SUMMER ISSUE | 2025

SOUTH FLORIDA'S

WILDSIDE

SOUTH FLORIDA WILDLIFE CENTER'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

OUR MISSION: PROTECTING WILDLIFE THROUGH RESCUE, REHABILITATION, AND EDUCATION.

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Help us heal, rehabilitate, and release South Florida's wildlife all year long. By joining our community of monthly donors, you're providing steady, reliable support that allows us to respond to every animal in need — from orphaned opossums to injured owls.

Your ongoing gift means more lifesaving care, more successful releases, and more hope for wildlife. Email development@southfloridawildlifecenter.org to learn more about monthly giving, sponsorships, and more!

Make a lasting impact. Join our flock today!

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South Florida
WILDLIFE CENTER
Saving Wildlife in Our Urban Jungle

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THE HOME DEPOT GOES WILD!

A big thank you to the incredible Home Depot team for rolling up their sleeves and making a difference! Their volunteer project brought much-needed improvements to our facility, helping us better serve wildlife in need.

THANK YOU, ADELE FOR SPONSORING!

We are deeply grateful to Adele Zum for your generous support. Your commitment to wildlife and conservation helps us continue our mission to rescue, rehabilitate, and release animals in need.

MISSED OUR LAST NEWSLETTER?

Don't worry! All of our previous editions are available on our website. From heartwarming rescue stories to important wildlife updates, catch up on everything you might have missed.

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wildlife photography
CONTEST

JUNIOR CATEGORY WINNER

Glide of the Goldeneye
by Rohan Khera

This winning cover photo features a female Common Goldeneye, a diving duck known for its bright yellow eyes and expert underwater hunting skills. These ducks nest in tree cavities, and ducklings leap from high nests shortly after hatching. Fast whistling fliers, they migrate south in winter and can be found on lakes, rivers, and coastal waters across the U.S.

2025 WINNERS

We'd like to extend our heartfelt thanks to **Mark Smith** for serving as this year's judge in our Wildlife Photography Contest! Mark's incredible eye for detail and deep appreciation for wildlife made him the perfect person to help us select our winners, and we can't wait to showcase their stunning work throughout this magazine.

A big thank-you also goes out to **Sawgrass Recreation Park** for generously sponsoring the prizes for our talented winners. And of course, to every participant, thank you for helping us celebrate the beauty of the wildlife all around us. Your photos didn't just raise awareness; they helped raise critical funds that support our wildlife hospital and the life-saving care we provide every day.

MEET MELISSA!

JOIN US IN WELCOMING MELISSA RUBIN – OUR NEWEST BOARD MEMBER

We're delighted to announce that Melissa Rubin has joined the South Florida Wildlife Center's Board of Directors!

Melissa brings decades of expertise in animal welfare and nonprofit leadership, paired with a lifelong dedication to protecting wildlife and the environment. Her passion for compassionate care, advocacy, and strategic growth aligns perfectly with our mission.

During her time at the Humane Society of the United States, Melissa held senior leadership roles overseeing the Animal Rescue, Care, and Sanctuary division - which included, at the time, the South Florida Wildlife Center.

In that capacity, she played a pivotal role in supporting our operations, expanding programs, and strengthening infrastructure.

Today, Melissa serves as Executive Vice President of Advancement at Greater Good Charities, an organization dedicated to helping people, pets, and the planet by responding to urgent needs and amplifying positive impact.

We're honored to welcome her back to SFWC in this new role. Welcome home, Melissa - we're thrilled to have you with us again!

wildlife photography
CONTEST

OVERALL WINNER

Blue Bird of Happiness
by Judy Haran

The Indigo Bunting (Passerina cyanea) is a small yet eye-catching songbird, celebrated for its vibrant coloration and melodious song. During the breeding season, males transform into a brilliant, almost iridescent blue - a hue created not by pigments but by the microscopic structure of their feathers that refracts light. Females and juvenile birds, in contrast, are a warm brown color with subtle hints of blue on the wings or tail, providing them with excellent camouflage while nesting.

