

Wildlife Center of Virginia

Teaching the *World*





The Wildlife Center of Virginia was started with a conversation, animated at times, among four friends – two married couples – over a cup of coffee and the viewing of a new litter of Labrador Retriever puppies. The topic: how best to provide quality healthcare to injured and orphaned wildlife in the community.

One of the quartet was a former zoo vet. Both wives were vet techs. The fourth was a nationally known conservation advocate. But none of the four had ever run a wildlife center – in fact, back in 1982, there really was no such thing. None of the four had “deep pockets” or connections to significant funding sources.

But they shared a dream and, on November 9, 1982, that dream became a reality. Established as the Shenandoah Valley Wildlife Treatment and Rehabilitation Center, the new organization set up shop in five stalls in a 90-year-old horse barn and began admitting patients.

By 1985, the organization had a new name – **The Wildlife Center of Virginia** – and a new home, a custom-built double-wide trailer.

Despite those humble beginnings, the Center's mission was anything but small – *a hospital for native wild animals, teaching the world to care about, and care for, wildlife and the environment.*

The vision was not just to teach people in the Shenandoah Valley or Virginia. The target audience was not even just the United States. The mission of this fledgling organization was to teach the world!

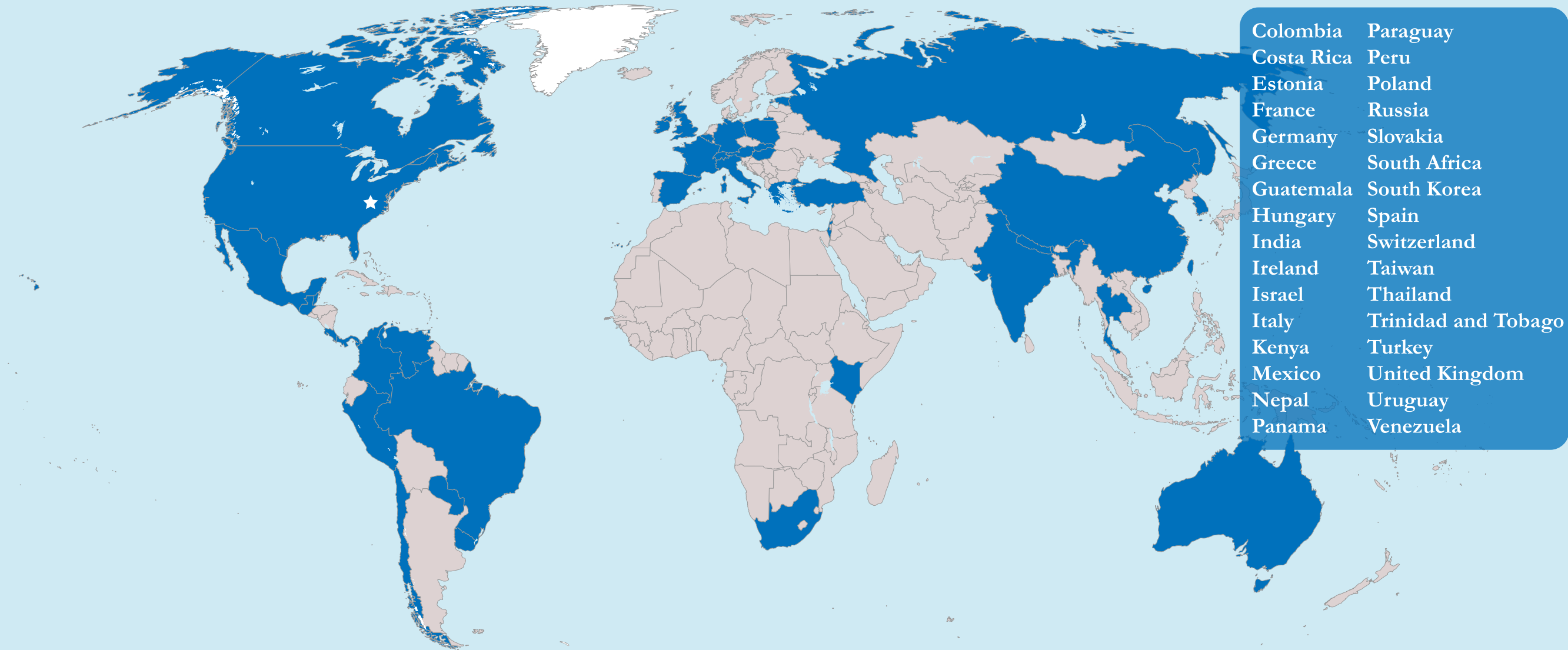
Throughout its history, the Wildlife Center of Virginia has been on the cutting edge of the ever-developing field of wildlife and conservation medicine. In its first 35 years, with the help of generous supporters, the Center has treated more than 75,000 patients – more than 200 species of wildlife – and has catalogued and shared lessons learned. The Center has embraced innovative, state-of-the-art technologies, emerging science, and new opportunities for communication.

