



WILDLIFE CENTER

OF VIRGINIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

PRESIDENT'S YEAR IN REVIEW


Dear Friends,

For many of us, 2021 is a year that looks best in the rearview mirror. The continued stress of the pandemic, the challenges of finding and scheduling vaccinations, booster shots, and tests, at times seemed overwhelming. Somehow, we not only survived 2021, we thrived.


That success was enabled by an unprecedented level of support from our friends and benefactors. Your support provided state-of-the-art care to a record-breaking 3,804 wild animals. We were able to launch the *Great Rebuild*, a dramatic renovation that upgraded many of our animal facilities.

Our weekly television series, *UNTAMED: Life is Wild*, aired on VPM and other PBS affiliates nationwide. It was nominated for an Emmy Award, and won two Telly Awards. Those achievements are a tribute to those who have made it all possible with their generous financial support.

As we enter 2022, we look forward to even more success and achievement. We will be celebrating the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Wildlife Center of Virginia, and we will be announcing many new initiatives. But for now, I hope you will enjoy this report of yet another remarkable year, and I hope we can count on you as we look to the future.



Sincerely,



Ed Clark, President



Bald Eagle release, Virginia Beach VA, January 2021. Photo courtesy of Jim Yanello.

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ON THE COVER:
Education Ambassador "Gus" (Barred Owl) at a small, in-person event in Albemarle County.

The *Great Rebuild* of 2021
Donors Responded to Support
an Essential Upgrade

Animal enclosures get a lot of wear and tear when they are used to house more than 3,000 wild animals per year. Donors responded generously in 2021 when we launched the *Great Rebuild* campaign to renovate and expand our animal care facilities. The result is one of the most extensive facility upgrades in the history of the Wildlife Center.

Well over half of the total space of our enclosures was rebuilt, renovated, or expanded in the project—improving safety and habitat enrichment for our wild patients and ambassadors..



"Verlon"
(American Kestrel)
enjoys his view.

**10,000
SQUARE FEET**
of existing pens either repaired or rebuilt

**500
SQUARE
FEET**
of **NEW** enclosure
space added

**1.5
ACRES**
of bear habitat
enclosure upgraded
and secured



2021 Patient Admissions

TOTAL: 3,804

Passerines (Songbirds)

942 PATIENTS

- 33 American Crow
- 24 American Goldfinch
- 154 American Robin
- 1 Baltimore Oriole
- 11 Barn Swallow
- 1 Bay-breasted Warbler
- 2 Black-and-white Warbler
- 2 Black-capped Chickadee
- 1 Black-throated Blue Warbler
- 54 Blue Jay
- 1 Blue-headed Vireo
- 4 Brown Thrasher
- 2 Brown-headed Cowbird
- 1 Cape May Warbler
- 4 Carolina Chickadee
- 86 Carolina Wren
- 9 Cedar Waxwing
- 10 Chipping Sparrow
- 36 Common Grackle
- 2 Common Raven
- 1 Common Yellowthroat
- 8 Dark-eyed Junco
- 41 Eastern Bluebird
- 1 Eastern Kingbird
- 3 Eastern Meadowlark
- 10 Eastern Phoebe
- 1 Eastern Towhee
- 1 Eastern Wood Pewee
- 61 European Starling
- 2 Evening Grosbeak
- 6 Fish Crow
- 23 Gray Catbird
- 8 Hermit Thrush
- 65 House Finch
- 54 House Sparrow

- 1 House Wren
- 1 Least Flycatcher
- 1 Louisiana Waterthrush
- 82 Northern Cardinal
- 41 Northern Mockingbird
- 1 Northern Parula
- 1 Northern Rough-winged Swallow
- 1 Ovenbird
- 15 Pine Siskin
- 1 Pine Warbler
- 6 Purple Finch
- 5 Red-eyed Vireo
- 4 Red-winged Blackbird
- 1 Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- 4 Scarlet Tanager
- 11 Song Sparrow
- 1 Summer Tanager
- 1 Swainson's Thrush
- 4 Tree Swallow
- 12 Tufted Titmouse
- 4 Undetermined Bird
- 5 White-breasted Nuthatch
- 1 White-crowned Sparrow
- 1 White-eyed Vireo
- 7 White-throated Sparrow
- 2 Wood Thrush
- 1 Worm-eating Warbler
- 4 Yellow Warbler

Raptors and Vultures

390 PATIENTS

- 10 American Kestrel
- 40 Bald Eagle
- 6 Barn Owl
- 41 Barred Owl
- 21 Black Vulture

