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Wood Turtle Rescued from WV Highway

On June 25, Anne Havlovick and her family were on an interstate heading north when they saw an injured turtle in the road. They stopped and picked it up and detoured to the nearby town of Paw Paw, WV to decide what to do next. Somehow, they were directed to WWI as the closest facility equipped to help. Although it was after hours, we accepted the admission, not knowing where the turtle had actually come from. The new patient was a wood turtle with several, very unstable fractures on its lower shell near the tail. While we see many box turtles and a few water turtles on a regular basis, wood turtles are few and far between.

Immediately after admission, we cleaned the fractures of dirt and debris and placed the turtle in a warmed aquarium. Next we visited Dr. Robert Wagner, who sutured the shell pieces to be more stable. A month-long regimen of injectable antibiotics was started to prevent infection of the bone. Once medication was complete, we stabilized the fracture site using dental epoxy.

Like most turtles, wood turtles have a home territory that they have established over their long years and know the best places to find food, to swim and to hibernate. It is critically important that we release turtles back to where they came from. We contacted Anne to see if she could give us any idea of the turtle's general location when found, not an easy task when you are driving along an interstate. To our surprise, Anne was so invested in the wood turtle's well-being that she drove up from her home in Chantilly, VA to the exact spot the turtle was found and was able to supply us with awesome directions.

After a paint job to color the pink epoxy, the turtle was ready to go. On August 9, Beth and WWI friend and former office manager, Lisa Vezzani, took a road trip to do the release. We found the spot Anne had described and pulled off the road. The surrounding area was lush forest with a shallow but clear stream at a safe distance from the highway. When we placed the wood turtle on the ground, she immediately trekked through some ferns and into the stream. Although she never looked back, we watched her swim away, filled with awe and gratitude that we had become a part of her long life's saga.



SMILING AT YA!

ABOUT WOOD TURTLES



- This family of turtles has more than 80 species world-wide, 8 in PA.
- Their hind feet are more flattened than members of some other families. There is also webbing between the toes.
- Their carapace (upper shell) is brown and keeled. Its scutes, or large scales, are a series of concentric growth ridges and grooves. The scutes appear sculptured and are rough to the touch. The plastron (lower shell) is yellow with black blotches on the outer edge. The lower shell of the male is concave, the female's is flat or slightly convex.
- Their range extends from Nova Scotia south to Virginia.
- They are found in most of PA but are missing from the western border.
- Although a terrestrial turtle, they're very much at home in the water. In fact, they hibernate in water in the winter months. In PA only the box turtle is considered more terrestrial.
- They wander from home, ranging far afield if necessary to find their favorite habitat that includes cool streams. They're fond of streams running through hardwood forests. They can be found in marshy meadows and other farmlands and are attracted to swamp-land with stands of red maple.
- Although omnivorous, they're partial to vegetation, enjoying wild fruit. They favor strawberries and low-bush blueberries. Other plants, such as dandelion and sorrel are also favored. The wood turtle eats slugs, insects and tadpoles.
- They lay one clutch of 4-12 eggs a year. The eggs are normally deposited by the female sometime in May or June. They hatch in September or October, and it is not unusual for the young wood turtles to remain in the nest through the winter.

Turkey Vulture Update

In our 2021 Winter Spring newsletter Turkey Vulture article, we reported our two vultures would be here through the winter and our challenge would be keeping them warm enough.

Our wonderful family in the community really came through for us again by purchasing the necessary items from our AmazonSmile wish list to keep the vultures safe and warm. Once the weather warmed up, we moved them from the heated mews to our flyway so they could become acclimatized to the temps outside and to build flight strength. Keep in mind that these two came to us as fledglings and never had the opportunity to fly at all! We kept our fingers crossed and after what seemed like forever, they began to show us that they were ready for release.

Facilities Director Carol Darold had the responsibility to pick the right kind of weather day, identify a good release location and recruit a team to go with her in case something went wrong and they would have to be caught and brought back to the flyway for more conditioning. Hot weather helps raptors to gain altitude and soar because the warm thermal updrafts help to lift them into the sky. Turkey vultures especially are masters at simply soaring the skies with little or no effort thanks to those thermals.

