South Florida
WILDLIFE CENTER
Saving Wildlife in Our Urban Jungle

Because EVERY MOMENT MATTERS



THE GALLINULE REUNION
One Rescue. One Happy Homecoming.
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Veterinary Extern
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Stories of Healing and Release
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Wood Stork (26-1506)
Admitted weak/sick from a lake where other birds have been found dead from suspected toxins.
27 days in care and released.

South Florida
WILDLIFE CENTER

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VISION

To lead a future where people and wildlife peacefully coexist, where every rescue fuels innovation, every release restores balance for the natural world and every lesson inspires a generation to advance conservation and inspire communities.

MISSION

Our mission is to protect wildlife through rescue, rehabilitation, release and education advancing conservation and the interconnected health of animals, people and the environment.

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The Heartfelt MOMENTS

Virginia Opossum
(26-2020)

Six months ago, I walked through the doors of the South Florida Wildlife Center. During that time, I have come to see just how many acts of generosity stand behind every animal we are able to help.

Just yesterday, I saw our veterinarian staying a little longer, quietly monitoring and delicately administering fluids to one of our injured pelican patients. Every day I witness a multitude of moments - a volunteer giving an afternoon and taking on extra duties to pitch in after an influx of patients in need of feeding. A neighbor stopping to help an injured bird and being late for work to get them to us. A donor choosing to invest in the future of a wild patient they may never see or a student just beginning their career that they have never met. And of course, the extraordinary moment when an animal returns to the wild.

The generosity that keeps us going isn't measured only in dollars. It can be seen in the countless moments we are willing to give of ourselves through time, knowledge, compassion, attention, and who we choose to support.

It's found in the choices we make every day. How we care for the land or our backyards so that it can be a place for wildlife to peacefully exist. Whether we stop to help. How we make room for wildlife in our neighborhoods and communities. How we choose to support wildlife and the effort we take to coexist with the wild animals whose home is South Florida, too.

These stories are a collection of choices, and no single person created them. They happened because volunteers, staff, interns, neighbors, partners and supporters each played a part. Together, these individual moments became something much larger.

As 2026 draws to a close, I am deeply grateful to be part of this community and excited about what we can build together to preserve and coexist with the wild lives around us. While the next wild animal who needs us is never far away - with them comes another moment that matters. As you read these stories, I hope you'll see how every act of care and generosity, large or small, and all who came together were a significant series of moments to make a difference in each animal's life.



With gratitude for every moment you make possible,

Stacey Price
Executive Director

The MOMENT They Need Us



Common Gallinule (26-4307)

On July 27, Rescue Coordinator Nick responded to a call from a homeowner who discovered a young Common Gallinule (26-4307) with their head trapped in a narrow gap between an outdoor patio door frame and the concrete foundation. The curious youngster had likely been searching for insects when the adventure took a wrong turn.



With six other young gallinules watching from a safe distance, Nick carefully and patiently worked to free the bird. Once rescued, the gallinule was transported to the Center for evaluation and treatment.

During triage, staff noted facial abrasions, swelling, and overall weakness. One major concern in situations like this is capture myopathy, a potentially life-threatening condition caused by extreme stress and prolonged physical struggle. Wild animals trapped or confined for extended periods can suffer muscle damage and organ complications as their bodies desperately try to escape. Thankfully, this gallinule had not been trapped long enough for severe symptoms to develop.

The bird received pain medication, antibiotics, anti-inflammatory treatments, supportive care, and tube feedings while recovering in the Wildlife Ward. After about a week of rest and close monitoring, the gallinule was strong enough to move to an outdoor aviary for flight conditioning and muscle rebuilding.

Once outside, the young bird quickly began eating independently and spending time on higher perches, clear signs of progress. **After 15 days in care**, the gallinule was fully recovered and cleared for release.



The best part? When Nick returned the bird to the wild, the rest of the young gallinule family was waiting patiently along the riverbank.

This rescue is a wonderful reminder of what can happen when compassionate people take action. Thanks to the homeowner who made the call, to Nick for his patience and expertise during the rescue, and to our dedicated wildlife team for providing the care needed to give this young gallinule a second chance and a successful return home.

DID YOU KNOW?

Common Gallinules have long toes helping distribute their weight and allowing them to "walk on water", navigating over lily pads and other floating vegetation in their wetland habitats.

WHATS IN A NUMBER?

At South Florida Wildlife Center, we use patient IDs rather than names to honor each animal's wild nature. These IDs help us track each patient's treatment and recovery while keeping our stories focused on wildlife and their place in the natural world. Refraining from naming reflects our commitment to caring for wild animals with the goal of returning them to the wild.

Found an Animal?

CALL or send us a TEXT at **(954) 524-4302**, please be ready to provide the following:

- Your name
- Photos of the injured animal
- Exact Address, City, and Zip Code

Scan to learn more about when wildlife should be admitted.



