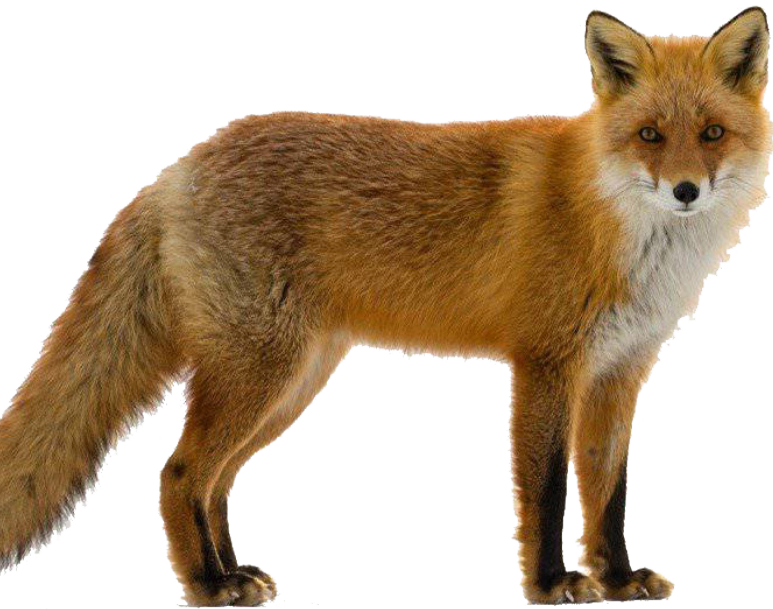




Rockfish Wildlife Sanctuary

5450 Wheelers Cove Road • Shipman, VA • 22971



How you can help today:

Cash Donations

Most of our funding comes from animal lovers like you! Please visit our website to donate.

RWS Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign

Don't forget the RWS Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign number: 3200!

Material Donations

- Paper towels and plain tissues
- Nitrile gloves
- 13gal. trash bags
- Newspapers
- Old towels, blankets
- Pet training pads
- Gas cards for transporters
- Gift cards to Food Lion for fresh veggies and fruits
- Gift cards to Blue Ridge Farmers Co-op

RWS Resale Shop

Proceeds at our resale store in Greene House Shops - located at 14843 Spotswood Trail, Ruckersville, VA 22968 - at the corner of Rt. 29 and Rt. 33, benefit the Sanctuary. The store also accepts donations, especially jewelry, art, glass, silver, china, or small furniture. To find out more, call 434.263.4954.

Please give us a call, visit our website and follow our social media to donate, volunteer, & keep up to date with what's happening at the Sanctuary!

434.263.4954 • rockfishwildlifesanctuary.org
facebook.com/rockfishwildlifesanctuary
Instagram @rockfishwildlifesanctuary
TikTok @rockfishwildlife

These people keep us going!

Wildlife Rehabilitators

Katie Attas
Nathou Attinger
Sarah Cooperman
Dez Brooks
Grace Leytham
Grace Neubauer
Jeff Wilbur

Board Members

Nathou Attinger
Liz Courain
Kaki Dimock
Anju Grover
Mary Haines-Johnson
Nancy Nuell
Charlotte Rea
Karen Walker
Patty Wallens

Animal Care Volunteers

Debra Abbott
Tina Walker-Brinson
Lilly Carpenter
Nicole Charles
Everly June Cope
Jaymie Dixon
MaryAnn Dupes
Cynthia Elkey
Lilly Farmer
Marcie Gibbons
Matt Heinrich
Steve Holler
Carolina Leonard
Andrea Merchak
Kent Olson
Debbie Smith
Dave Violin

Legal Advisor
Meghan Cloud

Transport Volunteers:

Karyn Allen
Brittany Barnett
Robyn Bennett
Tony Cambio
Peyton Coyner
Jennifer Dahmen
Lauren Dalton
Cynthia Elkey
AJ Greely
Layla Gustavson
Susan Hastings
Dianne Hillman
Jennifer Lewis
Magda Liska
Lex Meredith
Shannon Padgett
Gary Powell
Charlotte Rea
Crystal Shull
Genevieve Story
Stephanie Sweat
Dave Volin

Outreach

Sarah Cooperman
Bernie Dracopoli
Lilly Farmer
Nancy Newman

Carpentry

Ed Spellman
Carl Stellwag
Pete Syme

2022 Summer Interns

Katie Fox
Kris Cooper
Maddie Townsend

Thank you!