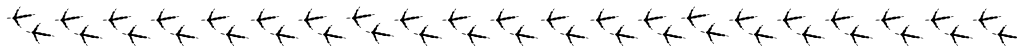
On a hot and clear day in July, Carol gave the thumbs up for release. The team assembled, the vultures were packed into two crates and "Operation Turkey Vulture" was in full swing. First out of its crate was the younger bird, the one we were most concerned about. The vulture took a good look around, got a running start and effortlessly lifted off, flew across the field and landed in a tree. The

Fully-feathered juvenile



second kid was not so lucky. It decided to run into the nearby trees and as staff gave chase, the vulture burst back out of the forest being chased by the turkeys in residence there! By the time it was caught, it was panting and exhausted. Carol decided to put the vulture back in its crate to rest and calm down. A few hours later, she returned to the release site and this time, the vulture flew into the air immediately.

We never know what is going to happen every time we take a patient out for release. This time, it was both comic and rewarding. Two turkey vultures have been spotted more than once, soaring together in the skies above the field where we released our "kids." We choose to believe they are the two we cared for so diligently for all those months and once again, feel gratified to have been a part of their story.



Raccoon Rescue

By Morgan Barron, WWI Rehabilitator

Another uncommon sign of rabies is hind limb weakness, which this raccoon had. At first, I was concerned this poor guy had rabies, but he wasn't showing any other signs other than being hit by a car and hind limb weakness. He had scrapes, bruises, and abrasions all over his hind area and stomach.

I decided to treat him with EXTREME caution since he did not seem to be overly aggressive towards me. I kept him in quarantine for the required 2 week minimum and he continued to show no signs of rabies or sickness and began improving in his hind area. For weeks I gave him physical therapy to strengthen his leg muscles since he did not have much room to use them during quarantine. With medication and therapy, I was able to move him to an outdoor enclosure. He was able to walk and use all four legs. He would move a few feet and then fall over, which was to be expected at first. He also had a slight limp when walking.

After continued treatment with medication he was able to be released back in the wild a few months later. Once released he was able to run and climb without falling or difficulty. He still had the small limp but all things considered, living life with the limp is one of the best outcomes we could have hoped for this raccoon.



In late December, I had a raccoon dropped off that was hit by a car. He had partial hind limb weakness, so I was not sure my course of action. About 30% of raccoons in the US are confirmed to have rabies according to the CDC website. Over half of those hit by a car and tested, are confirmed to have had rabies. The rabies virus attacks the central nervous system of the animal causing it to react in an abnormal way. Usually raccoons understand cars are bad and try to avoid them. When a raccoon infected with rabies sees a moving vehicle it feels the need to attack the vehicle and doesn't connect that it is life threatening.

Juvenile Bald Eagle

On July 2, Game Warden Greevy brought us a juvenile Bald Eagle that was on the side of a road in Mill Run.

The bird was in pretty bad shape, thin and with horrible flystrike all over its tail end. Flystrike is the term we use when a sick or debilitated animal is victimized by flies laying their eggs on it. Sometimes, in as little as 12 hours, the eggs hatch and the larvae – maggots – begin to feed on the animal's flesh. You may have heard that maggots only eat dead flesh, but that has not been our experience over the years. The flies may originally be attracted to dying and necrotic tissue, but maggots will quickly move on to living tissue and can cause a tremendous amount of damage.



Restraining the eagle so we could remove literally hundreds of maggots was stressful for it and for us. Once that was accomplished, it became a waiting game to see just how much damage was done and whether or not living tissue would generate in the ravaged areas. We were most concerned about the eagle's coccyx, or tailbone, because we could actually see bone.

The young eagle was put on several medications to help with infection and to rid the bird of parasites.

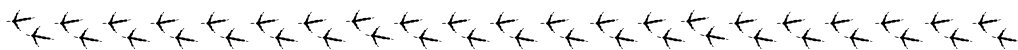
This required daily handling – another very stressful thing for the bird. In wildlife, stress can be as harmful as anything else our patients are dealing with, and elevated levels of stress can cause the immune system to become vulnerable to opportunis-



tic pathogens. We were encouraged when the juvenile (probably a male based on its size) began to eat on his own rather than be force-fed. It was time for us and for him to stay the course and hope for the best.

