



**WILDLIFE MEDICAL CLINIC
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN**

**ANNUAL REPORT
2022**



OUR MISSION

The Wildlife Medical Clinic at the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine embraces a threefold mission: to provide veterinary care to sick or injured wild animals; to educate veterinary students and wildlife professionals about wildlife medicine; to promote conservation initiatives and ecosystem health through collaborative research, dissemination of scientific information, and public education programs.

Veterinary care

Treat sick, injured, or orphaned wild animals, with the goal of their successful return to their natural habitat

Education

Develop not only the medical and surgical skills of veterinary students, but also their problem-solving, teamwork, and professional competency

Conservation

Foster community interest in local wildlife and collaborate with licensed wildlife rehabilitators, conservation departments, and natural history departments

MEET OUR TEAM

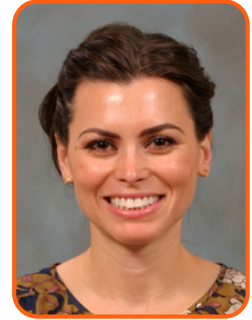
Faculty and Staff



Samantha Sander
DVM, DACZM, CWR, Director



Michelle Borsdorf
DVM, DACZM



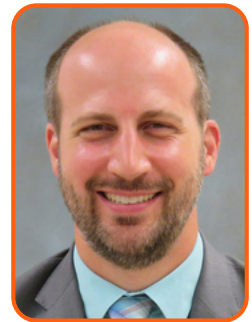
Krista Keller
DVM, DACZM



Judilee Marrow
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Sydney Oliveira
Program Coordinator



William Sander
DVM, MPH, DACVPM

2022-23 Wildlife Medical Clinic Executive Board

Chair

Aimee Hearn

Secretary

Allison Wallace

Fundraising

Ellie Petree, Dorothy Echols

Webmasters

Danielle Money, Theodore Berlanga

Treasurer

Billy Wright

Ambassador Coordinators

Mackenzie Wells, Emma Gooding, Jacob Dalen

Managers

Chloe Duplex, Brianna Huff



VETERINARY CARE

The focus of the Wildlife Medical Clinic is to provide quality and compassionate veterinary care in a responsible manner to free-living wildlife. Each year, the Wildlife Medical Clinic receives patients 365 days, 24 hours a day. Our case presentation is cyclical, with busy seasons being spring through the fall.

Outside of 2020, where we had a slightly reduced number of patients due to COVID-19 and the closing of the clinic, we have continually had around 2,000 patients per year. This number increases as our reputation and service become more widely known.

This year, we faced challenges as highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) made its way through the Urbana-Champaign area. We worked to separate highly susceptible species from lower-risk species and to keep the general volunteer staff separate from the ambassador animal staff to ensure our ambassador animals and other patients remained safe and healthy during the outbreak. Our strict protocols have proven effective in keeping our ambassadors and patients safe and will remain in place until the risk of this disease has lowered.

Many of the patients brought to the Wildlife Medical Clinic are severely debilitated or suffering from injury or incurable disease that permanently prevents successful release. In many of these cases, humane euthanasia is the most appropriate and compassionate measure to be taken. These decisions are not taken lightly and are consistent with our goals to relieve suffering and return healthy animals to the wild.

BY THE NUMBERS

1,853

patients

108

species

6,401

animal days

41

highest daily patient
census

682

animals released or
transferred (37%
release rate)



The Eagle Flies Again

An adult bald eagle arrived in late October having endured trauma which left him unable to fly. On examination, we found no obvious fracture or abnormality, but the patient exhibited signs of weakness and had a wing droop. After a week of supportive care, which included fluids, pain medication, and rest, he made a complete turn-around and was released back into the wild. We watched as he flew off into the trees, wishing him a long and healthy life.

Off the Hook

This summer we treated an adult snapping turtle that had a hook stuck in its oral cavity. With the aid of radiographs and an endoscope, we determined that an octopus-type, J-shaped fishing hook was stuck in the turtle's neck. This required a surgical procedure to remove the hook. After a few days of rest and healing, the turtle was back to its normal self and ready to be released back into the wild.



Snowy—and Spicy

In March, we received a snowy owl with a fracture of the left radius close to the elbow joint. Because owls need precise wing function to survive in the wild, the fracture was treated surgically by placing a long pin through the center of the bone. All was going well until the patient removed the pin himself—against doctor's orders. Luckily, the fracture was on its way to healing. Instead of a second surgery, a wing wrap kept the bone safe during the rest of his recovery.

EDUCATION

The Wildlife Medical Clinic is operated by veterinary and undergraduate students who volunteer their time year-round to care for wildlife patients and perform various organizational roles. This work occurs in addition to the rigorous courses and study sessions they devote to their degree programs.