And, in fact, the Wildlife Center has been teaching the world!



Since 1982, the Wildlife Center of Virginia has provided on-site clinical training in wildlife and conservation medicine to hundreds of individuals – from across the United States and around the world. Center staff has crisscrossed the globe to participate in international conferences and to provide hands-on training. The countries reached through these activities include:

Australia
Austria
Belgium
Belize
Bermuda
Bonaire
Brazil
Canada
Chile
China



Individuals who have spent time training at the Wildlife Center of Virginia – those who have worked side-by-side at the Center with our veterinarians and rehabilitators – are now at the forefront of wildlife veterinary medicine and conservation at these and many other institutions:

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- Wildlife and Ecosystem Subcommittee, Alberta Veterinary Medical Association
 - Veterinarian [retired], Albuquerque Zoo
 - American Wildlife Foundation
 - Species Survival Center, Audubon Nature Institute
 - Zookeeper, Brandywine Zoo
 - Senior Veterinarian, Busch Gardens
 - Assistant Professor, College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, Colorado State University
 - Director of Animal Health, Dallas Zoo
 - Clinical Veterinarian, Disney's Animal Programs
 - Associate Veterinary Surgeon, Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, Edinburgh Zoo
 - Veterinarian, Estonian University of Life Sciences/Estonian Fund for Nature
 - Department of Environmental Science and Policy, George Mason University
 - Environmental Educator, Hanover-Caroline Soil and Water Conservation District
 - Humane Society, Vero Beach and Indian River County, Florida
 - National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center
 - Natural Chimneys Regional Park
 - Oregon Zoo
 - Wildlife Health Specialist, Parks Canada
 - Wildlife Veterinarian, Pennsylvania Game Commission
 - Associate Professor and Director, Tufts Wildlife Clinic
 - Director, National Wildlife Health Center, U.S. Geological Survey
 - Science Advisor, Environmental Health, U.S. Geological Survey
 - Wildlife Disease Coordinator, Ecosystems Missions Area, U.S. Geological Survey
 - Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute
 - Smithsonian National Zoological Park
 - Soarin' Hawk Raptor Rehabilitation Center
 - Southwest Virginia Wildlife Center
 - Epidemiologist, Wildlife Health Center, University of California Davis School of Veterinary Medicine
 - Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Colorado
 - Veterinary Technician, University of Connecticut
 - Assistant Research Scientist, Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Georgia
 - Raptor Center, University of Minnesota
 - Wildlife Veterinarian, Assistant Professor of Wildlife Health, University of Tennessee
 - Winnipeg Humane Society
 - Veterinary clinics: Colorado, Florida, Maine, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, United Kingdom, Vermont, Virginia, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin
 - Virginia Department of Forestry
 - Virginia Outdoors Foundation
 - Webbed Foot Wildlife Rehabilitation Clinic
 - White Oak Conservation
 - WildCare Oklahoma
 - Zoo Miami



Dr. Madis Leivits

Tartu, Estonia

Wildlife Center Intern for Veterinary Diagnostics 2009-2010

Current position: Veterinarian and a Ph.D. student at the Estonian University of Life Sciences; expert veterinarian at Estonian Fund for Nature; owns and operates a small veterinary service. Received “Veterinarian of the Year 2015” award from the Estonian Veterinary Society for his work in bringing wildlife medicine to Estonia.

