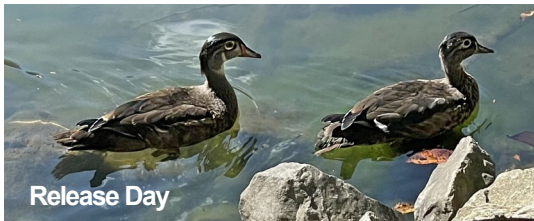




WOOD DUCKLINGS - A DELICATE BUT SUCCESSFUL REHAB



Hidden away in forest ponds, swamps, and woodland streams in Western PA is one of the most beautiful waterfowl in the world: the wood duck. The male, or drake, has colorful and intricate plumage, complete with a crested head and bold white markings intersecting shades of chestnut, brown, and green. Once nearly extinct because of loss of habitat and hunting in the early 1900s, these secretive ducks have made a comeback in our state over the past century.

Because their lives are more private and isolated than their mallard cousins, their rehabilitation presents unique challenges: raising orphaned "woodie" ducklings differs greatly from raising orphaned mallard ducklings.

The differences begin before hatching! While mallard nests are located on the ground, mama wood ducks make a nest in preformed tree cavities that can reach heights of up to 60 feet. One day after hatching, woodies make a leap of faith out of their nesting tree to follow their mom to water. This is an incredible moment to observe. In fact, one of our orphaned wood ducklings came to us mid-summer because of overly enthusiastic birds gathered to witness the leap. They accidentally spooked the mama wood duck who ran off with her brood, leaving one wood duckling in the nest. We also took in another group of woodie orphans in mid-summer and, thankfully, they accepted the single orphan.

Despite their epic start to life, woodies are incredibly fragile, small, and easily frightened. If found they should be kept somewhere dark, warm, quiet,

and dry until they are brought to a rehabber. Too much stress caused by human contact can result in the sudden death of the ducklings. This threat remains throughout their life. This means rehabbing woodies is a balancing act of providing the proper care and letting them be.

Our balancing act involved "food baths" and very warm enclosures in isolated spaces. The five woodie ducklings were given food baths three times a day. These baths gave them access to small water containers to practice swimming and preening while eating specially formulated waterfowl starter that floats. They then spent most of their time snuggled under fleece with a heating pad beneath and a heat lamp above. Woodies require more heat and much less water than other ducklings. To encourage foraging, we gave them live mealworms and greens. As they grew, more natural items were added, like logs for climbing and perching. For the final two weeks before release, they graduated to an outdoor enclosure with constant access to water, perches, and lots of foliage to hide behind. In the outdoor enclosure, their consistent flight ability and foraging skills indicated that they were ready for release!

We released the five woodie juveniles at a large wooded pond in September. Though they were initially hesitant, one brave soul eventually ventured into the pond. That was all it took! The others then flew laps around the pond and swam along the edges of the water enjoying their newfound freedom. We left the juveniles preening, splashing, and exploring their new home. Two weeks after their release, we received an update that all five woodies continue to call that pond home.

Below is an internet photo to show how beautiful Wood Ducks are. WWI does not keep ducklings until maturity, only until they are able to survive on their own.

Article by Shannon Sapolich

ABOUT WOOD DUCKS

- The Wood Duck is the only native species of perching ducks in North America.
- Perching ducks have well developed claws, long tails and iridescence on the wings.
- Wood duck roosts consist of large numbers of birds gathering each evening to spend the night on a body of water; once breeding starts in the spring, roosts are no longer formed.
- Wood ducks nest in hollow trees or woodpecker holes.
- Males and females are easily distinguishable. Males are colorful birds with bright green heads and a red iris; females are more grey/brown with a grey bill and a brown iris.
- The hen lays ten to thirteen eggs, laying one egg per day until the clutch is complete.
- Using their sharp claws, the hatchlings climb to the opening of the nest cavity then leap out as the female calls to them.



Internet Photo

Rare Albino Raccoon



This past summer, employees of Berlin Lumber in Somerset County started noticing young raccoons hanging around but no mother. They knew that was not uncommon and figured the mother was coming back periodically to care for them. They did the right thing by leaving them ALONE and not attempting to handle or interfere with them. They just observed and hoped the raccoons would move on.

After two weeks, not only hadn't the little coons moved on, they were less cautious of machinery and humans. For the safety of both the raccoons and the public, the PA Game Commission was called. Warden Andy Hardy was dispatched to the site on June 20. Imagine Warden Hardy's surprise to find one of the juvie coons was an albino! Warden Harvey captured all three raccoons and transported them to our Mt. Pleasant facility, where we specialize in rehabilitation of rabies vector species, such as raccoons and skunks.

If either humans or domestic animals had potentially been exposed to rabies from the raccoons, the raccoons would have been euthanized and tested for the disease as infection is almost always fatal. Animals infected with rabies might not appear sick but still could transmit the disease. Humans or animals can get rabies from the saliva of a rabid animal if they are bitten or scratched, or if saliva or brain tissue gets into their eyes, mouth, or a fresh wound. Fortunately, there had been no contact, so the trio of little coons could be rehabbed.

