

NEW YORK STATE



**WILDLIFE  
REHABILITATION  
COUNCIL**

# RELEASE

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THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW YORK  
STATE WILDLIFE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, INC.

### Important Dates:

**NYSWRC Board Meetings**-open to all  
E-mail Kelly (kmartink@midtel.net) for information  
about how to join us. Next meeting is at seminar.

**NYSWRC Annual Seminar: Nov. 13-15, 2009**  
**Fort William Henry Resort & Conference Ctr.,**  
**in Lake George, NY** Registration flyer will arrive in  
the mail shortly - or you can download from website.

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**NYSWRC WEBSITE: [www.NYSWRC.org](http://www.NYSWRC.org)**

View back issues of *Release*, seminar information,  
rehabilitator listings, & much more.

### Seminar 2009; Come one Come all!

By Kelly Martin, NYSWRC President

NYSWRC is busy planning our annual seminar, and we hope that you will mark your calendar for November 13 – 15<sup>th</sup> in Lake George, NY. This is your opportunity to learn from the best, add to your skill set, improve your techniques, expand your knowledge, and to meet and greet with fellow rehabilitators. If you are an experienced wildlife rehabilitator we hope that you will join us to share what you have learned over the years to help those following in your footsteps. The success of our annual seminar is in large part due to those who graciously come to teach and train us in better ways to care for wildlife.

NYSWRC can never thank our speakers enough for their willingness to come to our seminars year after year. This year we welcome back many returning speakers and we also have new speakers. We look forward to their participation. We have advanced, intermediate, and beginning level topics that include raptors, passerines, small and large mammals, facility "tours", medical sessions, labs, as well as some education and organization lectures. Once again we will offer our **Animal Basic Care** course, and the Rabies Vector Species training seminar. Speakers will include NYSWRC board members, state and federal agency representatives (Departments of Environmental Conservation, Health, Agriculture & Markets, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service), wildlife biologists,

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### Our NYSWRC Mission:

NYSWRC, Inc. is a not for profit membership organization dedicated to the education of wildlife rehabilitators, improvement of the field of wildlife rehabilitation, and the protection and preservation of the environment.

### Editor's note:

I welcome your articles, poems, information, questions and artwork. We are pleased to print articles from our members, but caution each reader that NYSWRC is not responsible for the accuracy of the content or information provided, and does not necessarily endorse the policies proposed. Submissions should be sent to: nisseq@aol.com or to PO Box 62, Newcomb, NY 12852.

**Seminar 2009, continued**

pathologists, veterinarians, and experienced wildlife rehabilitators. Specific key speakers are: Dr. Jeff Baier, CO; Dr. Erica Miller (NWRA), Tri-State in DE; Dr. Kristina Kalivoda and Dr. Noha Abou-Madi, Cornell; Dr. Dave McRuer, Wildlife Center of VA; Diane Nickerson (NWRA), Mercer County, NJ Wildlife Center; Harriett Forrester and John Satta, NJ; Drew Bickford, Raptor Center of MN; Jayne Amico, CT; and many others.

Please join us. Spread the word to new rehabilitators and invite them to join us.

See you there!

**Could'a, Would'a, Should'a ...  
Laws, Ethics and Doing the Right Thing!**

By Kelly Martin, NYSWRC President

"I could have taken that songbird to a federally licensed wildlife rehabilitator, but ..." "I would have taken the skunk to a RVS rehabilitator, but it is so far away from me ..." "I should have renewed my license, but the paperwork is such a pain and then I forgot ..."

I am concerned these days that wildlife rehabilitators are going to end up with undue restrictions on our licenses due to our own actions or inactions as the case may be.

