

The Ridgeline

NEWSLETTER OF THE BLUE RIDGE WILDLIFE CENTER

ISSUE 52

2021
Annual Report

*Porcupines
in Virginia!*

Grateful In So Many Ways



Being part of Blue Ridge Wildlife Center over the past year has been an amazing experience. The staff and volunteers are laser-focused on the mission and work tirelessly to fulfill it—and it has been incredible to witness.

In 2021 alone, the BRWC team treated **3,331 native wildlife patients** with injuries ranging from eye infections to gunshot wounds, to raising hundreds of orphaned babies, all with the goal of getting them well enough to release back into their natural habitat. While our patients do not enjoy receiving care, they avoid immense suffering because of it.

And little do most people know how much that one wild animal adds to the health of our ecosystem. That is why we are committed to educating the community on the concept of **One Health**, that the health of people is connected to the health of animals and our shared environment. In 2021, BRWC **provided 65 educational programs to our community**, and engaged and inspired thousands more through *The Ridgeline* and social media.

Although our patients never thank us, **it is your support and enthusiasm for our mission that motivates us every day!** And it is because of your incredible support in 2021 that we are looking forward to some big changes in 2022.

• For years our patient load has been dramatically increasing, but our staff has stayed the same size. This year, because of your support, I am excited to announce that we are welcoming two new full-time staff members to the team!

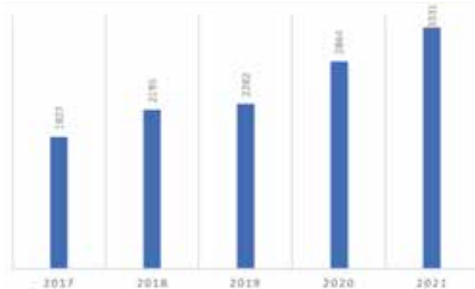
• Of course, we can't hope to reduce threats to our native wildlife without providing education to our community. We want our Center to become a destination of learning and inspiration! Now, with a grant from the Hillsdale Fund, we are adding educational signage to our on-site Wildlife Walk! This will allow community members to enjoy free, self-guided tours of our native wildlife walk year-round.

• It's also vital that we look at the future of wildlife medicine, rehabilitation, and education. By expanding our internship program in 2022 we hope to inspire future generations of Veterinarians, Rehabilitators, and Educators to continue our work!

All this and more to come in 2022, all made possible by YOU! Whether you have given your time and energy as a volunteer, donated monetarily or in-kind, brought us an injured animal, or shared something you have learned from us with others—**thank you!**

With gratitude,

Annie Bradfield



The Ridgeline

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Boyce, Virginia 22620

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ABOUT

Blue Ridge Wildlife Center is a 501(c)3 organization caring for native wildlife by integrating veterinary medicine, rehabilitation, education, and research.

BRWC is located in Boyce, Virginia on the Burwell van-Lennep Foundation's property on Island Farm Lane.

The Center relies on private donations exclusively. Contributions are tax-deductible.

FOLLOW US

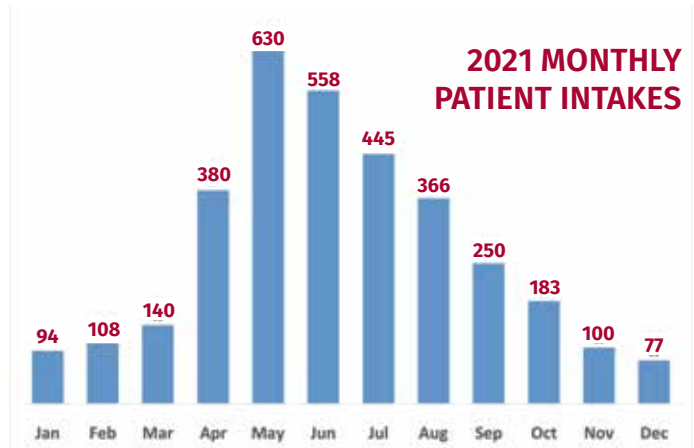
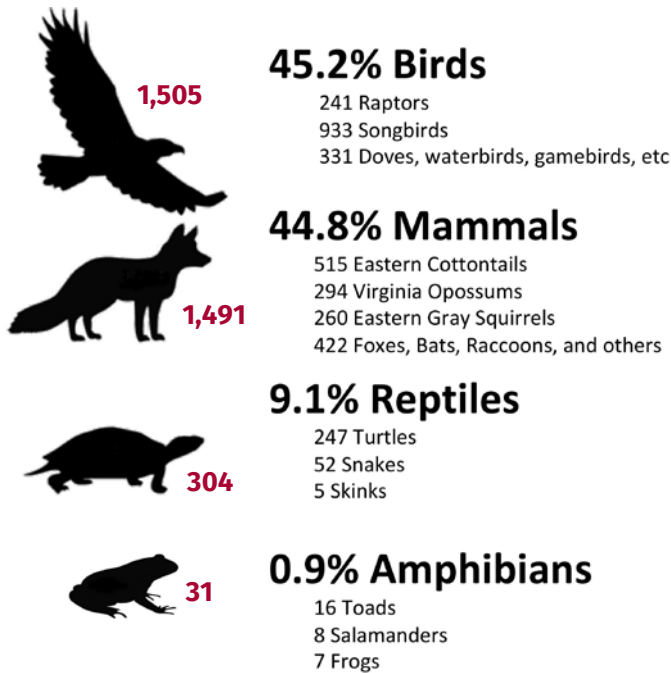