In our 32-year history, WWI admitted the following albinos: a grey squirrel, a flying squirrel, a groundhog, a blue jay and a painted turtle. While we might find these creatures beautiful and unique, lack of natural pigment puts albino animals at greater risk for survival in the wild. This is especially true of prey animals.

The albino raccoon and its siblings were given access to the challenges they would face once released. In addition to fresh food and water, foraging and play opportunities were provided. Their large cage was furnished with branches to climb, pools to play in and dens to explore. After several weeks of care provided by rehabber Morgan Barron, the raccoon trio was released on the refuge property, where she still gets glimpses of the little raccoon "ghost".

Submitted by Morgan Barron

ALBINO RACCOONS. INTERESTING FACTS

- Only 1 in 10,000-20,000 raccoons is born with albinism. Statistically, this means your chances of seeing an albino raccoon is one in 750,000 – about the same chance as being struck by lightning!
- Albinism is an inherited condition and the gene for albinism is recessive. That means both parents must carry the gene to produce albino offspring.
- Albinos lack the pigment melanin that is responsible for dark hair, skin and eyes.

Raven Chicks

Wildlife patients are brought to the center in a wide variety of containers: commercial pet carriers, plastic bowls and totes, baby cradles, bird cages and cardboard boxes in every imaginable size, the smaller the wildling the larger the box. So, it was not too surprising when a Game Warden showed up with a 5-gallon bucket holding two enormous raven nestlings. The young ravens had gotten into trouble at a commercial facility in Donegal, and it had become necessary to remove them.

Like the many young crows we've rehabbed over the years, ravens are susceptible to imprinting on their human caregivers. Fortunately, their eyes were not yet focused on this pair, so that gave us some time to break out the baby crow supplies. These included a camo ball cap with a camo netting to cover your face and black crew socks sewn into a black "face" that is used for hand-feeding.

Another rehabber in eastern PA was looking for raven chicks to put with her single nestling. We made arrangements for the single chick to be transferred here since we had a very good idea where the ravens had come from. It ended up being fortuitous that we were getting that other bird, as sadly, the smaller of the two that we had admitted became ill and died.

Ravens are very omnivorous and opportunistic, eating just about anything they can find, including carrion. Over many weeks, we began a feeding regimen that included dead mice, rats and chicks, in addition to puppy chow, assorted fruits and grains, fresh corn on the cob and eggs – both raw and hard-boiled. As the ravens progressed, we added mealworms, earth worms, and Dubia Roaches.

The chicks grew and no longer looked like babies, but fully grown and feathered sub-adults. They were flying beautifully and behaved fearfully around our staff. The final stage of their rehab was live-prey training.

On September 14th we released the young ravens back into the area where they were rescued. Our last glimpse of them as they flew off into the woods was one raven perched at the top of a tree, gleefully ripping leaves off the branches.



PA Game Commission Rescues 5 More Barn Owlets



The owlets had to be separated upon arrival due to their difference in size.



Once again, we've had the honor of taking care of young Barn Owls brought to us by the PA Game Commission in mid-August. Last fall, we also featured in our newsletter two Barn owlets brought to us by the PGC. This time it was a clutch of five!

In PA, Barn Owls are a species of special interest because their populations have decreased over the last decade. This clutch was rescued because they had moved from their nest box to the inside of a silo that was scheduled to be filled. Coincidentally, Game Warden Harvey had had to euthanize an adult Barn owl that was found injured about ½ mile from the farm where the nest box was located. Because Barn owlets eat more than their body weight daily, loss of one parent could disrupt the nest, causing mortality of the young. Hunger may have prompted these owlets to move out of their nest box.

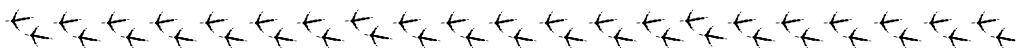
The five chicks were still in some down, with tail and wing feathers beginning to erupt. It was not necessary to hide

ourselves from these birds. They knew quite well they were to fear humans, and they let us know of their disapproval by the screeching and growling that went on any time staff was near.

Within two weeks, we were able to move them outside into our linear flyway. This gave them lots of room to build up flight strength. At this stage of development, the 5 owlets were eating a total of 45 mice a day! Finally, after two rounds of live prey training, the owlets were ready to go.

On Friday, Oct. 27, Game Warden Andy Harvey retrieved the feisty, not-so-little Barn Owls for release back on the farm they were rescued from in Somerset county.

We feel proud and very blessed to have had a part in rehabbing these beautiful and unique raptors, and gratified that the PGC entrusted them to our care.



Barn Owl Conservation Initiative

In 2005 the PA Game Commission began a Barn Owl Conservation Initiative with the goal of securing this species' future in PA. Their decline is believed to be in part due to the change of 'cleaner' farming practices, which has eliminated the vegetative cover needed for their preferred food source, as well as the loss of secure nesting sites.

