

WILDSIDE

South Florida Wildlife Center's Quarterly Newsletter | Education | Patient Updates | Events



LOOKING BACK
at our journey
through COVID-19

Learn How To Be A
HEMOCARE HERO



South Florida **WILDLIFE CENTER**

Saving Wildlife in Our Urban Jungle

Staff:

Executive Director
Alessandra Medri

Senior Development Director
Kari Allen, MBA

**Director of Outreach
and Volunteer Services**
Carolina Segarra

Medical Director
Antonia Gardner, DVM

Veterinarian
Renata Schneider, DVM

Office Manager
JoAnne Mayz

Rehabilitation and Release Supervisor
Mariangelique Diaz Fallick

Clinic Supervisor
Christel Sama

Nursery Supervisor
Jessica Sayre Sonzogni

Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator
Julie D'Errico

Facilities Manager
Glenn Georgis

Maintenance Technician
Anthony Weare

Community Service Coordinators:
Sharon Gallardy
Joshua Rodriguez
Jordan Wheatley

Wildlife Rehabilitation Specialists:
Sanita Bromfield
Erika Dukes
Nick Sonzogni
Karen Rossi
Melanie Lemieux
Deanna Duskin
Maria Vanegas

Veterinary Assistants:
Sandy Pagel
Shelby Whitebread

@SouthFloridaWildlifeCenter
southfloridawildlifecenter.org
3200 SW 4th Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33315
954.524.4302

SOUTH FLORIDA'S **WILDSIDE**

Our mission:
**RESCUE
REHABILITATE
RELEASE & EDUCATE**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

04 Message from our
Executive Director

06 Meet Blue!

08 Our journey through COVID-19

10 | Past and Upcoming Events

12 | Quarter in Review

15 | Become a HomeCare Hero

16 | Volunteer Spotlight: George Hill

18 | Thank you!



Cover photo credit, juvenile Tern by Carlos Paillaca



*This Gopher tortoise was found
wandering around and brought to
us for a quick health evaluation
before being released.*



HELLO & WELCOME

This Raccoon photo was proudly taken by Jeffrey Gammon and submitted as a contender for our 2021 Wildlife Photography Contest.

The Center has seen many changes over its 51-year history. Many of you have taken that journey with us; for the newcomers, we welcome you aboard! As we embark on this next chapter, we are excited about the projects we have planned to build local awareness, launch educational initiatives, and provide innovative medical care—all the while involving you in everything we do! Our goal in 2021 is to grow our community of advocates, volunteers, and neighborhood experts. With your help, South Florida Wildlife Center will stretch its lifesaving care and transformational services further than it ever has before! Every patient that comes through our hospital doors has a story and a life worth protecting. Thank you for empowering us to care for and prepare them for a new life back in the wild.

Message from **ALESSANDRA MEDRI** Executive Director



Thank you for making a difference in the health of South Florida's wildlife! Your generosity has helped over 12,000 animals receive food, rehabilitation, and life-saving veterinary care this past year. Many have already been rehabilitated and released back into the wild because of donors and friends like you. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we never rested and continued treating both local and migratory patients. Following appropriate precautions and guidelines, we have been able to relaunch our volunteer program (thank you to all who have signed up!), and our foster care programs for the adorable babies we have already admitted this season.

We look forward to increasing our impact and empowering the community on how we can all coexist with wildlife. While the animals we have cared for this year cannot say thank you... we can! On their behalf, thank you! We are so thankful to have supporters like you making a difference in these helpless animals' lives. If you have not heard the news already, South Florida Wildlife Center is once again an independent organization. On July 1st, 2020, we became unaffiliated with the Humane Society of the United States and extended our lease at our current location through 2025. Following that change, the Board invited me to join South Florida Wildlife Center as Executive Director. After 25 years of working in animal welfare and environmentally focused agencies, I am eager to continue moving the SFWC mission forward. Thank you for supporting the health of South Florida's wildlife and environment.

Warm regards
Alessandra Medri
Executive Director



The South Florida Wildlife Center earned a 2021 Platinum Seal of Transparency! Now, everyone can see our strategy, metrics, and achievements. Check out our updated non-profit profile on Candid: www.guidestar.org/profile/23-7086391



This handsome Red-tailed hawk spent four days in the wildlife hospital ICU after a delivery driver accidentally hit him while driving. He was successfully released soon after!

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT



Northern Yellow Bat

The northern yellow bat (*Lasiurus intermedius*) is one of Florida's larger bat species, with a wingspan of 14 to 16 inches and a body length of about 2.8 inches. They are found throughout Florida, except the Florida Keys. Its long, thick fur varies in color from yellowish- to grayish-brown. This enables it to be well camouflaged in its preferred roost habitat of dead palm fronds.

