

❄️ SPECIAL ❄️
Holiday Edition



**Holiday
Fish Drive**



30th
ANNUAL

Pelican Talk

WINTER 2023

NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL NATIVE WILDLIFE CENTER

30th ANNUAL Holiday Fish Drive

30th ANNUAL *Holiday* FISH DRIVE!

Can you believe our Annual Fish Drive turns 30 years old this year? What started as a fun idea back in the 90s has now become a vital part of our end-of-year fundraising. Our pelicans, gulls, herons, and even opossums collectively eat thousands of pounds of fish a year, and the cost of all that seafood adds up quickly!

Your Fish Drive donation will be used to help cover the cost of fish, as well as seed, crickets, mice, and more, for the myriad of creatures treated at our center each year. Even better, an anonymous donor has pledged to match up to 5,000 pounds in Fish Drive gifts! You can help fill PHSS's freezers by making a contribution online, or by sending back the envelope enclosed in this newsletter. Every dollar counts!

Help us
fill our freezer
with fish!

Make your gift today at pelicanharbor.org/donate



holiday
gift
guide

The holidays are a wonderful time of the year but they can also be a little overwhelming when we go through our gift list! It can especially be challenging when we want to gift items that are useful, good for the environment, and support a worthwhile cause. Our team created this list that will delight even the most discerning recipient. Get yours today at pelicanharbor.org/holiday-gift-guide



Send
Someone on
Our Sunset
Cruises!



Show
You Care
with a Pelican
Adoption!



New
Pelican Harbor
Merch!



NEW MERCH FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

Scan to shop or visit
pelicanharbor.org/merch



Updates on New Wildlife Campus

By: Christopher Boykin, Executive Director

The PHSS Building and Capital Campaign committees have worked hard alongside nearly a dozen partners and contractors to move our project forward. We are on the precipice of groundbreaking and are eager to begin construction on our future home.

Soil Remediation - Some ground contamination of arsenic on the property occurs below commercial levels but above residential levels. A \$500,000 grant from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and Environmental Protection Agency was secured through their Brownfields program for the cleanup. It consists of scraping the soil, adding a protective environmental barrier, and covering it with one foot of clean fill. DERM is in the final stage of approving the remediation plan, and our contractors at WSP are standing by for mobilization in late November.

Building Permit and Notice of Commencement - We have retained the services of Judi Witkin and Associates as our permit expeditor. We are on the fourth of five rounds of building permit comments with the City of Miami. Our permit process number is BD22-024189-001, and the notice of commencement is expected before the year's end.

Completion Date - Our partners at Stiles Construction and Sharpe Project Developments have our project completion date scheduled for March 2025.

Funding Update - We have secured \$11,900,000 of funding for our new wildlife campus via donations, sponsorships, and formal pledges. A construction line of credit was also secured through a partnership with Bank OZK for the balance of funds to complete the \$15,000,000 buildout. Donors interested in investing in the project may contact Executive Director Christopher Boykin at (786) 942-9156 for information on naming opportunities.



BUILDING PERMIT

This card must be kept posted in a conspicuous place on site of

A “Wild” Day with Jeff Corwin

By: Hannah McDougall, Director of Communications

We were over the moon to host wildlife celebrity Jeff Corwin for a day of filming for his ABC show, Wildlife Nation. Emmy-winning television host Corwin is recognized as a global leader in exploration and conservation. The day was a long one, with multiple cameramen and audio engineers squeezed into the hospital (shoutout to our clinic staff for their patience and accommodation)!

Under the supervision of Dr. Renata Schneider and Yaritza Acosta, Jeff helped to intake, examine, and treat some of our patients, ending the day with a quadruple release at Morningside Rookery. It was amazing to get to know Jeff and his wonderful staff, especially for our younger employees who grew up watching his shows on NatGeo and Animal Planet. The episode is set to air in January, so keep an eye out for us on the big screen!



Species Highlight: Pied-billed Grebe

By: Amanda Burke, Wildlife Rehabilitator and Intern Coordinator

In early October, the clinic received a somewhat uncommon intake in the form of a Pied-billed Grebe. These exceptional waterbirds are commonly found in ponds, lakes, marshes, estuaries, and sloughs. This particular patient was found trying to cross a road in the Everglades, unable to fly or otherwise make it back to his marshy home. After treating the superficial wounds on his feet from walking on concrete, he was given daily swim therapy and offered food to mimic his natural hunting behaviors. Pied-billed Grebe #1799 quickly recovered and was released just five days later back into a marshy area near where he was found.