Newsletter designed by Dara Bailey Design

Hospital Stats

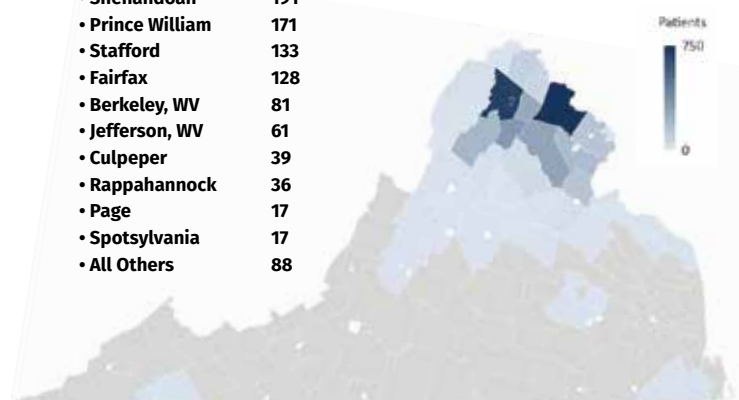
We treated **3,331** patients in 2021, a **16.3% increase** from last year. This included **152** unique species, **14** of which we saw for the first time at our facility! Similar to previous years, patients that survived the first 24 hours had a survival rate of **78%**!

PATIENT BREAKDOWN

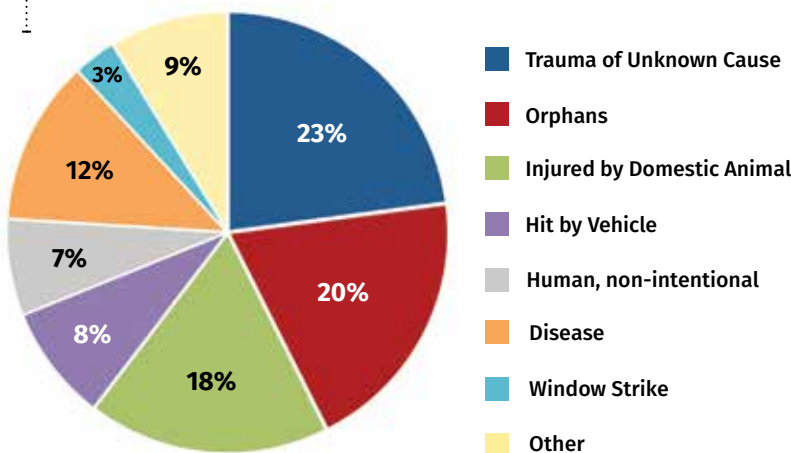


PATIENTS BY COUNTY

• Loudoun	830
• Frederick	697
• Warren	316
• Fauquier	271
• Clarke	255
• Shenandoah	191
• Prince William	171
• Stafford	133
• Fairfax	128
• Berkeley, WV	81
• Jefferson, WV	61
• Culpeper	39
• Rappahannock	36
• Page	17
• Spotsylvania	17
• All Others	88



REASONS FOR ADMISSION



TRAUMA OF UNKNOWN CAUSE

Trauma of Unknown Cause indicates that there is trauma, but the event that caused trauma was not witnessed. The vast majority of these cases are likely to be hit by vehicle or cat attacked cases and we mark them in the records as “suspected hit by car” or “suspected cat attack” or another suspected cause based on signs seen on intake. When including these suspected cases, vehicle collisions and cat attacks are the two most common reasons we admit patients.

