

ANNUAL REPORT

2021









STAFF

Executive Director Alessandra Medri

Director of Development Anne Marie Taglienti

**Director of Outreach** Carolina Montano

Medical Director Antonia Gardner, DVM

Office Manager JoAnne Mayz

**Nursery Supervisor** Jessica Sayre Sonzogni

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**Release Supervisor** Mariangelique Diaz Fallick

Clinic Supervisor Christel Sama

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Lead Community Service Coordinator

**Community Service Coordinator** Janina Morejon

**Development Specialist** Giannina Orozco

Outreach Specialist Katelyn Forgham

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Wildlife Rehabilitators:

Nick Sonzogni Jessica Ferrigno Lisa Bergwin Joscelyn Phillips Christian Park Tristan Colon Erika Piechowski Oasis Saenz Crysta

Clinic Team Lead Shelby Whitebread

**Veterinary Assistants:** Sandy Pagel Hailey Rogala

Facilities Manager Glenn Georgis

Anna Stryjek

Facility Technicians: Anthony Weare Adam Sheets

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS** 

Jeffrey J. Arciniaco President, Board Chairman

Thomas J. Sabatino Jr. Vice Chairman, Secretary

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Dear Friends of the South Florida Wildlife Center,

For 53 years, the South Florida Wildlife Center has been an invaluable resource to serve wildlife and citizens in the tri-county area. We are grateful for our supporters who have helped us continue our work to provide rescue, rehabilitation, and life-saving veterinary care each day of the year.

As the largest volume wildlife hospital in Florida, we work tirelessly to provide treatment and specialized care for native animals, as well as the many migratory species that visit Florida. In 2021, we treated 9,098 patients including 48 on Florida's threatened species list and 15 on the Federal threatened species list. We treated 163 Brown Pelicans – more than double the number of patients in prior years.

This has been our first year operating as an independent, self-governed organization unaffiliated with the Humane Society of the United States and we are proud of our many accomplishments. The South Florida Wildlife Center is committed to continuing our work as the leading wildlife rescue, rehabilitation, and release organization in the region.

We are focused on providing the highest quality care for our animals with state-of-the-art technology for acute wildlife trauma. We've developed a robust and community education program to both engage and motivate our next generation to take action to preserve our environment, protect natural resources and teach others to peacefully co-exist with wildlife as their natural Florida habitats diminish.

We are exceptionally proud of the recognition we have received this year. The South Florida Wildlife Center was voted "2021 Top Non-Profit" by GreatNonprofits.org and achieved 2021 GuideStar Platinum Seal of Transparency for excellence. I want to thank our donors, friends, volunteers and employees for their dedication and support. We are so grateful for your compassion and kindness that have truly helped make a difference in our community.

Together, we can make an even greater impact to help injured and orphaned animals and educate our communities about peaceful human coexistence with wildlife and their vital role in our precious ecosystem.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey J. Arciniaco President and Chairman

# **2021 ACHIEVEMENTS**

#### ONE FULL YEAR AS AN INDEPENDENT ORGANIZATION

As of July 1, 2020, the South Florida Wildlife Center has established itself as an independent, self-governed 501c(3) organization that is no longer affiliated with Humane Society of the United States. We currently serve the Tri-County areas of Palm Beach, Broward and Miami Dade Counties.



### LAUNCH OF A NEW WILDLIFE EDUCATION AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

The Outreach and Community Services Department is incredibly proud of the first-ever Wildlife Education Ambassador Program at SFWC. The presentation of ambassador animals can provide the compelling experience needed for guests to gain and maintain personal connections with their own relationships with nature. Additionally, it provides a positive outcome for an animal that cannot be released due to injuries or other behavioral issues. Appropriate use of ambassador animals is an essential and powerful educational tool that provides various benefits to our wildlife educators seeking to convey cognitive and compelling messages about local conservation and our wildlife neighbors.

## GREW THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM AND OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED

Volunteers, interns, and externs play a critical role at South Florida Wildlife Center by increasing our ability to rescue and rehabilitate sick, injured, and orphaned wildlife. This year, we created new volunteer positions to help our different departments, including admissions, outreach and education, development, and wildlife rehabilitation. At the same time, new educational programs such as the Veterinary Technician Externship and Wildlife Hospital Internship were added for students seeking specialized experience. We also revamped our foster program, now the HomeCare Heroes Program, to include more support for those fostering wildlife from home.



