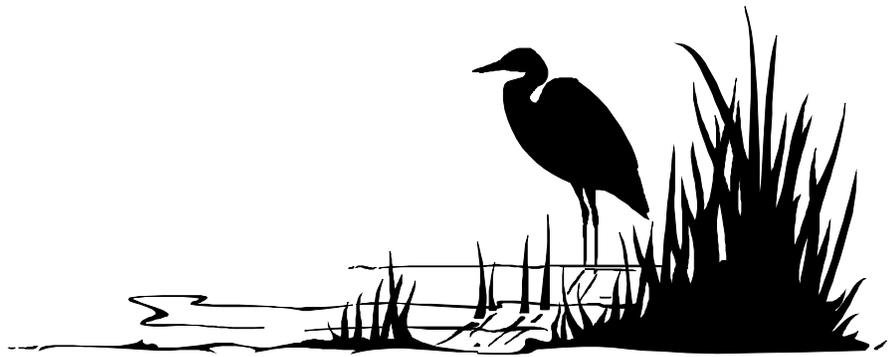


Wildlife Tales

Dec 2014 VOL. XX No 3
Written by: Carol Kerr Hardee



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Center News

Here's Wishing All of Our Friends Happy Holidays

I can't believe that yet another year has almost come to a close. The weeks have flashed by seemingly at light speed as we have worked to complete all of our many tasks. I often say, "If only there were 48 hours in a day, perhaps I could get more of it done." We have welcomed our first part-time employee this year, Lindy Williams, who has helped us with our impossible work load. Our volunteers who raise wildlife babies allow our organization to rescue and save so many more lives than what we could do alone. We thank these selfless individuals who really sacrifice much in their personal lives in order to accomplish this noble feat: Leslie & Bill Johnson, Lindy and Lindsay Williams, Esther and Wallace Plummer, Terri White, Thressa Jones, Jennifer Rosenfeldt, Jennifer Odom, & Stacy Russo. With help from our volunteer transporters and veterinarians we continue to rescue many more lives, and, of course our contributing members enable us to successfully rehab with the necessary tools, medicines, and supplies. We thank all of you for your kindness. In the photo below is one of our baby gray squirrels in care.



A Publication of the **Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Central Florida**
Please visit us at our web site: www.wildlifecenterflorida.org

Our Calendar for the Year

The year usually begins on a quiet note through January and February with fewer phone calls and animal rescues. It is a brief time to sort through supplies in the storage room, organize, and label items. We also use the winter months to schedule any necessary repairs to buildings, cages, and equipment. By March, baby otters and tiny opossums begin to arrive. April brings orphaned and injured fawns. During April, too, I am on a strict schedule in order to tubally feed the neonate opossums coming in for care. Orphaned baby raccoons also arrive at an ever increasing pace until, by May, we begin to really fill all available spaces allotted to them. The months of May and June also bring baby birds on a daily basis and phone calls day and night. Striving to feed the baby birds every half hour is an unrelenting labor. By July, the first round of opossums are ready for release, but this is when the second wave begins to arrive, along with more baby raccoons and birds. By now, we and our volunteers are exhausted but must continue as baby squirrel season begins in early August with more phone calls and squirrels arriving on a continuous basis day and night. Of course, the early arrivals are the neonates weighing 10-12 grams each and needing around the clock care. September is a repeat of August except we also receive tiny flying squirrels as well as the grays. And did I mention that fawns also come in during August and September? At least by mid October, we get a weather break as the high temperature is often down to 80-85 degrees F; and the oppressive humidity lessens. As I write this newsletter, we are still struggling to complete the four bottle feedings per day of 23 baby squirrels (including 15 flying squirrels), 4 baby raccoons, and a baby opossum, and in outside cages are more than 100 gray squirrels and half a dozen raccoons. With November, things will become a bit easier-fewer phone calls and animals being admitted each day and fewer babies being hand fed four times per day, but we are still quite busy each day with little “down time” in our schedule. December’s work load will also continue to lessen as far as animal care; however, we have the holiday push with an annual volunteer party to prepare, holiday dinners and get togethers, food and gift shopping to complete. Every day of the year, there are some bottle babies requiring four feedings per day; so we never get up in the morning and say, “What do we do today?” All that I can say is that the animals are well worth the effort.

