

The Wildlife Center of Virginia

2015 Annual Report

The Wildlife Center of Virginia ... a hospital for native wildlife.

During 2015, the Wildlife Center admitted 2,339 patients – sick, injured, and orphaned wild animals in need.

Among the 2015 patients were:

- 320 Eastern Cottontails;
- 197 Virginia Opossums;
- 191 Eastern Gray Squirrels;
- 35 Bald Eagles. During 2015, the Center released 10 eagles, and most of those birds were outfitted with transmitters – tiny units that allow us to track these eagles' travels after they are released.

At the beginning of 2016, we were receiving periodic updates from eight eagles. On New Year's Day [more or less], six of these eagles were in Virginia; one had just flown up into Delaware, and one was 'wintering' in South Carolina.

AND ... we continue to receive periodic updates from NX! Center Eagle fans will remember NX as one of the three "rock star" eaglets from the Norfolk Botanical Garden, admitted to the Center after their mother was killed. When NX was released later that year, and re-released in May 2012 after her recovery from an injury, she had a transmitter, which was expected to function for two years – until summer/fall 2013.

But ... *it keeps on tickin'!* The NX transmitter continued to function throughout 2014 and 2015. Admittedly, the check-ins are growing less and less frequent, and there



are increasing gaps in the data. But the transmitter has far exceeded its expected life, and we've received a multi-year look at the travels of an eagle successfully rehabilitated by the Center.

So ... *where has she been?* Compared to some of the Center eagles, NX has been something of a homebody. NX was re-released in May 2012 at the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge near Warsaw, VA. Since that time she has meandered up and down the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers. Other than a few brief forays across the Potomac into Maryland ... she's been a Virginia bird.

To check out the latest reports from the Center's eagle transmitters, please visit <http://wildlifecenter.org/critter-corner/success-stories>.



2015 patient admissions

Total Admissions: 2,339

Mammals [1,076 patients]

American Beaver	2
American Black Bear	18
American Mink	1
Big Brown Bat	33
Coyote	10
Domestic Rabbit	5
Eastern Chipmunk	2
Eastern Cottontail	320
Eastern Fox Squirrel	5
Eastern Gray Squirrel	191
Eastern Mole	1
Eastern Red Bat	11
Eastern Woodrat	1
Gray Fox	5
Hoary Bat	1
House Mouse	2
Meadow Vole	4
Northern Long-eared Bat	1
Norway Rat	2
Pine Vole	1
Raccoon	48
Red Fox	17
Silver-haired Bat	2
Southern Flying Squirrel	8
Striped Skunk	18
Unidentified Bat	2
Unidentified Rodent	3
Virginia Opossum	197
White-footed Mouse	52
White-tailed Deer	92
Woodchuck	21

Reptiles and Amphibians [164]

American Toad	1
Eastern Box Turtle	110
Eastern Hog-nosed Snake	1
Eastern Milk Snake	1
Eastern Musk Turtle	1
Eastern Painted Turtle	12
Eastern Ratsnake	7
Five-lined Skink	1
Green Frog	1
Northern Black Racer	4
Northern Rough Greensnake	1
Northern Watersnake	1
Queensnake	1
Red-eared Slider	3
Ring-necked Snake	1
Snapping Turtle	14
Unidentified Amphibian	1
Unidentified Reptile	1
Yellow-bellied Slider	2

Raptors and Vultures [283]

American Kestrel	9
Bald Eagle	35
Barn Owl	2

Barred Owl	18
Black Vulture	12
Broad-winged Hawk	1
Cooper's Hawk	21
Eastern Screech-Owl	60
Great Horned Owl	31
Long-eared Owl	1
Merlin	1
Northern Harrier	1
Northern Saw-whet Owl	1
Osprey	3
Peregrine Falcon	2
Red-shouldered Hawk	13
Red-tailed Hawk	47
Sharp-shinned Hawk	6
Turkey Vulture	19

Passerines [Songbirds] [576]