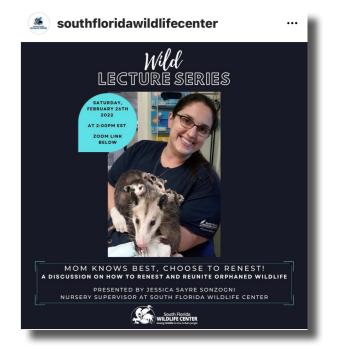


#### **SOLIDIFIED NEW PARTNERS**

The South Florida Wildlife Center announced at the end of 2021 that it has formed an international partnership with the Wildlife Recovery Center-LIPU (Italian League for the Protection of Birds) in Rome, Italy. LIPU is a national Italian charitable organization founded in 1965 and devoted to protecting the country's wildlife with a particular focus on birds. It has a membership of 42,000 and is the Italian partner of Bird Life International. Moreover, it is one of the most important Italian environmentalist organizations with World Wildlife Fund Italia, Legambiente, and Greenpeace Italia. Through this prestigious international alliance, the LIPU Wildlife Center of Rome and SFWC will share valuable information, foster collaboration, and promote international externships to cross-train our support teams in all areas of rescue, rehabilitation, and outreach.

### CREATED NEW OUTREACH AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The South Florida Wildlife Center offered its first series of free public lectures this year on various topics presented by professionals in their respective fields. We heard from a diverse range of colleagues in animal welfare, students, and staff and want to thank everyone in our community for contributing to the success of the 2021 Wild Lecture Series. We hope those who joined us were able to learn something new about nature and how it correlates to wildlife and what we do at SFWC.





#### **DEVELOPED NEW WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED**

For those who haven't subscribed yet, SFWC has been producing monthly e-newsletters where different patients are highlighted, fun facts are shared, and opportunities to get involved are advertised. We have also started doing Quarterly Newsletters that are also shared via email but are also printed and mailed to give our donors a closer look at the work we do every quarter. In 2022, our new website will also be debuted, allowing for more interaction in a more user-friendly fashion. Lastly, we've created different opportunities for the community to get involved in supporting the center through our now Annual Wildlife Photography Contest, Baby Shower for our Wildlife Nursery, Drink 4 The Locals charity events and other amazing fundraisers!

# 9,098 PATIENTS ADMITTED FROM 281 SPECIES

NATIVE	31KD3 - 33U4
(36.3%)	

**Grey Kingbird** Herring Gull Indigo Bunting Killdeer

21	American Kestrel	36	Laughing Gull
16	American Purple Gallinule	1	Least Bittern
36	American Redstart	7	Least Tern
25	Anhinga	6	Lesser Black-backed Gull
2	Audubon's Shearwater	1	Lesser Scaup
1	Bald Eagle	37	Limpkin
4	Barn Swallow	2	Little Blue Heron
6	Barn owl	1	Little Gull
4	Barred Owl	12	Loggerhead Shrike
5	Belted Kingfisher	1	Louisiana Waterthrush
9	Black Bellied Whistling Duck	1	Magnificent Frigatebird
2	Black Crowned Night Heron	1	Magnolia Warbler
7	Black Duck	1	Marsh Wren
4	Black Skimmer	3	Merlin
11	Black Vulture	1	Mississippi Kite
7	Black-and-white Warbler	13	Mottled Duck
1	Black-bellied Plover	321	Mourning Dove
17	Black-throated Blue Warbler	35	Northern Cardinal
1	Blue Grosbeak	1	Northern Flicker
397	Blue Jay	22	Northern Gannet
10	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	1	Northern Harrier
1	Blue-winged Teal	432	Northern Mockingbird
96	Boat-tailed Grackle	9	Northern Parula
12	Broad-winged Hawk	4	Northern Waterthrush
1	Brown Booby	38	Osprey
167	Brown Pelican	46	Ovenbird
3	Brown Thrasher	34	Painted Bunting
21	Burrowing Owl	10	Palm Warbler
1	Cape May Warbler	1	Pied-billed Grebe
24	Cattle Egret	1	Pileated Woodpecker
1	Chestnut-sided Warbler	1	Pine Warbler
17	Chuck-will's-widow	1	Prairie Warbler
1	Clay-coloured Sparrow	1	Prothonotary Warbler
189	Common Grackle	4	Purple Martin
9	Common Ground Dove	110	Red-bellied Woodpecker
2	Common Loon	4	Red-eyed Vireo
41	Common Moorhen	67	Red-shouldered Hawk
1	Common Myna	7	Red-tailed Hawk
5	Common Nighthawk	2	Red-winged Blackbird
2	Common Snipe	1	Redhead
22	Common Yellowthroat	3	Ring-billed Gull
64	Cooper's Hawk	92	Royal Tern
24	Double-crested Cormorant	2	Ruddy Turnstone
5	Downy Woodpecker	20	Sanderling
5	Eastern Kingbird	3	Sandwich Tern
1	Eastern Phoebe	1	Scarlet Tanager
111	Eastern Screech Owl	2	Sharp-shinned Hawk
1	Eastern Whip-poor-will	2	Short-tailed Hawk
3	Eastern Wood Pewee	5	Snowy Egret
46	Fish Crow	1	Sooty Tern
1	Glossy Ibis	8	Sora
12	Gray Cathird	1	Surf Scoter
51	Great Blue Heron	1	Swainson's Hawk
57	Great Harned Owl	1	Swainson's Warbler
3	Great Horned Owl	4	Tri-colored Heron
39	Green Heron	15	Turkey Vulture

