

My SBWS Volunteer Story

BY BETH GREEN

I wanted to volunteer some of my time, working with animals that cannot help themselves and need human assistance, but I knew that working with dogs and cats would be heartbreaking for me. I had already heard of Sea Biscuit Wildlife Shelter, and thought that might be a good fit – you can’t get too attached to birds, right? (Hah!) So I did some homework and then contacted Mary Ellen Rogers about a possible volunteer position – maybe something on the admin side of things? since I had absolutely zero experience with any kind of wildlife – and she said “Sure!” come on by any day between 8am and 10am and check things out. So I did. And I was hooked.

At first I trained with other, more experienced volunteers to learn about the routine tasks that must be done daily (clean/feed/treat our residents and patients as needed). Then I was assigned a permanent shift (~ 2 hrs of

my time per week). Hah, again. Then there were birds that needed to be rescued and transported to SBWS for treatment and rehab. And there were educational and promotional events where I could help. And there was even some admin stuff I could help out with! And I was hooked even more.

I’ve been a volunteer for about 2 ½ years now, and find all aspects of the work that we do at SBWS to be extremely rewarding. Having now been involved in in a variety of Sea Biscuit operations, I’ve gained a ton of education, knowledge, skills and experience, and it seems like I’m learning something new all the time. I am definitely hooked.

There is such a great need locally for the services that Sea Biscuit Wildlife Shelter provides. Because the organization is sustained primarily

through volunteer efforts and monetary donations, the opportunity to contribute is huge, and the needs are ongoing. I would encourage anyone with interest to contact Mary Ellen Rogers directly to learn how they can get involved.

It is very gratifying for me to know that I am helping to make a difference in the lives of these animals, and to be part of the team that gives their best efforts, every day, to do what we can to help fulfill Mary Ellen’s vision and the mission of Sea Biscuit Wildlife Shelter.

Check out our website <https://www.seabiscuitwildlifeshelter.org/> and our postings on our Facebook page for more information about this amazing organization. Maybe you’ll get hooked, too!

CURRENT PATIENTS...



Every summer, migrating shearwaters wash up on our beaches because they aren’t able to get enough food to make it to South America when the Atlantic is rough and the sargassum weed they feed in is torn apart. We do our best to help.

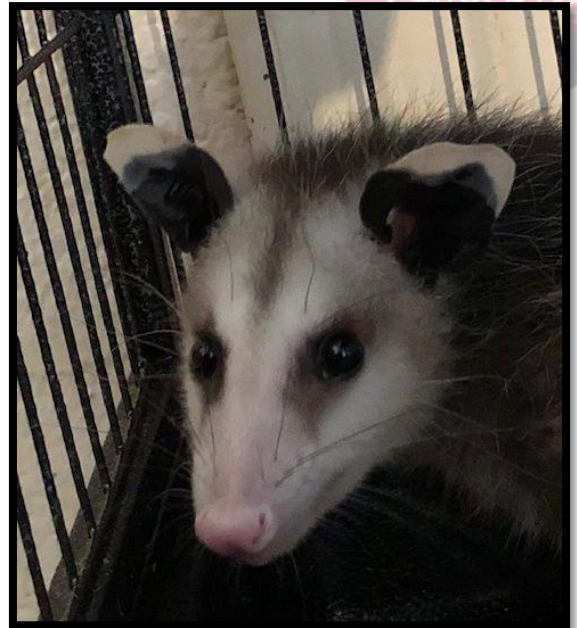
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Juvenile Anhinga found in a subdivision backyard near Sunset Beach is very underweight and not flying. She's making progress every day with lots of fresh live small fish.

Wildlife rehab is not a paying position and lots of little mammals like possums squirrels and fawns rely on us to help them grow up. We hope more folks become involved in their care. The rewards are a sense of great satisfaction and giving back to the environment.



Barred Owl hit by a car is also improving daily. His leg is bruised and his foot is not grabbing well but he has no broken bones and we expect a full recovery.





BY THE NUMBERS

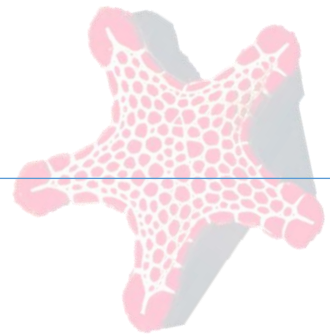
As of this writing (July 17) we've admitted 266 animals for care. There were 15 others held over for continuing care from 2018. 284 incoming total so far in 2019

Because there is no other permitted rehab facility in Brunswick County available right now, we've accepted 21 possums, 5 fawns and 3 bunnies. 17 birds are unprotected species like pigeons and starlings. But the overwhelming majority of our patients are federally protected birds representing 50 different species from hummingbirds to pelicans and great blue herons

Pelagic species such as shearwaters and scoters come ashore either dead or dying from emaciation during their migration. It is so sad to see them washing ashore on our beaches each year. We do what we can to make their final days comfortable and stress free. Several were humanely euthanized

30% of all the incoming we were able to treat have been released to return to the wild

15% are still in care and 6% have been transferred to educational facilities!



EXPANSION UPDATE

Since 2007, we have been using ¼ acre of residential land to house and feed more than 500 birds and mammals each year.

Last January, DUKE ENERGY PROGRESS graciously offered the Sea Biscuit Shelter a 20 year lease with 5 year renewals for almost 4 acres of wooded land adjacent to Dutchmans Creek. It's located next to Bill Smith Park, owned by the Town of Oak Island. The town will allow us access through their park so their visitors will also be able to come to our new building and see our resident education birds.

After we signed the lease, we visited the Karen Beasley Turtle Hospital in Surf City for Jean Beasleys advice. We conducted surveys to determine elevations and significant trees. A fencing estimate was acquired and an easement to access the property is being prepared. There are no utilities at the site so we are investigating the costs for power and water and sewer. We are hoping our facility will be a model of "green building" and utilize solar and wind energy. It will be all on one level with public access for programs and training volunteers. Skylights will provide natural light for both the birds and other animals in care.

As soon as those costs are available and the architect, Glenn Willis, and commercial builder, Guy Auger, have determined the total construction costs, we will be launching a campaign for funding

Then we'll need a volunteer with grant writing and fundraising experience. Is it you?



EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS



Our Mission Statement tells that we rescue, rehab and release wild birds AND assist in research and education on their behalf.

Every year we conduct local tours of the facility for environmental groups and have outreach programs open to the public. Our statistics and birds provide data for the Natural Science Museum in Raleigh, the NC Wildlife Resources Commission and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

30 programs have been completed and our education birds continue to delight and enlighten the visitors. Benson the Barred Owl and Tim the pelican are the crowd favorites!

HAPPY ENDINGS



HOW TO HELP!

If you would like to volunteer or make a donation, please call Mary Ellen at (910) 278-7871 in need of paper towels, cleaning supplies, fresh fish and dry pet foods and seeds.



WHERE TO FIND US!

On Facebook:

Sea-Biscuit-Wildlife-Shelter/
Blog:

<http://seabiscuitshester.blogspot.com/>

Call:

(910) 278-7871

Visit:

(by appt only)

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