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Pelican Press

Fall 2023

NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL NATIVE WILDLIFE CENTER

RAPTOR HEADACHE

AMANDA BURKE, WILDLIFE REHABILITATOR & INTERN COORDINATOR

Miami's skyline has grown exponentially in the last few decades. Beautiful, gleaming skyscrapers climb higher and higher along the bay, blending in with the view around them due to their glass walls. While they are visually appealing and fit in with the city's modern design, they are a detriment to the avian population in our area. Their seamless construction makes it increasingly difficult for flying birds to differentiate between sky and building, resulting in window strikes and subsequent head trauma.

We often think of songbirds as the only victims of window collisions, but PHSS has already admitted more than 40 raptor patients with head trauma this year. These patients come in lethargic or non-responsive, unable to respond to stimuli, and have a loss of coordination. Usually, their eyes also have a number of issues resulting from the trauma - inflammation, ulcers, hemorrhaging inside of the globe, and even severed optic nerves from impact. The impact can also cause swelling inside of the brain, leading to brain damage or death if left untreated. We treat these patients with fluid therapy which can include an IV drip with specialized fluids that reduce swelling and improve circulation. Laser therapy is also done daily to help with inflammation, and medications are prescribed to abate pain, inflammation, and to help resolve eye issues. A liquid diet is provided until the patient is both stable and strong enough to receive a more natural diet. Quick treatment is necessary to ensure recovery and minimize long-term damage to these birds. Damage to the eyes is often critical, as many raptor species hunt by sight and need full vision to successfully hunt in nature.

These cases could be lessened by architectural design that keeps wildlife in mind, such as breaking up glass exteriors with different surfaces and materials, or by the specification of bird-safe glass that is available on the market. You can help birds of all species by buying anti-collision stickers or a safety film for your windows. An easy at-home method is using a chalk marker and making dots 2 inches apart over the surface of your windows. These are easily removed with water and only require the purchase of a chalk marker. Even the smallest of efforts can help birds flying through Miami's skies, and we can all do our part to help migrating wildlife prosper in our urban environment.



EASTERN SCREECH OWL RECEIVING IV FLUIDS



PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT: MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE INTERN **JOLEANY SOBRINO**



In May, I joined PHSS as an administrative intern through Miami-Dade College's Civic Leadership Fellows Program through the Institute for Civic Engagement and Democracy (iCED).

Since childhood, I have always wanted to be a doctor, someone who helps others, and I have always been fascinated with animals. The way that each animal has their own way of hunting, socializing, and surviving is truly incredible and underappreciated. When I learned about veterinary medicine, I thought, "Even better!" Today, I am a sophomore at MDC's Hialeah campus majoring in Biology/Pre-Veterinary Medicine, aspiring to be a wildlife veterinarian.

At PHSS, I have learned very valuable lessons like what to do when a baby animal is found out of its nest, how to correctly rescue wildlife, and how to proceed with proper enrichment for our ambassador animals. Even with an administrative position, I learned many of the essential skills in line with my veterinarian career. I have also seen what it takes to keep a non-profit organization afloat with all the demands of the clinic and the patients' needs.

Throughout my experience here at PHSS, I have been greeted with open arms and smiles. I am very grateful to have been given the opportunity to work with kind people who care about rescuing, rehabilitating, and releasing native wildlife. I never thought that I would be able to be included in an organization with such an important mission and goal for the future of Florida's wildlife. I believe anyone would be lucky to be a part of PHSS and learn from these wonderful people!

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT: AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN

HANNAH MCDUGALL, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

While not common in the Miami area, American White Pelicans are frequently found on the Gulf Coast of Florida. Unlike their Brown Pelican cousins, they are not plunging divers and also prefer freshwater, unlike our saltwater-loving Brown Pelicans. These large but elegant birds are known for their distinct migratory patterns and many individuals that reside in Florida during the winter months actually breed in the northern parts of North America. Monroe, our Ambassador American White Pelican, is originally from Iowa and arrived to us on a Delta Cargo Flight

MEET MONROE!



after she missed her migration due to wing injuries. Do you love Monroe as much as we do? She and other Ambassador Animals are available for symbolic adoption on our website!



