February 22, 2012

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Okay, give me just a couple of minutes to get things cleaned up and ready for Mrs. Matheson’s class!

Comment:
Hurrah! Mrs. Matheson and her students!

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Good afternoon, Miss Amanda. We're working on getting ready to go (grouping around the laptops)

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Excellent! Hello, everyone!

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
While you guys are getting set up, I'll just throw a link out there for other folks who are waiting and reading ... Davis just posted a brief story about a new Bluebird patient that we have. [http://www.wildlifecenter.org/wp/2012/02/bluebird-window-collision/]

Comment:
Hi Mrs. Matheson & class we're always glad when you have time here. You always have fantastic questions, I hope Amanda is well rested and ready, you all ask some hard ones!

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Gulp ... 

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
First, we would like to congratulate Mr. Clark on his award. We are jealous that Gus was able to go to the dinner and we didn't LOL

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
We did think about you guys last night -- we always do when Gus is around!
Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
And you guys will be very happy to know that he was VERY well behaved.

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
We noticed in the Gala photo that we got from Lydia, that Gus's foot is turned. What does the bottom of an owl's foot look like?

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
I was looking for a photo of owl feet but couldn’t find any photos of the bottom of owl feet – I do have this photo though (it’s a hawk). There are some similarities – basically, all raptors have these “papillae” – the little bumps you can see on the bottom of the feet. There’s some thought that those help disperse the weight of the bird. This is what we look at when we do “foot and feather” checks on the patients (and edu birds too) – making sure those little bumps are still nice and bumpy! Smooth feet or pink feet can often be the start of developing foot problems.

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Of course, the tops of owl toes are different from hawks/eagle’s toes because owls have feathers down to the very tips of their toes! This helps with silent flight.

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Has Gus been behaving at all the events he's been going to? He certainly has had wheels on his feet!
Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Davis took Gus out twice in the past week – Gus was very well behaved, and only bated once or twice. Bating is what you guys saw at the Gala – when he flies off of the glove. Gus is a little more prone to doing that than some of our other birds, sometimes. He was VERY good last night.

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Our server is acting weird, so there will probably be some delay. Sorry - too many people on our server.

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Oh no! Don't they know there is a Cam in the Classroom session scheduled? :)

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Is Gus on a diet yet? Do you know why he put on so much weight this winter?

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Yes, Gus is on a bit of a diet – and already has lost a little bit of weight! It’s a slow weight-loss, which is good – we certainly don’t want to make him lose too much, too quickly, when it’s still sort of “cold” out (depending on your definition of cold).

It’s definitely normal for our birds to put on more weight in the winter – and the education birds do have a tendency to get a little heavier, since they’re not as active as their wild counterparts. Perhaps he really bulked up because it hasn’t even really been too cold this winter – we’ve definitely had some cold snaps, but overall … it’s been a mild!

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
My new student, Ivan, was wondering how long are Gus's feet" and what about the talons?

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Welcome Ivan! Good question.

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
I’d say the talons are 2-3 centimeters long … and the toes are longer than that – maybe 4 cm? -ish? We did take a picture of Gus’s feet last night – of course, his fluffy feathers partly cover them up! But you can check out the talons and can also see some of his papillae on the bottom of his feet.
Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Do you know when Gus is going to molt? Will you take pictures for us?

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
A lot of our owls molt in the summer time – usually around July/August. I remember that Gus looked a little rough last year when he was molting – but not as bad as Pignoli and Alex, our two screech-owls – they REALLY have some bad hair days! But yes, I’ll have to take some photos. You guys will be out of school by then – but you’ll have to keep in touch with us!

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
We just need to remember to not plan when there is our Galileo testing (rotten timing on our part)

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Does Gus have a swinging perch? Does he keep his head still while the rest of him moves, like the hawk on camera does?

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Gus doesn’t have a swinging perch, but he has three perches (and a Christmas tree) in different spots in his enclosure. He can keep his head still while the rest of him moves – someone just commented on his ability to do that last night, when he was at Ed’s award dinner!

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Do owls have cheeks? (We're going to be doing human body systems in a few months, so we'll have more questions about bird anatomy later)

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
I don’t think so. Cheeks are supposed to be that spot on your face below your eye, but in between your nose and ear. With the way owl faces are, I think there’s not much room there – their “nose” (nares on their beak) is up higher and their ears are as well – so I think that makes it hard to triangulate on that area that would be a human cheek. I asked Dr. Miranda this question ... we talked our way through it!

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
We remember you saying that Gus ate something with blue feathers? Would Gus eat a hummingbird? Also, has he had anymore unapproved snacks?