Leslie Johnson

In August, I received a call from long-time volunteer, Leslie Johnson, as she was driven home after spending 5 hours in the ER. At her home, she had fallen and tore her shoulder rotator cuff. I was all too familiar with that injury as Ron Hardee had undergone surgery for that some years ago. Leslie also found after an MRI that she had five older injuries from previous years as well. So after losing volunteer Terri White for several months due to bacterial meningitis, we were now going to have another one of our intrepid wildlife team out of action for awhile. Even though Leslie could not use her arm, which was in a sling, she continued to hand feed many squirrels in her care- I don’t know how she did it. Squirrel mom, Donna Holly was a big help as she was willing to care for many of the babies to help us out.

By early September, volunteer, Terri White was able to return to her many duties-rescuing and raising baby raccoons and squirrels for the center. We really missed her a lot. In a very brief time, she soon had acquired one dozen baby squirrels and four raccoons, all needing “bottle” feeding four times per day.

In mid October, yet another volunteer, Esther Plummer, who rescues and raises many animals for the center, admitted her 90-year-old mother, Frankie, to the hospital. Sadly, her mom died on October 24. Our thoughts are with the family in this difficult time.

Arrivals and Releases

Fawns

On September 6, we received a call about a fawn that was in trouble within 10 miles of our center. Although we have tried to defer most deer calls, in this case, there was no other rehab facility to assist the baby. At the time, we thought that we would stabilize him for a few days and then transfer him to another facility for extended care, but we actually had him here for over a month. He had numerous, life threatening digestive issues which we were determined to cure completely before we sent him elsewhere. After several weeks of treatment, he finally was totally well and healthy. Wyn Burns, a rehabilitator in Fort Pierce, FL, had a fawn similiar in size and was happy to add ours in order to raise them together. We always want fawns to be raised with others so that they can learn and develop appropriately. Wyn has a wonderful volunteer, Tony Barr, in her area who also volunteers for the local humane society. On October 10, Tony drove all the way from Fort Pierce to us in Christmas, and then, transported the fawn to Wyn Burns' facility in Fort Pierce. The photo, below left, is of Lindy Williams providing a bottle to the fawn, and the photo, below right, is of Ron Hardee doing the same.



When the fawn was first admitted for care, he was housed in a barn because he was very young and sickly. We let him have access to the outdoor area once he became stronger. Although the fawn completed a course of medications, he still had digestive problems for another week after which, he got much better. We are so pleased that we were able to help him to recover.

Arrivals and Releases



The photo on the left was taken after two weeks of care, but the fawn still had problems with his G.I. tract.

After a month of care, (right) the fawn was normal and healthy. He enjoyed running in the large deer pen and munching on fresh maple leaves, but was still drinking his bottle four times per day.



Photo, left, is the fawn a day before his transfer. Isn't he gorgeous? We miss him but are very pleased to have transferred him to a facility where he will grow up with another fawn his age which is very important.

Arrivals and Releases

Opossums

All of the “spring” babies have been released as well as the second groups which arrived in late June and early July. This is always expected, and all of the summer groups have also been released except for my surprise baby opossum. Orphaned by a car hit on September 6, he weighed only 16 grams when admitted for care. He was tube fed for the next 6 weeks and housed in a small container on a heating pad. For the next stage of his life, he was moved to a 10 gallon aquarium, and then he could lap his formula from a shallow container four times per day. Gradually, grapes cut in half were offered, and later carnivore diet was added to the menu. As this newsletter is being written, he weighs a whopping 82 grams. We rarely admit opossums of this size so late in the year. Many years ago, I received a young baby opossum in mid November, and because we had her in care over the holidays, I named her “Noel”.



(Left) The little opossum was only 16 grams on September 6 and was tubally fed.

Below, right: after a few weeks in care, he was 50 grams in weight and beginning to lap his formula from a lid.