PHSS SECURES \$4.4 MILLION CONSTRUCTION LOAN FOR NEW FACILITY

We are proud to announce that we have recently secured a \$4.4 million construction loan thanks to a successful partnership with Bank OZK.

These funds are instrumental in the forward progress of our capital campaign for the construction of a new 2.6-acre native wildlife hospital and education center. Soil remediation and site work are set to start in September 2023, with vertical construction to commence before year-end. This pivotal juncture comes after four years of planning and fundraising efforts, with the Deeks and Batchelor Foundations being founding supporters.

This new facility will allow for larger enclosures to let our patients spread their wings, an advanced surgery suite for delicate procedures, and an expansive education center for hosting members of the public. Naming opportunities are still available, but time is ticking as we near groundbreaking. Please contact Christopher@pelicanharbor.org or at (786) 942-9156 for questions or to schedule a tour of the property.



Visit pelicanharbor.org/capitalcampaign to learn more and establish your legacy today!



BACHELOR MATCH IS HERE!

The Batchelor Foundation has graciously offered a matching grant that will double the value of all donations made to our wildlife rehabilitation program up to \$100,000. This means that every dollar you contribute will be matched, effectively **DOUBLING** your donation and magnifying the support we can provide to the sick, injured, and orphaned animals under our care. With the generous support of The Batchelor Match and your kind contributions, we can take our efforts to new heights!



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION BRINGS TEACHING TO LIFE

TROY MCKALLA, ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATOR

At PHSS, we firmly believe that knowledge is the key to fostering awareness, appreciation, and protection of the delicate balance of our ecosystem. In the heart of South Florida, it is often easy to overlook the coexistence of our local wildlife. Our educational outreach program strives to create a connection between the community and the native wildlife that call South Florida home by offering a unique opportunity for both children and adults to interact with wildlife up close.

By providing this direct experience, we hope to ignite curiosity and promote understanding of the vital roles animals play within our ecosystem. As you learn more about Maggie the Virginia Opossum's role in scavenging and cleaning, Humberto the Box Turtle's part in maintaining the balance of plant life, and Mowgli the Screech Owl's nocturnal contributions to pest control, you'll gain a deeper understanding of the symbiotic relationships that sustain our ecosystem. With every interaction and educational session, we strive to empower our community with the knowledge to drive positive change. More knowledge translates to increased awareness, and as we collectively become more conscious of the importance of preserving our native wildlife, we take crucial steps toward creating a harmonious environment for all residents, both human and animal.

SPEAKER SERIES



October 11th · 5:30-7:30 PM

X-REEFS: Creating Hybrid Reefs To Protect Florida's Corals, Coastlines, & Communities



November 8th · 5:30-7:30 PM

Lights Out Miami: The Effects of Light Pollution on Migrating Birds



November 13th · 5:30-7:30 PM

Exploring Florida's Venomous Snakes | with Special Guest Dr. Ray "Cobraman" Hunter

HAWK BURNED BY GAS FLARES AT LANDFILL

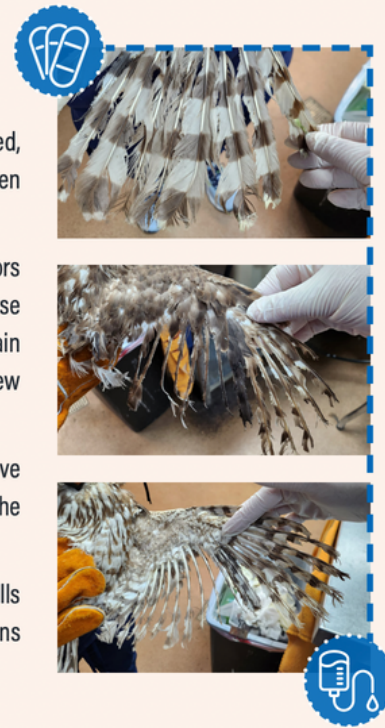
YARITZA ACOSTA, WILDLIFE REHABILITATION MANAGER