INJURED BY DOMESTIC ANIMAL

Injured by Domestic Animal cases are almost exclusively dog or cat attack victims. In 2021, roughly 70% of these cases were confirmed cat attacks while 30% were confirmed dog attacks.

HUMAN, NON-INTENTIONAL

Human, non-intentional is the cause we list if the issue was caused by humans who were not intentionally trying to harm the animal. This includes things like lawnmower injuries, garden netting injuries, and glue trap victims.

Of the **152** unique species we admitted, **14** were seen for the first time in 2021!



Wood Frog

All three Wood Frogs we took in this year were due to domestic animals—two cat attacks, and one attack by a chicken! Two of the three frogs were successfully rehabilitated and released back at their found locations.



Horned Lark

This youngster came in due to being orphaned and lethargic. Thankfully this bird bounced back quickly with specialized care, and was released just weeks later back at its found location after becoming an independent juvenile.



Black-throated Blue Warbler

This gorgeous warbler was found on the ground unable to fly. With the exception of southwest Virginia, these warblers are only in Virginia during migration.



American Pipit

This American Pipit struck a home and broke one of its wings. These birds migrate into Virginia for the winter, and breed in Arctic tundras and alpine meadows.



Hooded Merganser

This fancy diving duck was rescued due to its wing being caught and constricted by some garden netting. Thankfully this bird didn't have any serious injuries, and was able to be released back to its home pond!



Red-throated Loon

We took in not one, but TWO Red-throated Loons for the first time this year. Both loons were found after being grounded on slick roadways that resemble open water from the air, leaving them unable to take off and with various abrasions to their chests and feet.



Worm-eating Warbler

We took in two Worm-eating Warblers for the first time this year. One was a cat attack while the other was a window strike—two of our most common reasons for songbird intakes each year.



Northern Mole Kingsnake

This snake was brought in due to being stuck in garden netting. Thankfully it made a full recovery in a short period of time and was released!

Salamanders

It is extremely rare that we admit salamanders at the Center and this year, we admitted **eight** individuals of **three** unique species!

Eastern Red-backed Salamanders



This year we took in a record-breaking six Eastern Red-backed Salamanders—all at once! These individuals were part of an illegal captive situation, but were quickly released back to their found location once cleared for any illness or injury.

Yellow-spotted Salamander



This salamander was accidentally dug up in the finder's garden. They were concerned about potential injury, but after a full exam, the individual was given a clean bill of health and released back at its found location.

Jefferson Salamander



This salamander was brought in due to a tail injury. This individual was successfully released back home!

Moles, Voles, and Shrews!

In 2021 we admitted **moles, voles, and shrews!** People commonly confuse these three animals but they are all quite different from one another.



MOLES

- Large forepaws for digging, long nose, eyes and ears are barely visible
- Eats insects and other invertebrates
- Aerates soil and creates good growth media for plants
- Food source for other wildlife



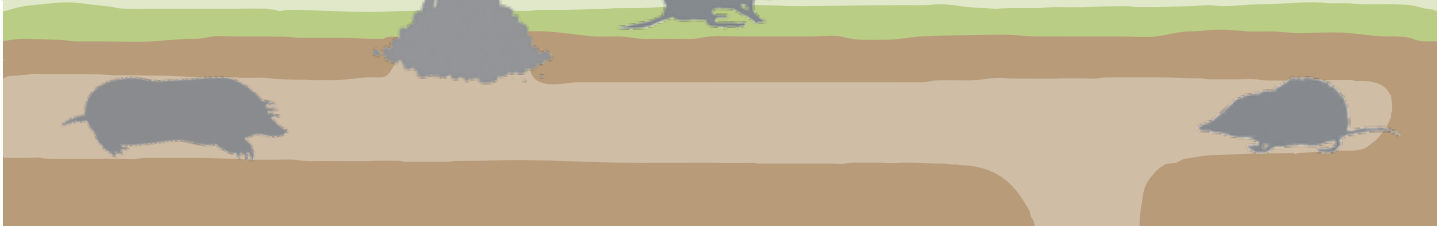
VOLES

- Most similar in appearance to mice, but have shorter and rounder snouts and short tails
- Eats plants and grains
- Important food source for many wild animals



