

# The Wildlife Center of Virginia

*2016 Annual Report*



A black bear cub is climbing a tree trunk, its body pressed against the bark. The cub's head is turned slightly to the right, showing its dark fur and light-colored muzzle. The background is a soft-focus forest with green leaves and tree branches.

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

**During 2016, the Wildlife Center admitted 2,577 patients – sick, injured, and orphaned wild animals in need.**

Among the 2016 patients were:

- 343 Eastern Cottontails;
- 223 Virginia Opossums;
- 179 Eastern Gray Squirrels;
- 123 Eastern Box Turtles;
- An American Beaver, an Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtle and a Southern Leopard Frog, a Cape May Warbler and a Royal Tern ...
- 38 Bald Eagles; and
- A record 36 Black Bears. Among our 2016 bear patients were:
  - Cubs born in January – February 2016 that were orphaned or became separated from their mothers. In at least one case, we suspect that the cub was illegally kept as a “pet” before it was rescued and brought to the Center.
  - Cubs and older bears that were struck by cars. On July 22, for example, a cub was hit by a car on South Delphine Avenue – just a few hundred feet from the Center’s entrance driveway. Within an hour, Center veterinarians had that cub in the Center’s surgical suite, performing tricky – and successful! – surgery to repair a jaw fracture.
  - Bears, primarily from the Winchester area, with mange – including one sow that we believe is about 10 years old. Mange is caused by parasitic mites that burrow under the fur and skin, causing hair loss – sometimes significant hair loss – weight loss, and infection. Center vets have been testing the most effective treatment for these sick bears.



# And the first tiny cub of 2017!

On January 23, the Center admitted a tiny Black Bear cub – thought to be only about 10 days old. The cub was rescued by a Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries [VDGIF] biologist from a den in Lunenburg County that was abandoned by the sow.

The cub was placed in an incubator in the Center's ICU and was fed every four-hours ... 'round the clock. The cub became something of a "celebrity" – an article in *The Washington Post*, an Associated Press story, and postings on more than 100 media websites across the country!

While the cub did well at the Center – and started gaining weight! – we recognized that the best chance for this cub was to place him with a surrogate mother in the wild. VDGIF had 10 wild sows – each with a tracking collar – that might be pressed into service. As VDGIF has reported, "using wild, female bears as surrogate mothers for orphan cubs has been a successful practice in Virginia. Female bears are excellent mothers and will readily take orphan cubs."

On January 25, VDGIF biologists picked up the Lunenburg cub and transported him to an active bear den. The cub was placed just outside the den, and the biologists withdrew to watch – and wait. And wait. For more than five hours. Unfortunately, the sow did NOT come out of the den, so the biologists retrieved the cub.

None the worse for the outing, the cub returned to the Center – and more round-the-clock feedings.



The second try came on January 30. Two VDGIF biologists took the cub to a second active den, located on private property. One biologist was able to sneak up behind the den and leave the cub very close to the den opening. At the same time, the second biologist was watching the den with binoculars – and could see the collared sow and two cubs.

Shortly after the drop-off – success! The sow poked her head out of the den, sniffed the new cub ... and quickly picked him up, and placed him with her own two cubs!



# 2016 Patient Admissions

**Total Admissions:** 2,577

## **Mammals** [1,176 patients]

American Beaver	1
American Black Bear	36
American Mink	1
Big Brown Bat	28
Bobcat	2
Deer Mouse	29
Domestic Rabbit	3
Eastern Chipmunk	9
Eastern Cottontail	343
Eastern Gray Squirrel	179
Eastern Harvest Mouse	3
Eastern Mole	1
Eastern Red Bat	15
Evening Bat	2
Gray Bat	1
Gray Fox	7
House Mouse	10
Muskrat	2
Northern Flying Squirrel	1
Norway Rat	3
Raccoon	59
Red Fox	12
Short-tailed Shrew	3
Silver-haired Bat	2
Southern Flying Squirrel	8
Striped Skunk	37
Unidentified Bat	1
Unidentified Rodent	21
Unidentified Weasel	1
Virginia Opossum	223
White-footed Mouse	16
White-tailed Deer	100
Woodchuck	17

## **Reptiles and Amphibians** [197]

Coastal Plain Cooter	1
Common Garter Snake	3

Corn Snake	1
Eastern American Toad	2
Eastern Box Turtle	123
Eastern Mud Turtle	1
Eastern Painted Turtle	22
Eastern Ratsnake	13
Eastern River Cooter	3
Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtle	1
Five-lined Skink	2
Milk Snake	2
Northern Black Racer	1
Red-eared Slider	1
Snapping Turtle	18
Southern Leopard Frog	1
Striped Mud Turtle	1
Wood Frog	1

