Dear Members,

I often like to reprint stories I wrote some years ago. Since egrets have recently been in the news and their plight an issue that WRR continues to address, it seems fitting to share this story with you again. As we approach Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation’s 42nd year, I cannot help but be reminded of those early days and the countless memorable events, situations, animals, people, and times during those years. This story took place, as you will read, when WRR was very “bare-bones” and ran in one of our early newsletters.

Always there were the animals. Animals in need and animals simply being themselves, teaching me what I had to learn to be better at caring for them. Animals I rescued and held for only a moment and others who remained with WRR for more than a decade.

And of course, there were the people. A good friend to WRR in those early days, actor Earl Holliman, once said of WRR, “They have never received a call from a raccoon.” I told him how often I have used his statement to make an important point - WRR has been here for animals, of course, but every animal we have helped started his or her journey to WRR because of some human.

Sometimes those humans were on the periphery watching, like the time I was called to rescue a great egret who was taking up residence in a neighborhood near the San Antonio River. He had been seen by an elderly woman and her grandchildren who were enthralled by this stately white bird who was taller than the youngsters. Seemingly not able to fly, he made his way from...
Trust and Integrity Matter

Two weeks ago, I received a call from a donor to confirm that WRR had received all the required documentation needed for his bequest and to go over the details of his will. You see, he wanted to make sure everything was in order as he was entering hospice care and did not know how much time he had left on this Earth. I remember thinking, “Here is a man facing the end and he is making it a priority to be sure WRR had what we needed to provide for the animals in our care. What an unselfish act that requires such immense trust.” As we continued our conversation he told me that knowing WRR was receiving his bequest brought him great peace and comfort. He told me he knew we would do what is needed for all the animals at WRR and that it meant so much to him to be a part of it. As we ended our conversation, he wished WRR and me well and I thanked him for his kindness and assured him his generosity would make a profound difference in the lives of many wild animals.

Earlier today, as I walked the Sanctuary grounds looking up at the sky surrounded by the wonderful sounds of life around me, I received the phone call - he had passed away. I now find myself reflecting on my last conversation with him, understanding that WRR is blessed to have the trust of life-long donors. Donors who remember WRR in their planned giving are making a personal commitment that deserves and demands the utmost integrity from us. We understand that our donors deserve transparency, efficiency and trust. Trust to know that WRR is steadfast in our mission and ethics, no matter what.

Trust and Integrity Matter
They are the cornerstone of every positive relationship and it is important for donors like you to know that we do not take you for granted. Because of you, we are able to do what we do every day to save lives. Where would the thousands of wild animals who come through our doors be if we did not have your trust and commitment? You make it possible and it is our pledge to always be deserving of the trust you place in our hands.

To this donor who trusted Wildlife Rescue to be a good steward of his gift, we are forever grateful for his lasting legacy of saving wild lives.

Sincerely,
DIANA REYES, CFRE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE & DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
distracted so my plan was to toss the voluminous
and adults. He was somewhat "contained" and
the middle of a crowd of neighborhood children
I approached this beautiful bird as he stood in

As I overtook the crowd the egret took mercy on
me, slowed down, and allowed me to remove the
sheet; once I did so he wasted no time in taking
flight, making a beeline toward the water. He was
last seen flying headlong down the middle of the
San Antonio River making his way far from the
neighborhood, the kids, the adults, and me. What
in the world went through his mind I will never
know, but I feel certain that for the rest of his life
he gave humans an even wider berth than before.
So much for my good intentions.

Though this story had a happy ending, every year
WRR is made aware of yet another egret rookery
being threatened with destruction. These birds
have for eons built their nests in massive stands
of trees and the more we drive them away and cut
down their trees, the fewer homes they and their
young will have. In making their plight public, WRR
hopes to garner sympathy and support for these
magnificent birds.

Though this occurred in the days when our "rescue equipment"
consisted of one pair of heavy gloves, several cardboard
boxes (to this day I cherish cardboard boxes!) and
various types of bedding. We had no impressive
paraphernalia, only endless determination to make
what we had work in any way required to do the job.
It was with these meager trappings that I arrived in
the neighborhood, eager to aid an injured egret.
Since he could not fly, I was fully aware that I might
have to devise some way to carefully trap him but I
dealt with the intimidating cats in his path.

house to house stirring the family dogs to raise all
manner of ruckus and scattering the intimidated
cats in his path. He covered considerable distance
as his long legs carried him gracefully from front to
back yards.

It is important to take into account that this occurred
in the neighborhood, eager to aid an injured egret.
Since he could not fly, I was fully aware that I might
have to devise some way to carefully trap him but I
knew he was not going to simply stand still and let

I approached this beautiful bird as he stood in
the middle of a crowd of neighborhood children
and adults. He was somewhat "contained" and
distracted so my plan was to toss the voluminous
sheet over him and make my approach. Not
surprisingly he had the exact opposite plan in mind
and as the sheet floated softly down over his torso
he took his cue to beat a hasty retreat. In doing
so the sheet magically managed to remain in place
creating the image of a tall, now elongated, bird
with a massive wingspan flowing gracefully down
the street followed by an entourage of children
followed by a chorus of screaming adults, followed
by me, the "expert rescuer" who was wondering
how everything could go so wrong so fast!