Rockfish Wildlife Sanctuary

5450 Wheelers Cove Road · Shipman, Virginia 22971 · 434.263.4954 · rockfishwildlifesanctuary.org

A Semi-Annual Newsletter

Spring 2023

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE . . .

the more they stay the same! RWS undergoes an organizational shift, while at the same time keeping a consistent and dedicated staff. Titles and responsibilities change and grow along with the Sanctuary.

Welcome RWS's new Executive Director Sarah Cooperman!

All staff, past and present, are thrilled with the choice of Sarah as the new Executive Director of RWS. Her smile, infectious laugh, and genuine care for the well-being of both patients and staff will serve to represent RWS well and carry on the Sanctuary's legacy!

"When Sarah first arrived at RWS, I was taken in by her smile, laughter, and warmth. She was so excited to work with wildlife and to be carving her way in the world. As time went on, she grew from a nervous newcomer to a confident and impressive professional, and I think bringing her onto the team was one of the best choices we could have ever made. Sarah has a unique talent in the world of animal care, which is that she is also great with humans! She elevated so many things at RWS, but the outreach program certainly stands out as one of her biggest achievements so far. Sarah taught me the value of teamwork, and when I left the organization, I knew it was in great hands with that team. I am so proud of her taking on the challenge of executive directorship, and I am confident she will lead the organization forward, as she has helped to do since the first day she stepped foot onto the dreamy, magical property that is RWS."

Madeline Zimmer, RWS Associate Director, 2017-20

"Sarah has been instrumental to the growth of Rockfish Wildlife Sanctuary over the past four years. As a wildlife rehabilitator, she greatly expanded the rehabilitative capabilities of numerous species of bats by helping to design and secure grant funding for a new enclosure. As the Associate Director of Outreach, she increased the reach of educational programming by presenting up to 50 free programs across Central Virginia annually as well as identifying new audiences for digital media. I am excited to see the new heights that she is able to help Rockfish Wildlife Sanctuary reach in her new role as the Executive Director."

Brie Hasham, RWS Associate Director 2021-22



Rockfish Wildlife Sanctuary rescues, rehabilitates, and releases orphaned and injured wildlife in Central Virginia and educates our community about the needs and value of the natural environment.

CH - CH - CH - CH - CHANGES . . . (Cont.)

Dez Brooks: Rehabilitation Program Manager, All-Around Superhero

We're excited to share another personnel update from the Sanctuary: Dez has been promoted to be our first ever Rehabilitation Program Manager. In this new role, Dez will oversee daily rehabilitation operations at RWS. This means they'll be managing rehab staff and volunteers while ensuring our 850+ patients are getting the proper species-specific care they need to return to the wild. Yep, we'll just come out and say it: Dez is a superhero! Here are Dez's colleagues reflecting on their superhuman rehab skills.

Jeff (staff): Dez has the ability to empathetically understand what's going on with every animal.

Grace (staff): They know everything off the top of their head! They know all of the logistical info, from county species restrictions to knowing each individual animal's care needs.

Sarah (staff): I'm fully convinced Dez speaks hawk...and crow...vulture. The work they have done as primary trainer for our education ambassador birds is astounding!

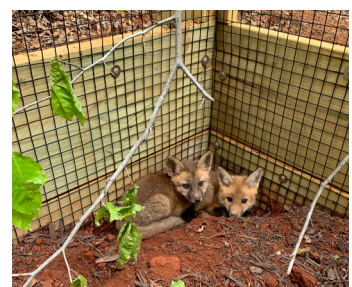
Matt (volunteer): Dez is such a good teacher. They're really good at explaining things!

Debbie (volunteer): They are always available to answer questions and they have ideas and plans to make raising and releasing babies go as smoothly as possible. They are also great at handling angsty squirrels!



WE HAVE A NEW FOX ENCLOSURE!

