



Goose Creek Wildlife Sanctuary, Inc.

Giving native wildlife a second chance ...

Holiday 2013 Newsletter



Always Learning... Always Improving!

Releases are, without a doubt, some of our best moments. However, they aren't without challenges. Take squirrels, for instance...in the past when they were ready for release, their cages were set up at the release site and after a few days the doors were opened. At dusk, a volunteer would shut the door to protect the ones who came back to sleep. (This prevented predators from trapping them in their cage while they slept.) The next morning the cages doors were opened again. It was a very time consuming process and still had some risks for the squirrels. Their cage was open throughout the day and daytime predators could enter. If a squirrel returned after the cage was closed for the evening, he would have to find some other cover for the night. Volunteers would spend over an hour at dusk each evening at each release site waiting for squirrels to return while standing guard against predators. We were all working as hard as we could to provide the best opportunities for survival for the wildlife we had hand raised.



Two released squirrels came back for their blanket!

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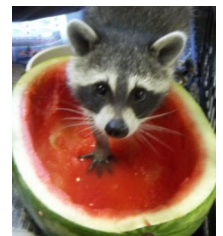
Did You Know:

- Deer are native to all continents except Australia and Antarctica.
- A group of geese is called a gaggle.
- The bobcat mating season is late winter, but year round is possible.

This year GCWS received a private grant for two release cages—one for small mammals and one for songbirds. We cannot say enough about the difference these two cages have made!! Pictured above is the new small mammal cage and the nest boxes we use inside the cage. For squirrels, when they are ready to release, we are able to place the cage they have been in inside the large release cage and simply open their cage doors. They can begin to explore the release cage at their own pace and as they feel comfortable. This new release cage allows them ample room to jump and climb the variety of tree limbs placed inside. Once the squirrels have become acclimated to the area and are ready to go, a detachable door (the size of a doorknob) is removed near the top of the release cage. The squirrels can come and go at their leisure and predators can't get in. (The release door is up high and *continued on page 2*)

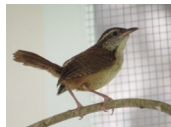
Enrichment For Wildlife

One of the challenges with wildlife is making sure that they have plenty of enrichment. We add natural items such as branches, rocks, flowers, sticks, or pinecones to songbird and squirrel cages. For insect eating birds like flycatchers, cut up fruit hanging in their cages attracts fruit flies which teaches them to hunt while providing stimulation. Because of their inquisitive nature, raccoons are always a challenge. Baby toys, balls, pinecones and baby pools are always hits. We even hide treats in the middle of a pile of pine straw for raccoons to forage through. Favorite food treats include acorn squash, watermelon and pumpkins. Some are left intact and some have a couple of holes cut in them so the raccoons can scoop out the insides and the seeds to eat.





GCWS received a private grant for a songbird release cage!



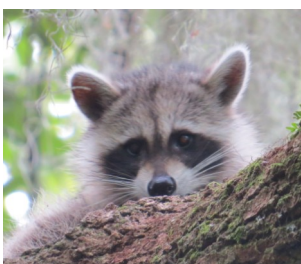
Always Learning...Always Improving (continued from page 1)

small enough their typical predators won't fit.) No more long evenings for the volunteers waiting for squirrels to return; no more shutting out any late returning squirrels; no more large open doors during the day. It has been a wonderful addition to the wildlife rehabilitation efforts at GCWS!!

Amazing things we've learned with the addition of these new release cages:

- About 90% of the squirrels return home the first night of their release. Many of the squirrels return for several nights and some return for weeks.
- Almost all of the squirrels return home for food and water for many days/weeks.
- Many animals released through these soft releases (songbirds, squirrels, etc.) have returned "home" when they needed help. (See "Why Soft Releases Are Best" below.)
- Acclimation to the area before release is a much smoother transition for the animal as they become familiar with the sights, sounds and layout of the area.

Why Soft Releases Are Best



We are often asked about our release process. While it varies depending on the animal and their situation, the preferred method for orphans raised at the sanctuary is a soft release. A soft release is one where food and water are provided for the animal for a time period after release while they acclimate and learn how to find their own food. In the case of songbirds and squirrels, they live in a release cage for a short time period before release to get familiar with the area.



For us, the animals have proven time and time again the importance of this type of release. Not only are they able to come and go as they feel comfortable, but they have also returned home when they've gotten into trouble and needed help. We had a squirrel who returned to his nest box inside the release cage a few weeks after being released after an apparent fall and injury. We were able to catch him and nurse him back to health once again. In the case of songbirds, a blue jay that had been released a few weeks prior, returned to the release aviary and waited in the doorway for someone to open it and let him fly in after being pecked bald by other birds. He remained in the aviary until his feathers grew back and he was ready to tackle the world again. And these are just two of many examples of released animals returning for help. It gives us all a great feeling that these animals seem to realize there's a safe place for them to return to when they need help.