The Wildlife Medical Clinic demands a very high level of participation of its volunteers, requiring multiple hours each week in patient care, on-call for new patient intake, feeding orphaned animals, and attending patient rounds and other training. Nevertheless, in a typical year, more than 140 students volunteer in the Wildlife Medical Clinic.

Students flock to our program because it offers them unique experiences not found in any other veterinary programs in the country. The skills learned through volunteering can be applied to every field of veterinary medicine. Their time at the Wildlife Medical Clinic helps prepare students for success throughout their career, regardless of their chosen specialty.

Historically, only our first- through third-year veterinary students are eligible to volunteer in the clinic. Knowing we had more capacity to give, in 2019 we grew our educational opportunities and welcomed fourth-year veterinary students into the Wildlife Medical Clinic. These students earn academic credit to complete their final, clinically oriented year of veterinary school. This program allows us to make our facility available to visiting and affiliate students who would otherwise not have an opportunity to benefit from our program. In 2022, we were delighted to have 37 fourth-year veterinary students participate in our elective wildlife rehabilitation rotation.

In addition to enhancing veterinary student education, the Wildlife Medical Clinic provided on-site training to one specialty intern and two residents, all of whom are veterinarians pursuing specialty training. We also supported Wildlife University, a two-day veterinary student conference on wildlife medicine. The conference included 87 student registrants and nine wildlife/veterinary professional registrants attending from three countries and 16 states! We are proud of the commitment of our University of Illinois students, who organized and put on this program. This experience gave them an opportunity to build their leadership, communication, and organizational skills while networking with professionals and future colleagues in the field. This program also serves as an opportunity to highlight the strength of the college's wildlife program and further increase the accessibility of our impact to veterinary students around the world.

BY THE NUMBERS

14
hours

hours didactic lecture

115
hours

hours didactic case rounds

16
hours

hours team leader
training

>6,700
hours

hours hands-on
learning

MEET THE MANAGERS



BRIANNA HUFF

My favorite thing about the Wildlife Medical Clinic manager position is the interaction with other veterinary students. I love to watch them learn and grow in their veterinary education and their passion for wildlife medicine. Being able to serve as a resource to the students allows me to build new relationships with them, and that is something I wouldn't trade for the world. Serving as manager has also allowed me to make great strides in my own educational and professional development. The patients in the clinic constantly present us with new challenges, and I learn something new every day. The faculty and house officers that support us are extremely knowledgeable and are constantly encouraging us to think outside of the box. Working in the clinic has allowed me to practice integral medical skills, learn the importance of advocating for my patients, and overall, has provided me with invaluable experience that I am incredibly grateful for.

I believe being hired as the Wildlife Medical Clinic student manager for my year has been the best thing to ever happen to me. The people I have met and the clinical experience I have gained is going to help me improve the field of wildlife medicine so much in the future. I loved getting to feel more comfortable with treating wildlife and helping others feel comfortable as well. I also believe I would not be in veterinary school if it weren't for the Wildlife Medical Clinic. The clinic means so much to me, and I am thrilled to see what it does for students in the future.



CHLOE DUPLIX

CONSERVATION

Our conservation mission takes two forms. The first is through public outreach, we strive to bring an awareness and appreciation of wildlife and the natural world. Avenues used to accomplish this include print and broadcast media appearances, public education through our website, social media, and a monthly e-newsletter as well as bringing our ambassadors to the public for in-person outreach. Our student volunteers have an active role in outreach by managing our social media and website, public speaking, writing, and even making live, on-camera television appearances.

The second conservation mission encompasses scholarly activity and collaboration with local state and wildlife organizations. Our students attended and presented at three scientific conferences.

Veterinary students and faculty work together to investigate wildlife medicine techniques and concerns. These projects advance knowledge in the field while preparing students to be clinician scientists throughout their careers. Students gain experience defining their research focus, gathering and interpreting data, writing a manuscript for publication, and presenting their results at conferences.

Many of our studies are retrospective, allowing us to analyze past cases and optimize future care for patients here and at rehabilitation centers globally.

Thanks to the support of a generous donor who shares our vision for public outreach and conservation messaging, we now have a full-time program coordinator. Sydney Oliveira comes to us with an extensive background caring for animals in both zoo and wildlife rehabilitation settings. She is excited for this opportunity and looks forward to growing our outreach program by developing a new, on-site educational program.

We envision opportunities for students throughout primary and secondary school. Our program will serve as a destination for field trips, offering students an opportunity to meet our ambassador animals, interface with our veterinary students, tour our facilities, and learn about wildlife and conservation locally and globally.