3	Virginia Rail
104	White Ibis
1	White-crowned Pigeon
1	White-eyed Vireo
3	Wilson's Storm Petrel
15	Wood Stork
1	Wood Thrush
3	Worm-eating Warbler
11	Yellow-bellied Sapsucke
18	Yellow-billed Cuckoo

#### **NATIVE MAMMALS - 2713** (29.8%)

Yellow-rumped Warbler

Yellow-throated Warbler

Yellow-crowned Night Heron

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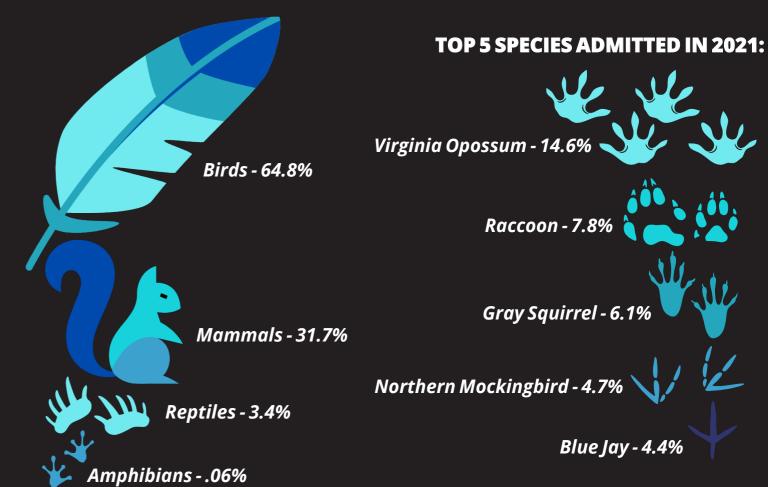
#### **NATIVE REPTILES - 124** (1.4%)

American Red-bellied Turtle

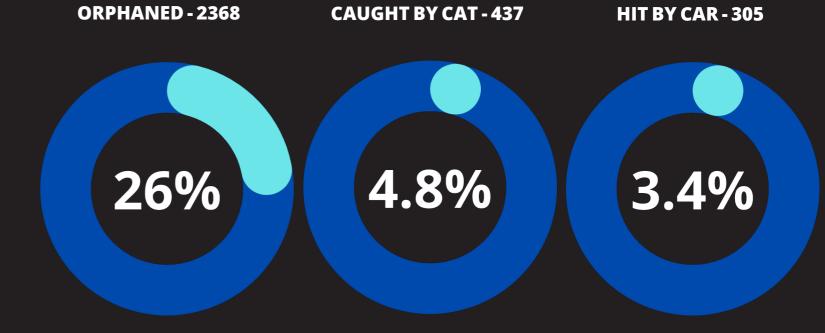
	, arrefreditted beined tale
3	Black Racer
3	Florida Box Turtle
19	Florida Cooter
2	Florida Kingsnake
1	Florida Redbelly Turtle
25	Florida Softshell Turtle
30	Gopher Tortoise
18	Peninsula Cooter
3	Ring-necked Snake

**NON NATIVE BIRDS - 2592** (28.5%)**NON NATIVE MAMMALS - 174** (1.9%)**NON NATIVE REPTILES - 185** (2.0%)**NON NATIVE AMPHIBIANS-6** (.06%)

#### **TOTAL PATIENT DIVERSITY FOR 2021:**



Besides being found weak, sick, injured though the cause is unknown and various other reasons, the top 3 reasons for admissions were:



# WILDLIFE RESCUE

Habitat loss poses the greatest threat to South Florida wildlife. The natural forests, swamps, plains, lakes, and beaches continue to disappear as they are harvested for human consumption and cleared to make way for agriculture, housing, roads, transportation, and the other hallmarks of development.