SHREWS

- Pointed nose with small eyes and small feet
- Though technically venomous, shrew saliva will not kill a human but can cause pain and swelling
- Eats insects and other invertebrates



Our staff look back on some of their most rewarding cases of 2021



Jen Riley, DVM,
Director of Veterinary Services

Red-tailed Hawk

One of my most memorable cases of 2021 was this immature Red-tailed Hawk that we admitted in November with large, maggot-filled wounds over the back. After cleaning and removing dead tissue from this wound, hydrocolloid bandages were applied and changed every 2-3 days for the next three weeks. As a veterinarian with the benefit of amazingly skilled rehabilitation and veterinary technician co-workers,



I do not need to administer medications and perform treatments on every patient every day. I do tend to see those with the most horrific wounds that require frequent bandage changes and regular anesthetic procedures as this hawk did, which makes cases like this particularly memorable for me.

In this case, we used donated hydrocolloid bandages (though honey bandages would likely have worked well too). These allow the wound bed to stay moist while pulling away fluid and bacteria. It worked well and the wounds were



healed in three weeks with full feather regrowth by four weeks! ■



Jessica Andersen,
Rehabilitation Program Manager

Porcupine

Porcupines are considered extirpated (locally extinct) from Virginia, which made it easy to pick a most memorable case when that's exactly what came into our door—a young porcupine, rescued out of a parking garage in downtown Winchester. Despite having been hunted and pushed from the state in the 1800s, it seems populations are coming back to the area from western Maryland and eastern West Virginia, and as they do, they're expanding back into their natural range into Virginia.

Thankfully, this porcupine didn't have any serious injuries, and just needed some time to rehydrate and recover from what was likely a stressful and exhausting ordeal being chased and trapped in a parking garage with no food or water. Our staff has had extensive training across the U.S. and abroad and have worked with a variety of species. For me, previous porcupine experience from a rehabilitation position in Texas gave me the skills necessary to properly house and care for this rare Virginia species without getting quilled or causing loss of quills to this individual. We also have a diverse cast of volunteers, one of which (Dr. Iara Lacher) is a botanist and plant expert, who helped us forage and identify the proper plant material surrounding our center that make up a porcupine's preferred diet while he was in our care! After this short period, we were



able to find an excellent location just a short distance from where this individual was found that provided plenty of wild and undeveloped habitat for him to thrive, and hopefully keep him from strolling the streets of Winchester in the future! ■



Cara Masullo,
Licensed Veterinary Technician

Eastern Ratsnake

This Eastern Ratsnake was discovered with a firm, egg-shaped lump in the middle section of his body in mid-November by our veterinarian's neighbor. Luckily, the neighbor recognized that this was abnormal and reached out for help. Dr. Riley assisted in safely capturing the snake so that it could receive the care it needed. As we suspected and confirmed on x-ray, this ratsnake swallowed a ceramic egg. Though these snakes are immensely helpful in pest control and preventing disease spread through their ingestion of large numbers of rodents and the ticks on those rodents, these snakes will also eat eggs when available.