- 3 Broad-winged Hawk
- 22 Cooper's Hawk
- 58 Eastern Screech-Owl
- 28 Great Horned Owl
- 1 Merlin
- 4 Osprey
- 3 Peregrine Falcon
- 48 Red-shouldered Hawk
- 72 Red-tailed Hawk
- 7 Sharp-shinned Hawk
- 26 Turkey Vulture

Other Birds

341 PATIENTS

- 2 American Woodcock
- 1 Belted Kingfisher
- 35 Canada Goose
- 14 Chimney Swift
- 1 Common Loon
- 2 Common Nighthawk
- 10 Domestic Fowl
- 6 Downy Woodpecker
- 20 Great Blue Heron
- 2 Great Egret
- 3 Green Heron
- 3 Hairy Woodpecker
- 1 Herring Gull
- 2 Killdeer
- 1 Laughing Gull
- 44 Mallard
- 86 Mourning Dove
- 1 Northern Bobwhite
- 10 Northern Flicker
- 1 Northern Shoveler
- 5 Pileated Woodpecker
- 28 Red-bellied Woodpecker
- 1 Red-throated Loon
- 2 Ring-billed Gull

- 14 Rock Pigeon
- 17 Ruby-throated Hummingbird
- 1 Solitary Sandpiper
- 1 Sora
- 2 Virginia Rail
- 5 Wild Turkey
- 8 Wood Duck
- 6 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- 6 Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Mammals

1,838 PATIENTS

- 1 American Beaver
- 10 American Black Bear
- 34 Big Brown Bat
- 17 Black Rat
- 1 Coyote
- 52 Deer Mouse
- 20 Eastern Chipmunk
- 594 Eastern Cottontail
- 6 Eastern Fox Squirrel
- 298 Eastern Gray Squirrel
- 1 Eastern Mole
- 2 Eastern Pipistrelle
- 18 Eastern Red Bat
- 1 Evening Bat
- 1 Gray Fox
- 5 Hispid Cotton Rat
- 1 Hoary Bat
- 53 House Mouse
- 2 Little Brown Bat
- 1 Meadow Vole
- 7 Northern Short-tailed Shrew
- 17 Norway Rat
- 82 Raccoon

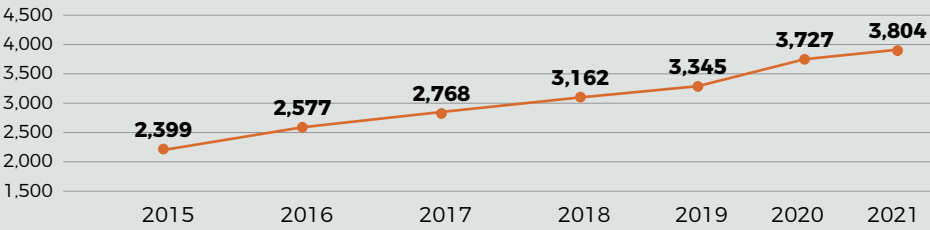
- 1 Rafinesque's Big-eared Bat
- 29 Red Fox
- 8 Southern Flying Squirrel
- 40 Striped Skunk
- 1 Undetermined Mammal
- 395 Virginia Opossum
- 117 White-tailed Deer
- 23 Woodchuck

Reptiles and Amphibians

293 PATIENTS

- 3 American Bullfrog
- 11 Eastern American Toad
- 5 Eastern Gartersnake
- 1 Eastern Hog-nosed Snake
- 26 Eastern Painted Turtle
- 27 Eastern Ratsnake
- 6 Eastern River Cooter
- 2 Fowler's Toad
- 2 Gray Treefrog
- 2 Green Frog
- 3 Northern Black Racer
- 1 Northern Mole Kingsnake
- 2 Northern Ring-necked Snake
- 1 Northern Rough Greensnake
- 6 Red-eared Slider
- 19 Snapping Turtle
- 1 Spotted Turtle
- 174 Woodland Box Turtle
- 1 Yellow-bellied Slider

INCREASING CASELOAD 2015-2021



Cases Admitted Per Year

With ongoing habitat loss, and a pandemic leading to more time spent outdoors, humans are encountering more injured and orphaned wildlife. The trend has led to a significant increase in patient admissions. The Center also receives patients with more complex medical needs from other centers—increasing not only the number of patients but also the level of care required.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird being freed from a porch door screen, April 2021

Feeding a Virginia Opossum joey whose mother was injured in a dog attack, April 2021

Veterinary staff perform a blood transfusion on an injured hawk in February 2021

From Treatment to Training

Patient #21-0509 Recovers from Lead Poisoning

The Center's 509th patient of 2021 came to us on April 13 from Charlottesville. 21-0509 is an Eastern Screech-Owl who was found as a fledgling on the ground in a local park, unusually quiet and minimally responsive.