Dr. Irene San Juan Lopez

SFWC Veterinary Extern

"The aspect of my veterinary externship I have enjoyed most has been being part of a team that made me feel truly welcomed and integrated from the very beginning. Working alongside such a supportive group has helped me gain confidence and make the most of this experience. I have especially enjoyed the opportunity to handle and treat species I had never worked with before, including pelicans, coyotes, and opossums. As a recent graduate, it has also been incredibly rewarding to be trusted with performing surgeries, helping me develop both my practical skills and confidence as a veterinarian.

The most meaningful and memorable part of the externship has been participating in wildlife releases. Seeing animals return to their natural environment after recovery is a truly special experience and one of the most fulfilling aspects of wildlife medicine. Since my goal is to pursue a career in wildlife veterinary medicine, gaining hands-on experience with these species has provided invaluable knowledge and practical skills that will help me perform more effectively and confidently in the future, whether in a zoological institution or a wildlife rehabilitation center."

Small MOMENTS, Big Impact

Baby season means a busy Nursery filled with tiny patients, countless feedings, and a team working around the clock to meet the needs of growing wildlife. Each young animal arrives in need of specialized care, patience, and a second chance. Behind every patient is a dedicated team working together to help them return to the wild. Veterinary staff provide critical medical care, rehabilitators guide recovery, and nursery staff manage the daily feedings, cleaning, and monitoring that help vulnerable animals grow strong.

Interns and volunteers are an essential part of that effort, supporting daily care and helping ensure every patient receives the attention they need. Your generosity makes this work possible, providing the food, medical resources, supplies, and support required to help each animal heal, grow, and take the next step toward returning home.



984
Babies Admitted
January through mid-September 2026



174
Interns & Volunteers
Contributing more than
1,500 Hours
of care and support

How to Get Involved

Every patient's journey to recovery depends on compassionate people willing to lend a hand. By volunteering at the South Florida Wildlife Center, you can play a direct role in helping native wildlife heal and return to the wild.

Scan the QR code or visit **SouthFloridaWildlifeCenter.org/volunteer-program** to learn more and apply today.



Gray Squirrel (26-4271)

Gray Squirrels are among our most-admitted mammals, with 548 patients received in 2026. As important seed dispersers, forgotten buried nuts often grow into new trees, helping regenerate forests. This infant was admitted after reunification efforts failed and, after 74 days in Nursery care, was released with other rehabilitated squirrels.

The MOMENT Everything Changes

Every patient has a moment when uncertainty gives way to hope. For these babies, that moment begins in our nursery.



Chimney Swifts (26-3512-3515)

Known as "nature's bug zappers," a single Chimney Swift family can consume more than 12,000 flying insects daily. These birds spend nearly their entire lives in flight. Four of the seven Chimney Swift nestlings admitted in 2026 were rescued from a Fort Lauderdale chimney and released after 29 days in Nursery care.

Blue Jay Nestling (26-2774)

Blue Jays are among our most-admitted songbirds, with 234 patients received in 2026. As members of the corvid family, they are highly intelligent, capable of remembering thousands of food cache locations and mimicking sounds, including hawks, cats, and even human voices.





Northern Yellow Bat (26-3539)

One of Florida's largest native bat species, the Northern Yellow Bat is recognized by its golden fur, which helps it blend into dead palm fronds. Typically solitary, it inhabits wooded and coastal areas. This young bat was admitted after reunification attempts were unsuccessful and released after 53 days of care.



Virginia Opossum (26-5634)

North America's only marsupial, the Virginia Opossum serves as nature's cleanup crew by consuming carrion and fallen fruit. Their low body temperature makes them resistant to diseases such as rabies. So far in 2026, we have admitted 1,497 Virginia Opossums.

"SOMETIMES, A MOMENT OF CRISIS BECOMES A JOURNEY MEASURED NOT IN HOURS OR DAYS, BUT IN PATIENCE, PERSISTENCE, AND COUNTLESS SMALL STEPS FORWARD".

MOMENTS in the Wild

Every patient who arrives at our hospital has a story, but some recoveries remind us just how much time and dedication healing can require. From months of intensive care for a threatened tortoise to the recovery of three ibis found under mysterious circumstances, these cases highlight the impact of expert wildlife care and rehabilitation.





GOPHER TORTOISE (26-276)

After arriving at the Center with a severe shell fracture, this adult female Gopher Tortoise underwent specialized shell repair surgery followed by months of intensive care, including daily irrigation, anti-fungal treatments, antibiotics, and cold laser therapy.

Tortoises are cold-blooded, meaning their metabolism is much slower than that of mammals, which can significantly extend the healing process. To support proper recovery, our veterinary team carefully placed shallow screws and wire in the shell to gradually pull the shell plates, known as scutes, back into position. This procedure was especially important because part of the coelomic membrane, the protective lining of the body cavity, had been exposed due to the fracture.

Thanks to our staff's diligence, the exposed tissue healed beautifully with no signs of infection, allowing her to move outside for the next stage of rehabilitation. Once the fractures had stabilized, the hardware was removed. **After 164 days of care,** treatment, and rehabilitation, she was finally released into a protected preserve.