We have all heard rationalizations and excuses as to why someone engages in bad behavior. We hold ourselves separate from the general public, until it suits us otherwise. Often we ignore illegal actions if we justify it as 'humane' and make the case that there was no other choice. No other choice that we like is more the case. Wildlife rehabilitators who heed the rules and regs often choose to look the other way when faced with ignoring someone else's illegal actions or turning them in. It is tough to be a rat! For all the times we tell the public that they can not keep something, why do we accept that the lapsed rehabilitator deserves to be able to keep an animal illegally? Why does that person get to ignore the rules? Because the animal is better off with that person than with the public or better off than dead? Tough choice, yes, but remember that it is that very license and adherence to those license conditions that separates us from the general public and makes us the professional (volunteer maybe, but professional nonetheless). We want to be taken seriously by the public, by our licensing agencies, and by our peers. It takes more than knowing what formula to feed, what cage suits an animal best, how to wrap a fractured wing, or when to free an animal. It not only means doing what is best for the animal, but also doing what is best for wildlife rehabilitation.

Realities are often harsh. There are not enough federally licensed rehabilitators evenly spread across the state and obtaining that license is time consuming and difficult. It also requires the aid of existing federally licensed people willing to mentor a person. Not everyone has the time for managing other people nor wants to do it. Certainly there is a sad lack of Rabies Vector Species (RVS) licensees making the rescue of bats, skunks and raccoons a near impossibility in many cases. It can be readily argued that this results in these species ending up in the hands of the public. Sometimes we have to accept that there is nothing we can do. Except, if something is unacceptable, we need to find legal avenues of change to remedy it. NYSWRC wants input on how we can work with our licensing agencies to improve our program, but this requires insightful and constructive suggestions, and not just complaints.

Illegal behavior is black and white. It is generally clear what can and can not be done. One only needs to refer to license conditions to provide clarity. Ethical and common sense concerns are harder to critique on firm ground. Ethical issues that have come to light lately in wildlife rehabilitation may impact our activity as much as illegal actions. A common theme rehabilitators share with the medical community is that when rendering care, one should do no harm. No one would knowingly do so (I hope) but actions have consequences and one area of great concern is the translocation of wildlife. Animals are often moved great distances from the point of origin in our efforts to effectively network with others. Raising orphans with conspecifics, placing difficult species with those best qualified to provide care or specialized housing are part of 'good' wildlife rehabilitation. So is returning an animal to its point of origin when possible. The reality is that fawns are being moved hundreds of miles. Raccoons are moved across 3, 4, or 5 counties to find a RVS rehabilitator. Movement of disease as animals are moved is of great concern for the Departments of Environmental Conservation, Health, Agriculture & Markets. The threats are many whether or not they actually manifest themselves in an outbreak: chronic wasting disease and tuberculosis in deer, rabies, avian flu, west nile virus, white-nose syndrome, even Lyme disease. Disease carrying parasites may be translocated along with the host animals and into new areas where they are not endemic. In reviewing logs kept by rehabilitators, entries are not always complete. It is imperative that each animal be able to be traced back to its point of origin in case there is a disease concern, especially a zoonotic disease. Though this is not always possible every effort must be made to comply with this license condition.

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**Could'a, Would'a, Should'a ...  
Laws, Ethics and Doing the Right Thing!**  
*continued*

Think too, how are we housing native wildlife? Rehabilitators are caring people and few limit their endeavors to wildlife alone. Though we may not be directly co-mingling wildlife with domestic, exotic, livestock, education, or pet animals, can we guarantee that there is no crossover in pathogens? The reasons are numerous and important for separating native wildlife from all other species of animals and humans. Are we obeying the 'letter of the law' as it pertains to our license conditions? It is worth re-reading these conditions every year upon receiving your license at the first of the year. Things may change and conditions may be added or deleted.

Unfortunately the rules are often bent to accommodate the rescue of animals. State licensees accept federally protected birds and may or may not transfer them in a timely manner, licenses are not renewed but animals are still taken in, RVS are taken in by rehabilitators and held (or kept) until they can be conveniently transferred to a RVS rehabilitator, assistants overstep their authority in handling animals sometimes with poor supervision from the Class II licensee, logs are not maintained properly ... all of which subvert a good system meant to protect native wildlife and the public. There are risks when the license conditions are ignored: wildlife health, public health, domestic animal health, risk of legal action, risk of loss of the license, damage to our wildlife rehabilitation program and to the integrity of what we do. Is it worth it, no

**A total of 19,489 animals were reported cared for by 441 licensed rehabilitators during 2008.** 294 licensed rehabilitators reported no activity for 2008.