Multiple examinations found significant levels of lead in his blood and a skull fracture, possibly from a fall caused by the neurological effects of the lead.

After months of treatment to reduce the lead in his system, the patient was more active and able to feed well, but he was clearly limited in his ability to fly and move freely. Director of Veterinary Services Dr. Karra Pierce made the decision that he was too neurologically impaired to return to the wild.



Severe head tilt is a common symptom of lead toxicosis. Veterinary and Rehabilitation staff made a soft neck brace to help resolve the patient's neck tilt.



Today, the recovered Screech-Owl is a candidate to become one of the Center's Education Ambassadors. Using current best practices, his trainer Amanda Nicholson, Senior Vice President for Outreach and Education, is slowly getting him used to human interaction with the lowest stress possible. "It takes a long time to build a relationship of trust," says Amanda.

+ 0509's data was included in a study of blood lead levels in nocturnal raptors presented by Dr. Pierce at the 2021 Raptor Research Foundation Symposium. The presentation was the first to gather data on lead levels in these species.



The Great Bear Release of 2021

19 Cubs Raised and Returned to the Wild

The orphaned cubs that came to the Center in 2020 to be raised and overwintered turned into one of the largest cohorts we've ever seen. By spring of 2021, as yearlings ready to strike out on their own, they numbered 19 in total—each weighing between 75 and 150 pounds. They were released into the wild in small groups on five days between April 13 and May 6.

"It was incredible," said Kelsey Pleasants, Wildlife Rehabilitation Supervisor. "We always have a plan, but it can get pretty chaotic. How many can we process in a day? Which do we group together? It took hours each day." In the end, says Kelsey, "it went flawlessly. The teamwork was above and beyond."



The logistics of a Black Bear release. Each set of bears had to be trapped or lured into a seclusion area where they could be sedated. Once unconscious, each was given a physical exam, treated for parasites, given their permanent tags, and loaded into a culvert trap for transport to their release site.

PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT AT A GLANCE

- In 2021, we provided training for:**
 - 37** Veterinary externs
 - 2** Veterinary Technician externs
 - 19** Wildlife Rehabilitation externs
- The Wildlife Center is actively gathering data for**
 - 14** ongoing scientific studies
 - Subjects include: Black Bear mange, emerging disease in box turtles, tick-borne pathogens, infectious parasites in wild canids, and baby bird identification.
- Veterinary staff presented findings at**
 - 8** professional conferences and universities
 - Subjects included: lead exposure in nocturnal raptors, mange in Black Bears, resilience in wildlife medicine, careers in wildlife rehabilitation, and raptor ophthalmology.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Virtual Outreach
at a Glance

In 2021, Center staff produced:



115

live or pre-recorded programs

3,031

minutes of programming

183,439

minutes total viewing time

23,095

audience engagements
(likes, comments, shares)



68

new videos posted

133,143

total views



49

contracted online programs with
schools, libraries, and civic groups

Expanding Capacity for Virtual Programs

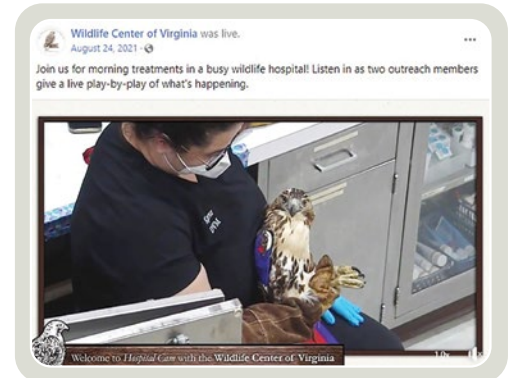
Year two of the pandemic created many new opportunities for the Center's Education & Outreach staff to engage the public virtually.