After two weeks the young eagle began to have respiratory distress. This was a very bad sign, and despite treatments in our new oxygen chamber, the respiratory issues worsened. Eagles and some other raptor species are susceptible to an endemic fungus called aspergillus, especially when they are experiencing high levels of stress. The immune system simply cannot fight off the fungal infection, and treatment of this condition is rarely successful.

When it became clear that we were not winning this fight, we gave the eagle euthanasia to end his suffering. Our friend, veterinarian Stephen Treese, kindly did a necropsy to find out what went wrong. As we suspected, the eagle had a large node of aspergillus blocking the trachea at the junction of the lungs. Dr. Treese was also able to tell us that the exposed bone from the flystrike was never going to grow healthy tissue, so unfortunately, this poor kid was doomed from the start.



On the next two pages are photos of Rabies Vector Species (RVS) that have been treated by WWI Rehabilitator Morgan Barron at our satellite facility. Morgan is certified by the PA Game Commission to treat RVS in PA.

According to the PA Game Commission, rabies is a great public health concern because it can be transmitted to humans by the bite of infected animals and is nearly 100% fatal without post-exposure treatment.

Everyone needs to be educated about rabies! Last year, WWI Morgan treated 98 RVS: 92 raccoons and 6 groundhogs. That gives you an idea of how many people put themselves at risk by coming into contact with RVS.

Rabies is a virus of the central nervous system (the brain and spinal cord) that can affect any mammal and is widespread throughout PA.

Raccoon rabies was first recognized in PA in the 1980s and has since become established in the wild raccoon population. Since 1995 more than 350 animals have tested positive for rabies in the state each year. From January thru March of this year 37 cases of rabies had been confirmed in PA with two raccoons in Westmoreland County.

Special Alert - Rabies

All mammals can potentially become infected with the rabies virus. In PA, the major wildlife reservoirs for this disease are raccoons, coyotes, skunks, bats, foxes and groundhogs. Unvaccinated domestic or feral cats and dogs are also at risk of acquiring and transmitting rabies.

Signs may include: Excessive vocalization, loss of appetite, hind limb weakness, possible drooling, and daytime activity by a nocturnal species (note that seeing a nocturnal species during the day does NOT ALWAYS mean rabies).

Exposure to rabies may occur by any of the following:

- A direct bite from a contagious rabid mammal.
- A scratch from a rabid mammal that breaks the skin.
- Saliva from a contagious rabid animal contacting an open wound or break in the skin, or mucus membranes such as the eyes, nose or mouth.

By law, all animal bites in PA must be reported by the medical professional to the Pennsylvania Department of Health.



RABIES VECTOR





TOR SPECIES



Two Eagle Scout Projects



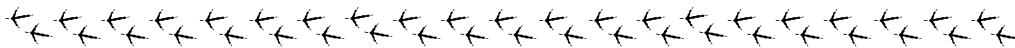
BOY SCOUT JONNIE McDUFFIE - In March, Jonnie McDuffie with Boy Scout Troop 1448 in Monongahela offered to help WWI as his Eagle Scout project. We decided on a flight pen for small raptors, such as screech owls, kestrels and accipiter species like Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks. These little guys really needed some space to exercise and acclimatize, and our raptor barn flyway is just too big and tall to allow us to reach them when it's time for release.

The finished product is an amazing enclosure, way bigger than we imagined and put together with skill and care. A big thank you to Jonnie, his fellow scouts and leaders for building this amazing structure for us! Also, kudos to Jonnie's mom, Mai, for spearheading this endeavor.

The first patients to use this were four young kestrels that have since been released. We have also conditioned and released one Broad-winged hawk with another now in the flight pen getting ready for release and migration. Next up will be two young screech owls that we plan to hack out here at the refuge. This is just another example of the over-whelming support of the community for our important work. We are truly blessed.

BOY SCOUT CARLIN WHALEN - In June, Carlin Whalen with Boy Scout Troop 251 made WWI another grateful recipient of an Eagle Scout project by building an outdoor enclosure for our educational ambassador opossum, Leo.