Below, left: At 80 grams, his longer fur is growing, and he's the size of a small hamster. At this age, he is housed in a 10 gallon aquarium with a heating pad under one end where his bed is.



Arrivals and Releases



This neonate gray squirrel weighed a mere 10 grams when she arrived at the center. She was fed 6 times per day including a 3 am feeding for the first two weeks.



Three and one half weeks later, she had grown fur, but her eyes had not yet opened.

Eastern Gray Squirrels

As in all of the past years, the infant squirrels began to arrive for care early in August, and by the end of that month, all of us who raise baby squirrels were swamped with them. By mid September, all 15 of my outdoor squirrel cages were full with weaned youngsters, who still need food, water, and clean-up daily. Meanwhile, we had been receiving “bottle” babies throughout this time. During all of September and October, our squirrel feedings were taking almost two hours per feeding and four to six feedings per day. There has been very little free time for anything else. The smallest gray squirrel that I received and raised this fall was a 10 gram female (pictured above). When she was about three weeks old, another little male her size came in for care, and they now have each other for company.

Another special case was a little 20 gram male who came in one day and developed an upper respiratory infection within two days. We keep all squirrels separate for the first 5 days, and, therefore, the other squirrels in care did not come down with the disease. Due to his tender age and small size, I was unsure as to whether or not I would be able to save him. Each feeding took much longer than the normal time because I had to suction his nose prior to, during, and after feeding. He was a little fighter, and after a week passed, he began to improve daily. I just called him my “special boy”. Currently, he is in an outdoor squirrel cage with two other youngsters his age, all weaned from their formula and devouring acorns, pecans, sunflower seeds, peanuts, and loads of vegetables. We received several large pumpkins donated by Publix, and I really enjoyed dividing them up so that all of the squirrels in care received large chunks. The squirrels always devour the seeds first-to them, it’s the best part. They also love tomatoes, corn, squash, cucumbers, apples, oranges, avacados, and more. When we have a spare moment, we gather acorns for them, which they eat every day.

Arrivals and Releases



At four weeks of age, the baby gray had just opened her eyes to see the world and all of its wonders. I think that this stage of squirrel life is the cutest. Soon after the eyes open, they begin to play and wrestle with their litter mates. She was placed with a male baby her same size for companionship.

Here at our center, is one of the squirrels housed in an outdoor enclosure getting his share of some fresh pumpkin-eating the delectable seeds first.



This group of gray squirrels was loaded into a pet carrier for their release after spending one month in an outdoor enclosure.

Arrivals and Releases

Southern Flying Squirrels

On September 22, as expected, we received the first flying squirrel babies of the season. They were found on a concrete sidewalk, and upon examination, two had sustained head trauma and the third had chest and abdominal bruising. To make matters more difficult, they only weighed 4 grams each, and were one week old. In the 1990's I had saved and raised two flyer babies that were 1 1/2 grams each; so I knew that I was capable of the task. The questionable factor was the injuries-were they too severe for these tiny munchkins to overcome? I was determined to do everything that I could. Not only did I feed the girls 6 times in a 24 hour period, but in between feedings, at two hour intervals whenever possible, I gave extra feedings. I would check their abdomens to see if there was any milk in their stomachs after two hours, and there never was. For most 24 hour periods, they received nine feedings. Although very time consuming, I feel that all of the effort was worthwhile, as there are now three, beautiful, furred youngsters growing up very well under my watchful eye.

In the following days after the arrival of the first three, came a "larger" boy of 15 grams, a group of three, weighing 6 grams, then a group of four weighing 10 grams, then two other groups of two each. Finally, we were feeding 15 baby flyers four times per day, as the tiny ones had grown during this time and no longer required 9 feedings per day. One of the groups of two babies were mauled by a feral cat, and I did not have great hopes for their survival due to their tiny size of only 10 grams. They both had sustained puncture wounds; so I gave them Clavamox antibiotic for a week as well as probiotics. They both survived and are thriving.



