



It was probably unintentional...an accident.

Earlier this year, an injured anhinga was brought to South Florida Wildlife Center with thick fishing line protruding from her mouth. The bird was thin, but feisty, with wounds on both sides of her mouth and clearly in pain. An X-ray revealed that the line was connected to a large hook in the bird's stomach—one of the largest we have ever seen ingested.

It was probably unintentional...an accident. The last thing anyone wants to do is inflict harm to an innocent creature, but mishaps like this occur daily. Some birds get hooked, but many become entangled in a web of discarded or broken monofilament line.

Pelicans, who stalk fishing spots hoping for handouts, are the most frequent victims, but we see many ibis, gulls, cormorants, gannets, terns, herons, egrets, frigatebirds, anhinga and other wildlife fall prey as well.

This anhinga's prognosis was guarded when she arrived, but Dr. Gardner

was able to retrieve the hook during surgery and the patient was released back to nature about 1 month later. Fortunately, thanks to the generous support of friends like you, we had the proper medical equipment such as a ventilator and X-ray machine on site for surgery, as well as the needed pain medications, antibiotics, and gastric protectants to help her through recovery and rehabilitation.

Many hooked or entangled birds are far less lucky, suffering and dying alone and in pain. The best way we can help is to stop accidents from happening in the first place.

Your support is funding a key part of our mission—educating our community. For example, SFWC signs have been posted at local fishing spots explaining what to do if an accident occurs. Accompanying these signs are bird-safe monofilament line and hook disposal tubes. We're making a difference, but we can do more.

Your tax-deductible gift today will go to work immediately educating our community and protecting and preserving the indigenous wildlife we know and cherish.

For the animals,

Renata

Dr. Renata Schneider
SFWC Director of Wildlife
Rehabilitation

IN THIS ISSUE

- COVER STORY - Preventing Hook/Line Injuries
- Hook & Line Medical Treatment
- Rehabilitation - Flight Cage
- Volunteer Spotlight
- What Can I Do?
- Shop Amazon Smile



Photo by: Aaron Ansarov

Hook and Line Medical Treatment

With the fall and winter migration comes the increased risk and occurrence of fishing hook-and-line injuries to pelagic birds. These patients often come to SFWC with complex injuries that require long-term rehabilitative care. In addition to an expert team of professional staff, we have a dedicated and critical volunteer base generously contributing time to assist in the medical, rehabilitation, and animal care departments. Saving these wildlife patients is only possible because of the donations that fund SFWC's trauma facility.

So, exactly how do the staff and volunteers at SFWC treat the seabirds that come to us with hook-and-line injuries?

Fishing hooks:

If a patient has swallowed a hook or has an imbedded hook, our veterinarians have several ways to remove it:

- Induce safe regurgitation of the hook.
- Enlist a slender-armed staff member to reach down into the stomach of a heavily sedated patient to pull out the hook manually—a technique most commonly used on pelicans.
- Perform abdominal exploratory surgery to find and remove the hook from the stomach.
- When imbedded, the hook is cut and removed, and the wound is treated.



Fishing line:

Line injuries occur when a bird becomes tangled. SFWC treats these injuries with:

- Medications to improve blood flow and physical therapy if circulation to the limbs has been affected.
- Medications and laser treatment for inflammation.
- Antibiotics for infection.
- Critical supportive care to patients who may be too exhausted from their attempts to free themselves from the line that they have no energy left to move or even eat.



Turtles, too!

Birds are not the only patients we see with hook-and-line injuries. Turtles like softshells and sliders with hooks in their faces, eyes, or throats come to the Center through our donor—and volunteer—supported ambulance service or are brought in by compassionate community members.



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Supporting: South Florida Wildlife Center Inc.
South Florida Wildlife Center Inc.
Location: Fort Lauderdale, FL | Year Founded: 1985

Mission: Protecting Wildlife through Rescue, Rehabilitation, and Education

Programs: Wildlife Program

Share your support.  

Birds are

Taking Flight – Thanks to Your Support!

Flight conditioning is the final step of rehabilitation for all raptors at SFWC because of illness or injury. Our patients rely on donor support for the entire process of their treatment and care, including the use of two on-site flight cages.

The larger structure measures 80 feet in total length, with an L-shaped corner for practicing navigation and perches of varying heights and textures to accommodate the various types of talons and feeding behavior of more than a dozen different species. We can even modify with accessories like pools for Osprey to feed on fish, large boxes for Barn Owls who prefer to roost in cavities, and foliage or sprinklers for an enriched environment that mimics the wild outdoors.

Flight cages aid in preparing birds for release back to nature.



Photos by: Aaron Ansarov & Toby Blades

We cannot release these birds back to nature until we are sure they have the endurance and skills to successfully live in the wild. These flight enclosures provide the space for us to monitor the stamina of raptors of all sizes as they build up their strength prior to release.

Ongoing maintenance, such as the re-roofing recently done thanks to a generous grant, is the key to keeping these spaces in good condition for the birds that use them. Beyond the medical treatments that may be needed for each case, on average \$200 pays for the care of an adult raptor and \$960 pays for the care of an orphaned baby raptor, in our care longer while growing until ready for release.

What can I do? How can I help? What do you need?

Janice Mancini Del Sesto, Sr. Director of Development

These words are music to our ears when you ask. Let us count the ways... donate, support, contribute, give, get, volunteer, help, recruit, enlist, educate, inform...there are so many productive options and opportunities for you to truly make a difference and feel heart felt satisfaction through your involvement.