Those opportunities included:

- live streaming of Hospital Cam with live audio commentary
- live facility tours, including progress reports on the *Great Rebuild*
- streaming special observances, holiday events, and guest speakers

The impact and quality of these events was enhanced by live broadcasting software. "Overall we upped the ante this year with the live broadcast style of hospital cams and live streams," said Amanda Nicholson, Senior Vice President for Outreach and Education. "Our new broadcast software has allowed us to blend live video with live audio commentary and add in any photo or videos we'd like to share while streaming."

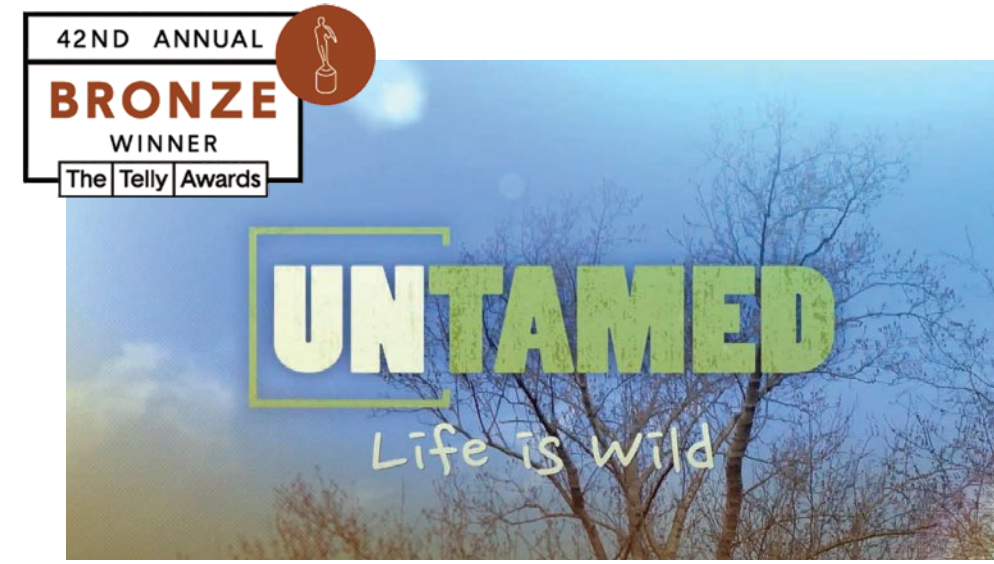
▼ A lull in COVID during the warmer months made possible a few small socially-distanced public outreach events. Six in-person programs were attended by 177 people in 2021.



Live Hospital Cam on Facebook, August 2021



Kai Medina uses production software to direct and provide commentary for a live hospital cam.



Banner Year for WCV's
Public Television Series

Season 3 of *UNTAMED: Life is Wild*, a co-production of VPM and the Wildlife Center of Virginia, was broadcast across Virginia beginning in April.

Meanwhile, also in 2021, Season 2 of the series was distributed nationwide through American Public Television. The series was licensed by 89 public television organizations across the country, from Eureka, CA to New York City—from St. Paul, MN to Midland, TX.

In May, Episode 1 of Season 2 (on "The One Health Concept") was honored with two Bronze "Telly" Awards, honoring excellence in video and television. In June, the same episode was nominated for a regional Emmy award by the National Capital Chesapeake Bay Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.



Co-Producers Amanda Nicholson and Ed Clark flank VPM Producer Clay Bretz with the Telly Awards the series won in 2021.



◀ **Season 4 of *UNTAMED* began filming in 2021. Look for it on VPM public television stations starting in April of 2022.**

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Call of the Wild: Continuing Education Builds Expertise Across the Profession


The Wildlife Center of Virginia has always taken a leading role in building the expertise and the capacity of the entire profession of wildlife veterinary medicine and rehabilitation. Each year the Center plans, manages, and hosts the **Call of the Wild conference**—one of the premier continuing education conferences for wildlife medicine professionals. At the 2021 conference, Wildlife Center staff shared their experience and insights in the following sessions:

- Dr. Karra Pierce: Fluid Therapy for Wildlife Lecture/Demonstration; “Drug Withdrawal Times and Prohibited Medications”; Raptor Physical Exam Lecture/Demonstration
- Dr. Emily MacArthur: “Basics of Amphibian Rehabilitation”
- Dr. Jennifer Yu: “The Physiologic Effects of Acute and Chronic Stress in Captive Wildlife”
- Ace Eid, LVT: “Effective Disinfection for Common Wildlife Diseases”
- Alyssa Lakota, LVT: “Anesthesia Complications”
- Ben Cole: “Caring for Nature in a Digital Age”
- Kelsey Pleasants: “Natural History of Woodpeckers in Virginia”
- Lacy Kegley: “Mental Health & Self-care”
- Connor Gillespie: “Patient Updates in Wildlife Rehabilitation”
- Maggie McCartney: “Building and Fostering Your Support Network”
- Alex Wehrung: “Advanced Virtual Programming”