These birds breed widely across eastern and central North America, favoring shrubby edges, old fields, and open woodland habitats where dense vegetation offers both foraging and nesting opportunities. After the breeding season, Indigo Buntings embark on a long migration to southern Florida, the Caribbean, and Central America, often traveling at night and navigating by the stars. Their diet is varied and seasonal: they feed primarily on seeds and berries outside of the breeding period, but rely heavily on insects during the nesting season to provide protein-rich food for their growing chicks. Males are highly territorial and are renowned for their sweet, musical songs, which they use both to establish territory boundaries and to attract mates. Females are responsible for building well-hidden, low cup-shaped nests in shrubs or tall grasses, where they typically raise one to two broods each year.

Although currently listed as Least Concern by the IUCN (The International Union for Conservation of Nature), Indigo Buntings face increasing pressures from habitat loss, particularly the clearing of shrublands and field edges they depend on for nesting and feeding. Conservation of these transitional habitats is essential to ensure that this dazzling species continues to thrive across its range.


THANK YOU FOR
ROCKING THE
OCEAN WITH US!

THANK YOU!

A huge thank you to Rock the Ocean, Charleston Coffee Roasters, Inc., and Renüable for making our Summer 2025 Beach Cleanup such a tremendous success!

With their generous support - and the incredible efforts of our volunteers - we welcomed **200 adults and 100 children** who joined us at Dr. Von D. Mizell–Eula Johnson State Park to make a real difference for our coastlines and wildlife.

Together, we removed a staggering **310 pounds** of trash from the beach, helping protect local habitats and raise awareness about the importance of keeping our environment clean and safe for all creatures.

We also want to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who joined us in the unforgettable moment of releasing a Cooper's Hawk back into a clear, wild space. Witnessing a recovered patient return to the skies is what our mission is all about - and your support helps make that possible.

Thank you for being a part of this impactful day!

wildlife photography
CONTEST

REPTILE CATEGORY
WINNER

Young Black Racer
by Sharon O'Brien

The black racer (Coluber constrictor priapus) is a common, non-venomous snake native to the southeastern United States, including much of Florida. True to its name, this species is remarkably slender and known for its incredible speed and agility, which it uses both to capture prey and evade predators. Adults are typically a uniform, glossy black with a distinctive white or gray chin and throat, while juveniles have a patterned, blotched appearance that provides camouflage in their early stages of life.

Unlike many snakes, black racers are primarily diurnal, meaning they are active during the day. They are opportunistic hunters with a varied diet consisting of insects, lizards, frogs, rodents, and occasionally small birds or their eggs. Contrary to what their name might suggest, black racers do not constrict their prey. Instead, they rely on their quick reflexes and strength to overpower and swallow their food whole.

Black racers thrive in a variety of habitats, including forests, fields, wetlands, and suburban areas, often being spotted basking in sunny spots or moving swiftly across open ground. As with many native species, they benefit from conservation efforts that protect natural habitats and educate the public about their ecological importance. By reducing fear and misunderstanding, humans can better coexist with these beneficial snakes that play a vital role in maintaining balanced ecosystems.

HOW ANIMALS BEAT THE SUMMER BLAZE

As temperatures soar in South Florida, humans aren't the only ones seeking shade and hydration. From mammals to reptiles to birds, wildlife has incredible ways of adapting to extreme summer heat. But with urban sprawl and habitat loss, these adaptations often aren't enough. **That's where we can help.**

Mammals like raccoons and opossums are mostly nocturnal during the summer months, becoming active after the sun sets to avoid overheating. Many will seek shelter in dense vegetation, tree hollows, or shaded burrows to stay cool during the day.

Birds use a behavior called "gular fluttering" - rapidly vibrating their throat muscles - to regulate body temperature. They also take dust baths or splash in shallow water to cool down. You might notice more birds visiting your birdbaths or shaded feeders this time of year.

Reptiles, being cold-blooded, rely on their environment to regulate body heat. During the hottest parts of the day, turtles, snakes, and lizards will burrow, seek shelter under rocks or logs, or cool off in water bodies.

How You Can Help:
Create a Wildlife-Friendly Yard This Summer

You don't need acres of land to make a difference. Here are some simple ways to make your outdoor space a haven for wildlife during the hottest months:

Provide Shade & Shelter
Plant native shrubs or leave wild corners in your yard to create cool, shaded hiding spots.

Offer Fresh Water
Place shallow water dishes or birdbaths in shaded areas. Clean them regularly to prevent mosquito larvae and keep them safe for wildlife.

Plant Native
Native plants provide food and shelter to local species while requiring less water and maintenance. Bonus: they attract pollinators too!

Avoid Pesticides
Pesticides can harm more than just pests - they can poison animals directly or contaminate their food sources.