American Crow	33
American Goldfinch	11
American Robin	75
Baltimore Oriole	1
Barn Swallow	9
Black-capped Chickadee	1
Blue Jay	39
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	2
Brown Thrasher	5
Brown-headed Cowbird	1
Caroline Wren	23
Cedar Waxwing	4
Chipping Sparrow	4
Common Grackle	21
Common Raven	1
Common Yellowthroat	2
Dark-eyed Junco	1
Eastern Bluebird	16
Eastern Phoebe	14
Eastern Towhee	2
European Starling	143
Fish Crow	2
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1
Gray Catbird	20
Great Crested Flycatcher	1
Hermit Thrush	3
House Finch	26
House Sparrow	37
House Wren	1
Northern Cardinal	25
Northern Mockingbird	11
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	6

Ovenbird	1
Purple Martin	1
Red-eyed Vireo	1
Red-winged Blackbird	1
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1
Scarlet Tanager	4
Song Sparrow	5
Tree Swallow	3



Tufted Titmouse	8
Unidentified Passerine	5
White-breasted Nuthatch	2
White-throated Sparrow	2

Other Birds [240]

Belted Kingfisher	1
Black-billed Cuckoo	1
Black-crowned Night Heron	1
Canada Goose	27
Canvasback	1
Chimney Swift	25
Common Loon	6
Domestic Fowl	4
Downy Woodpecker	2
Great Blue Heron	6
Green Heron	2
Hairy Woodpecker	1
Horned Grebe	5
Killdeer	1
Mallard	23
Mourning Dove	56
Northern Flicker	5
Pied-billed Grebe	2
Pileated Woodpecker	8
Red-bellied Woodpecker	11
Red-throated Loon	1
Ring-billed Gull	1
Ring-necked Duck	1
Rock Pigeon	19
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	13
Ruddy Duck	3
Virginia Rail	2
Wild Turkey	1
Wood Duck	6
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	4
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	1

Red-tailed Hawk #15 – 0021

On January 13, 2015, the Wildlife Center admitted a Red-tailed Hawk that had been found down in a field in Page County.

The bird had been felled by a hunter.

No, this hawk had not been shot. And the hunter responsible was probably not even aware that his or her actions had almost taken the bird's life.

The hawk came to the Center with acute lead poisoning. She had consumed the remains of an animal that had been shot by a hunter using lead-based ammunition. Radiographs revealed a fragment from a rifle bullet in the hawk's digestive tract.

That tiny fragment produced levels of lead in the hawk's bloodstream that left her fighting for her life.



Fortunately, in this case, timely intervention made the difference. The Center's veterinary team immediately began twice-a-day chelation therapy to treat the hawk for lead poisoning – ultimately, the bird went through three rounds of this lead-cleansing treatment. The hawk spent time in the Center's critical care chamber [supplemental oxygen] and was treated with antibiotics for infections and parasites.

Slowly but surely, the hawk regained strength. In March – after nearly two months of intensive care – the hawk was moved to an outdoor enclosure. The hawk spent five additional months in rehabilitation and recovery.

And on August 13 – seven months after her rescue – Wildlife Center President Ed Clark released that hawk back into the wild.



Get the lead out ...

A few days after this hawk's release, Ed Clark penned an op-ed piece for *The News Virginian*. In the piece, Ed noted that lead poisoning has caused the deaths of thousands of hawks, owls, vultures – even Bald Eagles!

And these poisoning deaths are entirely preventable.

"If hunters will simply switch from lead-based bullets and shot to the readily available 'non-toxic' shot, including the ballistically superior all-copper rifle bullets, the lead poisoning of raptors and avian scavengers can be eliminated," Ed wrote.

"As a lifelong shooter and hunter, I personally made the switch to all-copper rifle ammunition more than 10 years ago," Ed stated. "I don't want to be responsible for killing a hawk or an eagle as a result of the ammo I choose to use.

"It is time for all who consider themselves to be conservation-minded sportsmen to do the same."