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Though April is a time for enjoying spring and staying constantly busy caring for all the incoming orphans and other
animals, this year was also a time of loss for those of us at WRR.
On Friday April 12th we had to say good-bye to the lone lioness in our care. At 26 years of age she was no younger
even though she still had the countenance of a kitten. She and her sister had come to us from a roadside zoo in
Louisiana. They were both in their late teens and neither had been given an adequate diet, room to move about or
anything close to a life they would have chosen. When their situation went from bad to worse, WRR was able to step
in and give them sanctuary. We had also rescued a male lion some years before and he seemed pleased to have two
new companions. It was not long before the smaller of the two female lions died; she could not overcome years of
neglect and hunger, but the larger girl was determined to enjoy some newfound pleasures.

Once she settled in and we introduced her to the male, the lioness made it clear to him that she was now the
reigning matriarch. Though the male was larger, she possessed the more assertive personality. She was so assertive
that we had to feed them separately or the male would have gone hungry. So enamored of her was he that he just
sat by, looking on adoringly, as she ate….everything. The more he tried to get in her good graces the more insistent
she was that nothing he could do would meet with her approval. Finally, he found ways to make himself acceptable
and we would often see them sunbathing on their tail, massive platform or lying in the grass as the wind whirled
through their honey-colored fur.

The resident, free-flying black vultures have long been fond of the lion’s enclosure
as they know they can find some tidbits of leftover meat. When the lioness
realized these big birds were regular visitors she would crouch down nearly flat
in the grass, her round ears peeking out, twitching as she itched with excitement
at the chance to pounce on one of the black beauties. The vultures had long-ago
realized the risks they were taking and kept their distance, but she occasionally
had to try. As her massive body leapt at the flock of feathered intruders a
great cloud of black vultures rapidly retreated to the giant oaks to peer down,
respectfully, at the new resident. They would be even more careful in the future.

And so this was how the new lioness spent her days here. In time she would witness the passing of the male
and come to be the lone lion at WRR. The vultures, at times, seemed to become more companions than intruders and
would always share in her leftovers as she looked on, never again wondering if there would be another meal when a
new day dawned. If not freedom, she had found security at WRR. It is this we take comfort in, knowing that we gave
her our best, that she never again wanted for food or room to roam or comfortable shelter and that here she found
kindness, the warmth of the sun and the independence to be who she was.
About Animal Care

Wildlife Rescue animal caretakers and apprentices along with veterinary staff and dedicated volunteers are busy all year caring for close to 10,000 animals who come through our doors needing help. But beginning in March and continuing through the summer and fall injured and orphaned wild infants are brought to WRR on a steady basis and sometimes in large numbers.

As we begin the 5th month of the year, WRR has already taken in a total of 754 infant and juvenile opossums. That number is already close to one third of all the opossums we received throughout 2018 making this very likely a record year for opossums.

The cause for the increase is partly urban sprawl and partly misinformation about when it is appropriate to “save” a baby who only seems abandoned, inadvertently habituating him to humans, thus jeopardizing his future as a wild animal. But no matter the reason why and how they make it here, Wildlife Rescue provides each of these wild animals with the nutrition and rehabilitative care they need until they are strong and old enough to run free in the wild.

How to determine if an opossum is orphaned or in distress:

> After leaving their mother’s pouch, baby opossums mature very quickly. They will stay with mom, clinging to her back as she travels, for a couple of weeks before beginning to disperse as they mature to an independent age. If you come across a baby opossum who is moving normally, appears uninjured, and is at least the size of a dollar bill (from nose to tail base), he should be left alone.

> If you find a baby opossum who is smaller than a dollar bill, is walking in circles, covered in ants, or injured, always call the WRR Emergency Hotline at (830) 336-2725 to discuss the situation.

Designate a contribution towards opossums in our care:

> Specialized Formula: As marsupials, opossums require a very specific formula. During baby season, WRR will go through an entire 20lb bucket of specialized formula every few weeks to feed the orphaned opossums in our care ($183.20 / 20lbs)

> Incubators: Opossums are born as tiny, naked babies. They then spend an additional few weeks in their mother’s pouch, nursing and continuing to develop. To recreate the warmth and security of their mother’s pouch, these youngest babies must be housed in incubators while in care. A single incubator costs between $300 and $600.

Animal Enrichment Supply Drive Coming Up On May 13th!

WRR provides sanctuary to more than 150 primates rescued from the “pet” trade, roadside zoos, research laboratories, and many other cruel situations. These primates and other nonnative wildlife are permanent residents at WRR. In addition, WRR rescues close to 10,000 native animals every year. These injured and orphaned wild animals are cared for and released back to the wild where they belong. A critical component of caring for both permanent residents and wildlife in rehabilitation, is enrichment. Providing mentally stimulating tasks, novel scents and objects, and physically challenging environments is an important part of rehabilitating wildlife and caring for wild and domesticated residents. This year we will again be holding an Enrichment Supply Drive to gather materials and funds to create exciting and engaging enrichment items for the animals in our care.

