BY NOELLE KHATIB

February or March will mark my 6 year mark at Sea Biscuit Wildlife shelter, more importantly Sea Biscuit will be going on ten years. I have learned so much about birds, our environment, and myself in these past six years, and how they all form symbiotic relationship. As our climate grows warmer the fish migrate earlier leaving the birds that follow the fish to become ill with weakened immune systems from lack of food. Working with all the birds at the shelter has giving me patience, especially the raptors. When you work closely with these magnificent creatures you quickly learn to stay calm, move without hesitation, and be patient; to use these skills with wildlife is important, but to incorporate this in to waking life is invaluable.

This last weekend I went with Mary Ellen, Lora and Betsy to the wildlife rehabber conference at NC State in Raleigh. Betsy was great company and we both learned new techniques on how to manage and help the birds. The necropsy lab was extremely informative; I have assisted Mary Ellen a number of times with this but was very excited to do it on my own.

Twenty years ago, I refused to do this in a biology class and recorded what my lab partners did. Now I see how this can all be for the greater good to figure out what caused a death.

My favorite class was learning how to age a Barred Owl, as you all know we have incoming Barred Owls quite often and now I feel confident in giving an accurate age as well as identifying stress fractures on the feathers. Apparently, it is near impossible to tell the age after the owl is three years old, the bottom three bands on the bottom of the feathers grow wider as the bird reaches maturity. The stress fractures are small thin lines that occur when the bird is in a stressful situation as the new feather is forming. This part of the feather is then weakened and has a high probability to break.

I look forward to my shift at Sea Biscuit every week and will be forever grateful to Mary Ellen for the priceless opportunity to work so close with all of these majestic animals we rehabilitate and care for.

WHERE TO FIND US!

On Facebook:
Sea-Biscuit-Wildlife-Shelter/
Website:
www.seabiscuitwildlifeshelter.org
Blog:
http://seabiscuitscenter.
blogger.com/
Call:
(910) 278-7871
Visit:
(by appt only)
1638 E Beach Dr
Oak Island, NC 28465

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Lora Sharkey rescued a very young pelican ("Baby") that was hanging out on the SPT waterfront. It wasn't even flying yet so we surmised that it got blown/driven by Matthew's (hurricane) wind & waves. Another juvenile pelican was rescued by Lindsay Addison. It had gotten entangled by fishing line in the Cape Fear River. It was transferred to SBWS where its badly swollen leg healed & it reached a healthy weight. At Christmas time, both birds were transported by Lindsay to Florida where they were released. The older pelican immediately joined up with an adult & they flew off. The "Baby" floated for a while in the warm water & then flew off too. We love happy endings.

Cormorant

Bald Head Island Conservancy Staff rescued this double crested cormorant. He had a bruised and swollen leg. After 10 days of medication and food, he was released at the Davis Canal on Oak Island.

Pied Billed Grebe Swims Free

This Pied Bill Grebe was brought to us by the Boiling Spring Lakes Animal Control Officer. It was very skinny but it gained weight and strength quickly and was released at Spring Lake with other grebes and a better food supply.
Lil’ Screech Owl

William has a soft spot for animals and has brought us ducks and geese in the past. On his way to work one morning, he found this little screech owl, obviously hit by a car. He picked it up and put it LOOSE in his car. We picked it up in Ocean Isle. When it’s head trauma disappeared 5 weeks later, he was ready to release. By William, who drove him back to Delco, of course!

Education Programs

It’s been a record breaking year... again! With over 400 birds brought into the shelter this year, everyone has been busy and learning more and more. Some of our volunteers went to the Wildlife Symposium in Raleigh and even more training opportunities will be introduced in 2017!

DID YOU KNOW?

- There are over 10,000 species of birds worldwide
- Birds have hollow bones so they can fly
- Scientist believe birds evolved from the Theropod Dinosaurs

HOW TO HELP!