Thanks to a generous donation from the Sanford Fund and the amazing people at the Building Goodness Foundation, who give of their time, energy and expertise, our next group of fox kits will have a much larger space to grow and acclimate to the outdoors!



ALL ABOUT THE ANIMALS

Spring patient intakes are once again soaring! For the second year in a row, we are well ahead of the previous year's admissions at this time. Luckily for the patients, our stellar volunteers and interns are also returning to help manage the feeding and care - we are busy!



A Great (Horned) Reunion

When a Virginia Department of Forestry employee spotted two baby Great Horned Owls on the ground in Charlottesville, RWS staff teamed up with VDOF to get them safely reunited with their parents. Thankfully, the VDOF employee could see the nest the owlets had fallen from – it had a third owlet, too! Given that the parents were nearby observing the situation, these grounded owls were great “re-nesting” candidates. When Rehabilitation Program Manager Dez arrived on scene and performed a full physical exam, they were glad to find that both babies were in perfect health. State Forester Rob Farrell then got on his arborist gear and quickly scaled the tree where the nest was located. After sending photos down to Dez on the ground, it was clear that the nest was too small to comfortably hold all three babies. Owls are not known for being diligent or skillful nest builders! So, Dez made them a makeshift nest out of a milk crate, lifting it 40 feet up to Farrell in the tree. Farrell then secured it directly next to the original nest, so the parents would be able to care for the three owlets at the same time - and they did. Dez and VDOF followed up with occasional checks on the nest saw all 3 babies being happily cared for by mom and dad. A re-nest success!



Kit(tens) ?

A homeowner in Albemarle County noticed the infant kits together in their backyard and thought they had stumbled upon a litter of domestic kittens. They put the kits in their barn, providing bowls of kitten formula, solid foods, and water for over a week before realizing they perhaps had a more wild situation on their hands. Red fox kits are born almost uniformly chocolate brown and just a tad bigger than a domestic cat – they look similar to a puppy or kitten. However, infant fox kits have a white-tipped tail and quickly develop a white spot on their chest, too. The trademark red coat grows in after about one month. If you're ever unsure what kind of animal you're dealing with, reach out to us and ask! Luckily, this rescuer used gloves and did not touch the kits barehanded, so the local health department did not deem it necessary to test for rabies. Their story is a good reminder not to handle wildlife unless specifically instructed to by a permitted rehabilitator. As for the kits now? They're doing well at RWS, fully weaned onto solid foods and playing outside in acclimation hutches. We look forward to providing this foxy squad a safe home and proper, species-specific care until their release in late July!



Definitely not Skunks

This tale (tail?) also involves mistaken identities. We received a call in mid-April from a couple who had moved a storage container in their backyard and accidentally unearthed a den. They thought they saw a mother skunk run off and assumed the small, helpless pink babies left behind were skunks. After leaving the babies for 24 hours and seeing no sign of mom, the couple realized the babies needed help ASAP. They called us and told us they'd be bringing by four skunk kits, so we were surprised when we unboxed four baby groundhogs instead! That being said, the identity mix up was understandable. “Pinky” neonate mammals can be very difficult to identify, especially to those who don't encounter them often (most folks!). In fact, the hoglets were just barely above birth weight, and we estimate they were only two to three days old when they were orphaned. Honestly, our best size and shape comparison would be a little sweet potato. These patients were by far the smallest hoglets our staff had ever encountered. Yet this quartet is doing fabulously at RWS so far and they have nearly doubled in weight already. We hope to get these cuties munching on fresh greens soon and aim for a late-June release!

2022 MAJOR GIFTS & GRANTS

Alice Meador CACF
Arthur L and Elaine V Johnson Foundation
At Last Fund of the CACF
Bama Works
Batten Family Fund in the CACF
Bernice Barbour Foundation
William Camp Foundation
Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge
LEAW
J & E Berkley Foundation

Marta Helfin Foundation
Nunley Satira Foundation
Pajeau Wildlife Foundation
Ray Rowe Trust
St. Paul Foundation, The Earl D. & Marian N. Olson Fund
Sanford Fund CACF
Nancy Newman
Lucy Byrd Pegau
Alexandra Shaw

517

donors gave to RWS in 2022!

THANK YOU

stronger in 2023 because of you!

