Waynesboro, Virginia – March 18, 2022  
Spring is just around the corner, and this year the Wildlife Center of Virginia is encouraging members of the public to learn more about the wild animals that pollinate native plants in their area, share the importance of their roles within healthy ecosystems, and take action to protect them. Bees, beetles, flies, moths, butterflies, birds, bats, and other small mammals are just a handful of the many species of wildlife that are responsible for up to 90% of flowering plant pollination. 87 out of 128 of the most important global food crops humans depend on pollinators to reproduce, according to the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources. Pollinators across the globe are “keystone species” -- organisms that help define entire ecosystems.

Now is the perfect time to participate in the Center's National Pollinator Bingo, a nationwide project that encourages people to plant native pollinators in their gardens. The Wildlife Center of Virginia created this free game (with prizes) to celebrate native plants and their pollinators across the country! Bingo cards guide participants in choosing commercially available native vegetation to plant, no matter where they may be living in the United States -- all fifty states and Puerto Rico are represented with individual and regionally appropriate bingo cards.
On March 22 at 2:00 p.m. join Connor, the Center's outreach coordinator, and Amber, the Center's office manager (and avid beekeeper) as they host Piedmont Master Gardener Michelle Mrdeza for a fun discussion about the project, how you can become involved, and tips & tricks to get started with your own pollinator garden. Free and open to the public, the virtual program will be streaming on both the Center’s website and Facebook page.

Creating a backyard habitat that benefits wildlife – including pollinators – is easy, affordable, and rewarding. By providing shelter, food, and water sources, gardeners can attract and sustain a wide variety of wildlife. In 2014, the Wildlife Center of Virginia became an official National Wildlife Federation Certified Wildlife Habitat site. Visit the Center’s website for ideas, tips, and resources to get started.

For more information and to arrange an interview, contact Public Affairs Manager Alex Wehrung. A collection of high-quality photographs of pollinator species seen at the Center are available upon request.

Press Availability: To schedule an interview, contact Public Affairs Manager Alex Wehrung. Wildlife Center of Virginia staff are available Monday through Friday during regular business hours for virtual interviews about bird patients, online events, and their education and outreach work. A collection of high-quality photographs of patients and ambassador animals are available upon request.

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The Wildlife Center of Virginia is an internationally acclaimed teaching and research hospital for wildlife and conservation medicine. The nonprofit Center has cared for more than 85,000 wild animals, representing 200 species of native birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. The Center’s public education programs share insights gained through the care of injured and orphaned wildlife, in hopes of reducing human damage to wildlife.