If you would like to volunteer or make a donation, please call Mary Ellen at (910) 278-7871

The shelter is always in need of paper towels, cleaning supplies, fresh fish and dry pet foods and seeds.
It has been our great privilege to fund the considerable expenses of this shelter. Many local and distant donations were received and we not only paid the bills, we were able to build a new flight pen. Melinda Stewart wrote a children’s book about Plucky the Pelican and she funded it’s publication. Donations for her book still arrive and have exceeded $900!

Local fishing enthusiasts donate hundreds of dollars’ worth of fresh local fish for the seabirds here. Amy Campbell, Nick and Kathie Brown, Glenda Palmer, Jim and Karen Freeze, the Truby Family and many others stopped by after their catch and put buckets of fish in the tub or refrigerator for us. Sadly, Glenda Palmer’s mother passed away and donations were made to the Sea Biscuit in lieu of flowers. What a nice thing to do!

Contributions exceeding $1000 were made by Richard and Rosanne Fortner, Wilton Kimmer, Miles and Megan Highsmith and the Town of Oak Island.

We are very thankful for the $400 or more donations made by Tom Shilson, John and Julie Merchant, The Holden Beach Turtle Watch, Lorrie Maciag, Wild Bird and Garden and Sally Buchanan.

Skip and Ellen Cox, Tom Kuzenko, Lola and Robert Burgess, Suzanne Mello, Clarence and Jamie Wishart, Jean Edens, David and Regina Hill, Thomas Miller, Eileen Governale, the Old American Fish Company, Susan Greeson, Cindy Corcoran, Frieda and Dale Hewett, Jim Stoddard, Barbara Ash, Art and Linda Seifert, Cynthia O’Malley, Steve Sipple, Elizabeth Flint, Mary Goldfeder, Jane Scott, Jane Boyce, Devin and Mary Ellen Biery, Gretchen Schramm, Carmel and Ray Zotts, Deborah Wood, John and Diane Gerlach, Jean Edens, Ann and Jim White, Jack and Dot Moore, Alan and Elaine Crusan, Stephen Doll, the Cape Fear Browns Backers, Alice and Bob Seidel, John and Emily Wallace, Nancy and Mark Gillen, Juanita Roushy, The Oak Island Friends of Sea Turtles, Linda and Marty Wright, James Wallace, Earl and Lucy Williams and Judy Bailey all made donations over $100.

The sustaining gifts that help us pay for food, medication and other expenses were received from Robert & Jan Sowers, Deborah Markley, Derek and Brook Adams, Maxine Elliott, The Adventure Company, Ross and Rosemary Engel, Patricia Orsini, Linda Huff, Margaret Stanley, Dorian D’Agati, Rodney and Susan Lang, Frances Bethea, Mary Ann Harvey, Noreen Campbell, Mary Mckenna, Virginia Franco, Joyce Herrman, Richrd Harris and Norma Queen, Lee and Regina Steeneck, Gayle Sparkman, Roger Bokeny, Maggie and Richard Holcomb, Mary Edwards, Robert Musacchio, Peter and Donna Sword, Michael Mc Conney, Lindsay Darden, Bob and Naomi Martin, James and Jane Suits, Nancy Mclaughlin, Bert Maggart, Maria Nagem, Don Miller, Martha Sawtschenko, Sandra and Ronald Rughetti, Judith Kurzer, Jennifer Kurzer, Lelia Gore, Rich Montgomery, Roland and Karen Witt, John and Patricia Hartwell, Michael and Wendy Hicks.

A big THANK YOU to Paws-Ability for the donation of a laptop computer and security cameras!

**2016 FINANCIAL STATS**

| Total Income | $ 18,600 |
| Expenses     | $ 20,713 |

*We used $ 2100 of saved donations for the difference so we could build the new flight enclosures.*

**2016 Expenses**

- Housing & Utilities: 26%
- New Pens: 28%
- Office Supplies & Tools: 19%
- Transportation: 9%
- Cleaning Supplies: 2%
- Food: 12%
- Permits & Fees: 4%