SFWC could not fulfill its mission to rescue, rehabilitate, and release thousands of animals each year without the hundreds of volunteers who help us both onsite and in their own communities and neighborhoods. Volunteers are here seven days a week in the hospital, nursery, habitats, kitchens, admissions, and administrative offices. Our volunteers help feed babies, prepare food, clean habitats, and do data entry and filing. Offsite our friends host events in their homes or with their clubs to introduce and educate the community about SFWC and enlist support. Volunteers are trained to do rescues and releases. There's a job for everyone who wants to help.

And of course, we couldn't carry out our important mission without the generosity of those who invest in

and ensure the health and vitality of our native wildlife through financial contributions. Every single dollar makes a difference! If your employer is willing to match your donation or makes charitable contributions, please ask for their support.

SFWC receives no city, state, county or federal government support. All of our support comes from local businesses, foundations, and compassionate and generous people like you. Recently we received donations from two different middle school aged children who raised money for SFWC through their own creative efforts this summer. One advertised his dog walking services to neighbors stating that all proceeds would be donated to SFWC. The other helped entertain younger children at home to raise money for the Center.

How can you help? Make the most generous donation you can and give us a call to talk about other ways to "contribute."



Photos by: Christine Capozziello



An Eye for Wildlife

Robert Swinger, DVM, DACVO – Vo

For Robert Swinger, DVM, contributing to SFWC began with rescuing a Cooper's Hawk.

Even though it was Friday rush-hour traffic on I-95, Dr. Swinger and his technician stopped to pick up the injured raptor from the side of the road. That night, they stabilized the hawk in their own clinic and then brought the bird to SFWC's wildlife hospital the next day.

His experience is a perfect example of how local veterinarians can partner with SFWC to help wildlife, even if they usually see



Wheels for Wildlife Vehicle Donation Program

For more information about SFWC's vehicle donation program, visit www.WheelsForWildlife.com or call (855) 647-1618. Donate cars, trucks, RVs, motorcycles or boats—running or not. Vehicles can be towed for free from anywhere in the U.S. On average, SFWC receives 80% of the proceeds from vehicles sold at auction.

Advocating for Education—Doubling Her Impact for Wildlife

Eileen Snitzer, SFWC Volunteer and Donor

Volunteering in the wildlife nursery initially, Eileen Snitzer especially loves opossums. “I used to be terrified of them, especially when they’re standing on my front porch,” she admits. “But now I appreciate them for how important they are in the environment. I’ve learned so much more about them. They’re not out to hurt you.”

An advocate of education, she puts up flyers each spring to caution against “kidnapping” baby birds who really are not orphans, just fledging out of the nest and perhaps found on the ground because they are new to flying.

“People are very well meaning, they may just not have the information,” she explains. “I had no idea either, before I started volunteering at the Center.”

Eileen has seen the wildlife center from its earlier days with just one permanent building (the hospital) through today with a separate nursery and numerous other structures. Another change has been the increase in training for

volunteers, which she says is a very valuable benefit.

Her first involvement with SFWC was a project through her workplace, American Express, which provided grant funding and 50 volunteers to build a walkway (including laying rebar and pouring cement!) from the hospital to the on-site bird-of-prey habitat.

After starting to volunteer regularly, she has done a wide variety of tasks—cleaning cages and feeding babies in the nursery, fostering animals during storms, landscaping habitats, outreach tabling at community events, even laundry! “There are all kinds of ways people can give of their time,” she says. Her employer also matches charitable donations and has a grant program,

recognizing employees like Eileen who volunteer for nonprofits.

“It’s definitely worth checking if a company does that type of philanthropy,” Eileen says. “I’m fortunate enough to work for an organization that has an ethos of giving back to the community.”

When she’s not working or volunteering, Eileen is an avid gardener and likes to be outside. “I have a healthy respect for all wildlife.”



Photo by: Christine Capozziello

Volunteer

domestic patients like he does in his own private practice, Animal Eye Guys of South Florida and the affiliated Premier Veterinary Specialties.

Consulting on cases is another example. Dr. Swinger’s extensive knowledge of eye issues in animals and generous contribution of time has helped countless wildlife patients who otherwise might not have been able to survive in the wild.

“Most trauma cases involve retinal detachments, intraocular hemorrhage, and corneal ulcerations,” according to Dr. Swinger. “It is very important for us to return vision to these animals; without good vision, most fall to prey species in the wild or cannot find food and thrive.



Vision and comfort are key!”

He recalls one special case of a Great Blue Heron who needed a corneal transplant to maintain vision—the first surgery of its kind in this species.

“We performed a corneal transplant using a disc of A-Cel—this material acts as scaffolding and becomes new corneal tissue,” Dr. Swinger explains. “Our procedure did open the doors for others to do this surgery.”

Dr. Swinger says this type of volunteering is valuable for him and for his interns who join him on consultation visits.

“Volunteering at the SFWC allows me a chance to step out of my normal day,” he

says. “I get the opportunity to work with a talented group of animal enthusiasts and veterinarians and help animals that otherwise would not be helped. Being able to give back and provide medical services for animals without owners, with the only goal of getting them back into the wild, is very rewarding and uplifting for me.”

Because of donor support and dedicated volunteers—including veterinary specialists like Dr. Swinger—SFWC is making a difference for wildlife.



Photo by: Christine Capozziello



South Florida WILDLIFE CENTER

In partnership with The Humane Society of the United States

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Email: info@southfloridawildlifecenter.org

HOURS OF OPERATION:

8am to 6pm ET

365 days a year



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Planned Giving

Planned gifts have a significant positive impact on our organization and our ability to properly care for the animals entrusted to us now and in the future.

For information about planned giving opportunities, please contact Jan Del Sesto at 954-524-6344.



Words cannot express how grateful we are for the photo contributions of **Toby Blades, Aaron Ansarov, Christine Capozziello, Brian Jackson** and so many other volunteers and staff members. Your photos speak for themselves as they embody the beauty and heartfelt importance of our mission.

