Dear Friends,

For many of us, 2021 is a year that looks best in the rearview mirror. The continued stress of the pandemic, the challenges of finding and scheduling vaccinations, booster shots, and tests, at times seemed overwhelming. Somehow, we not only survived 2021, we thrived.

That success was enabled by an unprecedented level of support from our friends and benefactors. Your support provided state-of-the-art care to a record-breaking 3,804 wild animals. We were able to launch the Great Rebuild, a dramatic renovation that upgraded many of our animal facilities.

Our weekly television series, UNTAMED: Life is Wild, aired on VPM and other PBS affiliates nationwide. It was nominated for an Emmy Award, and won two Telly Awards. Those achievements are a tribute to those who have made it all possible with their generous financial support.

As we enter 2022, we look forward to even more success and achievement. We will be celebrating the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Wildlife Center of Virginia, and we will be announcing many new initiatives. But for now, I hope you will enjoy this report of yet another remarkable year, and I hope we can count on you as we look to the future.

Sincerely,

Ed Clark, President

---

**THE GREAT REBUILD**

Donors Responded to Support an Essential Upgrade

Animal enclosures get a lot of wear and tear when they are used to house more than 3,000 wild animals per year. Donors responded generously in 2021 when we launched the Great Rebuild campaign to renovate and expand our animal care facilities. The result is one of the most extensive facility upgrades in the history of the Wildlife Center.

Well over half of the total space of our enclosures was rebuilt, renovated, or expanded in the project—improving safety and habitat enrichment for our wild patients and ambassadors.

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- The Great Rebuild ........................................ 1
- Veterinary Science and Rehabilitation ......... 2
- Patient Admissions 2021
  - From Treatment to Training
  - The Great Bear Release
- Veterinary Stats at a Glance
- Outreach & Education ................................. 6
  - A Year of Virtual Offerings
  - UNTAMED: Life is Wild
  - Call of the Wild Conference Centerオープン
  - commuter connection
- 2021 Donors ............................................... 10
- Planned Giving ........................................... 14
- Financials ................................................. 16
- Leadership ............................................... 17

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**ON THE COVER**

Education Ambassador “Gus” (Barred Owl) at a small, in-person event in Albemarle County.
### 2021 Patient Admissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Songbirds</th>
<th>Passerines</th>
<th>Raptors and Vultures</th>
<th>Other Birds</th>
<th>Amphibians</th>
<th>Reptiles and Mammals</th>
<th>Total Patients</th>
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<td><strong>Vultures, Raptors and Mammals</strong>&lt;br&gt;1,966 Patients</td>
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**In increasing order not only the number of patients but also the level of care required.**

With ongoing habitat loss, and a pandemic leading to more time spent outdoors, humans are encountering more injured and orphaned wildlife. The trend has led to a significant increase in patient admissions. The Center also receives patients with more complex medical needs from other centers, increasing not only the number of patients but also the level of care required.
In 2021, we provided training for:

- 37 Veterinary externs
- 2 Veterinary Technician externs
- 19 Wildlife Rehabilitation externs

The Wildlife Center is actively gathering data for 14 ongoing scientific studies. Subjects include:

- Black Bear mange
- Emerging disease in box turtles
- Tick-borne pathogens
- Infectious parasites in wild canids
- Baby bird identification

Veterinary staff presented findings at 8 professional conferences and universities. Subjects included:

- Lead exposure in nocturnal raptors
- Mange in Black Bears
- Resilience in wildlife medicine
- Careers in wildlife rehabilitation
- Raptor ophthalmology

**From Treatment to Training**

### Patient #21-0509 Recovers from Lead Poisoning

The Center’s 509th patient of 2021 came to us on April 13 from Charlottesville. 21-0509 is an Eastern Screech-Owl who was found as a fledgling on the ground in a local park, unusually quiet and minimally responsive.

Multiple examinations found significant levels of lead in his blood and a skull fracture, possibly from a fall caused by the neurological effects of the lead.

