of the DAK animal keepers who assist the wildlife. Our friends at DAK have done so much to support the care of many injured and orphaned native wild animals.

We wish to thank dear friends of the wildlife, Wayne and Linda Boyd, for their kind and generous support over many years. Their dedication to our mission has been steadfast and most appreciated.

A thanks goes to Dr. David Jourdenais, Geneva Oaks Animal Hospital, who has assisted us for more than 25 years and Dr. Jane Fishman Leon for all of her help.

Thanks, Publix on Alafaya Trail at Eastwood for the fresh produce and dry pet foods.

We appreciate the officers of Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for their dedication and hard work. They routinely capture or confiscate injured or illegally held wildlife and transport them to us, often at night and on weekends.

Thank you Sea World staff and the rescue department for accepting injured wildlife and also for capturing some very difficult cases in order to save their lives.

We wish to thank the nice folks at Elizabeth Morse Genius Foundation for their support.

Wildlife Center Volunteers

Thank you, Marshall Wolfe, for building climbing cages, feeders, and bed boxes for the squirrels, and for completing various repairs at the center.

Our volunteers who field phone calls, are vaccinated for rabies prevention, care for a wide variety of species, and transport as needed: , Jennifer Rosenfeldt, Terri White, Jennifer Fletcher Odom, Thressa Jones, Nathalie Barnhart, Ethel Huggins, Mike Melone, Shellie Gilliam, and Esther Plummer. Thanks!

I wish to thank my brother-in-law, Jack Hardee, for helping me with many hours of work on the website and the newsletter. He is also our IT guy for all computer repairs and problems that arise, seemingly on a continual basis.

**Neonate
screech owl**

Wildlife Rehabilitation Center
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