“On a daily basis, I do clinical work on wildlife patients and manage the wildlife in the clinic, teach and supervise veterinary students, write and execute grant proposals for research, provide some forensic expertise, and do outreach to the general public as well as lobbying for a better world.

“I think the biggest thing was that a random boy from an unknown country was picked for the internship in a state-of-the-art wildlife hospital. ... That’s a huge gamble, but can be a very important boost for a person, if he uses it in the correct direction.

“The atmosphere, supervision, and opportunities from positively minded colleagues was a huge gain. I’m very happy that I was not only trained on clinical skills; the plan from [Dr.] Dave [McRuer] and Ed [Clark] was to have me involved in all aspects of ‘organization ecology’, as the skillset of only practicing good medicine is not efficient in the long run, especially when you are in a developing region.”

Dr. Adam Naylor

Edinburgh, Scotland

Wildlife Center Veterinary Intern 2011-2012

Current position: Associate Veterinary Surgeon, Royal Zoological Society of Scotland [RZSS], Edinburgh Zoo.



Art by Dr. Adam

“Although the majority of my work is focused on the veterinary care of captive animals, the RZSS also runs a significant number of field conservation projects. ... Within Scotland, the RZSS has led on many high-profile wildlife projects, including the reintroduction of the Eurasian beaver, a species which had been extinct in Scotland for more than 200 years.

“I am currently working on a collaborative project with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds [RSPB] which aims to eradicate introduced rodents which are decimating the unique avifauna of Gough Island, a tiny uninhabited volcanic island in the South Atlantic.”





On July 27, 2011, Dr. Miranda released NZ – one of the Bald Eagle ‘Rock Stars’ – at the five-eagle release at Berkeley Plantation.

Dr. Miranda Sadar

Fort Collins, Colorado

Wildlife Center Veterinary Fellow 2010-2012

Current position: Assistant Professor at Colorado State University’s College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences

Photo: James Deal

“We provide veterinary care to birds of prey at the Rocky Mountain Raptor Center, which is located in Fort Collins.

“I also worked with the Giraffe Conservation Fund and Cheyenne Mountain Zoo on a conservation program translocating giraffes in Uganda. My involvement with this project was as a supportive investigator, where I collected samples to evaluate the causative agent of Giraffe Skin Disease. This disease affects giraffe in Uganda and Tanzania.

“Before my fellowship at the Wildlife Center, I had come to the Center as a veterinary student. From the moment I walked in the doors, I knew it was somewhere that I wanted to come back to. It solidified my goals regarding my career path, which involved working with wildlife. During my internship, I made the decision that I wanted to become board-certified in zoological medicine, and the fellowship was exactly the experience that I needed to move forward toward that path.”



Licensed wildlife rehabilitators – volunteers holding permits from their respective state and federal wildlife agencies to care for injured and orphaned wildlife – are a vital component of a wildlife health care network. They are often “first responders” in wildlife emergencies.

For 23 years, in partnership with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the Center has hosted the **Call of the Wild Conference**. This three-day conference provides in-depth training for wildlife rehabilitators as well as veterinary professionals, wildlife biologists, environmental educators, and wildlife enthusiasts and creates the opportunity to share ideas and experiences in the evolving field of wildlife rehabilitation.

In the last five years, the Conference has drawn participants from 25 states and several Canadian provinces.

In July 2017, the Center launched the **Wildlife Care Academy** – providing year-round online training classes in wildlife rehabilitation, wildlife medicine and diagnostics, capture and restraint, as well as related disciplines of conservation education and organizational management. These interactive sessions [presented through Blackboard Collaborate] allow for an engaging online classroom, with a live instructor, presentations, discussions, etc. In its first 17 months, individuals from 43 states, nine Canadian provinces, Belize, Brazil, India, Portugal, and South Africa took a Wildlife Care Academy class.