Grebe toes are lobed rather than webbed like a duck's feet, and act as paddles when swimming. Grebe feet are positioned very close to the bird's rear end-making them exceptional at diving but very awkward when walking on land. These birds rarely fly, but when they do, they can only take off from the water by doing a running start, flapping their wings, and gaining momentum across the surface before taking flight. Once on solid ground, they are rendered flightless!

In the water, these birds are graceful and stealthy hunters thanks to their body construction. When at rest, a grebe's wings fit seamlessly against its body, virtually disappearing when not in use. Grebes also have an incredible ability to trap and release water between their feather layers. This gives them very precise buoyancy control, which they can use to float or completely submerge themselves underneath the surface. Often, grebes are seen with only their eyes and nares above the water, similar to how an alligator cruises along. Trapping water also helps to make them more efficient and fast hunters by reducing drag when foraging for their underwater food sources of small fish, crustaceans, mussels, and snails.

Not only do these birds use feathers as flotation devices, they also use them for internal protection. Fun Fact: more than half of a grebe's stomach contents can be its own feathers! This forms a filter in the stomach that keeps any sharp shells, bones, or exoskeletons from making their way into the intestinal tract and doing damage. Additionally, the feathers help form anything that can't be digested into a pellet to be regurgitated.



More Than Meets the Eye

By: Yesica Polo Hernandez, Wildlife Rehabilitator

Virginia Opossum #1477 arrived at PHSS along with his three other siblings after their mother was killed by a car. While his siblings were clinically healthy, patient #1477 appeared to be suffering from infectious cataracts in both eyes. He was immediately started on antibiotics and eye drops, and after a week, the eyes appeared to be getting better but were still cloudy.

We used a special tool called an Alger Brush to buff the surface of the eye to allow for more healing. After a visit to our Veterinary Ophthalmologist, Dr. Martinez, the little opossum was cleared for release with a minor amount of corneal dystrophy, but otherwise full vision.

While survival in the wild is often dependent on eyesight, for opossums, smell is of greater importance. This opossum now lives freely in a local park, guided by his nose and nearly perfect vision.



Humberto and Rosario: Nature's Marvels

By: Troy Mckalla, Wildlife Intake and Environmental Education Associate

As nature paints its vivid canvas, our cherished Florida Box Turtles, Humberto & Rosario, have captivated our hearts as they embrace the natural rhythms of life, love, and laying eggs within their nurturing environment.

That's right...they're parents! Week after week this summer, witnessing their hatchlings emerge from nests several inches below the sand left us amazed at the success rate they had this year!

With the arrival of the colder months, Humberto and Rosario are now gracefully embracing another natural instinct, entering a phase of dormancy known as brumation. During this tranquil period, our resilient reptilian friends may choose to intermittently awaken to drink, delicately balancing the art of rest and sustenance. We understand the significance of this crucial process in ensuring their reproductive and overall well-being and are glad they are getting some well-deserved rest after their "busy" summer.



A Brand New Set of Wings

By: Jacquelyn Schoppe, Wildlife Rehabilitator

A bird's feathers are important for warmth, mating displays, waterproofing, and of course, flying! This past month at the station, a small Common Yellowthroat was admitted with several of his primary and secondary feathers and all his tail feathers plucked out by a cat. This is a terrible problem for a bird to have, as all of these feathers are essential for flight.

With a bird this small (weighing just 11 grams on intake), manually replacing his feathers with new ones would be an impossible task, and the best regime was to offer him lots of time until he could molt and grow a new set. They say time is the best healer, and here at PHSS, time, along with supportive care, is the prescription for many cases we see.

However, after over a week in care, our little warbler still had not shown any new feather sprouts. We decided to add some bird-biotin vitamins to his daily diet, just as we humans would if we were trying to grow our hair faster. Sure enough, it worked, and after just a few days, our patient had several little feather sprouts all along his wings and tail! After spending a total of 21 days with us, our Common Yellowthroat was officially released from care with a gorgeous new set of wings!



Paw Print Art



Adopt our Ambassador Opossum Maggie



Insulated Water Bottle

Make a donation in honor of a loved one and we will send them a card letting them know about your generous donation made in their name!

