

The Ridgeline

NEWSLETTER OF THE BLUE RIDGE WILDLIFE CENTER

ISSUE 41



Teamwork Makes the Dream Work

This Northern Goshawk was rescued by a Virginia Conservation Police Officer before coming to the Center for surgery, rehabilitation, and release.

Gunshot Wounds | Meet Vega | Rehab Corner | First Annual WildFest | Education Updates | Wildlife Discovery Camp

Operating Transparently



Blue Ridge Wildlife Center is a not-for-profit, public charity. What does that really mean?

A not-for-profit organization, as designated by the IRS, means that profits earned are invested back into the organization—to support the implementation of its mission. It is a misconception that not-for-profits don't make profits—they should! A strong operating reserve of cash enables the organization to grow and provide exemplary services, to weather the ups-and-downs of the economy, and to handle unexpected events without compromising the mission.

A public charity is accountable to the public, and a Board of Directors governs the organization. Generally, boards are made up of three or more un-related individuals that serve non-perpetual term lengths. Such a structure should give confidence to the public that the funds they provide to an organization are managed appropriately.

BRWC has 14 members on its Board of Directors, serving one to two terms of three years each. This summer we will be saying good-bye to two Board members: **Lisa Goshen** and **Mike Morency**. Both have brought their unique talents and passions to BRWC, and we are so grateful for their involvement and support over the years! We also welcomed four new members in January—**Mark Albaugh**, **Patricia Carter**, **Amy Moore**, and **J. Carter Wiley**. Their new perspectives and commitment to a healthy environment and wildlife will surely benefit the organization!

BRWC has recently earned a 2019 Gold Seal of Transparency from GuideStar, which is the world's largest source of information on nonprofit organizations. A gold star indicates that BRWC has provided information that potential donors and grantors may find helpful when making funding decisions. By adding information about our goals, strategies, capabilities, and vision, we are demonstrating our commitment to transparency to ensure public confidence in our operations. Visit www.guidestar.org/Profile/7813866 to learn more!



You, as a supporter of BRWC, have a critical role to play—thank you for your trust and confidence in our operations—we simply could not do this work without you! Together with the staff, Board members, and volunteers, we make a strong team working for the benefit of our native wildlife!

Sincerely,

Hillary Russell Davidson



Cover photo by Laura Frazier.

The Ridgeline

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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—Lennap Foundation's property on Island Farm Lane.

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

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Newsletter designed by Dara Bailey Design

Gunshot Wounds and Lead Ammunition in Wildlife

By Jennifer Riley, DVM

Each year, the Center takes in a few animals that have been injured by gunshot. Unfortunately, 2019 has brought a dramatic spike in these cases. In early 2019, we have taken in over ten times more gunshot victims than any previous year.

Typically, gunshots account for between 0.5% and 2% of our total patient intakes. This year, that number has fluctuated between 7% and 12%. To make matters worse, gunshot victims have a very poor prognosis for recovery and release. Due to the severity of wounds caused by the ammunition (or caused by falling from mid-air after being shot), less than 15% of these animals will ever be released.

There are three main concerns that we have when thinking about wildlife that has been shot:

- 1. Criminality.** The majority of these animals are shot illegally.
- 2. Cruelty.** The animals that we see have been dying slowly with horrific, painful wounds.
- 3. Non-target effects.** The overwhelming majority of these patients are being shot with lead ammunition. This means that had the animal not been brought in for care, scavengers would have found it, ingested it, and died a horrible death from lead toxicity.

Why are these animals being shot?

If shooting these animals is illegal, why are people doing it? In many cases, the hawks that are shot are Red-tailed Hawks or Cooper's Hawks—two species that will readily kill unprotected chickens. Though we love the thought of chickens wandering freely over rolling pastures, they must be protected by some type of shelter to prevent attacks from raptors and other wildlife. Even if a hawk attacks and kills a chicken, it is NOT legal to shoot that predator.

Like hawks, Black and Turkey Vultures, our most commonly shot species, are often



This adult Turkey Vulture was admitted due to gunshot injuries and lead toxicity. It is NOT legal to shoot vultures, hawks, falcons, or eagles.

