



## Wildlife Veterinary Care News

*Wildlife Veterinary Care is a 501c3 non-profit charity dedicated to providing veterinary and rehabilitative care to sick and injured wildlife, and to improving the health of wildlife and our environment.*

**For assistance call  
540-664-9494**

### Animals Cared for this Year

A wide variety of wild species have received care from us this year, including screech, barred, barn, and great horned owls, red-tailed, red-shouldered, and Cooper's hawks, osprey, a bald eagle, and kestrels, great blue and green herons, big brown bats and red bats, red and gray foxes, mink, squirrels, cottontails, opossums, skunks, raccoons, robins, blue jays, mourning doves, woodpeckers, phoebes, chickadees,

### Mange in Foxes and Bears

Many reports of hair loss in foxes and bears have been coming into Wildlife Veterinary Care over the past few months. Photos of these animals show that they appear to be suffering from a form of mange caused by a sarcoptic mite that burrows into the skin, causing severe itching and hair loss. Sarcoptic mange has been found in foxes and coyotes in this area for many years, but this is the first year cases have been seen in black bears. That is a cause for concern because sarcoptic mange is currently causing an epidemic of mange in black bears in Pennsylvania and we don't want that to happen here.

<http://www.outdoornews.com/2015/09/24/state-faces-bear-mange-epidemic/>

This mite infestation can be treated with oral or topical medications, but that is not easily done in a free-ranging wild animal. Repeated doses are needed, and it is difficult to get the correct dose into a wild animal, and repeat it two weeks later without that animal in captivity.

The oral ivermectin medication that is used to treat mange should not be put in a piece of meat

finches, red-winged blackbirds, catbirds, mockingbirds, cardinals, ducks and geese, grebes and loons, box, painted and wood turtles, and garter, corn and rat snakes.

**Bald eagle suffering from lead poisoning**

**Great Blue Heron being treated for stomach worms**

**Osprey weak from starvation**

**Opossums whose mother was killed on the road**

**Checking the eyes of a barred owl with head trauma.**

Donations can be made at this link:  
[DONATE](#)

or through the website  
[WildlifeVetCare.com](http://WildlifeVetCare.com)

**Orphan mink treated for injuries and starvation.**

**Photo by Chris Weber Studios**

**Orphan baby big brown bat found dehydrated and**

and left out for a fox or bear to eat, because it is toxic to some breeds of dogs and other wildlife who may eat it. This medication is deadly to collies, shelties, and box turtles.

Newer medications are available that will treat this mite infestation in one dose. We tried this recently when a mangy fox was trapped and brought to WVC this spring.

Treatment usually involves hospitalizing the mangy animal for two to six weeks for repeated treatments. But in this case, this female fox was nursing. She must have had kits in a den out where she was trapped, and we needed to get her back out to them as soon as possible. She was given the single dose mange treatment used for dogs, and an antibiotic injection for the infection she had acquired from scratching at the mites. She was then taken back to where she was trapped that same day and released. We received reports from the homeowner in the area who had originally spotted the fox that her hair was growing back.

If you spot a fox or bear that looks like it has mange, please report it to us at 540-664-9494.



### **Paralysis from Botulism**

In the summer, botulism can occur in wildlife in our area, usually in wild ducks and geese. Botulism is an illness caused by a toxin released by the bacteria *clostridium botulinum*, a

emaciated. Photo by Chris  
Weber Studios

Horned grebe  
grounded with abrasions

Cottontails whose nest was  
attacked by cats

Green heron fledgling  
unable to fly

bacteria that proliferates in warm temperatures in decomposing vegetation and dead animals. This toxin can be consumed by Canada geese, ducks, and seagulls during the warm summer months while foraging in stagnant water.

The botulinum toxin causes paralysis of an animal's muscles, causing these birds to be found lying on the ground, unable to walk or fly. They sometimes are so severely affected they can't even hold their heads up (which is why this disease is sometimes called "Limberneck"). A duck can be affected by eating as few as three maggots containing the toxin. If found early and not severely affected, these animals can recover with supportive care. (This is the same toxin that is in the BOTOX injection used for humans).

We saw a case recently in a mallard that was brought to us for treatment of a broken leg. A family of mallards was being watched by a teacher at a school when she noticed one of the ducklings couldn't walk or keep up with the rest of the group. When the duck was rescued, Dr. Burwell found the duck's legs were not broken, but were paralyzed, and there were other symptoms of botulism. She recovered completely with supportive care over two weeks and was able to be released again.

## Unusual Wildlife Rescues

### Fox Survives With Trap Around Neck

When this gray fox was brought to us with a gopher trap crushing her head and neck, it appeared that it was too late to save her. The trap had cut down to the bones in her neck, and her wounds were severely infected. Although she didn't have much fight left in her, she was

strong enough to withstand the surgery needed to remove the trap and to clean and suture her wounds. Over the next four weeks her wounds healed and she regained her strength. She was released a month later.

### **Snake Consumes Ceramic Eggs**

Sometimes fake eggs are used by chicken owners to coax chickens to lay their eggs in a particular nest, rather than laying them all over the hen house. Ratsnakes are frequently on mouse patrol around hen houses, where they eat the mice that steal the chicken feed. Rarely, these snakes will eat eggs too. Even more rarely, a snake will eat these fake eggs. This is precisely what happened to this large ratsnake.

The owners of the hen house found this snake with two large lumps in her abdomen and the fake eggs missing from the nest. They brought the snake to Wildlife Vet Care to get help.

These eggs could not be digested or passed by this snake, so they had become stuck in the stomach. Without help, this snake would have slowly starved to death. Surgery was performed to remove the eggs, and once she had recovered, the owners of the hen house came back to get and release her back on their property to resume her mouse patrol.

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*Because Wildlife Veterinary Care is 100% Volunteer, there are no salaries to pay. Your donations are spent on supplies to care for the animals. Wildlife Veterinary Care is a 501(c)3 charity, and all donations are 100% tax-deductible.*

*Donations can be mailed to: Wildlife  
Veterinary Care, P.O.Box 288, Millwood, VA  
22646, and can also be made online on our  
[webpage](#) and [Facebook page](#).*

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**Our physical address is:**

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[www.wildlifevetcare.com](http://www.wildlifevetcare.com)

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