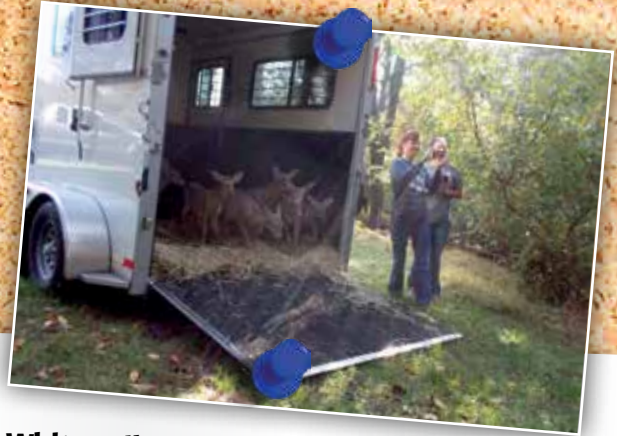
At the Wildlife Center of Virginia, we treat to release!



Bald Eagle

Admitted: September 27

Released: December 22, Berkeley
Plantation, Charles City County



White-tailed Deer [25]

Admitted: May – June. Causes for admission
include dog attack; orphaned; kidnapped
[unnecessarily captured when found alone]

Released: October 7 – 8, Augusta County



Great-Horned Owl

Admitted: April 11

Released: October 16, Waynesboro



Snapping Turtle

Admitted: April 22

Released: May 15, Culpeper County



Black Vultures

Admitted: May 13

Released: May 13, Fluvanna County

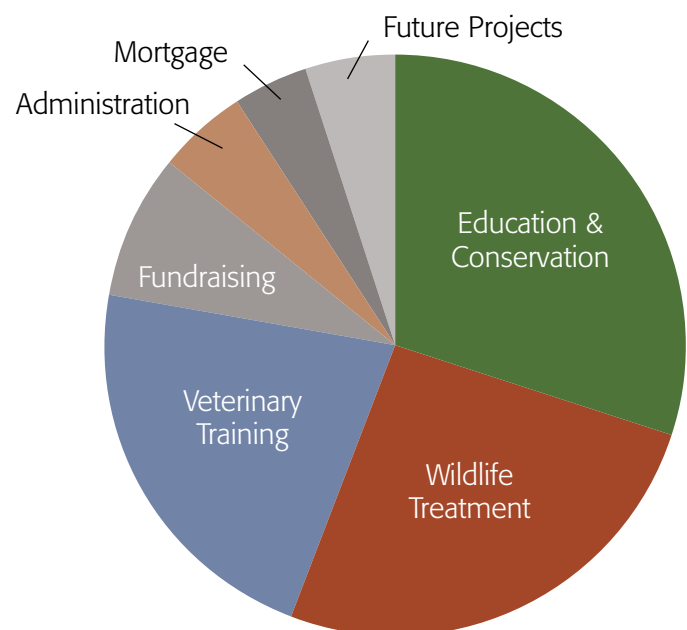
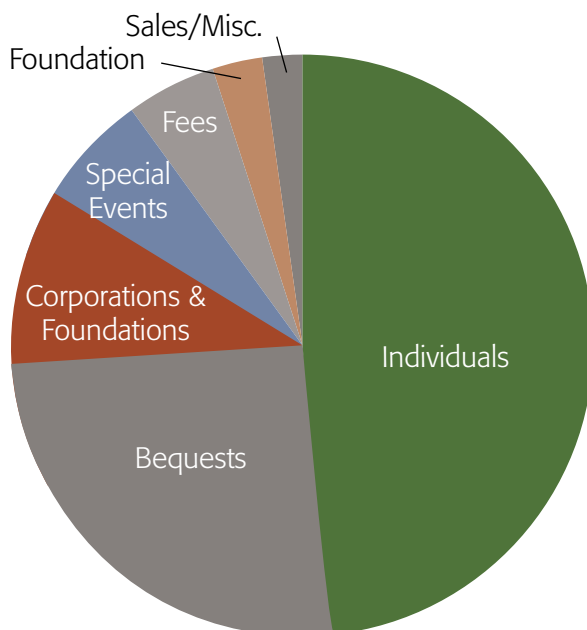
Two rescued baby vultures were placed in an active nest – with one “pre-existing” baby. The foster-mother vulture accepted these unexpected additions to her nest ... and made good use of the supplemental food – dead rats and mice – provided by Dr. Dave McRuer, the Center’s Director of Veterinary Services.