DID YOU KNOW?

Gopher Tortoises are a keystone species and ecological engineers. Their burrows serve as underground villages, and support entire wildlife communities. These shelters can reach six feet deep and 20 feet long, providing habitat for more than 300 animal species. When one tortoise is saved, the benefits extend far beyond a single patient, creating a ripple effect throughout the ecosystem.

WHITE IBIS TRIO (26-4497, 26-4503, 26-4504)

Three White Ibis arrived at our wildlife hospital within hours of one another after being found around the same lake in Broward County. All three presented with similar neurological symptoms, including weakness, difficulty standing, delayed responses, and poor coordination.

Their shared location and symptoms raised concerns about a possible environmental toxin, particularly after a resident reported that the area around the lake had been treated with an unknown chemical several days earlier.

Despite supportive care, one of the ibis, sadly, did not survive. The remaining two, however, responded well to treatment and were successfully released back into the wild. **For 16 days, our veterinary and rehabilitation teams provided specialized care**, including fluid therapy, supportive treatments, and close monitoring as the birds regained strength and normal function.



Cases like this highlight the importance of the One Health approach, which recognizes the connection between people, animals, and the environment. What enters our ecosystems does not simply disappear. Chemicals and pollutants can move through water, soil, wildlife, pets, and ultimately affect human communities as well.

Be part of the moment...

Sponsor A Release

Scan to sponsor a wildlife release and share in the unforgettable moment when a rehabilitated animal returns to the wild.



DEFINING MOMENTS

For more than 50 years, the story of the South Florida Wildlife Center has been built one moment at a time.

It began with the vision of Beatrice Humphreys, who believed South Florida's wildlife deserved compassion, protection, and a place they could receive a second chance. Her vision became the foundation for what would grow into one of the nation's busiest wildlife hospitals, **a place where one act of care could change the course of a life.**

In the 1950s, Humphreys began rescuing and caring for injured wildlife. As the need for wildlife services grew, so did the organization. In 1969, the Center formally incorporated, laying the foundation for decades of growth and impact.

What began as a small volunteer run operation in a crowded wooden building grew into a professionally staffed wildlife hospital.

By 1971, the organization had opened a dedicated treatment facility and was caring for nearly 1,000 animals annually.

Over the years, the Center expanded our facilities, expertise, and reach. New rehabilitation habitats, advanced medical capabilities, rescue services, and educational programs strengthened its ability to serve both wildlife and the community.

Today, the South Florida Wildlife Center's impact extends far beyond its original footprint. Since its founding, the Center has **cared for and aided nearly one million wild animals** while continuing to adapt and grow to meet the region's needs.

More than 50 years after Beatrice Humphreys rescued her first animals, her vision continues to guide the organization forward. From a small volunteer-run operation to one of the nation's busiest wildlife hospitals and rehabilitation centers, every milestone has been made possible by a community that believed wildlife deserved care, compassion, and a second chance.

Our history is measured not only by the animals we have cared for, but by the people who made that care possible, and by those who will carry it forward.

This next chapter begins with you.

MOMENTS & MILESTONES

1950
Beatrice Humphreys begins rescuing and caring for injured wildlife.

1971
The Center opens its first treatment facility.

1983
Groundbreaking seabird aviary expands rehabilitation capacity.

1993
Surgery and radiology facilities are added.

2026
A new mobile wildlife hospital serves a dual purpose: current hospital and future coastal rescue/triage efforts.

2027 & Beyond
Expanding our impact for the next generation of wildlife



Shop Our Wish List - Be a Part of the Next Defining Moment

Every rescued animal relies on food, medical supplies, enrichment items, and other essentials during rehabilitation. You can make an immediate impact by purchasing items directly from our wish list or by organizing a supply drive with your school, workplace, neighborhood, or community group.

Scan the QR code or visit: **southfloridawildlifecenter.org/wish-lists/** to **shop our wish lists** or **learn how to host a supply drive today**!



Barred Owl
(22-8442)

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A MOMENT Worth Protecting

Until the Next MOMENT

A phone answered.

A nest restored.

A difficult diagnosis made.

A volunteer folding another load of laundry, knowing there is always one more thing to do.

A student watching a surgery and discovering a calling.

A rehabilitator providing one more feeding, one more careful check, one more chance.

A donor deciding to help.

A team staying late because an animal isn't ready to go home.

And then, finally, a bird taking flight back into the sky.









These may seem like small moments. But together, they defined 2026 at the South Florida Wildlife Center, from rescues and recoveries to breakthroughs, challenges, and countless acts of compassion behind the scenes.

Every Rescue Starts With Someone Who Cares

From rescue and rehabilitation to release, every wildlife success story begins with people like you. Your support helps provide a second chance for thousands of South Florida's native wild animals each year.

Scan to make a gift, and be part of the next wildlife success story.
Learn more at:

southfloridawildlifecenter.org

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