## **Raptors and Vultures** [370]

American Kestrel	9
Bald Eagle	38
Barn Owl	9
Barred Owl	38
Black Vulture	16
Broad-winged Hawk	10
Cooper's Hawk	13
Eastern Screech-Owl	81
Golden Eagle	1
Great Horned Owl	24
Northern Saw-whet Owl	1
Osprey	8
Peregrine Falcon	5
Red-shouldered Hawk	28
Red-tailed Hawk	62
Sharp-shinned Hawk	10
Turkey Vulture	17

## **Passerines [Songbirds]** [563]

American Crow	30
American Goldfinch	12
American Robin	66
Barn Swallow	14
Black-capped Chickadee	1
Blue Jay	34
Brown Thrasher	9
Brown-headed Cowbird	1
Cape May Warbler	1
Carolina Chickadee	2
Carolina Wren	33
Cedar Waxwing	9
Chimney Swift	19
Chipping Sparrow	6
Common Grackle	25
Common Raven	1
Common Yellowthroat	1
Dark-eyed Junco	1
Eastern Bluebird	25
Eastern Kingbird	1
European Starling	61
Fish Crow	1
Gray Catbird	11

Gray-cheeked Thrush	1
Hermit Thrush	1
House Finch	48
House Sparrow	36
House Wren	9
Indigo Bunting	2
Northern Cardinal	41
Northern Mockingbird	9
Pine Siskin	2
Purple Martin	1
Red-eyed Vireo	2
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	2
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1
Scarlet Tanager	3
Song Sparrow	4
Swainson's Thrush	1
Swamp Sparrow	1
Tree Swallow	3
Tufted Titmouse	6
Unidentified Passerine	20
White-breasted Nuthatch	3
White-throated Sparrow	1
Winter Wren	1
Wood Thrush	1

## **Other Birds** [271]

American Woodcock	2
Belted Kingfisher	3
Black Scoter	1
Black-crowned Night Heron	2
Canada Goose	23
Common Loon	5
Common Nighthawk	3
Domestic Fowl	6
Downy Woodpecker	12
Great Blue Heron	6
Great Egret	1
Hairy Woodpecker	1
Mallard	41
Mourning Dove	61
Northern Bobwhite	1
Northern Flicker	10
Pied-billed Grebe	4
Pileated Woodpecker	5
Red-bellied Woodpecker	13
Red-headed Woodpecker	1
Ring-billed Gull	1
Ring-necked Pheasant	1
Rock Pigeon	24
Royal Tern	1
Ruby-Throated Hummingbird	17
Ruddy Duck	2
Sandhill Crane	1
Tundra Swan	1
Whip-poor-will	3
Wild Turkey	4
Wood Duck	8
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	4
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	1





# A *GOLDEN* Eagle?

Among the 2016 patients – one Golden Eagle.

Golden Eagles are not common admissions at the Center – only three in the past five years. In eastern North America, Golden Eagles breed in Canada; in Virginia, Golden Eagles are generally seen in winter, as they migrate south along the mountain ridges in the western part of the state.

But the Golden Eagle admitted on August 21, 2016 – hardly winter! – didn't fit any of those patterns. It was a young bird – hatched earlier in the year – rescued from Saltville in southwest Virginia. Preliminary analysis of DNA samples indicates that the bird was likely hatched in the southern U.S.

Who knows how that bird came to be found alongside a road in Saltville. But it was unable to fly – and it needed help.

The Center's veterinary staff gave the Golden a complete physical exam. The bird was in poor overall physical condition and had a mild eye inflammation. The eagle received fluids, anti-inflammatories, pain medications – and time. Three months.

By mid-November, the Center's vet and rehabilitation team had decided that this eagle was ready for his second chance. Dr. Dave McRuer, the Center's Director of Veterinary Services, loaded the eagle up into the Center's Toyota van and made the three-hour drive south to Big Walker Lookout in Wythe County, a country store perched atop a mountain ridge, and the perfect spot to return this Golden Eagle to the wild.



Photo courtesy of Katie Tredinnick

Photo courtesy of barb j melton



To the delight of a band of about 40 hardy spectators – and a pool of reporters from local TV stations and newspapers – the eagle took off, made a quick u-turn, circled the “launch pad” a couple of times ... and perched up in a tree. He sat there, surveying his surroundings and preening ... for about an hour.

And then, with a final shake of his feathers, he launched out of the tree, flew off behind a ridge – and out of sight.

But we can still keep tabs on that bird. The Golden Eagle was outfitted with a tiny transmitter that provides periodic updates on his location. The eagle has spent the last few months meandering around mountainous Southwest Virginia.