Photo by Dr. Jen Riley.

accused of killing neonatal livestock such as lambs, kids, and calves. Though groups of Black Vultures can cause property damage and may (on rare occasions) kill unprotected and generally unhealthy neonates, these species are scavengers and rarely kill for food.

Other animals may be considered just a nuisance (skunks, groundhogs, squirrels) and be shot simply for being around. If you feel you have nuisance animals in your area, we strongly encourage you to call the Center and discuss possible eviction techniques prior to taking lethal action. Keep in mind that “humane traps” are often NOT humane and though they can be used to move a wild animal in your home to the outdoors, it is never legal to relocate a wild animal off the property on which it was trapped. Relocating is illegal in VA, but not in all states, as it often causes the inhumane starvation and death of the involved animals and can also spread diseases/disease vectors or spread nuisance animals to new areas. Encouraging animals to move on naturally is always the preferred method.

Criminality

In Virginia, the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) regulates hunting and enforces the associated regulations. To be clear, we DO NOT believe that licensed hunters are the cause of our increased illegal gunshot cases. Licensed hunters are frequently ardent conservationists and closely follow the hunting regulations. They know better than to risk their license by shooting game animals out of season, or by hunting animals that are never legal to shoot at any time. We suspect that the illegal shooting issue is caused by individuals who are not licensed and do not know the laws. We would encourage law-abiding hunters and all wildlife lovers to report these wildlife crimes. As DGIF states on their website, “Don’t allow the actions of a few outlaws to tarnish the reputation of Virginia’s sportsmen and sportswomen!” The animals that are legally allowed to be hunted have defined seasons which DGIF updates annually. These dates (in addition to many other regulations) can be found at www.dgif.virginia.gov.

Shooting of birds in particular is also regulated by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), which is enforced by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). This act prohibits the “take” (defined as “to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.”) of migratory birds as well as the possession, transport, sale, or purchase of the bird or any part of the bird including nests or eggs.

“Migratory Bird” can be a confusing term for people reading the MBTA. Though that term in conversation might mean “any bird that migrates”, in terms of the MBTA, “migratory birds” include any avian species that have been previously agreed upon between the United States, Canada, Japan, Mexico, or Russia. These “migratory birds” may live in the same area year-round.

Nearly all of our native birds are protected by the MBTA and those that are not are typically covered by state laws. Though some species may have a regulated hunting season, it is illegal to shoot these birds OUTSIDE of that season. Birds with no legal hunting season, such as raptors, can never legally be shot. Non-native birds are not addressed in the MBTA. You can access a list of species covered by MBTA at USFWS’s website <https://www.fws.gov/birds/management/managed-species/migratory-bird-treaty-act-protected-species.php>.

In the case of our avian gunshot patients, USFWS is also contacted to start their own investigations. Though these investigations cost tax-payers, wildlife centers like ours receive no state or federal funding for the treatment we provide. If you know of anyone illegally shooting wildlife, please report it. It will save wild lives and financial resources.

Cruelty

In addition to the laws mentioned above, a poorly-placed bullet is a terrible way to die. Gunshot victims that are not immediately killed often have injuries that result in a slow, painful death. Some will be killed quickly by predators, cars, or other means, but many spend days suffering with fractures, developing infections, and starving as their new disabili-



This adult Canada Goose was admitted due to gunshot injuries and lead toxicity. Though this species has a legal hunting season, this animal was shot out of season and had to be reported as a wildlife crime. Photo by Dr. Jen Riley.



ties prevent them from being able to hunt and feed themselves. The lead they leave in the environment, when they finally do die, is another part of the pain and cruelty cycle as it will later impact the scavenger that feeds on the gunshot victim.

Non-target Victims

Lead shot in the muscle tissue DOES NOT cause lead toxicity in the shot animal. It is only animals that ingest the metal that are truly at risk of this devastating and often fatal type of poisoning. There is a high correlation between hunting season and lead toxicity cases in wildlife. Our larger scavengers including vultures and eagles often prey upon deer carcasses that have been shot with lead ammunition. When game is shot using lead, an extremely soft metal, lead fragments can travel up to 18” from the wound channel! Even if animals avoid the larger pieces of ammunition, these tiny flecks of metal can be enough to cause lethal toxicity. Sadly, since these larger raptors often ingest large pieces at once, many come in with the ammunition still in their stomachs. So far in 2019, over 80% of our vulture and eagle patients have come in with abnormally high lead levels. For this reason, we encourage all hunters to make the switch to copper or other alternatives.