After months of treatment to reduce the lead in his system, the patient was more active and able to feed well, but he was clearly limited in his ability to fly and move freely. Director of Veterinary Services Dr. Karra Pierce made the decision that he was too neurologically impaired to return to the wild.

Severe head tilt is a common symptom of lead toxicosis. Veterinary and Rehabilitation staff made a soft neck brace to help resolve the patient’s neck tilt.

Today, the recovered screech owl is a candidate to become one of the Center’s Education Ambassadors. Using current best practices, his trainer Amanda Nicholson, Senior Vice President for Outreach and Education, is slowly getting him used to human interaction with the lowest stress possible. "It takes a long time to build a relationship of trust," says Amanda.

### The Great Bear Release of 2021

19 Cubs Raised and Returned to the Wild

The orphaned cubs that came to the Center in 2020 to be raised and overwintered turned into one of the largest cohorts we’ve ever seen. By spring of 2021, as yearlings ready to strike out on their own, they numbered 19 in total—each weighing between 75 and 150 pounds. They were released into the wild in small groups on five days between April 13 and May 6.

“It was incredible,” said Kelsey Pleasants, Wildlife Rehabilitation Supervisor. “We always have a plan, but it can get pretty chaotic. How many can we process in a day? Which do we group together? It took hours each day.” In the end, says Kelsey, “it went flawlessly. The teamwork was above and beyond.”

### The 0509's data was included in a study of blood lead levels in nocturnal raptors presented by Dr. Pierce at the 2021 Raptor Research Foundation Symposium.

The presentation was the first to gather data on lead levels in these species.

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- Raptor ophthalmology
Expanding Capacity for Virtual Programs

Year two of the pandemic created many new opportunities for the Center’s Education & Outreach staff to engage the public virtually. Those opportunities included:

■ Live streaming of Hospital Cam with live audio commentary
■ Live facility tours, including progress reports on the Great Rebuild
■ Streaming special observances, holiday events, and guest speakers

The impact and quality of these events was enhanced by live broadcasting software. “Overall we upped the ante this year with the live broadcast style of hospital cams and live streams,” said Amanda Nicholson, Senior Vice President for Outreach and Education. “Our new broadcast software has allowed us to blend live video with live audio commentary and add in any photo or video we’d like to share while streaming.”

A lull in COVID during the warmer months made possible a few small socially-distanced public outreach events. Six in-person programs were attended by 177 people in 2021.

Banner Year for WCV’s Public Television Series

Season 3 of UNTAMED: Life is Wild, a co-production of VPM and the Wildlife Center of Virginia, was broadcast across Virginia beginning in April.

Meanwhile, also in 2021, Season 2 of the series was distributed nationwide through American Public Television. The series was licensed by 89 public television organizations across the country, from Eureka, CA to New York City—from St. Paul, MN to Midland, TX.

In May, Episode 1 of Season 2 (on “The One Health Concept”) was honored with two Bronze “Telly” Awards, honoring excellence in video and television. In June, the same episode was nominated for a regional Emmy award by the National Capital Chesapeake Bay Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

Season 4 of UNTAMED began filming in 2021. Look for it on VPM public television stations starting in April of 2022.
A key component of the Center’s outreach and education efforts continues to be Critter Cam—an online live-feed broadcast through the Center’s website. The three Critter Cam channels, broadcasting 24 hours per day, give wildlife fans worldwide the chance to view patients and ambassador animals as they go about their day. The accompanying Moderated Discussion chat allows “Critter Nation” followers everywhere to share their love of these magnificent wild animals.

In 2021 we learned that during the pandemic the nurses at the UVa COVID-19 Clinic had become avid watchers of the Wildlife Center’s Critter Cams. One of the former nurses, Cynthia, recently shared the story and a photograph with us. “The wildlife cameras were a source of constant stress relief to the COVID Clinic nurses,” says Cynthia. “We diligently followed the addition of baby bears, their growth and maturity, and ultimately their release back into the wild. And each nurse had his/her different cameras that they loved. We even got the doctors watching!”

