



Goose Creek Wildlife Sanctuary, Inc.

Giving native wildlife a second chance ...



Holiday 2017 Newsletter

Wood Ducks at Goose Creek

This edition is dedicated in loving memory of one of the greatest champions of saving animals in need- Jean Lipscomb Harper.

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Did You Know:

- The oldest recorded wood duck was a male and at least 22 years, 6 months old. He had been banded in Oregon and was found in California.
- Wood ducks are strong fliers and can reach speeds of 30 mph.
- Sarcoptic mange is caused by mites which burrow into the skin.
- Sarcoptic mange often leads to other infections through sores caused by the intense scratching associated with the mites.
- Sarcoptic mange is highly contagious but easily treatable.
- A raccoon can run up to speeds of 15 mph.

Every year seems to have one animal that stands out, whether it's because it's an animal we don't get very often or because of his/her seemingly impossible story of survival. This year it wasn't just one animal, but a particular species—wood ducks.

We received single ducklings, pairs of ducklings and larger broods trapped in swimming pools, inside fences, etc. As fragile as these babies are, it is almost mind-blowing that any survive in the wild.



Wood duck babies are kept indoors at GCWS when they're very young and small.



Graduating to the great outdoors.

When we receive wood ducklings, we do our best to match them with others the same size, whether at GCWS or with other licensed rehabilitators because like most babies, they do best when they are not alone. Depending on their size, they are kept inside for the first few weeks so we can closely watch to make sure every duckling is eating as well as monitoring the water and air temperatures. Once they are past the most critical stage, they are moved outside into a secure cage filled with a lot of hiding areas, branches, greenery and even a swimming pool. They will spend the next several weeks in their outdoor enclosure before being transported to a safe place for release.

During their time with us they will eat thousands of meal worms, thousands of crickets and bags of specialty waterfowl food. Their growth rate is incredibly fast and proper nutrition is paramount to healthy growth and feather development. During dry spells, we occasionally run sprinklers in their cage to mimic rain and ensure each

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An Easy Fix



Rescue Day

In July, Goose Creek received a call about a raccoon who appeared to be in serious physical distress. We set a trap and caught him on the first try. He was examined and found to be severely malnourished and suffering from sarcoptic mange so bad his eyes were almost crusted closed. He was treated for sarcoptic mange and fed a nutritious diet and his recovery began immediately. After less than 3 months, he was completely healthy and ready to be returned to the wild. Because someone took the time to call for help when they saw him, we were able to save him.

Once recovered, he was introduced to two other raccoons who were taken in individually during the spring. All three were given a soft release back into their intended world.



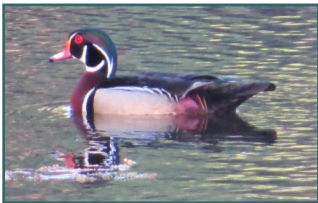
Release Day

Wood Ducks at Goose Creek (continued from page 1)

one of them is properly waterproofed. This year, we were fortunate to have Karen Willes accompany us on several wood duck releases and capture some of these wonderful moments. The picture shown here was the moment this group of 14 left their travel crate and hit the open pond water for the first time.

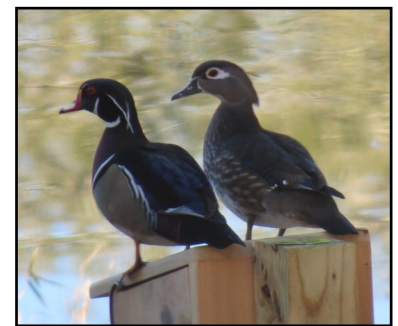


Wood Ducks



No one can deny the beauty of the wood ducks nor the strength (or fragility) of their ducklings.

If you're fortunate enough to have seen wood ducks in person, you know exactly how colorful and perfect the markings are on the adult males during mating season. The males (drakes) have red eyes and a crested head that is iridescent green, blue and purple with a white stripe from the base of their bill to the tip of the crest. Their bill is brightly patterned black, white and red. Their throat is white and the chest is a burgundy/chestnut color with white flecks that gradually morph into a white belly. His sides are buff while his wings are large-



ly metallic blue, green and black from above. The feathers on the side of the rump are elongated and reddish-violet with orange stripes. His legs are orange-yellow with dusky webbing.

And while the females (hens) aren't as colorful, they are still beautiful with a distinct teardrop white patch around their eyes and hints of iridescent feathers along their back. The females have dark brown eyes, a dark grey beak and yellowish-grey legs and feet with dark webbing.

In late summer, the male wood duck briefly molts and more closely resembles the duller coloration of the female, but retains the red eye and colorful beak.