Animal Rescuers, Volunteers, Donors, Supporters and Staff! RWS is

Building Volunteers

Carl Stelliwag
Ed Spellman
Pete Syme

Outreach

Sarah Cooperman
Bernie Dracopoli
Nancy Newman

Legal Advisor

Meghan Cloud

Animal Care Volunteers

Debra Abbott
Robyn Bennett
Everly June Cope
Nicole Charles
Cynthia Elkey
Jaymie Dixon
Lilly Farmer
Marcie Gibbons
Matt Heinrich
Steve Holler
Andrea Merchak
Kent Olson
Debbie Smith
Dave Violin

Patient Transport Volunteers

Karyn Allen
Robyn Bennett
Tony Cambio
Peyton Coyner
Jennifer Dahmen
Lauren Dalton
Cynthia Elkey
AJ Greely
Layla Gustavson
Susan Hastings
Dianne Hillman
Magda Liska
Gary Powell
Charlotte Rea
Crystal Shull
Debbie Smith
Genevieve Story
Stephanie Sweat
Dave Volin

Administrative/General/ Other Volunteers

Renita Banks
Bernie Dracopoli
Jessie Duff-McLaurin
Candy Goodyear
Adrian Neumeister
Nancy Newman
Nancy Ortiz
Jim Shea
Barbara Yeaman

2022 Summer Interns

Kris Cooper
Katie Fox
Maddie Townsend

Board of Directors

Anju Grover, President
Mary Haines-Johnson, Vice-President
Liz Courain, Secretary
Kaki Dimock, Treasurer
Nathou Attinger
Beverley Butler
Nancy Nuell
Charlotte Rea
Patty Wallens
Karen Walker

2022 Staff

Nathou Attinger
Brie Hashem
Sarah Cooperman
Dez Brooks
Katie Attas
Grace Leytham
Grace Neubauer
Jeff Wilbur

891

hours of volunteer time were
recorded in 2022!

Rockfish Wildlife Sanctuary, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. RWS receives an annual permit from the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (VDWR) to rehabilitate Virginia native wildlife and another to have education animals. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) gives RWS a state permit to rehabilitate migratory birds, as well as another permit to display education migratory birds. In addition, staff members hold individual permits from the VDWR, FWS, and the United States Department of Agriculture.

ROCKFISH WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

ANNUAL REPORT | 2022

Thank you, RWS Supporters! It was another great year at Rockfish Wildlife Sanctuary. Below are some of the highlights from this year, our work would not have been possible without your help.



868

animals were rescued by RWS in 2022.

480

animals were released in 2022.



4.6%

of revenue for RWS was provided by the RWS Resale Shop. Thank you to Candy Goodyear, Nancy Ortiz, and all who donated and shopped.



2,400

people reached by RWS Education & Outreach.



84%

of our revenues went to direct animal care.

750

sq. feet of river gravel installed for biosecurity protocols.

2.19–11.13

the dates on which our busy animal care season started and ended. Being earlier and longer than ever before affected our volunteer and staffing patterns, as we were required to remain fully staffed for a much longer period than in the past.



21 reptiles

(2.4%)



531
mammals
(61.2%)



ANIMAL
FACTS
868

animals were rescued by
RWS in 2022

316
birds
(36.4%)



5%

were pending release in 2023

30%

died from their
injuries or had to be
humanely euthanized

10%

were transferred
for acute
medical care

REHABILITATION
OUTCOMES

55%

of animals
were released
into the wild

\$17,201

RWS Resale Shop (4.6%)

TOTAL INCOME
\$377,003

\$91,000

Major Gifts & Grants (24.1%)

\$268,802

Individual Donations (71.3%)

\$9,553

Fundraising (3.6%)

\$28,302

General & Administrative (10.7%)

\$4,291

Education of the Public (1.6%)

TOTAL EXPENSES
\$265,817

\$223,671

Direct Animal Care (84.1%)

NOTE:

The RWS board seeks to meet nonprofit best practice benchmarks by establishing 3-6 months of operational reserves. This enables us to prepare for unexpected changes in the local economy and in the wild environs. We feel this is particularly prudent given the extended mating seasons we are starting to experience in Central Virginia.