**R** released to the wild, **P** disposition pending, **T** transferred to another rehabilitator, **PC** permanently non-releaseable, transferred to a NYS licensed person, **I** permanently non-releasable, transferred to a NYS licensed Ed. Institute, **D** died, **E** euthanized

**Editor: A Lesson Learned the Hard Way**

Our President's message was a gentle reminder that we must always provide wildlife care we are proud of. There really is no middle ground.

I've often heard rehabilitators say, "It doesn't matter, DEC doesn't do anything anyway." Yet, I know of at least three instances of DEC investigations of rehabilitators just in the first half of this year. I'm presenting a summary of an article from a local newspaper. Is this the kind of press we want? Our reputations are on the line.

**July 1, 2009 "Investigators charge local wildlife rehabilitator with reckless endangerment and unlawful animal possession"**

A month-long investigation has led to charges against a former wildlife rehabilitator in XXX for unlawful possession of wildlife and reckless endangerment, NYS DEC says.

The rehabilitator has been charged with 11 counts of unlawful possession of wildlife (a violation) after investigators confiscated eight birds of prey and three raccoons on separate occasions in June. XXX was a licensed wildlife rehabilitator until her license was revoked in 2008 after she allegedly allowed children to have contact with a raccoon – a rabies vector species – that she wasn't authorized to rehabilitate, DEC says. State Environmental Conservation Officers and a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Special Agent confiscated four birds of prey from XXX's residence on June 1 and two raccoons on June 2. The animals tested negative for rabies. When investigators learned that XXX was allegedly keeping other wild animals, ECOs and State Police returned on June 29 with a search warrant and found four additional birds of prey — an immature Coopers Hawk, Barn Owl, red-tailed hawk, and immature great horned owl — and another raccoon. The animals were in the living area of the house, which DEC says is not only improper for animals which are to be rehabilitated and released, but also raises concerns about human exposure to disease.

Each violation carries a fine of up to \$250 and/or 15 days in jail. A reckless endangerment charge – triggered by the alleged exposing of children to a species that potentially carries rabies – is a misdemeanor, with penalties of up to a \$1,000 fine and one year in jail. XXX will be called to court at a later date."

**Rehabilitation Records - Our Annual Report Statistics - Statewide in 2008**

Rehabers	Birds							Mammals								
	from Region:	R	P	T	PC	I	D	E	Total	R	P	T	PC	I	D	E
66 #1	939	88	89	3	0	819	433	<b>2415</b>	1071	42	84	2	0	505	161	<b>1865</b>
30 #2	121	20	34	5	1	52	12	<b>245</b>	89	4	10	0	0	29	4	<b>136</b>
92 #3	720	17	120	9	41	424	336	<b>1667</b>	748	44	59	1	2	243	76	<b>1173</b>
47 #4	160	25	48	1	1	116	102	<b>453</b>	317	58	86	0	8	218	67	<b>754</b>
40 #5	316	9	17	1	2	273	88	<b>706</b>	501	19	29	1	0	225	56	<b>831</b>
20 #6	85	7	11	1	1	36	6	<b>147</b>	270	38	22	0	1	106	20	<b>457</b>
32 #7	305	30	231	2	1	343	242	<b>1154</b>	491	44	189	1	0	326	129	<b>1180</b>
47 #8	547	6	35	0	1	255	116	<b>960</b>	606	34	64	0	0	333	97	<b>1134</b>
67 #9	765	35	32	2	3	497	500	<b>1834</b>	648	50	254	1	0	364	532	<b>1849</b>
<b>441 Total</b>	<b>3958</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>2815</b>	<b>1835</b>	<b>9581</b>	<b>4741</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>797</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2349</b>	<b>1142</b>	<b>9379</b>

Of the 497 reptiles reported for the state, 245 were released. Of the 32 amphibians reported, 16 were released.