Acute Effects of Stress

Effects of acute CA and GC release:

- Increase blood glucose → energy
- Increased muscle tone
- Mental effects: improve reflex time, memory formation for avoidance of future stimuli
- Fight or flight response



CALL OF THE WILD 2021 AT A GLANCE

421 attendees

35 states represented

5 countries (U.S., Canada, UK, South Africa, Germany)

53 total learning sessions and post-session Q & As

20 sessions and Q&As offered by Wildlife Center staff

Critter Cams Create Connection, Relief from the Pandemic

A key component of the Center's outreach and education efforts continues to be *Critter Cam*—an online live-feed broadcast through the Center's website. The three *Critter Cam* channels, broadcasting 24 hours per day, give wildlife fans worldwide the chance to view patients and ambassador animals as they go about their day. The accompanying Moderated Discussion chat allows “Critter Nation” followers everywhere to share their love of these magnificent wild animals.



Critter Cams and Moderated Discussion

13,660 unique visitors in 2021

Critter Cam 1



Maturing Black Bears captured on *Critter Cam*.

In 2021 we learned that during the pandemic the nurses at the UVa COVID-19 Clinic had become avid watchers of the Wildlife Center's *Critter Cams*.

One of the former nurses, Cynthia, recently shared the story and a photograph with us. “The wildlife cameras were a source of constant stress relief to the COVID Clinic nurses,” says Cynthia. “We diligently followed the addition of baby bears, their growth and maturity, and ultimately their release back into the wild. And each nurse had his/her different cameras that they loved. We even got the doctors watching!”

The Wildlife Center of Virginia salutes the staff of the UVa COVID Clinic, and all of the front-line health care workers of the pandemic. Their tireless dedication and compassion has helped countless people cope and survive during these past two trying years. **THANK YOU for your commitment.** We are so grateful that our work has helped lighten your burden.



UVa COVID-19 Clinic nurses donated to support *Critter Cams* in 2020 and are part of “Critter Nation.”



To view our *Critter Cams* and participate in the Moderated Discussion, please visit

wildlifecenter.org/crittercams

FINANCIALS

2021 Revenues

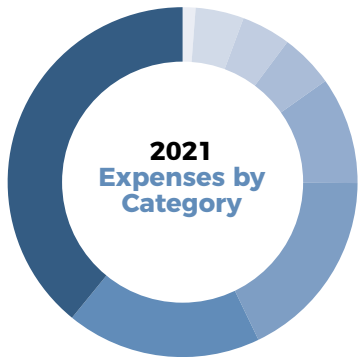
Individuals	\$1,849,375
Bequests	\$991,639
Corporations/Foundation	\$355,385
Events [net]	\$175,544
Wildlife Center of VA Foundation	\$49,000
Programs Fees/Sales	\$61,029
TOTAL:	\$3,481,972



- Wildlife Center of VA Foundation **1%**
- Programs Fees/Sales **2%**
- Events [net] **5%**
- Corporations / Foundations **10%**
- Bequests **29%**
- Individuals **53%**

