On May 9, 2018, a homeowner in Rockingham County saw a hawk flying overhead — with a duckling in its talons. The hawk dropped the chick, and the homeowner was able to rescue it.

The bird was admitted to the Wildlife Center the next day and was identified as a young Hooded Merganser. Surprisingly, the Center’s veterinary team found no injuries to the duckling. But it would need to stay at the Center for a couple of months — to grow and mature — before release.

It’s important for young wildlife, particularly waterfowl, to grow up with a sibling. But mergansers — particularly ducklings — are rare patients at the Center. Center rehabber Brie Hashem came up with a solution. She identified another patient — a Wood Duckling — as a new companion. These species have similar diets and native habitats, and the two patients were about the same size and maturity.

The bonding worked, and the two ducklings shared enclosures and swimming pools for several months.

On July 30, Brie and rehab intern Shannon Mazurowski made an early-morning trip to Lake Shenandoah to release the Hooded Merganser and the Wood Duck — together.
# 2018 Patient Admissions

## Mammals [1,572 patients]
- 23 American Black Bear
- 38 Big Brown Bat
- 1 Black Rat
- 7 Common Gray Fox
- 7 Coyote
- 30 Deer Mouse
- 5 Eastern Chipmunk
- 376 Eastern Cotton tail
- 1 Eastern Fox Squirrel
- 261 Eastern Gray Squirrel
- 17 Eastern Red Bat
- 1 Evening Bat
- 25 House Mouse
- 2 Meadow Vole
- 2 Northern Short-tailed Shrew
- 90 Raccoon
- 23 Red Fox
- 5 Silver-haired Bat
- 24 Southern Flying Squirrel
- 25 Striped Skunk
- 2 Tri-colored Bat
- 12 Undetermined Mammal
- 414 Virginia Opossum
- 6 White-footed Mouse
- 136 White-tailed Deer
- 39 Woodchuck

## Reptiles and Amphibians [267]
- 3 Common Five-Lined Skink
- 2 DeKay's Brown snake
- 3 Eastern American Toad
- 2 Eastern Gartersnake
- 1 Eastern Hog-Nosed Snake
- 22 Eastern Painted Turtle
- 16 Eastern Ratsnake
- 4 Eastern River Cooter
- 1 Eastern Spadefoot
- 3 Fowler's Toad
- 1 Green Frog
- 1 Northern Black Racer
- 1 Northern Mole Kingsnake
- 4 Northern Red-Bellied Cooter
- 5 Northern Ring-Necked Snake
- 2 Red-Eared Slider
- 1 Russian Tortoise
- 25 Snapping Turtle
- 1 Southeastern Mud Turtle
- 1 Western Hog-Nosed Snake
- 164 Woodland Box Turtle
- 1 Yellow-Bellied Slider

## Passerines [Songbirds] [699]
- 44 American Crow
- 14 American Goldfinch
- 74 American Robin

## Raptors and Vultures [393]
- 14 American Kestrel
- 43 Bald Eagle
- 2 Barn Owl
- 35 Barred Owl
- 11 Black Vulture
- 9 Broad-winged Hawk
- 27 Cooper's Hawk
- 68 Eastern Screech-Owl
- 1 Golden Eagle
- 33 Great Horned Owl
- 1 Long-eared Owl
- 1 Merlin
- 10 Osprey
- 2 Peregrine Falcon
- 39 Red-shouldered Hawk
- 68 Red-tailed Hawk
- 2 Sharp-shinned Hawk
- 27 Turkey Vulture

## Other Birds [231]
- 1 American Coot
- 1 American Woodcock
- 1 Bufflehead
- 27 Canada Goose
- 19 Chimney Swift
- 1 Clapper Rail
- 3 Common Loon
- 1 Common Nighthawk
- 11 Domestic Waterfowl

## Total Admissions [3,162]
During 2018, the Wildlife Center admitted 414 Virginia Opossums – our most common species.

Opossums are the only marsupials native to the United States.

Like other marsupials – think kangaroos – mother opossums give birth to tiny, underdeveloped offspring called joeys. Joeys immediately crawl into a pouch on the mother’s stomach, where they remain until they are two months old.

Opossums do play dead. That comatose-like state is an involuntary reaction triggered by stress.