By moving Leo outside, we've been able to offer him so much more enrichment and quality of life. The enclosure includes a nest box where Leo can cuddle up in his blanket when he sleeps through the day and an exercise wheel to keep him busy at night. This enclosure makes it possible for visitors to see Leo without handling by staff, and it will be transportable when we are ready to open our nature and education center. Thank you Carlin, parents and fellow scouts for helping us to make Leo's life here better and more enriching than anything we could provide him indoors.



Winter Tips

- ☑ Drive cautiously watching for deer and other critters that may be darting across the roads. The riskiest times of day are two hours after sunrise and two hours after sunset. For deer the riskiest time of year is Oct. through Dec.
- ☑ Consider building a brush pile in your backyard. Even in a small yard a brush pile can provide shelter and foraging sites for birds and other critters year round.
- ☑ During fall clean-up time, try to leave some leaves under shrubs or in other spots where they won't

cover your lawn grass and where birds can find them. Leaf litter makes a great spot where birds such as towhees, sparrows, and others can forage for insects, seeds, and other foods.

- ☑ Consider buying a heated bird bath. Water is just as crucial as food in the winter months. There are many solar heated bird baths to choose from.
- ☑ Take time now to clean and sterilize your bird feeders. House finch conjunctivitis (a contagious, bacterial infection that primarily affects finches) is on the rise this time of year. Bird feeders should be immersed and scrubbed with a solution of 9 parts water to 1 part chlo-

rine bleach to eradicate any disease organisms.

- ☑ Clean feeders every couple of weeks.
- ☑ Spend a little extra on higher quality bird seed. The "bargain" brands usually contain large amounts of seed most native birds will not eat. Better quality seed means more nutrition and less waste. Black oil sunflower seed provides the most calories for winter-feeding birds.
- ☑ If birds of prey are decimating your bird feeder population, move your feeders and bird baths to denser cover. Consider feeding early morning or early evening when hawks are less active.
- ☑ Consider dedicating a feed station for squirrels, to help keep them off your bird feeders. Squirrels favor ear corn, peanuts, and sunflower seeds.
- ☑ Landscape with plants that provide winter forage for wildlife such as service berry and mountain ash.
- ☑ Leave perennials untrimmed until spring. The seeds sustain songbirds during the winter and the plant skeletons provide shelter.



Many Ways to Support WWI

- ☐ **GENERAL OPERATIONS** _____
- ☐ **MEMBERSHIP** (Please Note: Due to new mailing requirements, we are no longer able to include expiration dates on our labels)
- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth - \$5 | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual - \$15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family or Classroom - \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor - \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate - \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron - \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining - \$500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime - \$1,000 |

*Memberships paid after Oct. 1 are good for the next year.
All contributions are tax deductible
Thank you for your support!!!!*

To make a donation, complete this form and send it with your check or money order, payable to Wildlife Works, Inc., to PO Box 113, Youngwood, PA 15697.

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WildlifeWorks, Inc.



2022

"Thank you for supporting local wildlife!!!"
\$15,000 BONANZA
365 Chances to Win various amounts of prize

CALENDAR SALES - Our biggest fundraiser is our daily numbers calendar. Daily winnings are \$30, Saturdays are \$50, and holidays and birthdays of famous individuals have winnings from \$60 to \$250. The calendars make great Christmas or birthday gifts. *Calendars will soon be available. If you'd like to secure your lucky number call asap.*

AMAZONSMILE AmazonSmile allows customers to enjoy the same products, low prices, and convenient shopping features as on Amazon.com. When customers shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com), the AmazonSmile Foundation donates 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to WWI when it is selected by customers. Since 2015, WWI has received \$1738 from AmazonSmile!

AMAZON WISH LIST Many needed items are listed on Amazon's wish list. To view our list, log on to your Amazon account. Go to **Your Lists** under **Your Account**. Then go to **YOUR FRIENDS**. If we are not already listed as your friend, send the suggested email to wildlifeworks@comcast.com. We will return the link giving you access to our wish list.