Financials

The Wildlife Center of Virginia is a 501(c)(3) organization that depends primarily on private donations – not federal, state, or local government funding – for its programs and services. The Center works hard to be an effective and efficient non-profit – we strive to keep our administrative and fundraising costs to a minimum so that we can do the best job possible as a wildlife hospital and education center.

Here's a snapshot of the Center's revenue and expenditures for 2015:

2015 Revenue			2015 Expense		
Individuals	\$637,173	48%	Education and Conservation	\$413,456	31%
Bequests	327,932	25%	Wildlife Treatment	324,385	25%
Corporations/Foundation	157,675	12%	Veterinary Training	253,464	19%
Special Events [net]	85,359	6%	Fundraising	122,135	9%
Program Fees	65,697	5%	Administration	69,920	5%
Wildlife Center Foundation	34,000	3%	Mortgage	40,415	3%
Sales/miscellaneous	10,288	1%	Future Projects	94,349	7%
TOTAL REVENUE	\$1,318,124	100%	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$1,318,124	100%



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.



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

During 2015, the Wildlife Center:

- Presented environmental education programs in classrooms and public libraries across Virginia and gave special presentations and tours at the Center, reaching more than 4,000 adults and more than 14,000 children. These programs featured some of the Center's education ambassadors and reinforced the steps that each of us – **any** of us – can take to protect wildlife and the environment.
- Continued **Critter Cam**, a live online broadcast and moderated discussion on the Center's website [www.wildlifecenter.org]. **Critter Cam** allows wildlife enthusiasts around the world to watch a variety of hawks, owls, and other patients – and to check in on Buddy, the Center's beloved resident Bald Eagle.
- Launched **Hospital Cam**, a monthly live-streaming "over-the-shoulder" look at the veterinary and rehabilitation team evaluating and treating patients.
- Provided hands-on professional training opportunities in wildlife veterinary medicine and rehabilitation in the Center's Waynesboro clinic for 53 professionals and students from across the United States ... and from Canada, Colombia, Ireland, Poland, and Taiwan.
- Provided training in wildlife medicine and non-profit management around the world – in Nepal, Russia, South Africa, and St. Kitts.
- Constructed a new outdoor enclosure for housing our Possum Posse – our resident Virginia Opossum wildlife ambassadors.
- Hosted the Center's Annual Gala Benefit and Auction and the *Call of the Wild* rehabilitation conference.



Mark your calendars and save the dates – the Center's Gala and Benefit Auction will be held on Saturday, October 29. And the 21st Annual *Call of the Wild* conference is set for November 11 – 13.

Photo courtesy of
Dan Addison

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Boards and staff as of January 2016.

And the Oscar Goes To ... *Oscar!*

In September 2015, the Center welcomed a new wildlife ambassador – an Eastern Hog-nosed Snake. While this species is native to Virginia, this snake had been kept as a pet.

Eastern Hog-nosed Snakes prefer habitats with sandy or loose soil; they use their distinctive upturned noses to dig and burrow. Their diet consists mainly of toads.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this species is their array of defensive mechanisms. When threatened, hog-noses will rear up, flatten their heads, and inhale air to make their bodies appear larger. They will hiss and may strike with their mouths closed.

And if that doesn't work ...

Their next defensive maneuver is to play dead! The snake will flip over – belly up – and remain still until the danger passes. The snakes may even musk – release a smelly odor – to make themselves even less appealing to potential predators.

The Center held an online contest to come up with a fitting name for this fascinating snake. Students from three elementary schools – Churchville, Gordon-Barbour [Gordonsville], and Sewells Point [Norfolk] – suggested a name that recognized the hog-nose's extensive range of acting skills – **Oscar**.
[photo on back cover].

Oscar joins a corps of some two dozen environmental ambassadors, including [left to right] Pignoli, Jaz, Emma, Phebe, and Quinn.





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