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Hmmmm … I bet he’d try! But hummingbirds seem like they would be incredibly difficult to catch. No, no more free snacks – a lot of his “free snack” days were when he was living in his old enclosure – probably easier for those freebies to sneak in. This enclosure seems like it would be tougher for something to get in.

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Has Gus had his check-up yet? Is everything fine with him?
Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Yes, Gus did have his annual check-up and appears to be in fine health – other than being a bit overweight!

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
How is the barred owl patient doing? (I didn't remember, they did!)

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Good memory! That was mentioned waaaay back at Thanksgiving. The barred owl patient is doing well, but not well enough for release. Dr. Miranda did determine that the owl is non-releasable, due to its wing injury – and the fact that it can’t fly silently. But since the injury is stable and not painful, we’ll be seeking out an educational facility for this owl.

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
We’ve been checking in on the Eagle Cam and were wondering, do owls have crops?

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
No! They’re different from other birds of prey in that way. No extra “storage” space for them – their meal goes directly into the first part of their stomach for digestion.

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
How fast can barred owls fly? How high can they fly?

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
According to Congowings, owls can fly 25-35 mph at top speed – of course, owls aren’t really designed for speed though. Really they just wait on a perch until they can hear their prey coming – and swoop down to nab them. Additional Congo information (she knows everything): When they fly, they flap their wings a lot, instead of soaring like a vulture. This is because they have special soft feathers. Soft feathers are quiet; this helps the owl to sneak up on night animals. But soft feathers are not very good at catching the wind. The owl is a good hunter, but he can’t rest and soar.

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
And I’m afraid I haven’t been able to find any stats on how high they can fly – they certainly can make their way up to the tops of some tall trees, but they’re not known for soaring and hunting from on the wing.

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Speaking of non-releasable - what do you have to do to find him a home?

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
We work with a variety of nature centers and educational facilities throughout the United States. When we have a non-releasable animal, and we know that that animal will be a good candidate (injury is stable, not painful, and the animal isn’t too freaked out by being in captivity), I’ll check my list of places that are looking for particular animals. From time
to time, different nature centers call in just to let me know that they’re looking for a screech-owl, or an eagle, or a barred owl or something like that.

**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**
There also is an “animal placement” listing on another wildlife rehabilitation organization’s website, so if I don’t have anyone on my list that wants the particular species in question, I’ll post a listing there. That way people who are looking for animals (but don’t know us) can also see what’s available. Then we trade information with them, and if a good fit, they will apply for the proper permits to obtain that particular animal in question.

That can sometimes take a couple of months, and we just hold onto the animal until all the permits come through. Then the animal goes to them. Sometimes that’s as simple as arranging transport across the state, and sometimes it’s making flight arrangements – for example, we have placed birds in Vermont, Utah, Oklahoma, and California!

**Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:**
How is the bear cub doing? Jose was wondering how long before he is a ‘chubby cubbie’? Is he so small because he wasn’t eating?

**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**
The cub is doing well so far -- he'll be weighed tomorrow, so we'll find out how quickly he's becoming chubby! We know he gained 2.2 lbs in the first week he was here ... we shall see what it is this time!

Our best guess is that he was separated from mom awhile ago – and has had trouble finding food. He may have been separated from his mother when he still should've been nursing – so perhaps that put him at a disadvantage, and then he had trouble finding food (but was finding SOME food, otherwise I don’t think he would’ve made it this long).

**Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:**
How did he get blind in the eye?

**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**
We can’t be sure – but it could’ve been some sort of traumatic injury that healed, or he could’ve even been born that way.

**Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:**
What is ‘anemic’?

**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**
Anemia is a fairly common problem with the blood – basically a decreased number of red blood cells. Red blood cells carry around oxygen in your body – so they’re pretty important! Anemia can be caused by blood loss (so sometimes we see anemia in patients that have open wounds and have lost a lot of blood), or because the body is having a tough time producing enough cells – usually because of nutritional issues. We can give a vitamin
supplement to help with that (we did, for the bear) and then just give him supportive care (fluids and food!) and give his body time to “catch up” again.

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Have you ever placed one in Arizona?

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
I don't remember placing a non-releasable animal in Arizona ... but that's not to say we've never done it!

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Orlando was wondering how fast a peregrine falcon can fly?

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Peregrines can 40-55 mph in “flapping flight” – and when they “stoop” (their free-fall dive), they can reach speeds of more than 200 mph!

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Orlando is testing you with "Do pigeons give milk?"