Want to see where this Golden Eagle ... and other Bald Eagles released by the Center ... have gone? Check out the “Eagle Tracking” section of the Center's website – [wildlifecenter.org](http://wildlifecenter.org).

# Financials

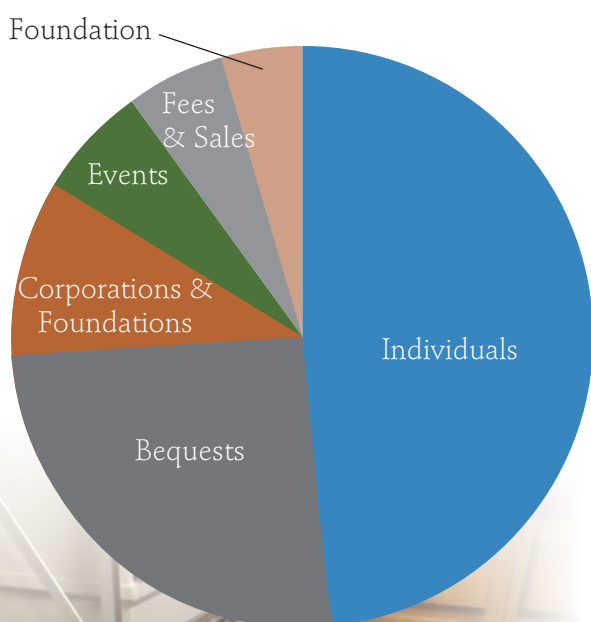
The Wildlife Center of Virginia is a 501(c)(3) organization that depends primarily on private donations – not federal, state, or local government funding – for its programs and services. The Center works hard to be an effective and efficient non-profit – we strive to keep our administrative and fundraising 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 2016:*

## 2016 Revenues

Individuals	\$668,705	45%
Bequests	403,835	27%
Corporations/Foundation	169,973	12%
Events [net]	123,518	8%
Program fees/sales	60,542	4%
Wildlife Center Foundation	49,000	3%

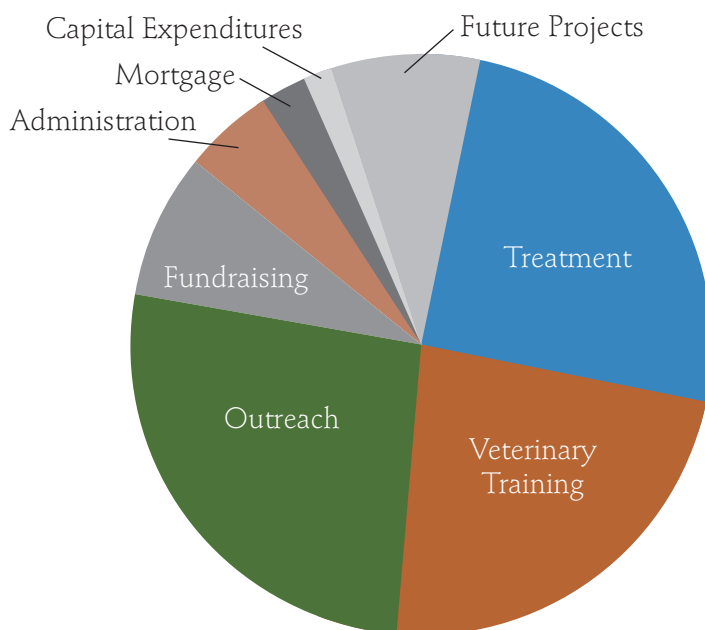
**REVENUES** **\$1,475,573** **100%**



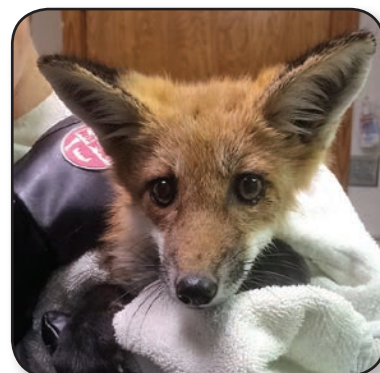
## 2016 Expenditures

Treatment	\$374,860	25%
Veterinary training	248,119	17%
Outreach	397,472	27%
Fundraising	101,845	7%
Administration	71,343	5%
Mortgage	40,415	3%
Capital Expenditures	21,962	1%
Future projects/reserves	219,557	15%

**EXPENDITURES** **\$1,475,573** **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.*





*The Wildlife Center of Virginia ... teaching the world to care about and to care for wildlife and the environment.*