Leave Brush Piles & Logs
These provide essential cover for reptiles and small mammals. Even a small brush pile can make a big difference.

By taking these small steps, you not only help animals survive the summer - you invite the beauty of nature right into your own backyard.

2025 SO FAR: A YEAR OF IMPACT AND MOMENTUM

So far in 2025, the South Florida Wildlife Center has admitted **5,148** patients, with the majority being orphaned babies whose injuries or separation were caused by human intervention. These numbers highlight both the challenges wildlife face in our rapidly changing environment and the critical need for the work we do every single day. Based on current trends, we are on track to treat and rehabilitate over 8,000 animals by the end of the year, underscoring the growing demand for our services.

None of this would be possible without the incredible support of our community. From volunteers who dedicate countless hours to hands-on care, to donors who ensure we have the resources needed to save lives, and to partners who help amplify our message, every contribution makes a difference. Your compassion, commitment, and shared passion for protecting native wildlife inspire us to continue pushing forward.

This year holds many exciting opportunities for SFWC. We are working on new initiatives to expand our impact, strengthen our outreach, and enhance the care we provide. We cannot wait to share these developments with you as they unfold. Together, we are making South Florida a safer place for wildlife to thrive.

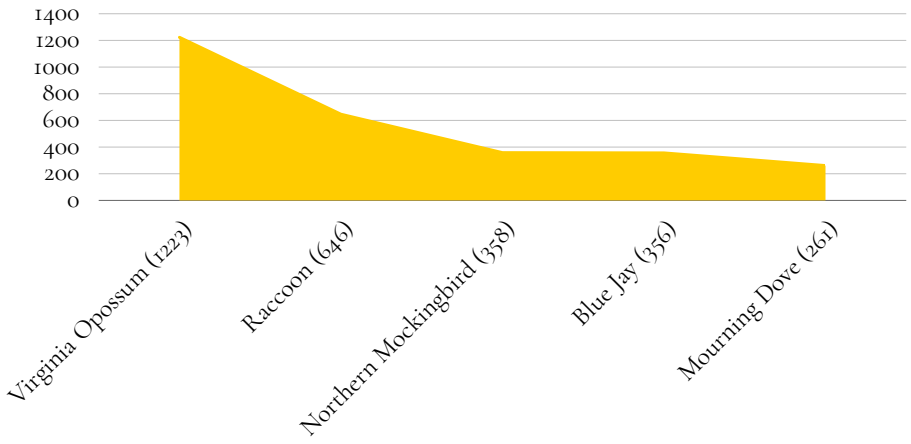
5,148 TOTAL ADMITTED

January 01 – July 31, 2025

Most Admitted

Virginia Opossums are the most common patients admitted to wildlife hospitals like SFWC, largely because they are abundant in urban and suburban areas where human activity is high. As opportunistic omnivores, they often forage near roads, garbage, and pet food, which increases their risk of vehicle collisions, dog and cat attacks, and other human-related injuries. Additionally, orphaned joeys frequently come into care when mothers are hit by cars, as the young continue to cling to the pouch or back. Their adaptability to human environments makes encounters (and subsequent rescues) far more frequent than with most other species.

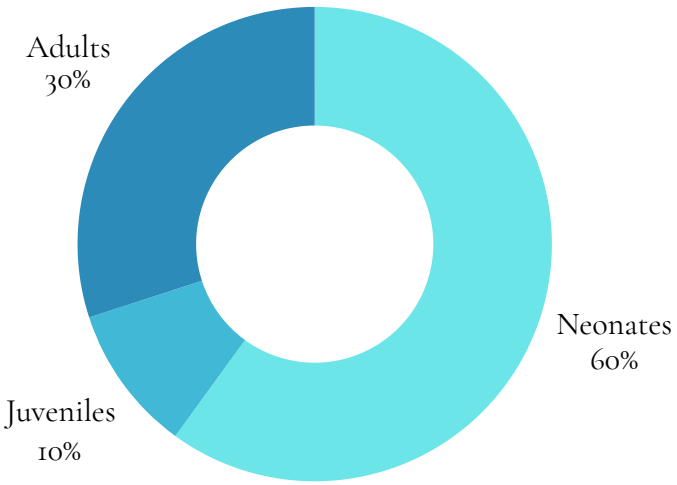
Top 5 Species of Overall Intake (5,148):