The barn owl is considered a species of greatest conservation need. Where feasible, nestlings are banded to gather information on longevity, causes of mortality, and dispersal.

In 2016 there were **202** active nesting sites with 7 new sites. In 2015 biologists banded 83 barn owls at 25 sites in 16 counties and recovered 94 banded barn owls, 91 of which were dead. From the recovered owls they learned how far they traveled after leaving the nest and their lifespan:

- The distance they traveled ranged from 0 to 926 miles with a median of 19 miles.
- Their median age was 12 months and ranged from within one month after banding to an 8 year old that was discovered still alive and sitting on her nest incubating her eggs.

The areas where barn owls are found in PA are primarily the southeastern third of the state. Barn owls were historically found across the agricultural landscape in southwestern PA but they noticeably started to disappear in the 1980s.

In a 2019 SW PA Game Commission report, it was reported that there were **226** unique sites in the state and they had banded over 1,800 barn owls. They also reported that the first barn owls, a female with five owlets, were banded in Somerset County, the first to be banded in the Southwestern Region! Since then others have been found, as the Game Commission brought two nestlings to WWI last July and five nestlings this year (above article).



All 5 Barn Owls Successfully Released!

For more info on the initiative, contact the PA Game Commission. Also visit Facebook PA Game Commission - Southwest Region for more photos of release day.

PA Game Commissions' Regional Wildlife Diversity Biologists:

- Monitor known nest sites and search for new sites
- Distribute and/or install barn owl boxes along with volunteers
- Promote conservation of barn owls to landowners and the general public.
- Band barn owls and gather data to determine longevity, dispersal, and causes of mortality.

For more info on the initiative, contact the PA Game Commission. Also visit Facebook PA Game Commission - Southwest Region for more photos of release day.



Wildlife Works after dark....

Nocturnal Patients



Spring Open House



Our Spring Open House on April 29 was a blast! Approximately 250 individuals came to our Youngwood facility to see first hand what WWI is all about as well to see several of our educational animals. Attendees met some of our educational wildlings, toured our facility, and had plenty of food and activities to do.

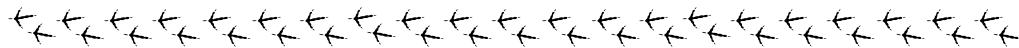
We had tremendous support from the local community and also raised \$5,024 to be shared by our Youngwood and Mt Pleasant facilities. Morgan, our Mt Pleasant rehabber, used her funds to help build a squirrel pen. A much needed addition.



A special thank you to our sponsors:

Artisans of Hands & Heart
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Sandy Schall
See Spot Run
Betty & Dean Simons
The Phoenix Tavern
Z&M Cycle Sales



Fall & Winter Wildlife Tips



Internet Photo

- ☑ 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 chlorine bleach to eradicate any disease organisms.
- ☑ Clean feeders every couple of weeks.
- ☑ Spend a little extra money 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.
- ☑ 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.



Internet Photo

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 |
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| <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.

Name _____

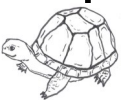
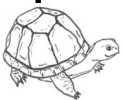
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WildlifeWorks, Inc.



2024

"Thank you for supporting local wildlife!!!"
\$14,000 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 greater winnings. This year we are selling two calendars. The calendars make great Christmas or birthday gifts. *Calendars will soon be available. If you'd like to secure your lucky number call asap.*

Special Thank You's



Tristan, Taylor, and WWI staffer Nicole Hinerman with Artemis.

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. Enter Wildlife Works Inc and our agency code 16577371 on the pledge card. Since 2003 WWI received \$8,273. In 2021 WWI received \$1,085.

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.

FACEBOOK DONATE BUTTON - Instructions are on the internet. Be sure to select Wildlife Works for your charity. No fees are deducted! And it is a great way for others to honor you on your birthday or special occasions. You will know who donated, but Wildlife Works will not. So we cannot recognize their gift or add them to our mailing list and you would have to let us know if they want to be added to our mailing list.

Lemonade Stand - Tristan Lori and Taylor Dillon set up a lemonade stand for the Scottdale community yard sale to raise money for WWI. Between the lemonade stand and Facebook, these kids raised \$500 for us! We asked them to bring the donation on a weekend so we could show them around a bit as a reward and they got to meet Artemis here that day.

Super Bingo - And a BIG thank you to Mojo's Wallet for having a bingo and asking WWI to be a beneficiary! We received \$1600 from this event and our volunteers had a great time attending. Mojo's Wallet is a nonprofit animal aid charity started by Tammy Kalkbrenner and her husband in memory of her beloved pet, Mojo. They hold fundraising events to assist local rescues, shelters and rehabilitation facilities.





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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.

Pictured is a Northern Flicker. These woodpeckers forage on the ground more than in the trees.



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