2021 Expenses

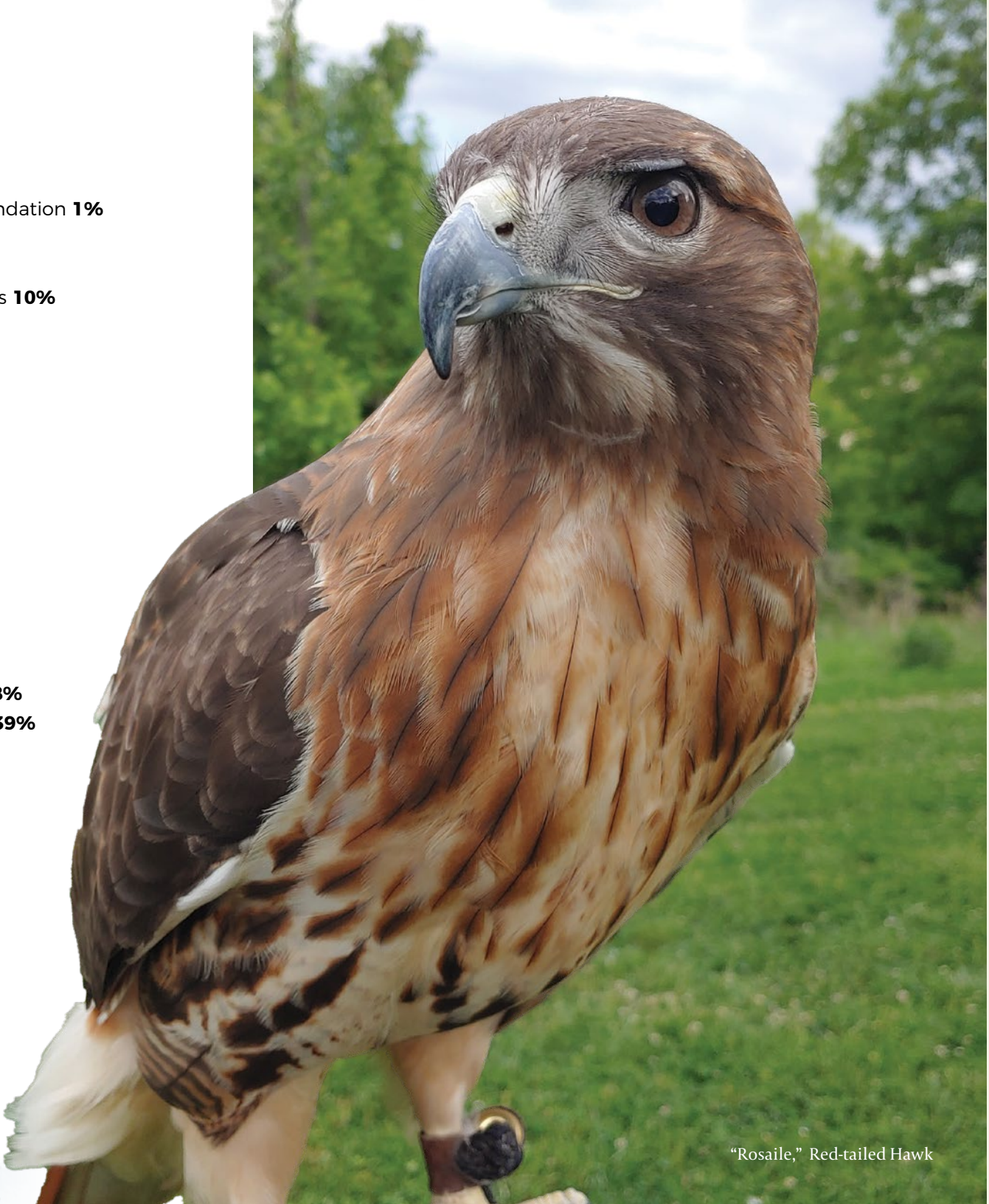
Outreach/Conservation	\$627,816
Treatment	\$619,017
Training	\$344,617
Fundraising	\$155,726
Administration	\$158,601
Capital Expenditures	\$172,919
Mortgage	\$41,498
Future Projects/Reserves	\$1,361,778
TOTAL:	\$3,481,972



- Mortgage **1%**
- Fundraising **4%**
- Administration **5%**
- Capital Expenditures **5%**
- Training **10%**
- Treatment **18%**
- Outreach/Conservation **18%**
- Future Projects/Reserves **39%**



A financial statement for the most recent fiscal year is available upon request from the State Division of Consumer Affairs, P.O. Box 1163, Richmond VA 23209, 804.786.1343. Financial statements are also posted on the Center's website.



“Rosaile,” Red-tailed Hawk

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WILDLIFE CENTER
OF VIRGINIA

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Dr. Jenn Yu, *Veterinary Intern*



"Violet" (Virginia Opossum)

Naming Our Newest Ambassadors

In early 2021, we named and welcomed two opossums to our troop of Education Ambassadors. "Violet" and "Marigold," as they were named in a poll in January, both sustained injuries that made their return to the wild impossible. Their friendly dispositions made them great candidates for work as ambassador animals, and favorites with both staff and audiences.



"Marigold" (Virginia Opossum)



**WILDLIFE
CENTER**
OF VIRGINIA

A hospital for native wild animals,
teaching the world to care about, and care for,
wildlife and the environment.

MAIL: P.O. Box 1557 Waynesboro, VA 22980 • LOCATION: 1800 South Delphine Ave Waynesboro, VA 22980 • 540.942.9453

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