Photo left: The three neonate flyers that came in weighing only 4 grams were quite the challenge. I admit that I was apprehensive to receive such tiny babies as every aspect of the difficulty of caring for them is magnified. They responded very well to the formula that I used, having good weight gain and no digestive issues. After I had them in care for three weeks, they developed diarrhea, but I gave them Flagyl & Albon right away for one week, and they were totally cured.



Photo left: It was difficult to hold these tiny infants to feed them. I used a 1/2 cc o-ring syringe with a Catac kitten nipple cut in two. This baby was one of the three weighing only 4 grams. She had received a head injury from the fall onto concrete, but there were no lasting ill effects from the injuries to any of the three.

Arrivals and Releases

Photo right: The three babies were developing coloration and just a little fuzz on their heads and backs a week later.



Photo left: Still growing in size and more fur coming in, the babies were doing nicely after three weeks of care.

Photo right: At the end of October, the same group of three now weighed 20 grams each, eyes were open, and they were well furred. At this age, I feed them four times per day, and they begin to munch on shelled pecans.



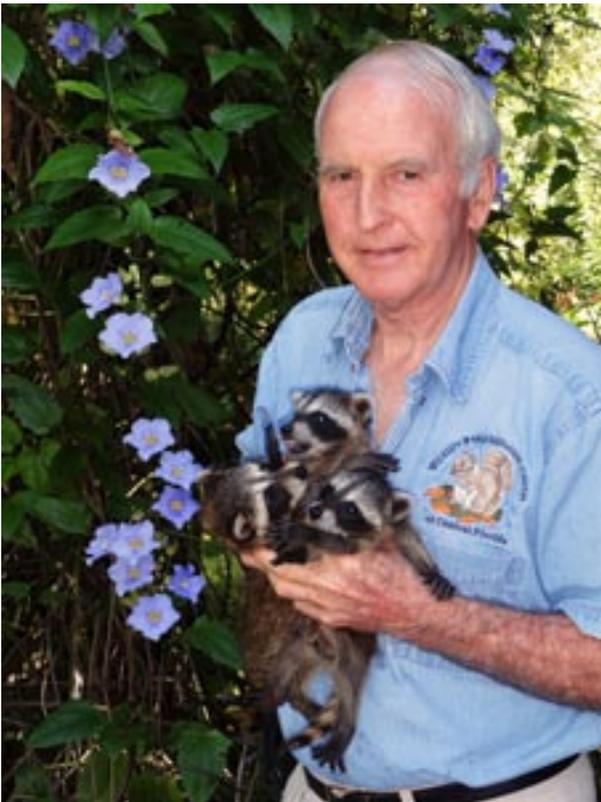
Arrivals and Releases

Raccoons

Over the summer, I successfully treated three raccoons that had contracted canine parvo. It was a substantial amount of work; however, saving their lives made the effort quite worthwhile. The treatment which seemed to aid them the most was adding crushed and dissolved lactaid tablets to their formula along with probiotics for every feeding. Using this method, I only had to administer subcutaneous fluids for the first 24 hours, and afterwards they received the treated formula. They did not dehydrate, gained weight, and their bowel movements were much improved. The two female raccoons have been released, but the male is still in care having been much younger when he contracted the disease. He is in an outdoor enclosure with three others his size, and all of them are growing up very well.

On October 3, three male, baby raccoons came in for care, dehydrated and thin. Soon after receiving proper nourishment, they were back to normal and demanding their bottles of formula. We are feeding them four times per day and for their protection, have them housed away from contact with other raccoons. They are not old enough yet to receive their vaccinations.

From our property, Ron and I brought in a small female raccoon that had sustained injuries to her face and forehead. By the swelling that we observed, we knew that she had developed an infection, and we made the decision to catch her so that we could treat her wounds. I gave her Albon, Flagyl, & Clavamox orally twice per day and Baytril injections once per day. Within one week, the swelling of her face had subsided nicely. Although she had not been hand fed by us with formula, I have found her to be fairly easy to handle for meds and cage cleaning.



These photos are of the three latest babies to arrive for care. Ron posed with them outside for the photo in front of a flowering sky vine, and the other photo is of the three in their first pet carrier. They soon needed a larger one with a sleeping hammock.