Most Common Reasons for Admission:

1. Orphaned
2. Hit by Car
3. Caught by Cat
4. Flew into Window

Patient Age Distribution:



wildlife photography
CONTEST

BIRD CATEGORY
WINNER

Eastern Kingbird Feeding Young Silhouette
by Justin Schmidt

The Eastern Kingbird (Tyrannus tyrannus) is a striking and assertive member of the flycatcher family, known for its bold personality and distinctive appearance. During the breeding season, it is commonly seen perched conspicuously on fence posts, wires, or treetops across open fields, farmlands, and forest edges throughout North America. This medium-sized songbird is easily identified by its sleek dark gray to black upperparts, bright white underparts, and a noticeable white-tipped tail that often flashes in flight.

Their diet primarily consists of flying insects, which they skillfully catch on the wing with acrobatic precision. They frequently jump out from perches to snatch insects midair, returning to the same spot to continue hunting. As the season progresses and insect availability declines, they switch to eating berries and other fruits, which also help fuel their energy needs for migration. Each fall, Eastern Kingbirds undertake a long-distance migration to South America, where they spend the winter in tropical habitats. During this period, their diet shifts heavily toward fruits and berries, which are abundant in their wintering grounds.

The species plays an important ecological role by controlling insect populations during the breeding season and dispersing seeds from the fruits they consume during migration and winter. Although currently listed as a species of Least Concern, Eastern Kingbirds face threats from habitat loss, pesticide use that reduces insect prey, and collisions during migration. Protecting their breeding and wintering habitats is essential to maintaining healthy populations of this spirited and valuable bird.

SEASONAL TRENDS

Wildlife hospitals often experience clear seasonal trends in patient admissions, with spring and early summer typically being the busiest periods. This surge is largely driven by the breeding season, when young animals are more vulnerable to injury, orphaning, or displacement. Late summer and early fall may see increased admissions from dispersing juveniles, while winter often brings fewer cases, except in regions where migration, cold stress, or seasonal food shortages affect local wildlife populations.

Virginia Opossums:

Species with the highest number of patient admissions, with **1,223** individuals admitted between January and July. The peak admission month was March.

Cooper's Hawks:

A total of **36** were admitted, with May being the peak month, accounting for over half the admissions.

Chuck-will's-widows:

15 were admitted in total, with March being the peak month, accounting for nine admissions.

Bats:

12 individuals from three known species - Evening Bat, Big Brown Bat, and Northern Yellow Bat - were admitted, with June being the busiest month, accounting for half of the admissions.

Seabirds:

A total of **19** Royal Terns were admitted during the year, with January marking the peak month for this species. Gulls accounted for **22** admissions across five species - Laughing Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Herring Gull, and Lesser Black-backed Gull - with January again emerging as the busiest month. Pelican admissions also totaled **22**, contributing to the seasonal surge in seabird patients observed during the winter months.

Burrowing Owls:

A total of **20** individuals were admitted during this time period, with admissions peaking in May, which emerged as the busiest month of the season. This surge in cases during late spring may reflect seasonal patterns in behavior, breeding activity, or environmental conditions that increase the likelihood of injuries or rescues.

FROM RESCUE TO RECOVERY: HOW HUMAN ACTIONS AFFECT SOUTH FLORIDA'S WILD ANIMALS

MEET NICOLE!

Nicole Alexiou is a senior at Florida Atlantic University (FAU), currently pursuing a degree in Biology. She enrolled in the course Human-Environment Interactions in South Florida, which required students to develop a research project exploring the relationship between humans and the environment at a local level. With a strong passion for wildlife and hands-on experience through her volunteer work at the South Florida Wildlife Center, Nicole saw a unique opportunity to combine her academic studies with real-world impact.

Inspired by the number of human-caused injuries she witnessed while volunteering in the Wildlife Ward - such as animals entangled in fishing line, struck by vehicles, or suffering from poisoning - Nicole proposed a research project titled "Anthropogenic Health Effects on Local Florida Wildlife."

To carry out her study, she analyzed patient case records from SFWC, categorizing injuries based on whether they were related to human activity. She further sorted the data by severity, species group (avian, reptile, mammal, marsupial), and outcome (released, deceased, or transitioned into ambassador roles). The goal of her project was to better understand and quantify how human behavior directly impacts native wildlife, while also raising awareness about the importance of conservation and responsible coexistence.