The Wildlife Center of Virginia salutes the staff of the UVa COVID Clinic, and all of the front-line health care workers of the pandemic. Their tireless dedication and compassion has helped countless people cope and survive during these past two trying years. THANK YOU for your commitment. We are so grateful that our work has helped lighten your burden.

The Wildlife Center of Virginia has always taken a leading role in building the expertise and the capacity of the entire profession of wildlife veterinary medicine and rehabilitation. Each year the Center plans, manages, and hosts the Call of the Wild conference—one of the premier continuing education conferences for wildlife medicine professionals. At the 2021 conference, Wildlife Center staff shared their experience and insights in the following sessions:

- Dr. Emily MacArthur: ‘Basics of Amphibian Rehabilitation’
- Dr. Jennifer Yu: ‘The Physiologic Effects of Acute and Chronic Stress in Captive Wildlife’
- Ana Eid, LVT: ‘Effective Disinfection for Common Wildlife Diseases’
- Alyse Leleta, LVT: ‘Anesthesia Complications’
- Ben Cole: ‘Caring for Nature in a Digital Age’
- Kelsey Reaents: ‘Natural History of Woodpeckers in Virginia’
- Lacy Kegley: ‘Mental Health & Self-Care’
- Connor Gillespie: ‘Patient Updates in Wildlife Rehabilitation’
- Maggie McCartney: ‘Building and Fostering Your Support Network’
- Alex Wehrung: ‘Advanced Virtual Programming’

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STAFF (as of December 2021)

Michael Adkins, Front Desk Coordinator
Katie Bacall, Wildlife Rehabilitation Intern
Amber Buck, Office Manager
Malahi Carroll, Front Desk Coordinator
Bill Clark, President
Ben Cole, Wildlife Rehabilitation Intern
Angela Conrad, Director of Administration
Ace Eid, Licensed Veterinary Technician
Lilly Farmer, Front Desk Coordinator
Larry Garretson, Director of Strategic Advancement
Connor Gillespie, Outreach Coordinator
Randy Huwa, Executive Vice President
Lacy Kegley, Vice President for Administration
Dr. Emily MacArthur, Veterinary Intern
Kelly Matherly, Fundraising Coordinator
Maggie McCartney, Wildlife Care Academy Coordinator & Front Desk Supervisor
Kai Medina, Outreach Communications Coordinator
Amanda Nicholson, Senior Vice President for Outreach and Education
Liz Noderer, Wildlife Rehabilitator
Dr. Karra Pierce, Director of Veterinary Services
Kelsey Pleasants, Wildlife Rehabilitation Supervisor
Jess Ransier, Licensed Veterinary Technician Supervisor
Kristen Sluiter, Special Projects Coordinator
Mac Stewart, Wildlife Rehabilitator
Lauren Swinson, Hospital Administration Assistant
Alex Wehrung, Outreach Public Affairs Manager
Rachel Wolfe, Licensed Veterinary Technician Intern
Dr. Jenn Yu, Veterinary Intern

FINANCIALS

2021 Revenues

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A financial statement for the most recent fiscal year is available upon request from the State Division of Consumer Affairs, P.O. Box 1163, Richmond VA 23209, 804.786.1343. Financial statements are also posted on the Center’s website.

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Virginia Department of Health
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Virginia Department of Health
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Dr. Jenn Yu, Veterinary Intern

"Butterfly," Red-tailed Hawk
Naming Our Newest Ambassadors

In early 2021, we named and welcomed two opossums to our troop of Education Ambassadors. “Violet” and “Marigold,” as they were named in a poll in January, both sustained injuries that made their return to the wild impossible. Their friendly dispositions made them great candidates for work as ambassador animals, and favorites with both staff and audiences.

“Violet” (Virginia Opossum)  “Marigold” (Virginia Opossum)

A hospital for native wild animals, teaching the world to care about, and care for, wildlife and the environment.