Smaller, illegally shot wildlife is also problematic for our scavengers. All but two of this year’s gunshot victims were

shot using lead ammunition before being left out to die and be scavenged. Fortunately, these patients came to the Center and that lead was removed from the food web. Unfortunately, very few illegally shot wildlife are brought in for care. Since these perceived nuisance animals are rarely shot for human consumption, these bodies and their lead are going into the environment.

Though all environmental lead is a problem, lead contained in dead animal tissue is of particular concern. It most likely will be ingested by scavengers that keep our environment clean. The ingested lead fragments are broken down by stomach acid and absorbed into the blood. When lead levels in the blood reach a certain concentration, we begin to see clinically obvious signs of toxicity including balance issues, weakness, diarrhea, respiratory abnormalities, and even tremors and seizures. Though some animals can die from the lead alone, most end up coming to the Center after a vehicle strike or other injury.

How to Help

Luckily, there are ways YOU can help!

- **Educate others!** Many people use lead or shoot wildlife illegally because they do not know the effects of these actions. Keep your conversations positive. Being anti-lead DOES NOT EQUAL being anti-

hunter. Blaming or degrading those that have used lead in the past is not helpful. Education is. Help us spread the word.

• **Report wildlife crimes.** Illegal shooting, trapping, or caring for wildlife without a permit are crimes that should be reported to our state wildlife agency by phone (1-800-237-5712) or email (WildCrime@dgif.virginia.gov). Let them know what happened, when it occurred, and any information you have about the circumstances or individuals involved.

• **Switch to non-lead ammunition (and fishing tackle).** Lead alternatives have improved dramatically over the years and though still a bit more expensive than

lead, their cost has gone down. We encourage all hunters to switch to help keep their meat and their environment safe! Though we would encourage property owners shooting nuisance animals to exhaust other alternatives first, if you must shoot nuisance animals, do not use lead! Most importantly, NEVER use lead (or any ammunition) to shoot an animal out of season or any species that cannot legally be shot.

• **Bury remains of butchered carcasses.** Scavenging birds and mammals will eat remains that are left out in a pile or not covered sufficiently.

We hope that our alarming rates of gunshot victims and lead toxicity decrease

over time, but this will only be possible if humans change the way we are treating the environment. Lead has long been accepted as a dangerous material for humans—that is why we have taken in out of so many products! Sadly, we've been slow to make the changes to protect our wildlife. If you use lead ammunition, please consider making the change today! If you have been shooting nuisance wildlife (or shooting any wildlife illegally), please familiarize yourself with the laws and contact the Center to discuss other options before resorting to lethal methods. ■

Meet Vega: The newest addition to the BRWC family!

After months of treatment, it was determined that this immature turkey vulture is unable to be released back to the wild. Luckily, she has an amazing temperament, interacts well with humans, and has no chronic pain issues. For these reasons, she will be joining one of our permitted volunteers on a journey to help educate the public about this amazing species!

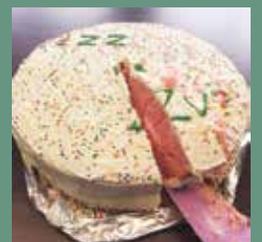
Why so amazing? This species plays quite an important role in our environment, essentially acting as nature's garbage disposal by way of eating carrion including road kill animals. Vultures not only remove carcasses, but they also remove the diseases contained in the bodies! Their strong stomach acid is able to break down various pathogens to prevent the spread of contagious diseases like rabies, botulism, anthrax, and others.



When Vega first came to us from Shepherdstown, WV, she was found to have many issues requiring medical and surgical intervention. Her intake exam revealed a fractured radius and ulna (wing bones), very high lead levels in her blood, 14 pellets of lead shot throughout her body, foreign material in her stomach, and lack of palpebral reflex in the right eye, likely caused by one of the pellets that was lodged in her brain stem.