Important ecological habitats are now forever lost, leaving our wildlife vulnerable to injury, abandonment, animal attacks, starvation, and even death. The Center treats more than 10,000 wildlife patients per year from over 250 different species. The team provides quality, professional care for sick and injured birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians from Palm Beach, Broward and Miami Dade Counties.

We have a standard intake process for each patient, including a full examination with radiographs and lab work if needed. Once completed, we determine the animal's appropriate fluid therapy and nutritional support, as well as any medical treatment or follow-up that may be needed. Depending on the condition of the patient, once the intake process is complete it will either go into our Clinic intensive care unit, Wildlife Ward supportive holding, or out into our specialized habitats.

# WHERE DID OUR PATIENTS COME FROM? **BROWARD COUNTY - 6494 PALM BEACH COUNTY - 791 MIAMI DADE COUNTY - 697 \*OTHER-30** \*\*UNKNOWN - 1086 8.7% \* outside tri-county area 71.4% \*\* location found undisclosed during admission **HOW DID OUR PATIENTS GET HERE?** STAFF **VOLUNTEERS** 12.5% **GOOD SAMARITAN** 83.2%

# REHABILITATION & RELEASE





Our number one goal is to release rehabilitated wild animals back to their natural habitats. SFWC is committed to doing what is right for every individual animal who enters our hospital.

Our release work includes re-nesting baby animals back with their parents and facilitating releases back for animals once they have



# WILDLIFE REHABILITATION

Each patient's rehabilitation plan is rooted in the species' natural history, and their release criteria is based on what abilities the animal will need to survive in the wild. The patient is released once it meets all our health and behavioral standards. Our team of wildlife rehabilitators closely monitors all patients in rehabilitation as they recover and provide ongoing care and checkups as needed. Each patient receives care based on their individual recovery treatment programs for a few days, weeks, or up to several months. This involves several hours a day for feeding, medical care, enclosure development, exercise, and behavioral monitoring and enhancement.

# **SFWC FIRSTS**

SUCCESFULLY RAISING A FLEDGLING RED-TAILED HAWK

After 3 months in rehabilitation for several injuries, the staff successfully raised a fledgling Red-tailed Hawk until fully healed and ready to be released back into the wild. #21-3498 came in emaciated with anemia, a blood parasite called Hemoproteus, and a fractured left leg. Given his weak state and age, the veterinarian opted to treat his fracture with splinting, which can be a challenging treatment to manage in birds and pain medications to keep him comfortable. He adapted surprisingly well to the splint, gaining weight and healing from his anemia on a carefully monitored diet.

#### FOUR NESTLING COOPER'S HAWKS WERE RAISED AND RELEASED

For the first time, four Cooper's Hawks were brought to the center as orphans within days of each other, and after weeks of caring for them and teaching them to hunt, the staff scheduled all 4 for release once they passed flight school.

#21-3569 - was found on ground with no parents in sight

#21-4104 - was found weak/sick

#21-4547 - was found on ground with no parents in sight

#21-4997 - was found weak/sick and had to heal from a keel fracture

#### OUR HIGHEST NUMBER OF BROWN PELICAN PATIENTS EVER ...

From 76 in 2019 to 97 in 2020 to 163 in 2021. Unfortunately, many of these birds came in with human-related injuries. Most common reasons for admission included being entrapped in fishing line, swallowing or being injured by fishing hooks, undetermined physical trauma, vehicle collisions, strandings, and appearing weak/sick from botulism or other natural illnesses.

#### #21-4721 - MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD

In North America, Magnificent Frigatebirds are seen most commonly in Florida. This male was found floating in the water along a beach in Fort Lauderdale. When the patient was captured and transported to us by a volunteer, the vet staff could see it was a little thin and weak but had no other obvious fractures or injuries. After a week of supportive care and close observation, this patient passed its flight test and was released near where it was found. The video of his release can be seen as a post on our social media channels published on June 25th.