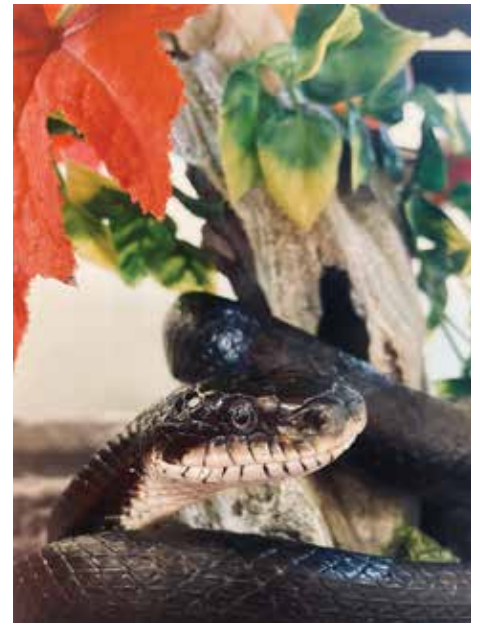
A ceramic egg placed in a chicken coop looks just like a real egg to these guys and, if allowed access to the coop, they will certainly eat these eggs. Ceramic eggs are unable to be broken down by the body's natural digestive processes and over multiple weeks, this fake egg puts constant pressure against the surrounding tissues. This can cause loss of blood circulation to those tissues, which results in the death of the skin and gastrointestinal tract. By the time this snake was found, the snake was severely dehydrated and the tissues were dying and surgery was necessary to remove the egg and parts of the dying tissues. With a guarded prognosis to start, this ratsnake recovered well from surgery and is currently doing great in care, waiting for release on May 1st when the weather is warmer (reptiles that come in for care after October 1st during colder months must be kept over winter until at least May 1st).

Though we never want an animal to need care, it is definitely a treat to be able to observe this common and docile species up close during the course of the winter



Dr. Jen Riley performs surgery to remove the ceramic egg.

months. It is truly a joy to watch him explore his cage and the different items we use to decorate his enclosure and keep his stay enriching. I think we can all relate to feeling cooped up during this pandemic, so we like to keep things interesting and provide enrichment that encourages natural behaviors. It is quite amazing to observe him eat and completely mesmerizing to watch them drink water. I find that



This ratsnake recovered well from surgery and will be released on May 1st.

snakes tend to be a controversial species for people who fear them, but I have found that everyone who walks through our doors and gets to experience this snake, among others, discovers how amazing they truly are. In addition to protecting human and wildlife health through his important ecological role, he is adorable. Trust me, I know! ■

Did You Know?

BRWC does not receive state or federal funding.

We are dependent on donations to care for the thousands of patients we treat each year. Please help us help them by making a donation today!

Visit our online Gift Shop!

Show your support for BRWC with a variety of merchandise for all ages. All proceeds support our mission of caring for injured, sick, or orphaned native wildlife and teaching the public how to be good stewards of the land around us. blueridgewildlifetr.org

Record-breaking Rescues

We admitted **four** raptors that were hit by vehicles **AND** stuck in the grille of that vehicle until rescued.



We typically do not get more than one of these each year. All four were successfully rehabilitated and released! If you hit a bird and it is stuck in your grille, please do not try to remove it yourself as this can cause additional trauma. Pull over when it is safe

to do so, cover the bird with a blanket/towel and refrain from speaking around the bird to reduce stress. Then call a rehabilitator or animal control officer for assistance! Thank you to the officers who shared these rescue photos with us!



Barred Owl recovering from a vehicle collision.



Glue Trapped Wrens

We admitted a record-breaking **15** Carolina Wrens on glue traps in 2021. These are the most common birds we see on glue traps, while juvenile Eastern Ratsnakes are the most common reptile, and Big Brown Bats are the most common mammals.



These traps are often intended for the insects that these animals eat and appear to be an all you can eat buffet that ultimately lures wrens, snakes, bats, and others to a cruel death. Luckily, the overwhelming majority of this year's glue trapped wrens



were brought to us on the trap, in time to be saved. Please do not attempt to remove an animal from a trap yourself and never use oil, which is commonly advised on the internet as a safe method of removal. Simply cover the open areas of the trap with cornmeal/breadcrumbs/tissues/torn paper to prevent further adhesion, cover the animal with a hand towel, and get them to a rehabilitator. Without proper sedation and handling, many of these animals will die of capture myopathy, (muscle damage that causes metabolic changes and results in death as a response to stress and subsequent over-exertion) even if you manage to get them off the trap. Unfortunately, many finders panic at the sight of an animal on the trap and wind up breaking bones, pulling feathers, cutting feathers, or damaging skin or scales in an attempt to free the animal. Other times, oil is used to remove the animal and, since bats and birds are generally fastidious groomers, much of that will be ingested. Oil ingestion or hypothermia associated with being oiled is the top cause of death for our glue trapped birds.

Please do not use glue traps and if you do, please do not attempt to remove these animals yourself.