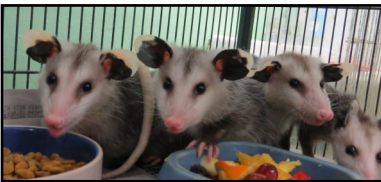
Unlike most other waterfowl, wood ducks have strong claws and perch in trees. They are also the only North American duck that regularly produces two broods in one year. The female lays 6-16 eggs in a tree cavity or man made box and incubates the eggs for 27-35 days. She lays one egg each day until she is done. She will bring no additional material into the nest, however, she will pluck downy feathers from her breast to line the nest.

The wood duck babies hatch well developed, covered with downy feathers and leave the nest the following day. The ducklings can instinctively swim and find their own food but they stay with their mother for approximately 7 weeks. The first weeks the ducklings need protein and feed on crustaceans, small fish, insects and larvae. As they grow, they'll eat aquatic plants, nuts, seeds and fruit.

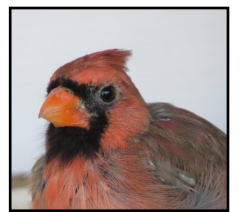
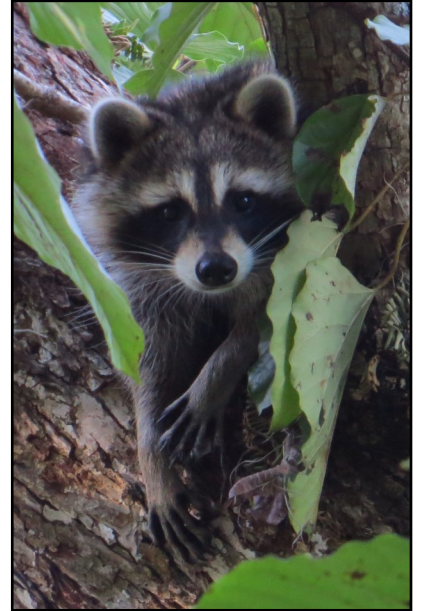
Both the male and female wood ducks are able to breed the first year after their hatching.

Please don't feed us bread!

- ◆ Bread offers very little nutritional value to ducks (or other birds) vital to growth and development.
- ◆ Bread is the equivalent to junk food and can cause obesity in waterfowl and other birds as well as "Angel wing".
- ◆ Rotting bread pollutes water and causes nasty surface algae and creates noxious odors.
- ◆ Feeding bread can increase the spread of diseases in two ways:
 - ◆ Carbohydrate-rich diets lead to greater defecation and bird feces easily harbors bacteria responsible for numerous diseases including avian botulism.
 - ◆ Moldy bread left behind can cause aspergillosis, a fatal infection that can decimate entire duck and waterfowl flocks.
- ◆ Leftover bread will also attract unwelcome pests such as rats, mice and insects that can also harbor additional diseases.



From every one of us,
thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your support!



Goose Creek Wildlife Sanctuary, Inc.

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

Animal Hotline: 850-545-3491

Business (mailing only) Address:
3400 Williams Rd.
Tallahassee, FL 32311

Business Phone: 850-508-7587
E-mail: info@goosecreekwildlifesanctuary.org
www.goosecreekwildlifesanctuary.org



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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In Loving Memory of Mrs. Jean Lipscomb Harper



It was with much sadness this year that we suffered the loss of longtime volunteer, board member and very dear friend, Jean Harper. Jean was one of those special people who dedicated her life to animals. Whether for her beloved cats or wildlife, Jean did everything within her power to make sure animals' lives were better. Words cannot express our enormous sense of loss.

At 91 and just days before her death, Jean finished raising her last two raccoons, Charlie and Pete (her third litter of the summer). Charlie and Pete are still with GCWS and will be released in the near future. We know without a doubt that Jean will be at that release.

Jean passed away on September 2, 2017.



We Need Your Help!!!

We desperately need your help in order to continue helping our injured, sick, orphaned and displaced wildlife. These animals don't have owners who can help with their expenses. They won't have adoption fees that help offset their medical and food costs. Their specialized formulas aren't cheap. The required medicines are sometimes expensive. The unique caging requires constant upkeep and repairs. The cleaning supplies are utilized daily. The enrichment is vital to preparing the animals ready for release into the wild. The joys are great but the heartbreaks are devastating. Yet every day our volunteers are ready to face another day of obstacles, uncertainty, endurance and love in the hopes of saving one more life. Please help us continue helping them. Participate in one of our fundraisers. Purchase much needed items from our wish list. Adopt an animal in someone's honor. Host a benefit fundraiser (wild animal baby shower, bake sale fundraiser, dinner party with friends, silent auction or raffle items, food drive for the animals, etc. just to name a few). Have fun and make a difference at the same time! Please make a donation today. The wildlife need your help!



Attention: We have an anonymous donor pledging to match up to \$5,000 before year end!! Donate today and help us make the most of this generous offer!!

Yes, I care! I want to help give these animals a second chance at life!

Send your donation to our mailing address:

**Goose Creek Wildlife Sanctuary
3400 Williams Road
Tallahassee, FL 32311**

Or visit our website at www.goosecreekwildlifesanctuary.org to donate via PayPal.