Due to lead toxicity, foreign material found in her crop, and the associated foreign body removal surgery, she was unable to process food normally at first. She had to be tube fed a special diet for one month before moving onto solid foods. She started processing food more normally and showing interest in self-feeding after six weeks in treatment! After undergoing multiple necessary surgeries and procedures including fracture repair surgery, pellet removal, eye tarsorrhaphy and then evisceration, barium studies to evaluate digestive issues, foreign body removal, and innumerable bandage changes with physical therapy, Vega is now a permitted educational ambassador and in training to teach you about how amazing these creatures are, and she sure does have a lot to say!

RIGHT: Vega's previously unknown gender was discovered with the help of DNA testing. There is no sexual dimorphism in Turkey Vultures, so our predominantly female team was extra-excited to learn that this amazing bird is a girl!



Rehab + Corner Interesting Cases

By Jessica Andersen



Least Weasel (*Mustela nivalus*)

We often think of carnivores as large and in charge, but don't let this 22 gram Least Weasel fool you! After being attacked by a cat, this weasel was in care with us for a short time to treat the puncture wounds and any potential infection the cat had caused. After just a few hours, this weasel was active, alert, and chowing down on the food provided for her. These small carnivores are bold, frequently preying on meadow voles that are almost triple their size. Once she had finished her round of antibiotics, she was cleared for release. These weasels are common in our area, but rarely seen. They are just one of many weasels we have in Virginia! *Photo by Dr. Jen Riley.*



American Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*)

This Black Bear cub was presented to the Center after the finder waited for a period of time, hoping the mother would return for it. When the mother had not returned after several hours, the weakened cub was carefully contained and brought to us for evaluation. The bear cub was found to be dehydrated and quite skinny, indicative of being separated from its mother for quite some time. The bear was given fluids and was transferred the next morning to the Wildlife Center of Virginia (WCV) in Waynesboro, VA. WCV is the only rehabilitation facility in the state that is permitted to rehabilitate black bears. We are thankful we have many wonderful rehabilitation facilities and good working relationships that ultimately benefit our wildlife patients!

If you ever have concerns about a bear being sick or injured, please contact the Wildlife Conflict Helpline run by our state wildlife agency which manages all bear issues (1-855-571-9003).

Photo by Dr. Jen Riley.



Eastern Cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*)

This adult cottontail was struck by a car, suffering severe head and eye trauma. On intake exam, masses were palpated in her abdomen. Radiographs confirmed our suspicion—these masses were babies! She gave birth just days after her admittance, and the babies were monitored closely by staff to make sure she was caring for them. Though she was lactating, she was not reliably allowing her babies to feed. Her head trauma made it difficult for her to perform basic functions, causing staff to intervene every now and again to provide supplementary feedings and stimulate the babies to urinate and defecate. The relationship was rocky at first, but as the babies grew larger and more mobile, they were able to go to their mother themselves to feed, and began eating solid foods early, around two weeks of age.

Unfortunately, the mother did not improve and had to be humanely euthanized due to worsening neurological signs. Her babies, however, were amazing eaters and persevered, growing quickly in just a matter of weeks, and were successfully released on the Center's property.

Photo by Dr. Jen Riley.



Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*)

What a rare find! A conservation police officer gave us a call after finding his free-roaming chickens panicked—and a Northern Goshawk with one in its clutches! Thankfully, this officer noticed the goshawk seemed injured, with swollen feet, which may have caused it to go after easy prey, such as backyard chickens. The bird was contained and brought to us. During its initial exam, it was found to have a significant crop wound, perhaps from attacking a prey animal that fought back. Our veterinarian performed surgery to clean and suture the crop wound as well as treat the foot lesions. With its wounds healing, this large accipiter took to eating well, and after being given time to exercise in our outdoor flight cage, it was released back where it was found. Goshawks are large, powerful birds that are generally more common in Canada and the northern United States. They are considered rare in Virginia.

Photo by Dr. Jen Riley.

Just a Reminder
BRWC is dependent on your donations to help us care for so many patients. The Center does not receive state or federal funding for wildlife rehabilitation. We are so thankful to those who have generously made it possible for us to help with so many animal emergencies!