#### #21-3026 - COYOTE



Coyotes can be found in all 67 counties of Florida. They arrived in Florida as part of natural range expansion from western states and can now be found in every state but Hawaii. SFWC has seen nine coyotes alone this year, which is far greater than the two admitted in 2020 and two in 2019. The female pup we admitted on Aprill 30th was found alone in the bushes in a Deerfield Beach neighborhood and appeared weak and without a mom nearby. She was safely captured by concerned citizens and transported to our center for evaluation. After deeming she was healthy and was, in fact, being taken care of by her mom, the neighborhood began diligently searching to see if they could find her. After searching for her mom for a few days, she was eventually seen with another baby, and this little one was reunited that same day to be with her family. Re-nesting is important because it allows the animal to grow up in the wild where they belong.

#### #21-1840 - GOPHER TORTOISE

After Broward County Park staff noticed that this Gopher Tortoise appeared odd, he was transported from Deerfield Island and brought to our hospital for evaluation and treated for shell rot. Shell rot is critical to treat because it deteriorates the protective shell of turtles. It is suspected that a non-native turtle spread the shell rot to this tortoise and others on the island. This is one of the many reasons why it is important not to release any pets and non-native animals and plants in parks and natural areas. In a YouTube video created by Broward County Parks on May 19th, you can see this Gopher Tortoise being released back to its burrow on Deerfield Island.

Gopher tortoises are a keystone species, which means that various species rely on this animal for survival. The burrows that they build with their shovel-like legs provide homes to burrowing owls, snakes, frogs, and other species.



# WILDLIFE EDUCATION

Most of the animals who are admitted to our hospital are suffering from injuries that are unfortunately the result of negative interactions with people. Today, wild animals and their environments face many challenges and threats brought on by shrinking habitats, increasing development, and traffic growth. Now more than ever, it is essential to educate our communities about the importance of conservation.

In 2021, the Outreach and Community Services Department was reestablished at SFWC. Several programs were created to increase our efforts to educate the community about wildlife and how we can peacefully co-exist with our wild neighbors.



#### WILDLIFE HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS

As an essential community resource, the Outreach Department is available 365 days a year to intake sick, injured, and orphaned wildlife. From assessing and admitting the animals for care to answering crisis calls for wildlife in need of rescue and providing education during each interaction.

#### WILDLIFE EDUCATION AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

They also provide daily care for the Wildlife Education Ambassador Program animals. The team is responsible for caring for them, offering them a meaningful life while living at SFWC, and sharing their stories to educate the community about wildlife conservation.

#### **OUTREACH AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

The Outreach Department staff also present wildlife education programs at parks, schools, community gatherings, and fundraising events. Our team teaches environmental conservation principles through fun, innovative, and interactive educational activities. This program aims to promote respect and appreciation of nature by teaching children, families, and community members that they can peacefully co-exist with their wildlife neighbors.

#### **VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS**

Lastly, this team oversees a volunteer program of several hundred members, five internship programs, and two externship programs that help run the Center's daily operations while training future professionals.



# COMMUNITY MEMBERS REACHED:

SOCIAL MEDIA	37,63
SUBSCRIBERS	28,504
SPEAKER REQUESTS	2,75
TABLING AT EVENTS	2,320
FUNDRAISERS	926
VIRTUAL SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS	601
WILD LECTURE SERIES	46'
COMMUNITY EVENTS	45
IN PERSON SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS	35
PARK PRESENTATIONS	16'
SFWC WILD TALK & TOURS	98
TOTAL:	74,286

The goal of SFWC's Outreach and Community Services Department is to promote respect and appreciation of nature by teaching children, families, and community members that they can peacefully co-exist with their wildlife neighbors.

The team guides environmental conservation principles through fun, innovative, and interactive educational activities. 2021 was a year of transition for the community as well as we all embarked through this COVID pandemic together. Once deemed safe, later in the year, we developed opportunities to engage the community, introduce our Wildlife Education Ambassador Animals, share their stories, and continue our education efforts virtually, in-person when available, and via all our communication channels.





# **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Our Volunteer Program provides a wide variety of opportunities for interested people to accomplish their personal, professional, philanthropic, and community service goals. Various skills can be learned in each area of the Center. Learning opportunities include interacting with wild animals, properly handling them, preparing nutritious meals, caring for their environments, administering medications, and physical conditioning.



