



## Goose Creek Wildlife Sanctuary, Inc.

Giving native wildlife a second chance ...



Holiday 2021 Newsletter



### *It's Been A Great 30 Years!*

It's hard to describe the satisfaction and joy that comes with releasing an animal who came in sick, orphaned or injured. Knowing that they were given a second chance is an indescribable feeling. And while there are many successes and joyous moments, there are also times of tears and heartbreak. After 30 years of the ups and downs and endless days and nights, it's time for a change.



When most people think about rehabbing wildlife, they usually picture cute orphan babies snuggled in their warm comfy beds with full tummies. Most don't realize everything that is involved. Each day is divided into sections: You start with critical care and feeding babies (mammals need to eat every two to four hours and baby songbirds sometimes as often as every 15 minutes). Between baby feedings, there are cages to clean and feedings for the juveniles and adults. In the middle of all of this, there are frequent calls about animals needing help. Some are being dropped somewhere and need to be picked up asap while others are simply reports of an animal lying beside the road (likely hit by a vehicle), tangled and stuck in a fence or simply lying in someone's yard that needs immediate help. That animal may be in Tallahassee, Perry, Keaton Beach, Lake City or anywhere in between. Each call for help usually translates into numerous additional calls and texts while we try to find someone who can help pick up, transport or cover feedings at GCWS while someone from here goes on the rescue.

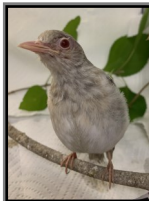
When new animals arrive they need immediate attention. They need to be warmed and assessed (which includes providing fluid therapy and medical attention as needed), a cage, incubator or dwelling needs to be set up, food or formula needs to be prepared, etc.

As the day progresses, there are medications to be given, wound management, laundry (loads and loads of laundry-all day long), grocery shopping, cooking, enrichment, cage repairs, transports to/from vet appointments, formula prep, inventory taken and needed supplies and formulas ordered and the list goes on. And did we mention laundry? Oh, and by now, every cage needs to be cleaned again and the phone hasn't stopped ringing. And this doesn't include any of the administrative side of running a non-profit, the required daily record keeping on each animal (which includes notes on how each one is doing, eating, bandage changes), the fundraisers to try and raise money needed to pay for the food, medicine and cages, the required Federal and state filings, the surprise inspections by our regulators, the training of new volunteers (many of which never return when they realize it's a lot of not-so-fun work). We're tired.

The last two years have also been extremely difficult in the way of volunteers. I'm sure you've noticed

#### Did you know:

- According to the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association, 75% of the animals cared for by rehabbers are as a result of some form of human interaction
- Most wildlife rehabilitation centers are volunteer based and receive no funding
- Florida rehabbers are licensed and regulated by FWC (state) and USFWS (federal) which include surprise inspections and a lot of reporting requirements



Believe it or not even after all of these years, it's sometimes hard identifying songbirds.

It is easy to determine what an animal's main diet is by its beak shape, but it's necessary to know what the bird is so you can determine all the foods in his diet. This little one who came in as a fledgling stumped us all. Many thanks to John Frink and wife Dr. Erica Miller for identifying this leucistic bluebird!

Leucism can be caused by a wide variety of conditions that result in the partial loss of pigmentation in an animal. Leucistic birds usually have normal colored eyes, feet, legs and beaks, but our guy has red eyes, a pink beak and pink legs.



**Some Incredible Characters.** . . . All of the animals are special to us, but there are a few who made really big impressions. We don't usually tell people that we sometimes name the animals, but it's often easier if we refer to them by name instead of their intake number. We have always named the bottle-fed raccoons because it's easier for us to remember Chaucer didn't eat well, or Trans Am (Sam) had an upset stomach. When we started asking volunteers which animal made an impact on them, it brought back many wonderful memories like:

**Esmerelda** (Muscovy duck) who followed Sara around;

**Grunt** (or George) the only white pelican we've had. We'd put Grunt on the side yard to play in a pool and he would knock on the door when he was ready to come back in.

**Gerald** the wood duck who would sit at the incubator glass and watch us (wood ducks are extremely shy).

**Mr. Jay**, a blue jay who took forever to leave the release cage and came back occasionally to visit.

**Pippin and Edison** two baby otters. . . . need we say more!?

**Mini**, a fawn who beat the odds more than once.

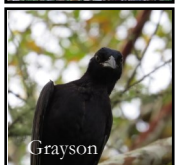
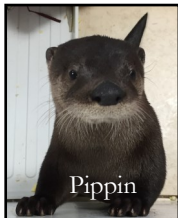
Two crazy little baby Sherman's Fox Squirrels;

**Mojo**, our first education Red-tailed hawk and the most laid-back bird of prey we have ever known;

**Marty**, a Broad-winged hawk;

**Grayson**, the grackle;

**Gizmo**, a little Chuck-will's-widow;



**Mikey**, one of the nicest opossums ever known. There wasn't a person who met Mikey that didn't fall under his spell.

**Brandon**, the education crow who still entertains us all.

**June**, a precious fawn;

**Pudge**, a little squirrel;

**Libby**, a piebald fawn;

Barred owls **Woody and Nyx** and screech owls **Floyd and Goober** who tirelessly helped with education programs.

**Benny**, a baby beaver who looked like a stuffed animal.

**Perky**, the lucky duck who gained worldwide media attention.

And **Bama**, Noni's first baby raccoon, whose favorite entertainment was getting inside of a paper grocery bag.

How can you not love them all?