### ***Hand Rearing Birds, A Book Review*** by Barb Cole

Those of us who rehabilitate avian species know how hard it is to find good new resources on rehabilitating birds, especially juveniles. So, Blackwell Publications truly deserves the thanks of the rehabilitation community for the publication of *Hand Rearing Birds*. Authored and organized by Laurie Gage, DVM, and Rebecca Duerr, DVM, this book is a compendium of current information on hand raising birds.

The book starts out with an excellent chapter on general care. This chapter concisely covers the basic information on rehabilitation, including natural history, legalities, intervention criteria, physical exams, stabilization necessities and techniques, common medical problems, basic diets and so on. This section is great for relative newcomers to avian rehabilitation, but also offers enough information that old-timers can pick up new and useful tips too.

The second chapter is on chick identification, and it is at this point that the book's one drawback for wildlife rehabilitators becomes evident. This book is designed to be a resource for everyone who hand-raises birds, so it not only covers information for the species we rehabilitators handle, it also covers exotic species that would be cared for in zoos and wildlife parks. Because this book is around 90 dollars, that means paying for chapters on species we don't handle. However, this also means that the book does cover all kinds of species, from raptors to poultry, from crows to egrets, and pigeons to finches. And this is all in one book!

Gage and Duerr then wisely asked specialists in the respective species to write individual chapters on their requirements and care. This book includes chapters by acknowledged experts on their species, including a number who have given presentations at our NYSWRC Seminars. Although this means that some of the basics are repeated from chapter to chapter (for example, warming and rehydration information.) It also means that you can go to the chapter of the species you are interested in to get information on that species directly, rather than having to flip back and forth in the book. Each chapter has new and different tips that remind even long-time rehabilitators that we always keep learning.

The chapter on the incubation of eggs was very impressive. Those of us who have been rehabilitating birds for any length of time can tell you how discouraging the "egg calls" are that we get occasionally. There is very little information out there on incubation parameters for passerines, optimal temperature and humidity, and so on. After reading this chapter, you realize that even those requirements are only part of the story. An egg really is a miracle, and there is so much more that goes into a successful hatching, that you can feel a little better if you have had less than stellar success with eggs. And after reading this book, you may pick up the one tip that will make all the difference in the world.

If you can afford it, this book will be a valuable addition to your rehabilitation library. The information is sound, current and I highly recommend having a copy. It covers a lot of good, basic information for many of the species we help. And in the slow winter months, you may even get a kick from reading about how to raise some of the really exotic species. Even toucans, penguins and mousebirds need help on occasion! And if there is one thing we rehabilitators know, it is you never know what may come through your door.



### ***The Daily Coyote, A Book Review*** by Amy Freiman

*The Daily Coyote: A Story of Love, Survival, and Trust in the Wilds of Wyoming*, (2008, Simon and Schuster) is written by Shreve Stockton. Stockton is a writer and photographer living in Wyoming. The book documents a year living in Wyoming as she raises an orphan coyote pup. The photographs are gorgeous! The writing is lyrical and the book presents a close up look at the many conflicting issues that pertain to coyotes and the "western mindset." Stockton's boyfriend was a cowboy who worked as a government trapper for the US Dept. of Agriculture, and his primary job was to trap and/or shoot coyotes from the air. He also brought her the coyote pup to raise. This fact allows for many good discussions of the conflicting viewpoints and emotions when it comes to dealing with coyotes.

Stockton was not a rehabilitator, but did seek assistance from them. Her coyote ended up a wild "pet" animal who was not suitable for release, yet never really a pet either. Her daily journals demonstrate just how much time and effort went into raising this animal. The morals of the story will make us all question the values of both taking and/or saving the life of coyotes. As the flyleaf says, *The Daily Coyote* "is a meditation on the nature of wildness versus domestication, of nature versus nurture, and of forgiveness, loyalty and love in all its forms." The book is filled with food for thought, and I thoroughly enjoyed reading it!