On May 20th, a Cooper's Hawk was admitted after being found at Medley Landfill unable to fly. On top of being weak and dehydrated, our staff quickly discovered that its feathers were singed and melted, and some areas of the beak and legs that should have been yellow were also melted and black - all typical signs of methane burns.

Birds of prey are drawn to areas like landfills due to their abundance of rodents and smaller prey, unwittingly putting our raptors in harm's way. Methane, a colorless gas and byproduct of decaying waste, poses a hidden threat as it combusts, subjecting these birds to searing heat when they venture through or perch near areas where the gas is ignited. Luckily, this patient did not sustain major damage to its skin, but its flight feathers were burnt beyond repair. This is an injury that requires a full molt to grow new feathers before being able to be released, a process that can take up to a year.

After intake, the bird was given pain medication, fluids, and topical wound treatment. Very quickly, the hawk became more active and began eating on its own. A few weeks later, the burned skin scabs began to fall off, revealing healthy new tissue. Soon after, the hawk was moved to our outdoor flight cage, where we now wait for the molting process to begin.

This case is a reminder of the unintended consequences that human activities can have on our wildlife. Burn injuries at landfills and other places that burn methane and other harmful gases may be more common than we think, and many wildlife organizations across the country are trying to gather more information and determine how these places can become more bird-friendly.



NAME THAT TUNE: BIRD EDITION

JACQUELYN SCHOPPE, WILDLIFE REHABILITATOR

Have you ever heard a song and wondered who sang it? We have all had those moments, and fortunately, there are several smartphone apps available that instantly identify song titles and artists for the tunes we hear. However, not all tunes that echo through our streets and neighborhoods are sung by humans. A similar technology exists that identifies birds from the lovely songs they play. The Merlin Bird ID App is a free and easy-to-use "name that tune" app and is a must-have for bird lovers everywhere. Similar to the popular app "Shazam," the sound recorder feature identifies the bird from the songs they sing. This is an excellent tool for any backyard birder to correctly document all their avian encounters. Tools like this are beneficial to the scientists at the Cornell Lab, who created the app, to the public, and also useful for our team.

Three baby Chimney Swifts are just beginning to take flight here at the station, making their schedule for release very soon. For this particular bird, it is best to release them into a colony with other "swifties."

This can be a challenge for rehabbers as these birds should be released "swiftly" once they are fully flighted, making the need to find an active colony an urgent one.

Luckily, this past weekend, walking around my neighborhood, I spotted some nimble, high-flying charcoal gray birds. Using the sound ID feature on the Merlin Bird app, I was able to confirm they were, in fact, a colony of Chimney Swifts! Thanks to technology, this app has helped us in locating a suitable release location for our adorable singing superstars.



DON'T LET THE HOLIDAYS FLY OVER YOUR HEAD THIS YEAR!

The holidays are a wonderful (and busy!) time to be with friends, family, and loved ones. We know it can also get a little stressful making sure you don't forget anyone on your gift list. To make it a little easier, we've compiled a list of great gifts that give back! We'll be adding more items to our shop this holiday season, so be sure to keep a close eye on our website for fun new items!

BE THE EARLY BIRD AND PREPARE WITH OUR HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

Ambassador Animal Shirts

Navy Blue PHSS Hat

A Gift From You

YOUR NAME HERE
YOUR MESSAGE HERE

Make a lasting gift by purchasing a brick to support our Capital Campaign

MEET THE ARTIST

Maggie's Paw Print Art

Support a patient in need by making a donation to our hospital in honor of a loved one. They'll receive a card letting them know about your generous donation in their honor!

Make a Donation