As for the raccoons, opossums, etc., we release them in areas where food and water are provided immediately after their release. When it comes to raccoons, we have witnessed them staying in the same area for days and even weeks. While food is initially provided, it is slowly tapered off as they learn to forage and find their own food.

Rescuing one animal may not change the world, but for that animal, their world is changed forever.—Unknown

In the case where an injured adult animal comes into GCWS, our preference is to return that animal to its home if it's a safe place. It may have other family there, but at a minimum, it is familiar with the area and isn't placed in an unknown location where it may not be accepted due to competition. If you ever find yourself dropping off an animal, please be sure to let us (or the vet office, etc.) know where the animal was found. It's always best to return them to their home whenever possible.

How You Can Help GCWS year round

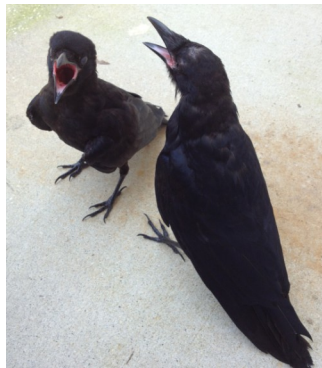
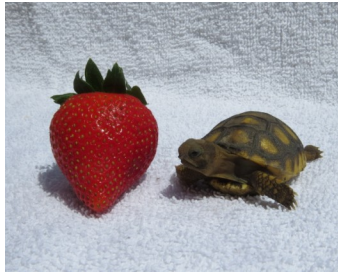
- You can help support and raise money for GCWS simply by searching the internet at www.goodsearch.com (powered by Yahoo), shopping online at www.goodshop.com or dining at a restaurant in the www.gooddining.com network!
- You can help GCWS and the environment by recycling your ink & toner cartridges and old cell phones. Contact GCWS to start a collection site or to drop off your items.
- Want to directly select and purchase items needed by GCWS? Go to www.amazon.com and visit our wish list. It's updated as our needs change!! *Make sure you go to Amazon's "Wish List" area and search for Goose Creek Wildlife Sanctuary in the "Wish List" section to pull up our list.) It comes to us anonymously, so please be sure to let us know who it's from!!



A special thanks to Shelby Bush for running the Cheeps Boutique fundraiser again this year! The event netted over \$1,600 for wildlife!! Plans are already underway for next year's event!! Cheeps Boutique even has it's own Facebook page to keep everyone informed of sales throughout the year! Make sure to like us on Facebook so you know what's going on between newsletters!!



Another successful year,
thanks to you!
Enjoy a few of the Faces of
2013 that your contributions
helped save.



Goose Creek Wildlife Sanctuary, Inc.

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

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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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Many thanks to our sponsors and participants in the 2013 Wild Thing Tennis Tournament!! This event raised over \$3,500!!

2013 WILD THING TENNIS TOURNAMENT

We'd Like to Thank Our Sponsors

- Tallahassee State Bank
- DONALD SWENHOLT ASSOCIATES INC.
- HARRY L. HARPER LAW OFFICES PANAMA CITY FLORIDA
- GAIL HARPER
- TINA HARPER
- MARGE VON GOEBEN

Announcements

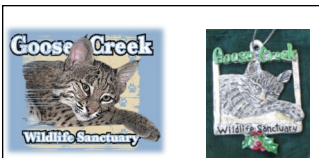
Holiday Gift Sale—Our t-shirts are 100% cotton and feature one of our rescued animals. The pewter ornaments were designed and donated by Fool Moon Treasures. T-shirts are on sale now at Wild Birds Unlimited (save S&H) located at 1505 Governor's Square Blvd., or use the order form below. Your purchase helps us support the animals throughout the year. Purchase a combination t-shirt & ornament set

for \$25.

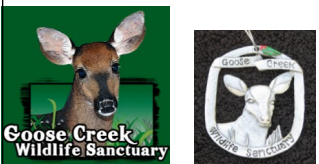
Sizes are limited, so call ahead to confirm & reserve your size! (Sizes range from child M to adult XXXL.)

Shipping & Handling Chart

Total	Add:	Total	Add:
0-\$10	\$3	\$51-\$70	\$7
\$11-\$30	\$5	over \$70	10% of order
\$31-\$50	\$6		



Bobcat T-shirt (blue) \$18
Pewter Bobcat Ornament \$8



Fawn T-shirt (green) \$18
Pewter Fawn Ornament \$8



Fox T-shirt (black) \$18
Pewter Fox Ornament \$8

Item Name	Size	Quantity	Total
Shipping & Handling Charges			
Donation			
Total			

Fax credit card (MC, VISA or AMEX) orders to 850-893-8244 or mail payments to our mailing address below:

CC Number: _____

CC Exp Date: _____

Name (ship to): _____

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City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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If this is a gift, check here: _____ We will include a gift card.

Goose Creek Wildlife Sanctuary
3400 Williams Rd.
Tallahassee, FL 32311

Avoid S&H charges by opting to pick up your purchase! Be sure to leave a phone number where we can reach you when your order is ready.