Opossums are tick vacuums. Unlike other mammals that carry ticks, opossums eat up to 90 percent of the ticks that attach to them. According to the National Wildlife Federation, that means that a single opossum consumes 5,000 ticks per season.

Opossums are immune to the venom of nearly every type of snake found in their native ranges.

Opossums have prehensile tails, giving them a fifth appendage. But opossums don’t hang by their tails from branches when sleeping.

“Opossums are nature’s clean-up crew, working the graveyard shift. Like little dust busters, they cruise the landscape, round ears tilted like satellite dishes, fleshy pink snoots to the ground. They feast on snails and slugs, perhaps even a cockroach or two”.

*Los Angeles Times*
1. MN18 and MN72 release site, Mason Neck State Park.

2. On June 12, MN18 [the female] headed north... across Pennsylvania, across New York, and into Canada.

3. On June 20 MN72 [the male] started his own trip north. He crossed into Canada on July 2.

4. By July 12, MN18 had arrived at the Ashuapmushan Wildlife Refuge in Quebec—her “summer retreat”.

5. By mid-July, MN72 had taken up residence on Saint-Pierre Lake in Quebec, 575 miles from his initial release site.

6. On October 1, MN18 headed back south.

7. On October 25, MN72 started his trip south.

8. By the end of November, both MN18 and MN72 were back in Virginia.

Eagle Tracking

Back on August 19, 2017, the Wildlife Center released two hatch-year Bald Eagles at Mason Neck State Park in Fairfax County—a female (MN18) and a male (MN72). Each eagle was released with a tiny transmitter, fitted on with Teflon straps [the way a human would wear a backpack].

These two eagles went their separate ways, generally exploring the lower Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers.

And then, in summer 2018, they began unexpectedly parallel journeys.
November Ice Storm

On November 15, the Wildlife Center was struck by a devastating ice storm. By early afternoon, ice began to accumulate on trees, posts, and roofs, and the Center lost power, lights, heat, phones, and internet service.

At about 3:30, a giant tree toppled, crushing the outdoor enclosure housing several of our education ambassadors. Within the next 30 minutes, in perilous icy conditions, staff and volunteers brought all of our resident education animals and many patients into the Center’s main building.

In the next few hours, many limbs – and entire trees – continued to fall, blocking paths and the Center’s parking lots.

While the Center’s main clinic was miraculously spared, many of our outdoor animal enclosures were damaged or destroyed. The Center was without power for three days.

Through the timely and brave actions of Center staff and volunteers, no patient and no education animal was harmed or escaped, and no humans were injured.

*The Center is now undertaking an extensive campaign to repair, renovate, and replace damaged outdoor facilities. And we’re also weighing options for a back-up generator.*
2018 Financials

The Wildlife Center of Virginia is a 501(c)(3) organization that depends 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 revenues and expenditures for 2018:

### 2018 Revenues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>$937,606</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bequests</td>
<td>1,121,729</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporations/Foundations</td>
<td>157,560</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events [net]</td>
<td>75,746</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Fees/Sales</td>
<td>85,850</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife Center Foundation</td>
<td>49,000</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,427,491</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2018 Expenditures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>$474,596</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>328,890</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach/Conservation</td>
<td>475,345</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>160,217</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>122,537</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortgage</td>
<td>40,415</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Expenditures</td>
<td>31,177</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Projects/Reserves</td>
<td>794,314</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,427,491</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
Welcome, Hudson

Hudson, a Gyrfalcon, was transferred to the Wildlife Center in 2017 from another wildlife educator. Although Hudson’s full history is unknown, he was hatched in captivity, likely in 2005, and was used as a falconry bird for a number of years before “retiring” as an education bird.

In the wild, Gyrfalcons live in extreme Arctic and subarctic climates. Hudson was named for Hudson Bay.

Rocking with Hudson. Amanda Nicholson, the Center’s Director of Outreach, has had primary responsibility for working with Hudson. As part of that process, she created a flat, turfed perch inside his enclosure – “home base” and the spot where Amanda leaves food.

“As the weeks progressed, I intermittently found more rocks placed on the food drop perch – and one time, a small piece of wood. Was there a chance he was putting them on ‘our’ perch, for me?

“In reality, I have no idea why he likes moving rocks around. But on the day I found a heart-shaped one on our perch, I decided to embrace my inner anthropomorphized version of the scenario – Hudson was leaving me presents!”