Arrivals and Releases



This young raccoon was one of three saved from dreaded canine parvo over the summer. He is progressing very well and will be grown up enough for release over the next months to come. Currently, he is housed in an outdoor enclosure with two other raccoons.

In the photo, below, left, our “yard coon” was admitted with a swollen face and oozing wounds. In the photo on the right, she is not very pretty yet; but her wounds are healing over and the swelling has diminished. At 850 grams in weight, she was large enough to receive her inoculations to prevent canine distemper, parvo, rabies, and panleukopenia. We are so grateful that we discovered her when we did and have been able to aid in her recovery.



Wildlife Center Volunteers



(Left) In September, Ron Hardee and Jennifer Rosenfeldt stopped for a photo when Jennifer arrived to take some squirrels to raise for me. We were hand feeding more than 30, and I called her for help.

Jennifer is the owner of Dramatic Paws, a mobile pet grooming service in Edgewater, Florida, about a 45 minute drive from us.

Although very busy, Jennifer is always willing to help us raise raccoons or squirrels when needed.

(Right) Our son, Wayne Hardee, comes out to help with our center chores on a regular basis. There is more work here than Ron, mom, and I can complete.



Wallace and Esther Plummer posed for a photo (left) when they arrived with several raccoons that were ready for an outside enclosure. They both have their rabies vaccinations and raise the raccoons for us until they are older and weaned from bottles.

Wildlife Center Volunteers

Melanie Leon and her mom, Dr. Jane Fishman Leon visited us at the center recently and enjoyed feeding the baby raccoons, holding baby gray and flying squirrels, and having a snack at the end of the day (after all of the animals were fed first, of course). This time of the year, we are slammed with work, and it was so nice to have a break from the daily routine by visiting with our dear friends.



Here, I am with my “Special Boy” whom I saved when he developed an upper respiratory infection at only 20 grams in weight. This photo was taken about two weeks prior to his graduating to an outdoor enclosure with several other gray squirrels his size. In the “good old days”, I used to name all of the animals that I raised, but there were significantly fewer of them then. It is satisfying to successfully rehab the huge numbers that we do today, but, unfortunately, I am now unable to name them all.

In Memory of Frankie Kemp, mother of Esther Plummer, who passed away on October 24, 2014, at the age of 90. The photo below is of Alice Kerr (left) and Frankie Kemp (right) taken in November, 2013.



A donation was made to the WRC by Stephanie Barker in Memory of her beloved 13 year old pet duck, Tessa, killed by an alligator during the fall of this year.



Ron feeding a relaxed baby flyer

Wish List

Foods: Dry Pedigree, Purina, or Science Diet Puppy food, unsalted, roasted peanuts, shelled pecans, any unshelled nuts, wild bird and sunflower seeds, any brands of dry dog or cat foods.

Supplies for baby animal care: infant “receiving blankets”, fleece fabric (can be purchased at Joanne’s Fabrics), which is used to make sleeping hammocks, small size “Catac” nipples for feeding squirrels (available from Chris’ Squirrels and More on line)

Cleaning supplies: paper towels, especially Bounty and Viva brands, unscented laundry detergent and dryer softener sheets, black, heavy duty trash bags with ties, Charmin bathroom tissue, liquid dish soap, liquid hand soap, zip-lock gallon sized freezer bags with zipper closures and other sizes as well, spray cleaners such as “409” or Lysol, cleaners for floors.

Monetary Donations are always necessary to supply the vaccines, foods, formulas, and equipment required to “do the job.” We really appreciate all of our wonderful members who have supported this work-without you, we could not succeed in rehabilitating so many lives.



Donations

Ron Hardee holding Laddie and Scruffy

Carol Hardee holding Toki and Niblit

Our lives are so enriched with joy and laughter by having these special companions with us.

If you include the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Central Florida in your will, please be sure to use the legal name and address of our Center as listed in this newsletter.

The Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Central Florida is an IRS registered 501(c)3 organization. All donations are tax deductible. 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, 1-800-435-7352.. This does not imply endorsement or approval by the state of Florida. Tax exempt # 59-3130774

Thank You To The Following:

We wish to thank dear friends of the wildlife, Wayne and Linda Boyd, for their kind and generous support over many years. They have helped us to save countless lives.

We thank the dedicated staff of Disney's Animal Kingdom-Hospital Manager, Lori Grady, and all of the DAK animal keepers and interns who assist the wildlife. Our friends at DAK have done so much to support the care of many injured and orphaned wild animals.

A thanks goes to the following vets and their staff: Dr. Jane Fishman Leon; Geneva Oaks Animal Hospital-Dr. David Jourdenais, who has assisted us for more than 20 years; Countryside Vet Clinic-Dr. Amy Charlton; East Orlando Animal Hospital-Dr. Kerry Jackson, Mayfair Animal Hospital-Dr. Whaley. All of these dedicated veterinarians and their wonderful staff have assisted the Wildlife Center in many ways-thank you for caring.

Thanks, Publix on Alafaya Trail at Eastwood for the fresh produce, BJs Lake Underhill for the bakery items, and thank you to long time friends at Winn Dixie for the dog and cat foods.

Thank you to the staff of Sea World, Orlando, for their assistance in accepting injured water birds, cranes, and turtles for treatment.

We wish to thank the nice folks at Elizabeth Morse Genius Foundation for their support over the years.

Thank you Jeanie Galloway, who continues through the years to send us gift boxes of wish list items for the animals in care.

A thank you goes out to the officers of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for their caring and concern in protecting the wild animals that we love.

A Big Thank You to Osceola and Seminole County Animal Control staff who have gone above and beyond in saving the lives of so many injured and orphaned wildlife. They have worked very closely with our volunteers, and we appreciate all that they have done for us and for the animals.

We wish to thank Sue Small and all of the wonderful staff at the Florida Wildlife Hospital in Melbourne, FL, for accepting some of our special animal patients.

We are so pleased that rehabilitator, Wyn Burns of Fort Pierce, FL, could accept our fawn for care when he needed another deer as a companion.

Thanks to Dr. Jane Fishman Leon and her daughter, Melanie Leon, for their assistance and support.

Thanks to Johnny Metcalf, James Johnson, and John Rogers for assisting us with releases. You have helped us so much, and we do appreciate it.

Thank You To The Following:

Here's my mom, Alice Kerr holding Rusty last December. Alice just turned 87 this year. She cleans all of the outdoor raccoon enclosures twice every day, provides fresh water to 15 outdoor squirrel cages daily, and cleans the outdoor opossum cages as well. She is an avid reader, completing almost 100 books per year and accompanies me on many quick errands to buy foods and supplies. Needless to say, she stays very busy. Mom has always had a love for animals and nature, which seems to have been passed down to succeeding generations.



Wildlife Center Volunteers

Thank you, Marshall Wolfe, for building climbing cages and bed boxes for the squirrels, and for completing various repairs at the center.

We thank the Lyon family-Stephanie, Pete, Michael, and Mathew for helping to prepare the newsletters for mailing.

Our volunteers who field phone calls, are vaccinated for rabies prevention, care for a wide variety of species, and transport as needed: Bill and Leslie Johnson, Lindy and Lindsay Williams, Jennifer Rosenfeldt, Stacy Russo, Terri White, Jennifer Fletcher Odum, Thressa Jones, and Esther & Wallace Plummer. Thanks!

On site helpers, Alice Kerr, and Tom Capellini.

A big THANKS also to the volunteer transporters: Wayne Koladey, Frankie Thompson, Valerie Jenkins, Jack & Sandy Juba, Becky Hopson, Stephanie Lyons, Lou Ann Smith, & Melanie Freire.

We wish to thank Ron's brother, Jack Hardee, and nephew, Larry Hardee, for helping us with many hours of work on the web site. Jack recently spent many hours building a new web site for the center.

I would like to thank our son, Wayne Hardee, and grandson, Alden Hardee, for their help completing repairs, cage cleaning, and many projects here on site.

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