One Health Research at BRWC

One Health, or working in a framework that integrates human, animal, and environmental health, is at the heart of what we do in our wildlife hospital. Though we do treat individual animals, it never stops there. The information we gain from each patient will ultimately go on to help others through increased understanding of diseases and treatments and through research. We were involved in twelve research projects at the Center in 2021, many of which are ongoing.

We work closely with the entomology department at Virginia Tech on a variety of disease prevalence studies to learn more about various ticks in our area, the hosts they prefer, and the prevalence of the diseases they carry. We are continuing to work with Tufts Cumming School of Veterinary Medicine on their Coronavirus

epidemiological research and surveillance study where we collect samples from wildlife species to determine the prevalence of COVID-19 in those species. We are also involved in genomics projects for some species and are assisting with research regarding wildlife trafficking in our state. The patients we admit are not just individuals with injuries or disease, they can teach us so much about the world around us and the current health status of that world!

Learning about **One Health** and Research in a wildlife setting is one reason that veterinary and veterinary technician students choose our externships and clinical rotations. In 2021 we had ten veterinary students and four veterinary technician students learn at our hospital!



Ticks collected from this porcupine (and other patients) were sent off for identification and to look for diseases the tick may be carrying. This helps us know more about the diseases in our area that impact humans and wildlife.



Kennedy van Gelderen was one of our veterinary technician students who spent nearly two months with us at the Center! In addition to learning about the veterinary care of wildlife species, Kennedy learned a lot about sample collection and data management for various research projects.



Sarah Street was an intern in 2021. In this photo, she is collecting a blood sample from an Eastern Gray Squirrel for our La Crosse Virus study with Virginia Tech.

Avian Mortality Event

Between May and August, we admitted over 100 birds with eye disease and/or neurological signs, as did many other rehabilitators in our area. Almost all of these birds were fledglings, and most were Blue Jays, European Starlings, and Common Grackles in addition to smaller numbers of American Robins, House Sparrows, and young raptors. Thousands more were reported as found dead to local state wildlife agencies. Though treatment was attempted initially, rehabilitators quickly found that these birds were

dying regardless of treatment and euthanasia was the only humane option. Though many diseases were ruled out, there has been no confirmed cause.



Volunteers and Interns

This year our volunteers and interns gave a combined 8,240 hours, despite delaying volunteers' return in the beginning of 2021 and requiring COVID vaccinations for all volunteers and interns returning to service.

We also added TWO new volunteer opportunities—Ambassador Animal Husbandry, and Children's Program Volunteer, which are both focused on the education side of our facility.

● Volunteers by the Numbers

- Active Volunteers in 2021: **53**
- Total Volunteer hours in 2021: **3,730**
- Volunteer with the most hours: **Kristi Titus** (pictured above right) with **619** hours! Kristi is also a home rehabilitator and the head of Kristi's Caring Hands Wildlife Rehabilitation & Education. She took in **380+** animals herself this year in addition to her volunteer work with the Center. She also assisted with MANY rescues and releases!



Kristi Titus, volunteer with the most hours.

● Interns by the Numbers

- Total Interns including rehabilitation, education, and veterinary internships: **29**
- Total intern hours: **4,512**
- Intern with the most hours: **Kenna Frierson** with **464** hours!



Daisy Lockett, Intern.



Jenny Schultz, volunteer.



Alex Albright—now Dr. Albright!—was one of the vet students who completed a rotation at BRWC in 2021. In this photo, she is learning about avian orthopedic surgery with Dr. Riley.



Stephanie Fosburg, volunteer.



Gabby Clautice, intern.



Amanda Crossen, intern.

New pre-release enclosures for rehabilitation patients

We had a variety of enclosures built this year, entirely by volunteers!

One of our largest songbird complexes that was comprised of four enclosures together was completely torn down and rebuilt better by boy scout AJ German with Troop 961. This enclosure was in dire need of an overhaul due to rotting wood, updated enclosure requirements, and general improvements to make these enclosures serve our patients better in their rehabilitation process.

We also had a volunteer, Dagny Kannengieszer, who built a brand new enclosure with the help of her family for housing additional songbirds, which is a huge need for us in the spring and summer as the influx of baby songbirds we raise need to be moved outside for pre-release conditioning and acclimation!