Red-shouldered Hawk
(*Buteo lineatus*)

This Red-shouldered Hawk made a successful recovery after a good Samaritan found it on the side of the road barely responsive and quickly brought it to the Center. This bird was in such a critical state that it couldn't stand or react much, and an IV had to be placed to administer intravenous fluids. Our staff was hesitant to hope—but by the next morning, this bird was weakly standing on its own, aware of its surroundings, and looked much better than it had on intake! The IV catheter was removed after two days and the bird's head trauma continued to improve. Thankfully, this bird did not have any broken bones and it was quickly upgraded from our Raptor Rehab room to a small flight cage and then eventually moved into our large flight ring. This bird was successfully released. *Photo by Dr. Jen Riley.*



Red Fox
(*Vulpes vulpes*)

High concentrations of animals in habitable areas and intentional feeding of wildlife causes more interaction between individuals and the likelihood of spreading diseases such as sarcoptic mange.

This Red Fox was successfully contained and transported to the Center for treatment. Fur loss can be indicative of a variety of issues, and mange can only be confirmed via a skin scrape of the individual. A skin scrape from this fox confirmed sarcoptic mange, and the long journey to recovery began. Mange, depending on the severity, can require multiple baths, anti-parasitics, rehydration therapy, and antibiotics to combat the infections that result from mange. This fox responded well to treatment, as you can tell by the fur regrowth in the pictures! Once the weather broke



and he had enough fur to be comfortable outdoors, he was moved outside to re-acclimate and was finally released after four months in care!

We do not advise people to handle foxes themselves, and it is illegal to place medication out for free-roaming animals. The medication can be dangerous to foxes if improperly dosed or if the fox has concurrent diseases. It can also be lethal to other species. Mange can only legally be treated in captivity by a licensed veterinarian.

Photo by Jessica Andersen

BRWC Open House



In late January, we hosted our second annual Open House. Visitors were able to tour the outdoor Raptor Observation Deck, as well as our learning center, our treatment room and radiology/surgery suites, our culinary center, and our individual patient rooms. Due to the large amount of interest from the year prior, we organized the event into groups of 15 people. Each group took a one-hour tour, starting every 15 minutes, allowing visitors to see everything, ask questions, and interact with our staff in a comfortable group setting.



Free tickets for the event were “sold” out within 6 hours of being available. Subsequently, we decided to extend the Open House to include one more tour and we raffled off 15 tickets via our social media pages!

Thanks to everyone who came and donated towards the care of our wildlife patients and thanks to the staff and dedicated volunteers who helped make this event happen!



Dangers of the Internet

By Jessica Andersen

The internet—a massive information highway at our fingertips—sounds like a great idea, right? Often, the answer is yes—for checking historical facts, looking up equations, creating a forum to share ideas and opinions in search of improving best practices. Sometimes though, available information for dealing with wildlife issues may seem okay, but when put into practice can cause more harm than good.

As an organization that strives to be a leader in the field of wildlife rehabilitation, we are constantly updating our protocols and the advice we give to the public. We stay up-to-date on new research and current studies and update our protocols appropriately so that we can provide the best care for our patients. We do not make certain information available to the general public—such as how to raise or care for wildlife species—so as not to encourage non-permitted individuals to take part in illegal activities. We do make publicly appropriate information available and pro-



This squirrel came into care after the finder accidentally aspirated the animal while attempting to feed it. We sadly treat many young squirrels for pneumonia caused by aspiration each year due to poor advice given over the internet.

mote it often on our social media pages and newsletters which are readily available to the public. However, just because our staff of wildlife professionals make this information available, it does not mean that all wildlife care suggested on the internet is a good idea.

When a person finds a wild animal that they believe needs assistance, they will normally just Google whatever animal they have found and scroll through the top few listings. But how do you know which resources are trustworthy? The intentions behind the webpages may be different—one may be more geared towards spreading information or supporting a cause, while the other is focused on selling a service or making money. As a non-profit organization, our webpage domain ends with “.org,” as do most other rehabilitation facilities. “.gov” webpages are often reliable in that this is official, government approved information being put out—it’s not just anyone who happened to create a website domain and can say whatever they like without any sort of citations or evidence. However, government and non-profit pages are often slow to be updated, and may have older or outdated information, and should still be critically assessed. Even if using a more reliable “.gov” or “.org” source, keep in mind that wildlife laws vary by state.