#### **GENERAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM \$ 284,352.58**

204 Volunteers regularly helped in all areas of the Center this year, including Rehab, in the Hospital, assisted in the Nursery, in Community Outreach & Education, and helped with the Center's beautification projects. Other interactions involved field rescues and assisting with fundraising events for a total of 9,963.30 hours.

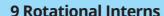
#### ONE DAY VOLUNTEERS

\$ 15,411.60

This year, we were able to host 151 volunteers who volunteered 540 hours at our one day community events.

#### **INTERNSHIPS**

\$ 168, 838.93



7 Wildlife Rehabilitation & Release Interns

**4 Nursery Interns** 

1 Wildlife Hospital Intern

21 interns contributed 5915.87 hours of service.

#### **EXTERNSHIPS**

\$ 62,910.15

**17 Veterinary Externs** 

**1 Veterinary Technician Extern** 

18 externs contributed 2204.28 hours of service.

#### **HOMECARE HEROES**

\$ 108,587.56

25 trained foster parents cared for 221 orphaned animals of 15 different species and provided 3,804.75 hours of care until they were more stable and ready to transition into our nursery.

Market value of service time contributed in 2021 \$640,199.82



# **PROFESSIONAL TRAINING**



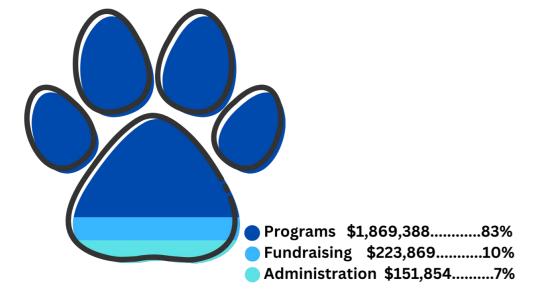


One of our proudest accomplishments is that SFWC is also a teaching hospital that provides several educational programs for veterinary students, future rehabilitators, and others looking to pursue a career in any of the life sciences. Volunteers, interns, and externs play a critical role at the South Florida Wildlife Center and increase our ability to rescue and rehabilitate sick, injured, and orphaned wildlife.



## **2021 FINANCIALS**

The South Florida Wildlife Center is a 501(c)3 non-profit dedicated to protecting and conserving Florida's wildlife. We strive to keep our administrative and fund-raising expenses at a minimum so that we can maximize our dollars and provide the best care for our wildlife patients.



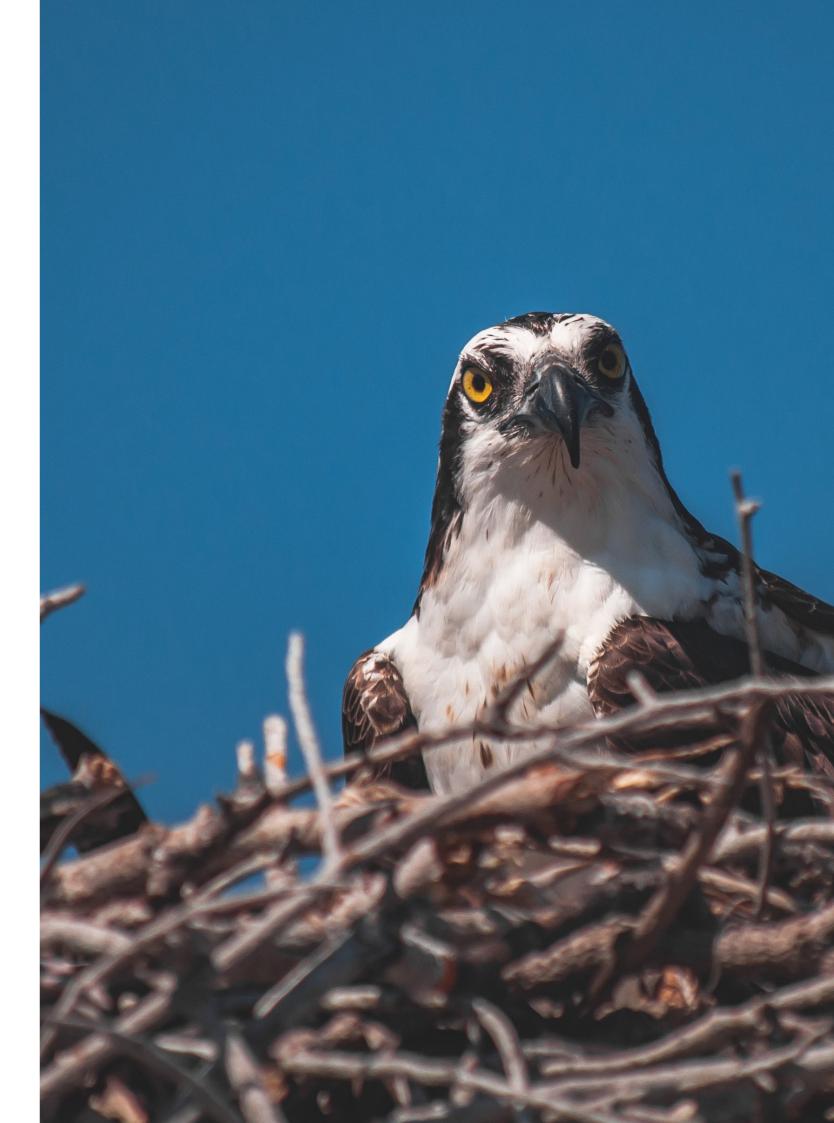
#### **TOTAL EXPENDITURES - \$2,245,111**