Lastly, but certainly not least, our volunteers Kevin, John, and Terry came together to begin the building of three new waterfowl enclosures. One enclosure has been fully completed, while the other two are still in progress, but hope to be done by the time we'll have need of them this summer. They boast a deck and inlaid pools for easy access by the ducks and geese we rehabilitate, but can also be used by herons, snapping turtles, and many others!



Refurbished songbird complex built by Boy Scout Troop 961.



Our brand new songbird enclosure built by Dagny Kannengieszer and family.



New waterfowl enclosure built by volunteers, Terry Bradfield, Kevin Martin and John Clark

Are you Interested in Volunteering?

We rely on volunteers in numerous ways to help us care for native wildlife. From animal care, administration, maintenance, to education.

Visit our website to learn more!

blueridgewildlifectr.org

Education Grows at BRWC

PROGRAMS



BRWC staff and Ambassadors gave 65 programs in and around our community this year, reaching over 1,700 children and adults! Programs were given both at the Center and away, to school groups, camps, civic organizations, and more. If you are interested in having our staff and Ambassadors come to your school, please check out our website for more information.



WILDLIFE WALK GRAND OPENING



This year, BRWC was excited to finally open our Wildlife Walk to the public! A Grand Opening event occurred in April to showcase the short trail housing many of the Center's permanent resident wildlife. Over the next eight months, over 600 tours were scheduled, introducing our Ambassadors to people of all ages in our community.



EDUCATION VOLUNTEERS

The education department was happy to bring in new volunteers this year! With the new Wildlife Walk, BRWC welcomed nine volunteer Docents to lead tours and speak with the public about our Animal Ambassadors, their species, and the work done at the Center. We also began training a small number of Husbandry volunteers, who help staff to feed, clean, and enrich our resident wildlife.



NEW ANIMAL AMBASSADORS

BRWC's Ambassador team grew by three new species this year! In late summer, Moira Rose, a Turkey Vulture, and Wednesday Addams, a Black Vulture, were deemed non-releasable and transferred to our education department. Both vultures had been inappropriately raised by humans, resulting in them becoming imprinted. We also took in Mocha, a Striped Skunk who had been purchased and kept as a pet, which is illegal in Virginia. Her unusually light coloring is a result of captive breeding. Come

meet all three on our Wildlife Walk! Tours are open to the public, and the link to sign up can be found on our website!



WILDLIFE DISCOVERY CAMP

For four weeks this summer, campers ages 6 to 14 participated in science lessons focused on wildlife and nature, played themed games, met our Animal Ambassadors, and enjoyed nature walks in the near-by woods. Does your child love nature? Look for registration information for Wildlife Discovery Camp 2022 on our website!



WILDFEST AND 2022

BRWC was thrilled to revive our annual WildFest this Fall. With safety precautions in mind for our community, the public was invited to join us for the event at the Clarke County Ruritan Fairgrounds in Berryville, VA to learn about the Center, our Ambassadors, and how they can help keep wildlife wild! Each station featured activities or crafts and many featured our Ambassadors for an up-close meeting. There were also paint sessions which invited the public to participate in a paint-by-instruction portrait of several Ambassadors who made modeling appearances! Look like fun? Mark your calendars and join us again in September for our third annual event.



Day of Caring

The United Way of the Northern Shenandoah Valley hosted the annual Day of Caring this past September. It's amazing what a caring group of volunteers can get done in one day! A team from Green Bay Packaging removed 3,500 lbs of debris from our outdoor rehabilitation area! Also, a team from Blue Ridge Hospice painted the bathrooms in our lobby and, along with a group from Navy Federal Credit Union, weeded and mulched the entire Wildlife Walk! It really does take a village, and we are so grateful to be part of this caring community. Thank you to the United Way and to everyone who participated!