Nicole successfully completed her project, earning high marks and recognition for her thoughtful and data-driven approach. Her dedication to wildlife didn't stop there - she continued to volunteer at the South Florida Wildlife Center beyond her class requirement. Her commitment, compassion, and growing expertise led to her being hired as a Wildlife Rehabilitator, where she now plays an integral role in the hands-on care and recovery of injured and orphaned animals.

Nicole's journey is a testament to how academic work, community service, and personal passion can come together to make a meaningful difference - for both people and wildlife.

Her dedication not only highlights the impact that one individual can have, but also serves as an inspiration for others to engage, learn, and take action in their own communities. Through her efforts, she continues to bridge the gap between education and conservation, fostering a greater understanding of our shared responsibility to protect the natural world.

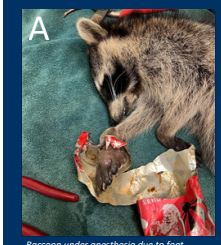
NICOLE'S INSIGHT:
THE HUMAN ROLE IN WILDLIFE INJURY AND RECOVERY IN SOUTH FLORIDA

At the South Florida Wildlife Center, the vast majority of patients arrive with injuries or illnesses directly linked to human activity. Vehicle and boat strikes are among the most common and severe causes, inflicting life-threatening trauma on mammals, reptiles, and numerous bird species. Nutrient pollution contributes to harmful algal blooms that sicken or kill marine mammals, turtles, fish, and seabirds, while coastal development and habitat loss push wildlife into smaller, urbanized spaces where they face increased risk from traffic, domestic animals, and disease. Entanglement in fishing gear and ingestion of marine debris frequently lead to deep wounds, amputations, and infections, and hazards such as free-roaming cats, window collisions, and light pollution continue to impact bird and sea turtle populations. These injuries are often more severe than natural ones, as they involve acute trauma or affect animals already stressed by degraded habitats and food scarcity. Data from SFWC admissions consistently show that human-caused factors account for most cases, reinforcing the need for community action through safe boating practices, pollution reduction, habitat restoration, responsible pet ownership, and prevention of urban hazards to protect South Florida's wildlife.

Read more about Nicole's research below!

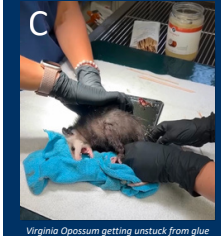
FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

South Florida WILDLIFE CENTER
Saving Wildlife in Our Urban Jungle



Raccoon under anesthesia due to foot trapped in Coca-Cola can

Nicole Alexiou now a staff member at SFWC!



Virginia Opossum getting unstuck from glue trap by veterinary staff

Human Impacts on Wildlife Health and Injury Severity In South Florida

Nicole Alexiou and Tobin Hindle, Ph.D. Geosciences

BACKGROUND

The healthofwildlife is affected by humans directly through intentional or unintentional activity1. Some of those incidents come from car collisions, pollution, or urbanization. In densely populated South Florida, wildlife are often impacted by human activity that results in major injuries or death2. Mortality of animals caused by human activity have consequences, such as declining species populations3. Wildlife rescue and rehabilitation centers take in sick and injured animals to nurse them back to health to be released back into the wild. South Florida Wildlife Center located in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, is one of those centers that are helping make a difference for these animals. They keep detailed records of surgeries, medications, and diets given to every patient that comes through the doors of the facility until they are euthanized, released back into the wild, or deemed as an ambassador animal used for education purposes.

OBJECTIVE

The objective behindthisresearch project is to examine how human activities impact wildlife injuries and mortality. My research identifies species impacted by and frequently of anthropogenic injuries to wildlife around South Florida. This research also helps address the unawareness people may posses about their negative impact on the lives of native South Florida animals.

OBTAINING DATA & METHODS

South Florida Wildlife Center maintains a database with patient information that includes species, classification, reason for admittance, disposition, and location where the animal was found. A total of 891 patients were admitted from December 1st 2024 through February 28th2025. Intake exam notes and reason for admittance were categorized into human related and non-human related events. Descriptive stats were used to determine the human related injuries and disposition within biological classes. Geocoding of each events revealed the spatial distribution of each patient intake.

