



# Pelican Press

Spring 2022

NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL NATIVE WILDLIFE CENTER



# Pelican Run 5k

SATURDAY • MAY 14TH, 2022

Join us for our first ever Pelican Run 5k on May 14th, 2022 at Haulover Park. Registration for this family-friendly walk/run includes an event t-shirt, participation medal, and top finisher medals.



Scan the QR code to learn more and register today!



Pelican Run 5K  
IT'S FOR THE BIRDS



We are overjoyed to announce the arrival of our brand new ambulance, generously donated by the Ron Magill Conservation Endowment (RMCE) at the Zoo Miami Foundation. Thanks to the generosity of the Bean Automotive Group, not only was the acquisition of the 2022 Toyota Rav4 made possible, but the vehicle was also beautifully wrapped to help promote the important work that PHSS is doing every day to help protect and preserve our priceless native wildlife. Thank you Ron Magill and Bean Automotive for your charitable support of our mission!



## Volunteer With Us!

*Stephanie Moure, Operations & IT Manager*

Pelican Harbor Seabird Station depends on volunteers to care for the thousands of animals we receive each year. From cleaning the enclosures and prepping the patients' meals to educating future generations on the importance of the work we do in rescuing native wildlife, there are opportunities for everyone! **Join the PHSS volunteer team today by scanning the QR code or visiting [pelicanharbor.org/volunteer](https://pelicanharbor.org/volunteer)**



Apply today!



# A Home for the Fish and the Feathered

*Samantha Martinez, Environmental Educator*

Pelican Harbor Seabird Station receives hundreds of wading and seabirds annually, more so than any other group of avians. This is in no small part due to the kind-hearted people who choose to bring in found injured or ill wildlife. Without the eyes and ears of these good samaritans, many of these animals would not make their way into care.

The health of Biscayne Bay requires that we pay attention to our impact. There are many ways in which our society unintentionally brings harm to our local environment, but luckily there are even more ways that we can make small changes in our lives to help repair it. For example, adopting safe fishing and boating practices, like casting with care and disposing of hook and line properly, helps to prevent wildlife injury and entanglement. You can also reduce chemical runoff by planting native plants in your yard and using natural herbicides. Additionally, you can reduce your plastic consumption, avoid littering, use reef-safe sunscreens and so much more!

Each organism within the Bay plays a role in which there is no understudy. So before we enjoy our weekend on the water, let us all take a moment to appreciate the tremendous importance of this ecosystem and what we can do to help preserve it and the animals, including us, who rely on it.



## Patient Highlight: Wood Stork #22-241

*By Hannah McDougall, Director of Communications*

On April 1st, PHSS had the honor of releasing an adult Wood Stork, the first in its 42-year history. Due in large part to habitat loss, the



Wood Stork is a Threatened species in the State of Florida. This particular bird had been in care for over 40 days after being admitted with Botulism poisoning. Wood Storks are considered an indicator species, meaning that the health of the population is an overall indicator of the health of the surrounding ecosystem. These types of species are therefore quite sensitive, so we are overjoyed that this patient was able to recover after being found in such a debilitated state!

## Florida's Fantastic Owls

*Tori Fields, Wildlife Rehabilitator & Intern Manager*

There are five species of owls that call Florida home. From largest to smallest, we have the Great horned owl, Barred owl, Barn owl, Burrowing owl, and Eastern screech owl. Big or small, each of these owls is equally important to our ecosystem by providing natural pest control by eating cockroaches, and invasive rats and mice. If you wish to welcome nature's natural pest control crew into your yard, you should consider adding owl nest boxes to nearby trees and avoid over-pruning to make your trees more appealing to our owl friends. Lastly, you should always steer clear of using chemical pest control like rodenticides. Rodenticides are one of owls' biggest threats because mice and rats readily feast on it, causing them to be ill and easy prey for the hungry owl. Although the owls do not ingest the rodenticide directly, they indirectly consume it through their food where it is equally as harmful and deadly. Small actions can help these beautiful creatures to stay healthy and free in the wild as nature intended them to be.



# Tenacious Toxins

Amanda Burke, Wildlife Rehabilitator

Botulism poisoning is a common cause for admission at Pelican Harbor. But what is Botulism? There are 6 different kinds of botulism, and the type that affects seabirds is known as Clostridium botulinum, or C. Botulinum type C. This bacteria is anaerobic, meaning it can thrive in low-oxygen environments. Unfortunately, pollution and water quality issues in Biscayne Bay often result in algal blooms. These blooms cause a huge loss of oxygen in the water; therefore making the bacteria grow exponentially. Once this bacteria begins to grow, it forms a toxin that grabs onto nervous tissues and hinders movement in the muscles. Fish contract the toxin, seabirds eat the fish, and the cycle continues. Birds who ingest this bacteria then grow lethargic and weak, lose the ability to fly, blink, or even hold their head up. It also acts quickly, so speedy treatment is imperative.

If the name botulinum is familiar, that's because a different strain of this toxin is a highly desired aesthetic service—known commonly as Botox!

Botulinum type A is used cosmetically due to the ability of the toxin to “freeze” muscles. It is injected under the skin and blocks messages from the nerves to cause muscle contraction—much the same way it works in birds. Even though botulinum is known as one of the most potent toxins, it is considered safe for human use in very low doses. The amount that these seabirds ingest is much higher and therefore causes much more severe problems. When we intake a botulism patient, supportive care is given right away. We provide lots of fluids and also a dose of activated charcoal—this helps soak up the toxins in the GI tract. However, this treatment only works if the bacteria is still present; if the disease has progressed too far it is unfortunately usually beyond treatment. If you see a seabird unable to stand, hold its head up or showing general weakness, be sure to call the clinic for assistance or bring the patient in as soon as possible. Botulinum—great for wrinkles, bad for seabirds!



## Renest is Best!

Hannah McDougall, Director of Communications

Springtime means songbirds are busy nesting — and when songbirds nest, baby birds appear at our door by the dozens. These babies come to us for all sorts of reasons - they fall out of the nest by accident, or after it was destroyed by wind or tree trimming. When we need to, we do an excellent job at raising these babies. However, mom and dad do a much better job and teach them things we can't like where to find water, how to catch dinner, what to do when it rains, and so much more. Visit [pelicanharbor.org/webinars](http://pelicanharbor.org/webinars) to tune in for a special webinar on May 11th and learn more about the importance of re-nesting.



## Watch Out! Mama Opossums Crossing!

Yaritza Acosta, Wildlife Rehab Manager

Baby mammal season is in full swing! This time of year we get an influx of orphaned and injured baby opossums due to their mothers being hit by cars or attacked by a cat or dog. A female opossum may have 1-3 litters per year, with breeding season beginning as early as December and most infants being born between the months of February and June. Opossums have adapted to urban life in Miami and can be found in all municipalities, even if you've never see one! They are most active at night scavenging for food, so be mindful when driving in neighborhoods after dark. If you do come across a dead opossum, always check to see if it's a female and check the pouch, because chances are she might still have live babies still attached to her, which can be brought to the clinic for care. **Did You Know: Opossums are great pest control, and are known to eat over 5,000 ticks in a single season!**





## MAKE A DATE WITH US!

MAY  
11



### RE-NESTING WEBINAR

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Time: 6:00-7:00 pm

Where: Zoom

MAY  
14



### PELICAN RUN 5K

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Time: 7:30 am

Where: Haulover Park

MAY  
15



### SUNSET CRUISE

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Time: 7:00-9:00 pm

Where: Crandon Park Marina