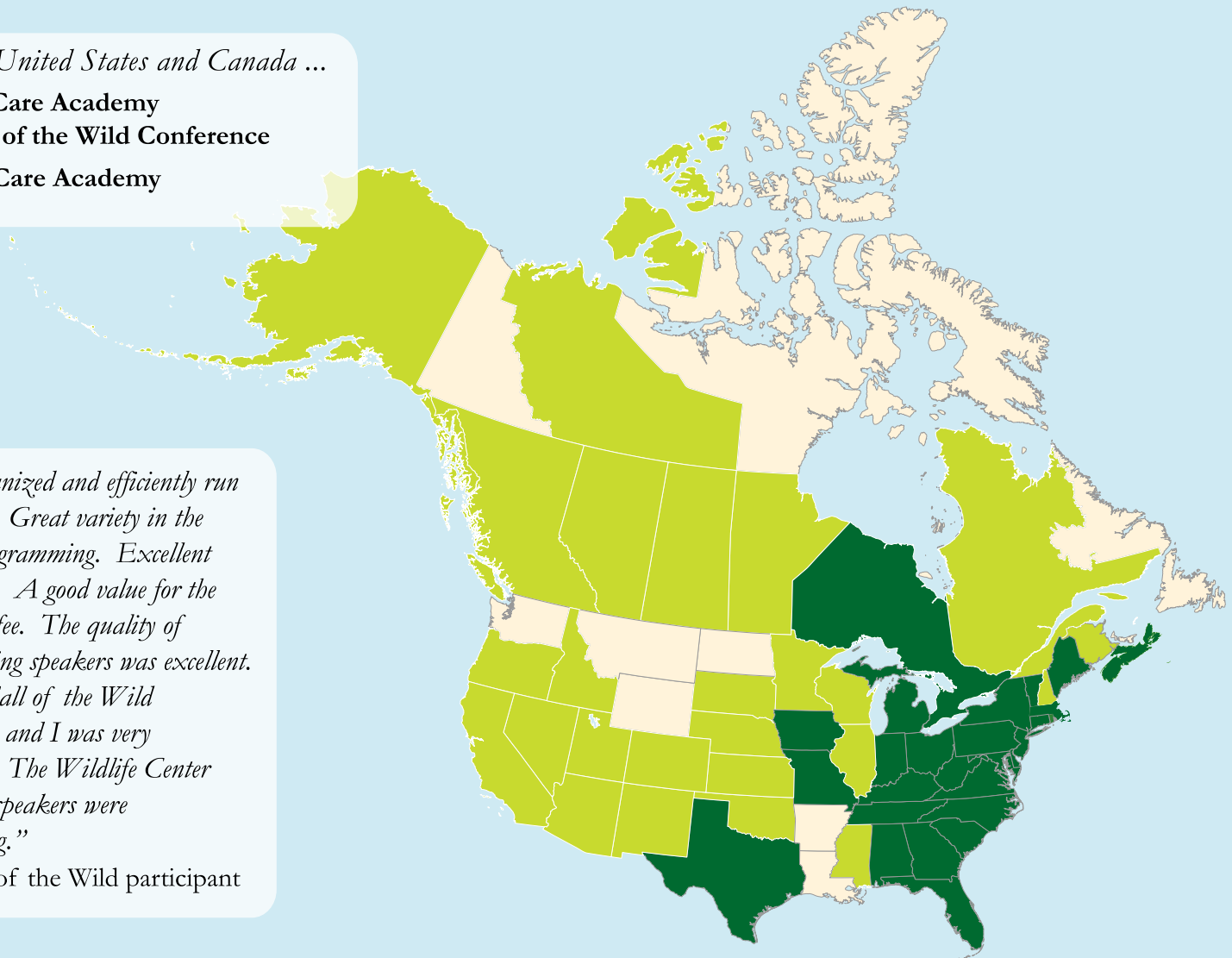
Across the United States and Canada ...

**Wildlife Care Academy
and Call of the Wild Conference**

Wildlife Care Academy

“Well organized and efficiently run conference. Great variety in the session programming. Excellent give-aways. A good value for the conference fee. The quality of programming speakers was excellent. My first Call of the Wild Conference and I was very impressed. The Wildlife Center staff and speakers were outstanding.”

- Call of the Wild participant





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The Wildlife Center of Virginia

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To learn more about the Wildlife Center, visit us at:

wildlifecenter.org