This patient came in dehydrated and disoriented but was quickly released after successful treatment!

Gray Fox

The gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) is a species of fox found in North and South America. They have salt and pepper colored fur with patches of white and orange around their faces. A gray fox is 10-15 pounds and is 3 ft long. Every year we see babies (kits) who were orphaned by their moms due to car accidents or other casualties or who were “kitnapped” by folks who thought they were abandoned. As good as our intentions are, its best to always watch from a distance and give mom a chance to return, since more often than not, she is out hunting for food. We have received 3 kits so far this year but are happy to report that 2 were reunited with mom and she took them to a safer location and will finish raising them.



LOOKING BACK at



Great Blue heron with a glove stuck in its beak.



Balloon and glove pieces regurgitated by a vulture during treatment.

our journey through COVID-19

COVID-19 hit everyone pretty hard this past year. As the situation with COVID-19 raised concerns, we wanted to assure you that the South Florida Wildlife Center continued to fulfill its commitment to sick and injured wildlife while dealing with reduced staffing and the critical need for social distancing. No matter the situation in the world, our wildlife patients rely on us each day for medical care, food, rehabilitation, and clean, healthy habitats. We continued to uphold our commitment to their recovery without compromising the health to our staff and volunteers for a safe and secure workplace. **This past year, your support has mattered more than ever and, thanks to you, we were able to continue our mission and**

help 8,979 patients from last March to this March tallying over 291 total species.

Many of you stepped up and directly helped us with protective gear, crafting face masks and shipping us latex gloves during the global shortage.

Unfortunately, where there hasn't been a shortage of masks and gloves is in our environment--an issue we are gravely concerned about. As facial coverings and disposable gloves are recommended, if not required, those not properly disposed of have caused great havoc amongst our wildlife and we have unfortunately seen several patients who have suffered terrible injuries due to entanglement and consumption.

If you are wearing a single-use face mask and disposable gloves, make sure to **dispose of them properly!**



Never litter them on the ground and double check where you are tossing them is secure. When throwing away your face mask, snip the ear loops in half with a pair of scissors. This way, even if it does happen to cross paths with wildlife, it will not cause tangling. Make sure all disposable gloves are placed in trash cans and not in the recycling bin.

Shop for reusable face masks to cut down on the use of plastic. We partnered with ReelHead to develop a Sun Protective Mask. Check them out at reelhead.com

Follow us on social media to learn more.

[@SouthFloridaWildlifeCenter](https://www.instagram.com/SouthFloridaWildlifeCenter) | [#SFWC](https://twitter.com/SFWC)



SPRING 2021 BEACH CLEAN-UP

On Saturday April 17th, the South Florida Wildlife Center along with the Green Advisory Board of Dania Beach hosted a clean up on Dania Beach in honor of Earth Day. Over 500 lbs of trash were collected by over 200 volunteers. To help the community understand the effects of pollution on wildlife, we told the story of 5 Brown Pelicans who were admitted due to fishing line and hook injuries and after months of rehabilitation were released back out to the wild at the end of this event.



Check out our social media for all the events we are participating in!

[@SouthFloridaWildlifeCenter](https://www.facebook.com/SouthFloridaWildlifeCenter) | [#SFWC](https://www.instagram.com/SFWC)

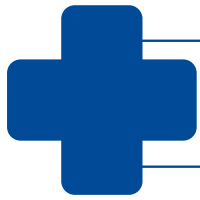




Special thanks to ReelHead Apparel and Stoked on Salt for sponsoring items in our raffle and to Home Depot for providing the buckets and gloves for the event.

FIRST QUARTER IN REVIEW

January 1, 2021 – March 31, 2021



Total Patients **1,879**

Total Species **137**

Birds **1,075**

Mammals **715**

Reptiles **86**

Amphibians **3**



Volunteers/Interns/Externs

86



Hours
Donated

2,858

Who We Care For...



Northern raccoon

Meet some of our patients this quarter.

Coyote



Sharp-shinned hawk



Masked booby



Red Rat snake



Blue jays



Gray squirrel





These Virginia opossums returned from HomeCare to continue their rehabilitation before release into the wild.



Our Wildlife Ward, always full of Royal Terns and Brown Pelicans during early spring! We love releasing these patients at the beach nearby.

Become a HomeCare Hero!

Did you know you can volunteer to help animals without coming to the South Florida Wildlife Center for regular shifts?