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Ooohh, good question! I bet some people will be surprised at the answer!

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
They do, actually! Dove and pigeons both produce “crop milk” for their young. Both mom and dad secrete crop milk -- this is a pudding-like substance that is very high in protein.

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Orlando just said, 'I didn't know doves did that!' (make milk)

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Yes! Pigeons are doves are in the same "order", so they have a lot of similarities.

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Orlando’s other question was if pigeons can find their way home if they get lost? (homing pigeons???)

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
I know that a lot of them can -- but we do sometimes see wayward pigeons here at the WCV (homing/racing pigeons). I'm not sure if they're lost, or they just get in a spot of trouble and are tired ... but we usually try to find the owner and figure out what to do.

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Andrew was wondering if you know how long the bear cub has been separated from its mom?
Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
We can't be sure -- but perhaps early fall/late summer? Our state bear biologist said this:

In most cases they typically would be nursing until at least into the fall, they begin eating more and more solid food once they emerge from dens. The mother teaches them what they should be eating and where they should eat it.
Cubs can be force weaned (say if they are orphaned in the spring) in July but if they were with their mother they would continue to nurse for a while longer even though they can eat solid foods. It is possible that this cub was orphaned early in the fall and managed to survive this long. Bear cubs have the ability to survive if they are orphaned in the fall but my general feeling is that when we see these undersize ones that they were probably orphaned much earlier and managed to make it.

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
You’re missing the explanation Samantha is giving Ivan about Gus and owls. I wish I had a camera. (Ivan has only been with us for a week and isn’t up to speed just yet. LOL)

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Ha! I am sure he has a lot to catch up on -- but I have no doubt all the students will tell him everything they know about Gus and owls!

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
And I will give "EN/CN" a teaser -- Mrs. Matheson's class worked on some "report cards" for Barred Owls ... report card time! We’ll be posting those on the website later this week.

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
How long do the feathers get on Gus?

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Oh goodness, where's Congo when you need her?

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Barred owls have feathers of varying lengths -- but some of their longest (their flight feathers) would probably be about 30 cm long?? I will have to tell Gus to sit still for a measuring session!!

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Guess we better get busy and finish our "Gus in space" stories. Boy, he sure does get around!!!

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Oh yes, I've heard he's been having adventures with moon rocks ??!!
Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Perhaps Critter Nation had better see this ...
Comment:
Oh boy, I am outta here. :)

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Oh no, I'm stumped already and it looks like so is everyone else ...

Comment:
I believe it was an African-American killed in the Boston Massacre

Comment:
Crispus Attucks

Comment:
Crispus Attucks

Comment:
Crispus attucks (sp)

Comment:
Crispus Attucks, a slave

Comment:
Crispus Attucks

Comment:
I think I've just flunked adult! LOL

Comment:
Crispus Attucks

Comment:
A slave named Crispus Attucks

Comment:
Crispus Attucks!

Comment:
We all know how to "google" don't we? lol

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
lol

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Or you guys are VERY good at history!!
Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Way to go, Izzy - and you're even a Canadian!!

Comment:
No Amanda--we all Googled!

Comment:
Hey, I actually knew that one (forgot his name for a sec)

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
What was the name of the event that he 'died' in?

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Oh, what Simchah said!!

Comment:
The Boston Tea Party!

Comment:
Boston Massacre

Comment:
Yo - Boston Massacre - scroll up

Comment:
Boston Massacre

Comment:
My husband knew the answer-LOL

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
No fair Googling! We can't in class! :))

Comment:
Boston Massacre

Comment:
... I'll just sit here quietly ... ;)

Comment:
There is a historic theater named for him here in Norfolk! The Attucks Theater - they host a lot of great live entertainment!

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Ah, interesting!
Comment:
Nobody died at the Boston Tea Party

Comment:
Boston Massacre (didn’t Google my friend is his great great great great granddaughter

Comment:
I will hide behind Orlando and look over his shoulder.

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Davis will be so sad he's missing this ...

Comment:
Stay in school kids :) it means you get to take a variety of classes, perhaps Canadian History for some of you someday :) since I get some US classes!

Comment:
Do we get credit/points for guessing?

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Yes, the Boston Massacre! Now, Where did "The Shot Heard 'Round the World" take place?

Comment:
I can answer this question..."Are you smarter than a 5th grader?" Answer: NOPE!

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Orlando was wondering how Dori knew he was reading over my shoulder?

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Oh they know EVERYTHING, class ... :) Probably some spy ...

Comment:
Concorde?

Comment:
Lexington ?