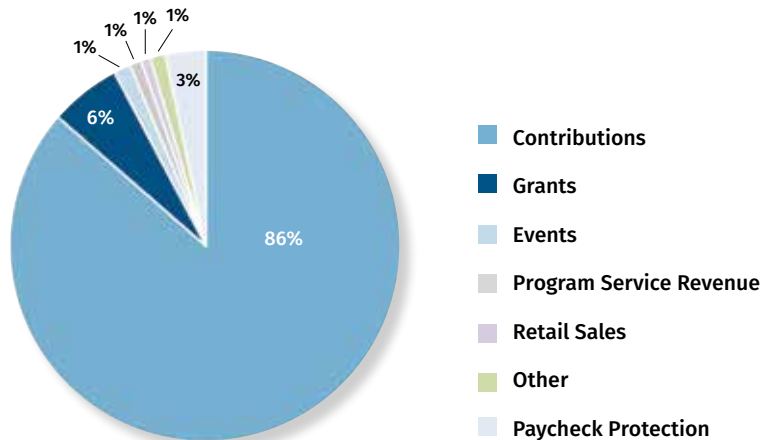
TOP: Day of Caring volunteers. LEFT: Weeding and mulching with help from Navy Federal Credit Union. RIGHT: Volunteers from Green Bay Packaging clean up around our outdoor rehabilitation area.

Financials FY2021

Blue Ridge Wildlife Center operates on a fiscal year. Financials reflect fiscal year 2021 from July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021.

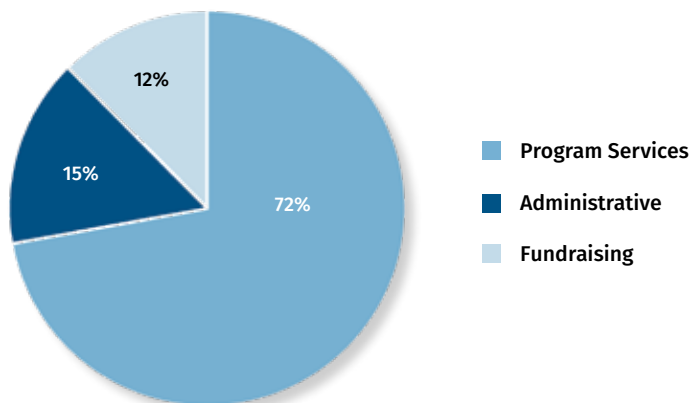
REVENUE

Contributions	\$ 1,359,852
Grants	\$ 92,205
Events	\$ 21,995
Program Service Revenue	\$ 15,196
Retail Sales	\$ 12,240
Other	\$ 19,639
Paycheck Protection Program	\$ 52,782
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	\$1,573,909



EXPENSES

Program Services	\$ 454,537
Administrative	\$ 97,226
Fundraising	\$ 78,221
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	\$ 629,984
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Revenue less expenses:	\$ 943,925



Donor Appreciations

BALD EAGLE

(\$10,000 and above)

James L. and Mary J. Bowman Trust
Linda Case
Gabriel Family Charitable Fund
The Hillsdale Fund
Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful (The GIANT Company)
Vicky Newell
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Patricia Robinson
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The Wise Foundation
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GREAT HORNED OWL

(\$5,000 and above)

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Lamda Iota Mu
Gregory and Lana Leggett
Mark and Terese Merrill
Helen Louise Noyes
Matthew Sheedy and Victoria Bendure

RED FOX

(\$1,000 and above)

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John Hopkins
Mark and Teri Lyn Houliston
Mark Huber
Judith Hunt
Judith Landes
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Bruce and Carla Macleod
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Kathie Menuet
Amy Moore
Thomas Murray
Musser Family Fund
Oak Grove Meadows, LLC
Dina Paxenos
Laurie Petronis Family Charitable Fund
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J. Donald and Mary G. Shockey
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Tim Spitzer
John R Staelin and Elizabeth Locke
The Stern Foundation
Andrew Stifler and Nicole Perry
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Mary Tedrow
Laura Thorpe
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Ebalinna Vaughn, DVM
Terry A. Wallace Living Trust
The Clara Weiss Fund
The Wiley Companies, Inc.
Melissa and Mark Winchester
Jerald Wolford and Margit Royal

Blue Ridge Wildlife Center

is very grateful for the approximately **2,500** supporters—from all over the US and beyond—that help us provide life-changing services to the native wildlife in our community. We receive gifts of all sizes and in different forms—through direct mail, Facebook, in-kind donations, family foundations, etc. We have included here a list of those supporters that have invested **\$1,000 or more** during 2021.

Every effort has been made to provide an accurate listing of supporters.

Please contact Annie Bradfield (annie@blueridgewildlifectr.org) with any errors or omissions.



Thank you
for your
Support!

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Stay Informed!

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TAIL END