When searching for rehabilitators in your area, look for state-run government or rehabilitation websites that give you listings for “permitted” or “licensed” rehabilitators with contact information for those individuals. Look for advice that encourages keeping wild animals WILD and getting babies back to their parents whenever possible. The following are some organizations whose websites have good information and advice: Blue Ridge Wildlife Center, Wildlife Center of Virginia, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Animal HelpNow, the United States Humane Society, Cornell’s



This is how a healthy, young Eastern Cottontail kit should look—full bellies and double chins. Unfortunately, we get many malnourished cottontail kits in each year. In some cases, it is because mom has been killed and the kits are starving, but in many cases, it is because well-intentioned finders have attempted to feed the babies based on internet advice. By the time the babies get to us, they are in terrible shape.

All About Birds. These are all good websites for advice or information to keep in mind PRIOR to an animal emergency.

If you have found an animal that needs help, you should never attempt to treat or feed that animal yourself for safety and legal reasons. No website run by permitted wildlife professionals will ever describe how to properly feed or care for wild animals. These professionals know giving that advice in a public forum would lead to far more unintentional, human-caused health issues for the animal.

If in doubt, please call our Center or e-mail us with any inquiries. We can refer you to reputable sites with the information you’re looking for and assist you with any wildlife in need of help. Surf the web responsibly! ■

If you receive duplicate copies of this newsletter, would only like to receive an electronic copy, or request changes to your name, please notify us at info@blueridgewildlifectr.org.

Research at the Center

By Cara Masullo

Here at the center, as part of the One Health initiative, we do our part to assist with research that impacts wildlife and the humans that share their environment. All ecosystems, including our urban environments, are connected to and affected by each other. By studying different indicator species, diseases, habitat health, and their responses to environmental changes, we can help track changes not only in the health of wildlife and our environment, but human health as well. Wildlife hospitals and rehabilitation facilities can be a wonderful resource for various research projects including, but not limited to, medical and ecological studies.

In a recent newsletter we discussed our involvement with SCWDS (Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study) and our findings regarding the Asian long-

horned tick (*Haemaphysalis longicornis*). Amongst other species, it was found on one of our Red-tailed Hawk patients, the first found on any avian species in North America. We are continuing to work with SCWDS and provide them with ticks we collect from our patients to help track the spread and abundance of this invasive species.

This year, we have also started assisting vector-borne disease researchers in the entomology department at Virginia Tech by collecting and submitting blood samples and live ticks. These samples will be tested for various pathogens so that we can see what diseases are affecting our local wildlife. This will also give us insight into the prevalence of many tick-borne diseases that affect humans as many of these diseases impact multiple species—even us!

Most recently we have been contacted to

help track the occurrence of *Echinococcus multilocularis*, a zoonotic tapeworm species whose definitive hosts include wild canids (e.g. foxes and coyotes). This parasite was recently found in a domestic dog in Clarke County, VA, where it was not thought to previously occur. Though no human cases have been found yet in our area, it is important to assess this parasite's prevalence in our area so that we can be better prepared for cases in humans or more domestic animals. It is important for us to keep the One Health initiative in mind as an infection such as this can be difficult to treat medically or surgically in both canids and people.

We plan to grow our research programs even more in the future so that we can continue to support the health of our environment and ALL species! ■

BRWC First Annual WildFest!

Sunday, June 2 | Clarke County Fairgrounds | Berryville, Virginia

For the past eight years, BRWC has held a “Baby Shower” event to raise awareness about the work that we do, as well as receive needed in-kind donations that aided us in caring for the many patients admitted during our busiest season. It was a free event open to the public, though attendees were encouraged to bring a “shower gift” of in-kind donations in lieu of an entrance fee.

This year, we will be transforming the event into our first annual WildFest—a public, family-friendly event focused on providing information about wildlife and how the public can live in harmony with our wild neighbors. The event will be held on Sunday, June 2, at the Clarke County Fairgrounds in Berryville, VA. WildFest will be a celebration of all things wild—from the work that BRWC does to other ways that the public can help wildlife and the environment. BRWC will be inviting local organizations with environmental messages to come share their knowledge with the public. The afternoon will be packed with fun for the whole family with games and activities for all ages, food trucks, a raffle, face-painting, and appearances by BRWC's Wildlife Ambassadors!

Entrance fee is \$10 per car/family. All fees and donations will go towards supporting the BRWC's mission to care for native wildlife, as well as grow our outreach and education programs. For more information, please visit our website and Facebook page!