*It's Been A Great 30 Years! ..cont'd from page 1*

the desperate need in the workforce around us in our day-to-day lives. Businesses offering salaries and benefits are having a difficult time finding employees; finding volunteers has proven even more challenging. Finding people with the same passion who understand this isn't glamorous work, that it's very hard work, it's sometimes heartbreaking, and that it requires follow through on commitments has been a major challenge. There have been days where we've had 4 people who signed up to volunteer and not one single person shows up. We've always said that we can't do this alone-we can't, not on an ongoing daily basis. Even on those days when no one shows up to help, the animals still have to be fed, the cages still have to be cleaned, the bandages still have to be changed, the laundry still has to be done and that poor animal sitting by the road that we just got a call for. . . . now what? The emotional toll is hard.

With all of that being said, we have made the extremely difficult decision not to renew our wildlife rehabilitation permits at the end of 2021. While we will no longer be able to accept wildlife for rehabilitation, personally we plan to help Florida Wild Mammal Association and St. Francis Wildlife Association as volunteers.

We will retain our education permits and education animals and plan on doing more presentations about our wildlife. We're even hoping to have some personal and family time to do some fun projects, yard work, travel and maybe even sit down to put a jigsaw puzzle together! We're excited about what this new chapter holds for us.

We've met so many incredible people through the years who care about wildlife and hope we will all stay in touch and keep working together to save these wonderful animals. For us, it will just be in a different way. Because we will still have our education animals, we will still have expenses and need volunteers to help with their care. It will just be more manageable for those days when we don't have help.

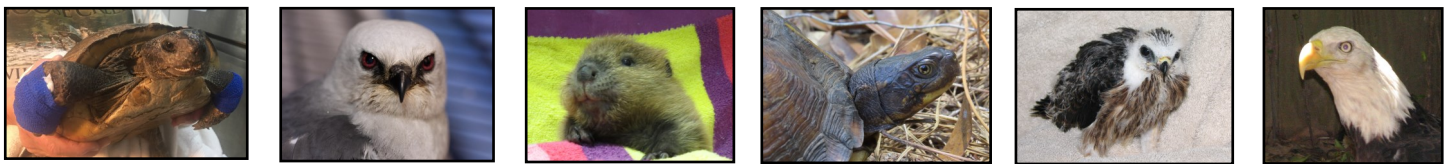
It's been a great 30 years! We couldn't have done this without each of our dedicated volunteers, supporters and donors through the years. Together, we have saved literally thousands and thousands of lives. Please don't stop! Florida Wild Mammal Association and St. Francis Wildlife Association take care of our wildlife and they need help as well to continue.

*With much love and gratitude (and a whole bunch of tears). Noni and Susan*





From every one of us,  
from the bottom of our  
hearts, thank you for your  
help and support over the  
last 30 years!





## Goose Creek Wildlife Sanctuary, Inc.

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Like us on Facebook to keep up to date with stories and events!

Goose Creek Wildlife Sanctuary, Inc., 3400 Williams Road, Tallahassee, FL 32311 registers annually with the State of Florida. (Registration number FL CH 5849.) A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free within the State (800) 435-7352. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval or recommendation by the State.

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### For Help With Wildlife:

**Florida Wild Mammal Association** is located at 198 Edgar Poole Road in Crawfordville, FL 32327 and are open to drop offs of sick, injured and orphaned wildlife. Their phone number is 850-363-2351. They were founded in 1994 and have two phenomenal wildlife rehabilitators, Chris Beatty and her daughter Jessica Beatty. They are passionate about saving wildlife and they are extremely good at what they do. Our area is very fortunate to have this team and facility.

**St. Francis Wildlife Association** is located at 5580 Salem Road, Quincy, FL 32352 and are open to drop offs between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm. Please call them ahead of time to let them know you are on your way. Their phone number is 850-627-4151.

**Allied Emergency Veterinary Hospital** is located at 2324 Centerville Road, Tallahassee, FL. They are a 24 hour emergency hospital that will accept wildlife for St Francis 24/7. Their phone number is 850-222-0123.

**Northwood Animal Hospital** is located at 1881 N Martin Luther King Blvd, Tallahassee, FL. They are a 24 hour emergency hospital that will accept wildlife for St Francis 24/7. Their phone number is 850-385-8181.

We realize we would never have made it without the unflinching devotion to our mission (which luckily was his too) and endless help of Dr. David Hale. He and his staff at Cross Creek Animal Clinic worked tirelessly and with great compassion in treating our wildlife. We wish we had kept a record of the many exams and surgeries he performed, mostly after hours. Thank you for your care and treatment of wildlife, as well as your valued friendship.

Special thanks to FWC officers Bryant Hughes and Tanner Robson for not only truly looking out for our wildlife but also for their friendly and cheerful attitudes.

In loving memory of Jean Harper who taught us so much and was always supportive of us. She raised a great many raccoons, foxes, bobcats, deer and a baby beaver. Not a day goes by that you are not thought of. You were truly a great role model, but most especially a dear friend!

And last, but certainly not least, THANK YOU to our friends and family!! Thank you for your emotional support and your understanding all of these years when we missed an event or had to leave in the middle of dinner to go to the aid of an animal. For the shoulder to cry on when it wasn't the outcome we hoped for and for listening to us go on and on about the successes, you truly don't know how much your support has meant over the years.

But hey, you've got some great stories and memories because of this crazy life!



Goose Creek Wildlife Sanctuary, Inc. will still be around taking care of our education animals and providing education programs. We will still have costs associated with our education team. It will include expenses such as their food, caging, enrichment and medical. If you would like to help with their care, we would greatly appreciate it. Donations can be made online via our website or Facebook page or mailed to us at our mailing address:



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