Drop off or send donated items to:
1354 Basse Rd. San Antonio, TX 78212
Between 9AM - 6PM

For a full list of needed items visit Wildlife-Rescue.org/Wish-List

Opossum Facts

• A single adult opossum will eat an average of 5,000 ticks each year, limiting the spread of Lyme’s disease.
• After leaving the pouch, baby opossums only stay with their mother and siblings for about three weeks.
• As marsupials, opossums have a significantly lower body temperature than other mammals which means they generally cannot contract diseases like distemper and rabies

WRR has rescued over 3,000 animals to date in 2019. This is about 500 more than had been brought to our doors by this time last year.
WRR veterinarian Mason Payne, DVM provides an injured fox with vital care in our hospital’s veterinary suite.

WRR is also home to many free-roaming animals such as these geese who are permanent residents here. They are free to go about their lives as they please and are given supplemental food and medical attention as needed.

Trained animal caretakers, apprentices and volunteers feed hundreds of orphaned and injured baby squirrels, like this little fellow, throughout the year.

Special precautions must be taken when handling certain species such as striped skunks and others in order to prevent the spread of disease. These very young babies are cared for only by trained staff.

Animal caretakers feed and provide care to over 300 farmed animals at WRR’s Kendalia sanctuary every day including these goats and donkeys.

Wildlife everywhere suffers the consequences of habitat destruction. Landowners who preserve that habitat are a crucial part of a growing movement to respect and care for the other living beings who share this planet. Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation is proud to work with those individuals who strive to protect our precious land and those who live on it.

Every year, WRR rescues, rehabilitates, and releases thousands of wild animals onto privately owned properties that have been pre-screened and deemed suitable for each species. To find out more about the requirements for these properties or to apply to become a release site provider visit Wildlife-Rescue.org/Release-Sites

Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation rescues over 9,000 animals every year. At our Sanctuary and Wildlife Hospital in Kendalia and the WRR Sherman Animal Care Complex in San Antonio we depend on volunteers to help us carry out our life-saving mission. Since the very beginning of WRR all those years ago, it has been the dedication and energy of volunteers that have fueled the organization, helped save the lives of animals in need, and carried out the mission of WRR. In 2018 alone, 321 volunteers contributed over 6,000 service hours to Wildlife Rescue by feeding baby animals, doing countless loads of animal dishes and laundry, rescuing animals in need from all over the hill country, transporting produce and feed to the sanctuary, and so much more. The work we do here at WRR would not be possible without the support and generous dedication of our volunteers.

To learn more about volunteering with Wildlife Rescue, visit Wildlife-Rescue.org/volunteer or email our Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator, Robert Burns, at rburns@wildlife-rescue.org
Wildlife Rescue Sustainers are a special group of supporters who commit to making a small monthly or quarterly contribution to underwrite the cost of our life-saving work.

*Every effort has been made to include every Sustainer. If your name is not listed, we apologize and will correct this immediately. Please call us at 830-336-2725 ext. 308.

THANK YOU TO OUR WILDLIFE SUSTAINERS AND FOUNDER’S CIRCLE MEMBERS


To learn more about becoming a Wildlife Sustainer or a Founder’s Circle Member please call our Donor Engagement Manager, Aleida Fuente Boles at (830) 336-2725 ext. 314
Workshops and Volunteer Trainings
WRR Sherman Animal Care Complex Education Center
1354 Basse Rd., San Antonio, TX 78212

JUNE
1st Information Session; 10AM - 11:30AM
6th Information Session; 6PM - 7:30PM
8th Intro Orientation Kendalia; 10AM - 11:30AM
13th Intro Orientation; 6PM-7PM
21st Appreciate Nature and Animals Workshop; 1PM - 3PM
22nd Appreciate Nature and Animals Workshop; 1PM - 3PM

JULY
6th Information Session; 1PM - 2:30PM
11th Information Session; 6PM - 7:30PM
13th Intro Orientation Kendalia; 10PM - 11:30PM
18th Intro Orientation; 6PM - 7PM
19th Investigating Our Ecosystems Workshop; 1PM - 3PM
20th Investigating Our Ecosystems Workshop; 1PM - 3PM

Young Friends of WILDLIFE RESCUE

Upcoming Exploration Sessions:
Young Friends of Wildlife Rescue members will explore different topics within wildlife rehabilitation, advocacy and conservation and will complete group volunteer activities each month.

JUNE: Engaging Activities for Animals
Wednesday, June 26, 6PM - 8PM

JULY: Wildlife Hospital and Veterinary Care
Wednesday, July 17, 6PM - 8PM

August: Wildlife: The Food They Eat
Wednesday, August 14, 6PM - 8PM

REGISTER TODAY:
Wildlife-Rescue.org/services/wildlife-education
(830) 336-2725

SPRING 2019