BY THE NUMBERS

34

professional presentations

52

outreach programs

13

on-going research projects

16

media appearances

12

virtual newsletters

5

research manuscripts submitted to scientific journals

MEET THE AMBASSADORS



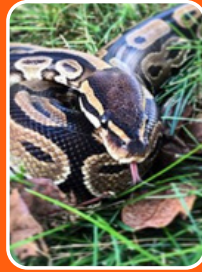
Odin

Red-tailed hawk



Hazel

Eastern box turtle



Bucket

Ball python



River

Bald eagle



Petunia

Virginia opossum



Patty

Virginia opossum



Thistle

American kestrel



Vara

Barred owl



Ruby

Red-tailed hawk



Onslo

Blue-tongued skink

The Wildlife Medical Clinic cares for ten non-releasable animals that serve as ambassadors for their species. These animals are cared for by a dedicated team of 20 volunteers who provide daily care, cleaning, training, and behavioral enrichment.

Our ambassadors have been settling in nicely to the residence built in 2020 through a generous gift. In the past year, more of the building's interior has been finished and insulation has been added, resulting in better climate control. This ensures that our ambassadors are safe and comfortable inside during the cooler months.

We also thank our generous donors for the following upgrades:

- Benches for the outdoor amphitheater space
- Customized enclosures for patients in two holding areas
- Increased enrichment, training, housing, and husbandry supplies from our wish list
- Landscaping outside the ambassador residence, providing shading, natural barriers for the animals, and beautifying the space

WISH LIST

Sponsor for student training opportunities (summer interns – \$25,000 total for 5 positions) & student manager (\$12,000 total for 2 positions).

Enrichment items, food/bedding for patients & ambassador animals (\$2,000).

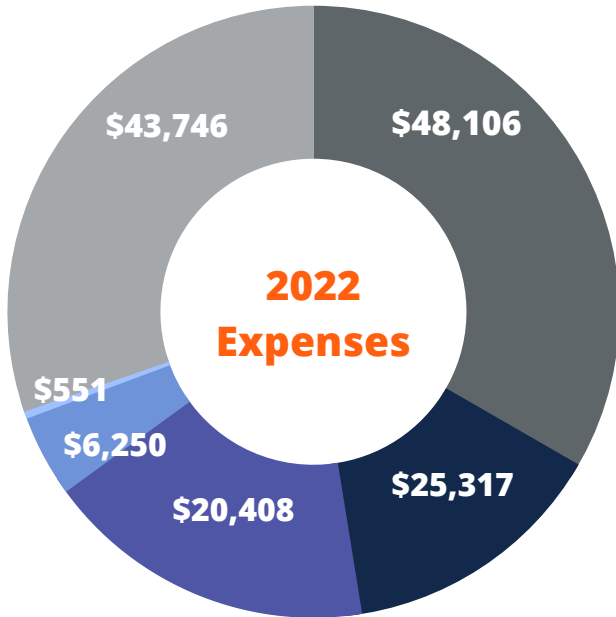
Adapted patient housing for two rooms (\$6,000 per room) to provide safe housing for our smallest patients and our mammal species.

Shade structure for Educational Amphitheater space to facilitate shade and rain protection for our visitors during educational events. Variable cost options ranging between \$8,000-\$15,000 depending on selection.

Shelving stands and storage for our reptile ambassador housing (\$2,000).

**Visit our webpage to see what else is on our wish list:
go.illinois.edu/givetowildlife**

BUDGET



- Student Intern Wages
- Medical Equipment & Supplies
- Advanced Patient Care
- Guided Student Instruction
- External Training and Outreach
- Facilities

Revenue for 2022 for operating expenses included \$129,324 from gifts, \$3,114 from student fundraising efforts, and \$4,643 from endowment proceeds.

Additionally, the College of Veterinary Medicine provided support to the Wildlife Medical Clinic in the amount of \$19,250, which went toward elective coursework and other wildlife instruction for veterinary students as well as a subsidy for diagnostic testing.

\$1 Million Gift for Educational Facilities

In 2022, the Wildlife Medical Clinic received its largest donation ever in its 45-year history!

Professor emerita Julia F. Saville, a specialist in Victorian poetry who is also an enthusiastic environmentalist, made a gift of \$1 million.

Her donation has immediately allowed upgrades in equipment and educational opportunities for our staff, facilitated the hiring of our first dedicated staff member and Program Coordinator, and will allow us to renovate one of our indoor spaces into an Educational Theater.

Dr. Saville has created an incredible opportunity for us to maintain care of wildlife animals, improve our student training and education, while markedly broadening our outreach scope and potential. We look forward to welcoming K-12 school groups to our space for discussions on conservation, veterinary medicine, and wildlife alike.

Prof. Saville said, "My greatest wish is that the Clinic may flourish and that the respect shown for wildlife there may become a widely shared community practice."





Connect with Us

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Arrange a visit with our ambassador animals
wmcambassadorcoordinator@vetmed.illinois.edu

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Hawk Talk, via our website