Contributions and Bequests \$1,791,	,41367%
Investments \$396,939	15%
Grants \$305,150	11%
Other Donations \$195.727	7%

#### **TOTAL REVENUE - \$2,689,229**

The South Florida Wildlife Center has released this document prior to our 2021 Financial Review and 990 submission to the Internal Revenue Service. All of our current and prior financial reports can be found on our website under the "About Us" tab.



# WAYS-YOU CAN HELP US

#### **Donate**

SFWC receives no state or municipal funding. Make a one-time financial contribution online, by mail or in person.

#### Volunteer

animals or help with our community outreach activities. We have a variety of ways you can get involved at SFWC.

#### **Educate & Advocate**

Join us at our Wild Talks whether at SFWC or at our scheduled park presentations! Meet the staff and some of our Ambassador Animals!

#### Donate a Vehicle

Donate your car, truck, motorcycle, RV, or boat to SFWC. You may qualify for a tax deduction while supporting a cause that is near and dear to your heart!

#### Wish Lists

Caring for our patients requires a lot of time, love, money, and supplies. Donating wish list items helps us with the day-to-day care of these animals and supports our operational needs.

We have a and a generic list on our website and these specialized online Wish Lists:

AMAZON CHEWY

#### **Stay Wild! Adoptions**

Your support of our Stay Wild!
Adoption Program helps to provide the best possible veterinary care, staffing, training, and husbandry, as well as enclosure upkeep for our Wildlife Education Ambassador Animals.

#### **Monthly Gift**

Join the flock! Make a financial contribution each month. Giving monthly is the most powerful way to create a lasting impact and make a difference in saving the wildlife of our urban jungle.

#### Follow Us

Stay updated on patient alerts, upcoming events and features of the amazing work our staff and volunteers do.

#### @SOUTHFLORIDAWILDLIFECENTER

Facebook Instagram YouTube TikTok

#### Subscribe

Sign up to recieve our emails and get monthly updates on what SFWC is doing and ways you can get involved!

#### **Attend our Events**

Whether its our Wildlife Photography Contest, Drink 4 The Locals charity events or other fun activities, stop by and see what we are up to.

#### **Donate your Yard**

If you own property in the tricounty area we serve (Palm Beach, Broward or Miami-Dade) and would be willing to let us release wild animals on your land, we would love to hear from you!

#### **Legacy Gifts**

Leave a Legacy! Make a lasting impact on our environment and for wildlife with a planned gift through SFWC. Your generous gift will help preserve Florida wildlife and conserve the environment for future generations by remembering SFWC in your estate plan.

#### Sponsor

Join the growing group of individuals and corporate sponsors who support our mission of saving injured and orphaned wildlife. As a sponsor, you will receive invitations to our events, recognition on our website and Annual Report, positive media coverage, as well as enhance your visibility within the South Florida business and philanthropic community.

#### Be a HomeCare Hero

Did you know you can volunteer to help animals without coming to SFWC for regular shifts? If you live in the tri-county area, we're looking for compassionate, committed individuals to help us hand-rear young mammals and birds from home! You'll receive instruction and support from SFWC staff as you feed and care for orphaned infants in your home; then you'll bring the animals back to SFWC for final rehabilitation and release.