Comment:
Lexington/Concord on "shot".

Comment:
Lexington MA

Comment:
Lexington?
Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Oh you guys are good ...

Comment:
Leif told lol

Comment:
Shot heard round the world - World Series 1951 - NY Giants!!

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Hmmm. That seems not right to me.

Comment:
What fun it is to be in history class today! Thanks, class!

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Lexington and Concorde - so, who fired first?

Comment:
I'm embarrassed to say that history was my favorite subject! :(

Comment:
Hi Mrs. Matheson's class, Miss Amanda and CN! I am just joining in :)

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
You'd better be good at history by this point in class! Yikes!

Comment:
Orlando, Congo knows everything, she told me.

Comment:
They did . para phrasing, if there is to be a war then let it begin here

Comment:
The British had to fire first, because the Militia held out till they could see the whites of the foe's eyes.
Comment:
It is unknown who fired 1st.

Comment:
This 1775 proverbial first shot was fired during an armed stand-off between British forces and local militia in Lexington,

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Okay, we need to get ready to go home, so, we have a challenge question - Where was the Battle of Bunker Hill fought? (and no, it wasn't Bunker Hill)

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Oh, tricky ...

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Correct, no one is sure who fired first.

Comment:
Breed's Hill?

Comment:
Breeds Hill

Comment:
Charlestown

Comment:
Embarrassed again.

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
(me too)

Comment:
Charleston

Comment:
Breeds Hill

Comment:
Breed's Hill

Comment:
Breed's Hill

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Okay, that sounds good to me ...
Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Rats, we couldn't get you - now, for one final one - they are pestering me to ask: What is the color of George Washington's white horse?

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Ha!

Comment:
White!! At last I got one :)

Comment:
H'mm, thinking maybe we won't need to google that one?

Comment:
white

Comment:
White???

Comment:
Spotted?/Mottled? col.

Comment:
I know, I know. White!

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
I think they're trying to trick us.

Comment:
Is that a trick question?

Comment:
Grey

Comment:
What a smart group of students you must be very proud Mrs. Matheson! :)

Comment:
Clean or Dirty??

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:
Good afternoon everyone! Time for us to go home! Thank you Miss Amanda for all the information!!!
Amanda Nicholson, WCV:  
Thank you guys for another great class! We will tell Gus you said hello!

Comment:  
We may not be as smart as 5th graders, but we have lots of fun on this chat!

Comment from Mrs. Matheson & class:  
Well, keep good thoughts - we have a tough reading test tomorrow, so send good vibes our way!!!!!

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:  
Good luck! You guys will do great!

Comment:  
Bye Mrs. Matheson's class. You are really good students and such fun!

Comment:  
Thank you class for the wonderful education, bye Orlando

Comment:  
Good afternoon Mrs. Masterson's class

Comment:  
No wonder they picked gus as their class critter they are all as wise as any owl! :)

Comment:  
Mrs. Matheson and her students are so smart and ask such good question. Sure would have liked to have had Mrs. Matheson as one of my teachers growing up. She really is one of the best. Thank you class for spending time here with us.

Comment:  
Great class, Amanda! Learned about pigeon milk! I wonder if the high speed flight of a peregrine is really really called a "stoop?" @ 4:26 I would have said "swoop!"

Comment:  
Crop milk?!? Who knew!!... so glad I tuned in for this chat today, GREAT questions, class!!!

Comment:  
Goodbye class and Thanks! for the great questions- :_))

Comment:  
I have to scroll back now to read all of the class!

Comment:  
I am so NOT smarter than a 5th grader, but I love how these kids are learning so much. Way to go class. You rock!
Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
They are very well rounded! Outer space ... moon rocks ... owls and other wildlife ... history ...

Comment:
Amanda, it is so good to see how you interact with the kids. I can almost HEAR the excitement in your words. Thanks for showing the next generation how to be responsible.

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Well thank you!! They are a fun class -- and these cam in the classroom sessions are better than we ever thought. Fun that we get to bring along 1200 people along for the ride!

Comment:
Bye class, we enjoyed letting you show us up with your intelligence.

Comment:
Amanda how is your head... or for that matter your desk! Those questions were rough! :)

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
Whew ... I'm glad you guys were firing out answers ... history really is NOT my strong suit..

Comment:
Amanda, why do I always feel stupid when you have classrooms on, maybe my age or is it an old brain ;-)

Amanda Nicholson, WCV:
No ... they do ask tough questions though!!! And as for the answers I can provide ... they also give me some time to look things up (like asking Congo about measurements and speeds and things like that).