Education 🍏 Updates

Continuing Education

Blue Ridge Wildlife Center's staff is committed to being on the cutting edge of wildlife medicine and rehabilitation. This requires constant research and learning and, this year, our staff members have been able to attend some amazing continuing education events!

Our licensed veterinary technician attended the VMX (Veterinary Meeting and Expo) conference in Orlando, FL, where she learned about updates in anesthetic and pain management protocols in addition to many other topics affecting wildlife species including spread and treatment of illnesses that are currently of high concern.

Our education manager attended the IAATE (International Association of Avian Trainers and Educators) conference in Orlando, FL, where she learned the most up-to-date training techniques that we are now using with our two dozen educational ambassadors!

Our rehabilitation program manager attended this year's NWRA (National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association) meeting in St. Louis, MO, where she learned many new techniques and had a chance



to network with other rehabilitators from across the country.

Our veterinarian has been keeping busy by providing continuing education lectures regarding wildlife to numerous local small animal hospitals in northern VA and will be lecturing again this summer at North Carolina's Lees-McRae Wildlife Medicine Symposium. A paper she co-authored

on uveitis in Eastern Screech Owls was recently published in the Journal of Avian Medicine and Surgery. Dr. Riley will be attending the AAZV (Association of Avian and Zoo Veterinarians) conference this September.

We are so proud of our staff for continuing to be leaders in the field of wildlife medicine and rehabilitation! ■

SCBI Interns at BRWC

Each semester, we receive one or two students from the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute that work alongside our staff and volunteers as a part of their semester's courses. These students are with us each Monday, from open to close, learning about rehabilitation, veterinary care,



SCBI student Julia Morgan (left) feeds one of our injured young squirrels while Kirsten Reinhart tube feeds an orphaned opossum.

and treatment of our native wildlife.

“As one of our classes at the Smithsonian-Mason School of Conservation, we have had the pleasure of doing a practicum at Blue Ridge Wildlife Center. We have learned so much in the few months that we have been here. The exposure to native wildlife has been an incredible experience. The dedication shown by the team at BRWC has been inspiring. The team is always eager to share their knowledge with us and answer any questions we may have. If you want to work with native wildlife, BRWC is the perfect place to be.”

Both Julia and Kirsten learned about caring for some of our early babies, such as squirrels and opossums, as well as some of our patients still recovering from

injuries or illnesses, including Bald Eagles, Red Foxes, Eastern Cottontails, Red-tailed Hawks, and many others.

“It is incredible to see people caring about native wildlife and recognizing their value in the ecosystem” - Julia Morgan

“There were some tough days, but these were always greeted by great moments” - Kirsten Reinhart