## During 2016, the Wildlife Center:

- Presented more than 200 environmental education programs in classrooms and public libraries across Virginia – and the Virginia State Fair! – and gave special presentations and tours at the Center, reaching more than 25,000 adults and children.
- Continued **Critter Cam**, a live online broadcast and moderated discussion on the Center's website. **Critter Cam** allows wildlife enthusiasts around the world to watch rambunctious Black Bears, hawks, owls, eagles, and other patients – and to check in on some of the Center's beloved residents.
- And, once a month, **Hospital Cam** provides a live 'over-the-shoulder' look at the veterinary and rehabilitation team evaluating and treating patients in the Center's clinic.
- Provided hands-on training opportunities in the Center's Waynesboro clinic for 37 professionals and students from across the United States and from Canada, Mexico, and the United Kingdom.
- Celebrated the release of *Maggie the One-Eyed Peregrine Falcon – A True Story of Rescue and Rehabilitation* – a wonderful children's book based on one of our education ambassadors. As part of a summer "book tour", author Christie Gove-Berg, Outreach Director Amanda Nicholson, and Maggie barnstormed across Virginia – with appearances at book stores, a library, a children's museum, a Richmond brewery, and a Richmond morning TV show!



Photo courtesy of Mina Von Feilitzsch

### 2017 SAVE THE DATES

- **May 6:** *Jack Hanna's Into the Wild Live!*  
Paramount Theater, Charlottesville
- **October 6:** *Back Home Again – A Tribute to John Denver*, Wayne Theater, Waynesboro
- **November 4:** *2017 Annual Gala and Benefit Auction*, Stonewall Jackson Hotel, Staunton
- **November 9:** *Wildlife Center 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*
- **November 17 – 19:** *22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Call of the Wild Conference*, Best Western Inn & Suites Conference Center, Waynesboro



Maggie Book Tour on TV

### On the back cover ... Pignoli

During 2016, the Wildlife Center lost a special friend – Pignoli the Eastern Screech-owl, who died in September.

Pignoli came to the Center in 2003, after she was found lying beside railroad tracks in Charlottesville. She had severe head trauma and had suffered damage to both eyes. Center vets surgically removed her right eye; with reduced vision in her remaining eye, Pignoli was unable to be released.

For 13 years, Pignoli was a beloved member of the outreach team and family. She crisscrossed Virginia, appearing in hundreds of programs and meeting tens of thousands of people. Her diminutive size – as a full-grown adult, she was only 7.5 inches tall [talons to tufts] – made Pignoli a special favorite of children and a memorable wildlife ambassador.

**Thank you, Pignoli.**

*Back cover photograph courtesy of Shelly Hokanson.*

# Directors and Staff

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Raina Krasner, *Outreach Coordinator*  
Alex Wehrung, *Outreach Coordinator*

### Veterinary Services

Dave McRuer, DVM, *Director of Veterinary Services*  
Kelli Knight, DVM, *Assistant Director of Veterinary Services*  
Ernesto Dominguez, DVM, *Veterinary Intern*  
Peach Van Wick, DVM, *Veterinary Intern*  
Leigh-Ann Horne, *Licensed Veterinary Technician, Hospital/WILD-ONE Manager*  
Emily Swords, *Intern for Veterinary Diagnostics*  
Linda McDaniel, *Wildlife Rehabilitator/Wildlife Rehabilitation Training Coordinator*  
Brie Hashem, *Wildlife Rehabilitator, Black Bear Focus Boards and staff as of January 2017.*



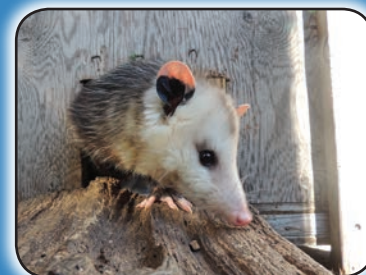
DELPHINE  
Virginia  
Opossum

# Welcome Aboard!

During 2016, the Wildlife Center welcomed four new wildlife ambassadors – non-releasable animals who are now serving as Center representatives. These animals travel with our outreach staff across Virginia – to schools, libraries, county fairs, community forums – and help to demonstrate the steps that each of us can take to protect wildlife and the environment.

**Delphine** (top photo) came to the Center in March 2016 when she was found injured on the side of South Delphine Avenue, the road where the Center is located. Center vets discovered that Delphine had severe head injuries – and a pouch full of babies. The vets stabilized Delphine; while her head trauma and vision loss meant that she could not be returned to the wild, she WAS able to raise her nine babies. The young opossums were released in June.

To learn more about these and other Wildlife Center ambassadors – and to learn how you may “adopt” one or more – visit the “Caring for Critters” section of the Center’s website.



BO  
Virginia Opossum



ROSALIE  
Red-tailed Hawk



VERLON  
American Kestrel







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