RESULTS

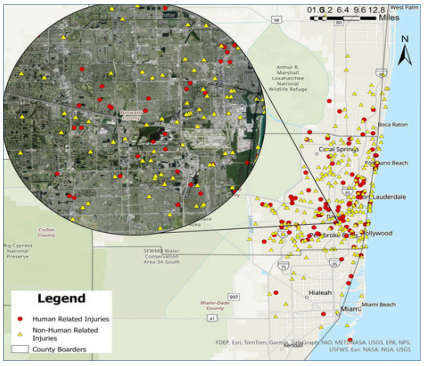


Figure 1: Map showing location of human related and non-human related injured animals were found

- 67 avian, 11 reptilian, and 71 mammalian species suffered from anthropogenic injuries
- Vehicle collisions impacted 43 mammals and 9 reptile patients.
- Trash/debris and urbanization injuries mostly impacted avian species totaling to 42 patients.
- 26 avian and mammalian species got caught by a pet or feral cat.

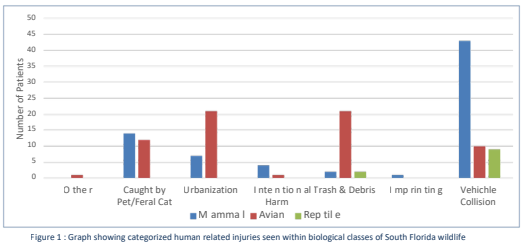


Figure 1 : Graph showing categorized human related injuries seen within biological classes of South Florida wildlife

- A majority of human related and non-human related patients died or were euthanized within 24 hours of admission
- 23% of patients died or were euthanized after the first 24 hours of admission
- 39 patients out of 134 patients with an anthropogenic injury were released

Total Human Related Disposition				Total Non-Human Related Disposition			
Died/euth.In 24 Hours	Died/euth.After24 Hours	Released	DOA	Died/euth. In 24 Hours	Died/euth. After 24 Hours	Released	DOA
50	32	39	13	274	77	72	20
37.30%	23.90%	29.10%	9.70%	61.90%	17.40%	16.30%	4.50%

Table 1 : Table showing total human related patient dispositions and total non-human related patient dispositions

DISCUSSION

17% of patients that donot include unknown cause for admittance are human related. Those unknown causes for admittance may also have correlation to a human related injury. However, 37%-61% of human related and non-human related patients die or get euthanized within 24 hours of them being admitted to the wildlife center due to them being not viable for rehabilitation. This means the animal was losing a limb (photo A), bird flue, distemper, or rabies in raccoons. Mammals were victims of 43 vehicle collisions, which comparatively was more than half of the patients who suffered from other human related injuries. Trash and debris entanglement or ingestion and urbanization, such as flying into windows and found in swimming pools, impacted 42 avian patients. This is due to birds being trapped and entangled in fishing line and ingesting fishing hooks, and they also get confused by the reflection in windows. Most of the injured animals that were brought to South Florida Wildlife Center were found in east Broward County. This area is extremely urbanized therefore a vast number of human related injuries were found there, specifically in southeast Broward in between Fort Lauderdale and Hollywood.

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AKNOWLEGEMENTS

Thankyou to South Florida Wildlife Center for providing me with the patient cases needed for the analysis of this project, Dr. Tobin Hindle for guiding me with the analysis and poster organization, as well as friends and family for edits and support!

wildlife photography
CONTEST

MAMMAL CATEGORY
WINNER

Cuddle Bears
by Jackie Hassine

Brown bears (Ursus arctos) are large, powerful mammals found across North America, Europe, and Asia. They are characterized by their thick fur, which ranges from light brown to nearly black, a distinctive shoulder hump of muscle, and long claws adapted for digging. Brown bears are omnivores with a varied diet that includes berries, roots, fish, small mammals, and carrion. In coastal areas, salmon is a critical food source, particularly as bears prepare for winter hibernation.

These bears are generally solitary, except for mothers with cubs or when food sources are abundant. They play an important ecological role by dispersing seeds and contributing to nutrient cycling. While they typically avoid human contact, brown bears can become aggressive if threatened or surprised, particularly females defending cubs.

Brown bears face threats from habitat loss, climate change, and human-wildlife conflict. Conservation efforts and protected areas have helped stabilize some populations, but continued protection is crucial for their survival.


THE HOME DEPOT
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EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR
PARKING
ONLY
OFFICE
MANAGER

THANK YOU!

Thank You, The Home Depot!