We're always excited to help shape the next generation of wildlife stewards! ■

Meet Keith Davis



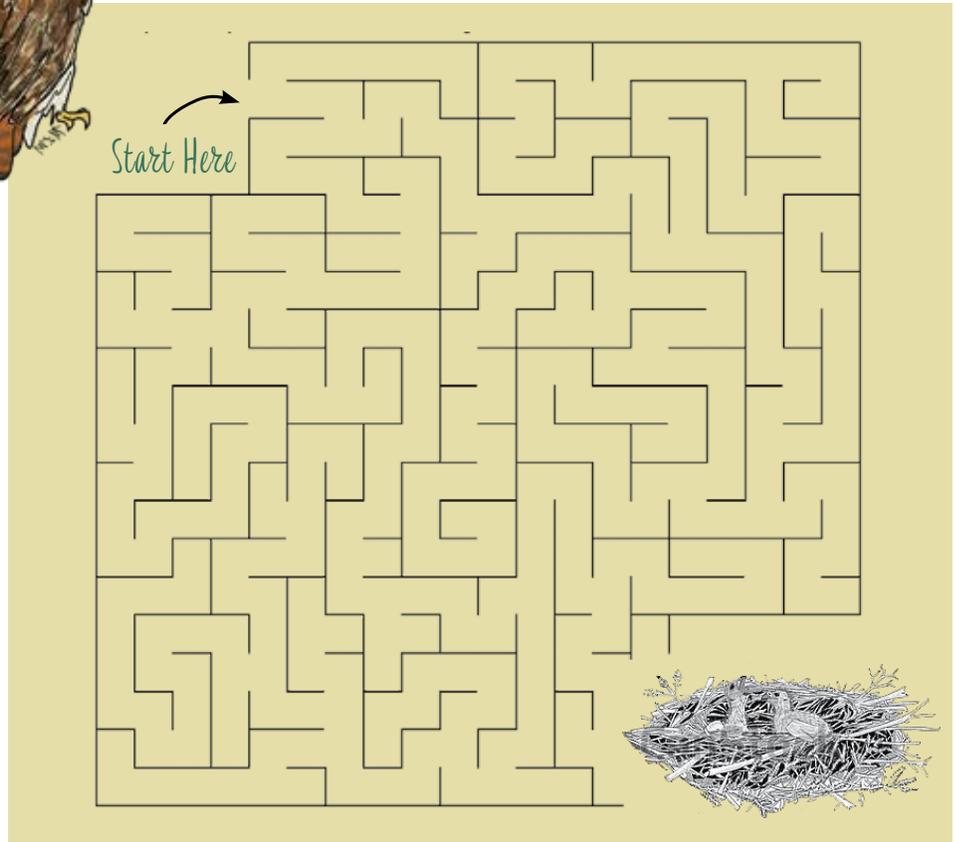
We are pleased to announce the newest addition to our full-time staff—Keith Davis, Operations Coordinator. If you have called the Center or admitted an animal recently, you most likely spoke with Keith! He responds to animal issues on the phone, facilitates admission and release of wildlife, and keeps two key databases up-to-date. A native of Warren County, VA, Keith received an A.S. in Business Administration from Tidewater Community College in 2000. Keith is a lifelong animal enthusiast and has 10 years of experience working as a veterinary assistant in small animal hospitals in North Carolina and Virginia. Keith volunteered at the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo in Colorado Springs, CO in 2013 and became a nationally-certified Phlebotomist in 2017. He spent the last year managing a small business in Front Royal. His hobbies include writing and recording original music, and audio video production, and he hopes to use these talents in the future to help contribute to the BRWC mission. He shares his home with his three dogs, Lilly, Charlie, and Kacey. Keith works Monday through Friday and can be reached at keith@blueridgewildlifectr.org. ■

If you would like to help BRWC on the weekends by performing duties similar to Keith's, we would love to hear from you! Please contact Keith or the Executive Director via email.



Help this parent hawk bring food back to the chicks!

Red-tailed Hawks will use the same nest every year, adding new sticks for support. Both parents raise the chicks each year.



Wildlife Discovery Camp



Looking for some fun in the sun for the kids this summer? Registration is open for BRWC's Wildlife Discovery Camp! We offer camps for ages 6-9 and for ages 10-14. With two separate weeks each per age group, there are plenty of opportunities for young, aspiring naturalists to come learn about all things nature! Sign up for individual days, or for the entire week. Each day features lessons about an environmental topic, followed by games and activities, outdoor excursions in our woods and at our pond, and up-close encounters with our wildlife ambassadors! Visit our website for more information about the days' topics and a registrations form.



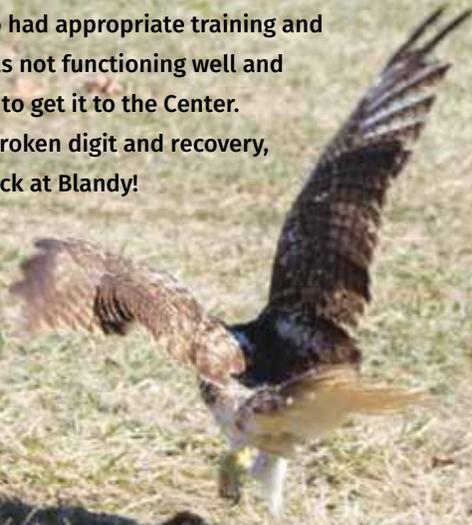
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Back to the Wild

This immature Red-tailed Hawk was struck by a vehicle on Route 50, near Blandy Experimental Farm. Though this bird was flighted, the finder (who had appropriate training and permits) noticed the foot was not functioning well and was able to contain the bird to get it to the Center. After surgical repair of the broken digit and recovery, this patient was released back at Blandy!



TAIL END