If you live in the tri-county area, we are looking for compassionate, committed individuals to help us hand-rear young mammals and birds from home! You will receive instruction and support from SFWC staff as you feed and care for orphaned infants in your home; then you will bring the animals back to SFWC for final rehabilitation and release!

[Click HERE for our HomeCare application!](#) 



Volunteer

Volunteers, interns, and externs play a critical role at the South Florida Wildlife Center by increasing our ability to rescue and rehabilitate sick, injured, and orphaned wildlife. We have opportunities available in wildlife rehabilitation, veterinary medicine, our nursery, outreach and education, and more.

New Volunteer Orientations are held monthly.

[Click HERE for our to see all of our volunteer opportunities!](#) 

Support

Follow us on social media and share what we are up to. Join us for events and help us spread awareness about wildlife protection and species preservation. Donate items from our wish lists or ask us what we are in most need of.

[@SouthFloridaWildlifeCenter](#) | [#SFWC](#)



Volunteer Spotlight

GEORGE HILL, JR.

Never has there been a volunteer so accepted into the flock...

George Hill came to the South Florida Wildlife Center in 2017 as a volunteer in the maintenance department. Choosing this department was a way to challenge his ability to endure the south Florida elements after retiring from a long career with Bell South. Being a south Florida native, George has always had an affinity for wildlife, especially Pelicans. When our need for rescues became apparent to George, he transitioned into a rescue volunteer. His charismatic and calming presence became widely known with staff, volunteers, and the public. To our pleasure, George transitioned to a full-time staff member as a rescue driver shortly after.

In early 2020, as our transition to independence grew closer, George

chose to shift back to volunteering. Now returned to his original role of volunteering with our maintenance team, he has had his hand in every major and minor habitat improvement on the property. From filling dumpsters, hauling wheelbarrows full of sand across the property, or refurbishing whole habitats, his list of contributions is lengthy. Without a doubt, George's service has made a world of difference for staff. Most importantly, every patient on property has benefited from his hard work. As George leaves the state of Florida and his time at the South Florida Wildlife Center comes to an end, we hope nothing but the absolute best for him and his family and will forever appreciate the tremendous work he did for this center.

Brown pelicans are some of our more frequent patients. If you have hooked a bird, do not cut the line! Reel. Remove. Release. If the injury is too severe, give us a call at (954) 524 - 4302.

*George,
The patients, staff, fellow volunteers,
and the community wish you well in
your future endeavors and we will
miss you terribly.*

*Thank you, from the bottom of
our hearts, for all the help and for
supporting our mission.*





THANK YOU!

When urban development began harming wildlife in south Florida, you stepped up for the animals in need. You've rallied around the Center for over 50 years, collecting supplies, volunteering your time, making donations, crafting items for our nursery, advocating for humane coexistence in your neighborhoods, and rescuing wildlife in peril. You have helped us become one of the largest, state-of-the-art wildlife trauma hospitals in the country, able to expertly respond to severe injuries and

illnesses and successfully raise orphaned wildlife for release back into the wild. South Florida Wildlife Center is the inspirational product of your tireless dedication to the region's beautiful and vital local and migratory species. The mission and challenges are far from over—we continue to admit an alarming number of animals with limited resources and staff—yet, together, we are confident we will continue to hurdle all obstacles in the way of saving our precious wildlife.

Special thanks to these generous community partners:



SFWC Wish List

Our lifesaving work requires a variety of items to treat injured and orphaned wildlife. The following is our "Wish List" of supplies needed to keep our wildlife hospital operating 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Many of the specific items listed below can be found and purchased through our **Amazon Baby Registry** or **Chewy Wishlist** click on the below link to see how you can support South Florida's wildlife.



BABY SHOWER 2021

To all who donated virtually or drove by during our baby shower, our orphaned babies **THANK YOU!**



Meet some of the babies who will benefit from these donations...



Virginia opossum



Gray squirrel



Northern mockingbird



Northern raccoon

Sleep like a baby

squirrel, opossum, blue jay, pelican, hawk...

It's baby season, they all need your help.

Donate Today

or include a legacy of wildlife rescue in your estate plans



**South Florida
WILDLIFE CENTER**
Saving Wildlife in Our Urban Jungle

Learn more

southfloridawildlifecenter.org

954.524.4302

info@southfloridawildlifecenter.org

3200 SW 4th Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33315

Hours: 9:00am - 5:00pm

[@SouthFloridaWildlifeCenter](https://www.instagram.com/SouthFloridaWildlifeCenter) | [#SFWC](https://www.facebook.com/SFWC)