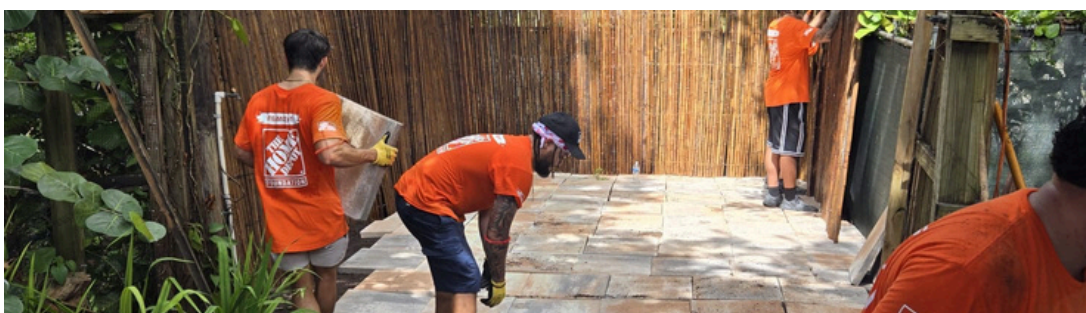
We extend our deepest thanks to The Home Depot Foundation, Store #0222-Davie, and Sponsoring Captain Lenia Rosa for their incredible support and hard work during a recent Team Depot Volunteer Project at the South Florida Wildlife Center.

With the help of 40 dedicated Home Depot associates, we successfully transformed our triage and community ambassador areas through an inspiring outdoor beautification effort.

The team:
🌿 Landscaped and laid sod in the ambassador area
🌸 Planted vibrant live goods to enhance the environment for visitors and educational programming
🎨 Painted columns and the concrete floor in our community staging area used for animal and public interaction
🧹 Cleared debris and prepped the triage space for future improvements
📦 Installed much-needed storage to better serve our wildlife patients

This project has made a lasting impact on the functionality and appearance of our facility, improving both the care we provide to wildlife and the experience we offer to our community.

Thank you, The Home Depot, for your generosity, teamwork, and unwavering dedication to our mission!



wildlife photography
CONTEST

URBAN CATEGORY
WINNER

Brake For Moose
by Steve Kemish

Moose (Alces alces) are the largest members of the deer family, native to northern regions of North America, Europe, and Asia. They are easily recognized by their towering size, long legs, humped shoulders, and the broad, palmate antlers of adult males. Moose inhabit boreal and mixed forests, wetlands, and areas with abundant shrubs and aquatic vegetation.

Herbivorous by nature, moose feed on leaves, twigs, bark, and aquatic plants, often wading into lakes and ponds to reach food. They are generally solitary animals, except during the mating season (rut) in the fall, when males compete for access to females.

Moose are strong swimmers and well adapted to cold climates but are vulnerable to heat stress and parasites, such as winter ticks and brainworm, which can impact populations. Habitat fragmentation and vehicle collisions also pose threats. Conservation efforts focus on habitat protection and mitigating human impacts to ensure healthy moose populations in the wild.

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

Thank You, Adele Zum with Shore Side Connections!

We are deeply grateful to Shore Side Connections for their generous corporate sponsorship and commitment to protecting South Florida's native wildlife.

Your support helps us provide critical medical care, rehabilitation, and safe releases for thousands of animals each year - and fuels our outreach and conservation efforts across the region. Partnerships like yours make a lasting difference, and we are proud to have you by our side.

Thank you for standing with us in our mission to give wildlife a second chance!

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wildlife photography
CONTEST

UP-CLOSE CATEGORY
WINNER

Green Orchid Bee Portrait
by Christopher Harrington

The green orchid bee (Euglossa dilemma) is a striking, metallic-green bee native to Central America but now established in parts of southern Florida. These bees are known for their iridescent coloration, which makes them easily recognizable as they forage. Unlike many bees, male green orchid bees collect aromatic compounds from flowers and other sources, storing them in specialized hind-leg pouches to attract mates.

Green orchid bees are important pollinators, visiting a wide variety of flowering plants, including orchids, from which they derive their name. They are solitary rather than social, with females building and provisioning nests on their own, often in small cavities or crevices.

Although they are not aggressive and rarely sting, green orchid bees contribute significantly to local ecosystems by supporting plant reproduction. Their continued spread in Florida highlights their adaptability, though it also raises questions about their impact on native pollinators.

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