SHARE WWI WITH A FRIEND - Our primary source of support is from individual donors. Please pass this newsletter on to a friend or family member who loves nature.

UNITED WAY - Participate in the United Way payroll deduction campaign at your workplace by writing in **"#223-199 Wildlife Works, Inc."** on the pledge card. In 2020 WWI received \$2,173 through United Way.

DONATE SUPPLIES - WWI needs many items, including: laundry detergent, bleach, paper towels, tissues, sunflower and other bird seed, yard work tools and postage stamps. We love postage stamps!!! But all donations are appreciated.

BIRTHDAY AND CHRISTMAS GIFTS - If friends and family insist on buying you gifts you really don't need, suggest they give a donation to WWI in your name instead. We'll send them a card announcing your gift.

MEMORIALS AND HONORIUMS - Remember and honor those you love through a gift to wildlife. Families and individuals will be sent an acknowledgement card and individuals and donors will be recognized in our Spring newsletter.

TICKET SELLERS NEEDED - WWI is in need of volunteers who will sell, up to five times a year, \$2 raffle tickets that pay out \$1,000 on the 7PM PA Lottery 3-digit number. Tickets can be picked up at the WWI office or they can be dropped in the mail to you. This is an easy fundraiser that can yield up to \$4,000 per year.

Anthrocon Donates Again

Last year's Anthrocon's 24th Furry Convention was cancelled at the David Lawrence Center in Pittsburgh due, of course, to Covid. Anthrocon had selected WWI as their event's charity and we were to receive all the funds raised through auctions, raffles, merchandise, sales, comedy and more. Even though no funds were raised Anthrocon made a \$30,000 donation to WWI!

We were truly grateful and were looking forward to actually participating in this year's event as their 2021 charity. The event, however, was held on-line due to Covid. Anthrocon put up a Go Fund Me page and their supporters personally came through with another sizable donation. These funds will be used to help us build our Nature and Education Center.

The good news is that we are also scheduled to be their 2022 charity! Hopefully all will be able to attend in person.

WWI Open House



**Sunday, Oct 17th
2 PM - 5 PM**

Admission - \$5 Adults, \$2 Kids 12 and under

Meet our resident animals & tour our facility

Jewelry, T-shirt, and Bake Sale

Crafts for Kids & Gift Basket Raffle

Octoberfest Craft Beer, Bud Light, Soda Pop & Water, Hot Sausage, Hotdogs, and Snacks will be for sale



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Wildlife-Works-Inc

WWI's MISSION is to rehabilitate injured, ill and orphaned wildlife and educate the public on how to better co-exist with wildlife. WWI primarily serves Westmoreland County but also accepts select patients from surrounding counties.

FACILITY - WWI operates from the Youngwood home-based facility of Beth Shoaf and several satellites in Westmoreland County.

VOLUNTEERS - There are 40-50 WWI volunteers, the majority of whom are animal care volunteers. Animal care volunteers are active every day of the year. In peak baby season, volunteers contribute approximately 50 hours daily!!!!

Additionally, the volunteer base includes several veterinarians and other professionals greatly adding to the high level of professionalism of WWI. In addition to caring for animals and educating the public, volunteers also raise a significant portion of the budget through events, sales, solicitations and program income. Without the dedication of these individuals WWI would not exist.

STAFF - There are currently five part-time paid positions at WWI: an office manager, two animal care technicians, one senior rehabilitator, and a grounds-keeper. These positions provide essential support for year-round uninterrupted operations.

LICENSED REHABILITATORS - WWI currently has two rehabilitators licensed by the PA Game Commission and the US Fish and Wildlife Service: Senior Rehabilitator, Beth Shoaf and Morgan Barron.

ADMISSION HOURS - Are by appointment only and are dependent upon the availability of staff. The office is open 10AM - 3PM Monday through Friday. Please leave a message during off hours. Your call will be returned as soon as possible.

NOTICE OF NON-PROFIT STATUS: WWI is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit. The official registration and financial info of WWI may be obtained from the PA Department of State at 800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.



THREE FLEDGLING TREE SWALLOWS

All photos within are Wildlife Works photos taken by WWI volunteers of rehabbed wildlings unless otherwise noted.