### My Aunt Lainie

My Aunt Lainie  
is very caring indeed.  
She helps and heals  
wild animals in need.

She takes care of  
squirrels and chickadees,  
And releases them  
back into the trees.

She has a very  
loving heart,  
And gives injured animals  
a great new start.

She's helped possums and pigeons  
and a chickadee named "Shoe."

I sure hope one day  
I can help animals, too!

By Alison (8 yrs. old) June 26, 2009



Snowshoe splint on Chickadee "Shoe",  
photo by Lainie Angel

### NYSWRC member Eve Fertig Received Yet Another Award—Congratulations Eve!

On May 19th, NYSWRC wildlife rehabilitator, Mrs. Eve Fertig was awarded the Distinguished Citizen Award for 2009. This was presented by the Alden Chamber of Commerce. This very prestigious award is presented to an outstanding citizen of the Alden community who shows concern for his or her neighbor, friend or stranger. Eve, at age 84, and her husband Norman still own and operate The Enchanted Forest Wildlife Sanctuary in Alden, NY. Throughout her long career, Eve has trained many of our NYSWRC members. She is a great example for us all.



### My First Black Squirrel Girl

by Lainie Angel

Melanism is defined as excessive pigmentation or blackening of the integuments or tissues resulting from the presence of melanin. The opposite would be albinism, which occurs with the lack of melanin

All black squirrels are grays, but not all grays are black. The first litter of baby squirrels to need my attention this past spring was composed of three gray and one black squirrel. Blacks are actually melanistic grays; they are not a separate species. They are intriguing though and beautiful with their shiny black coat and pink foot pads.

There have been black squirrels around my property in Lake George before, but they never stay for any length of time. So I was looking forward to seeing how long this baby would stay after her soft release. Her three siblings hung around for weeks, but the black one was gone soon after release. Of course I will never know what happened to her. She was healthy and vigorous, but certainly more visible to predators than her gray littermates.

There has been some proof that melanistic felines are more resistant to viral infections than other color coated felines. Melanism occurs in mammals, including humans (melanosis), reptiles, insects and plants.



## Wildlife Faces Cancer Threat

from: ScienceDaily (June 24, 2009)

While cancer touches the lives of many humans, it is also a major threat to wild animal populations as well, according to a recent study by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). A newly published paper in the July edition of *Nature Reviews Cancer* compiles information on cancer in wildlife and suggests that cancer poses a conservation threat to certain species. The WCS authors highlight the critical need to protect both animals and people through increased health monitoring.

“Cancer is one of the leading health concerns for humans, accounting for more than 10 percent of human deaths,” said Dr. Denise McAloose, lead author and Chief Pathologist for WCS’s Global Health program. “But we now understand that cancer can kill wild animals at similar rates.”

In certain situations, cancer threatens the survival of entire species. The Tasmanian devil, the world’s largest carnivorous marsupial, is at risk of extinction due to a cancer known as devil facial tumor disease. This form of contagious cancer spreads between individual Tasmanian devils through direct contact (primarily fighting and biting). To save the species from this fatal disease, conservationists are relocating cancer-free Tasmanian devils to geographically isolated areas or zoos.

Many species living within polluted aquatic environments suffer high rates of cancerous tumors, and studies strongly suggest links between wildlife cancers and human pollutants. For example, the study cites the case of beluga whales in the St. Lawrence River system. These whales have an extraordinarily high rate of intestinal cancer, which is their second leading cause of death. One type of pollutant in these waters—polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (or PAHs)—is a well-known carcinogen in humans, and PAHs are suspected carcinogens for beluga whales as well. Fish in other industrialized waterways, including brown bullhead catfish and English sole, also exhibit high levels of cancer.

Virus-induced cancers can affect the ability of some wildlife populations to reproduce. Genital tumors in California sea lions on North America’s western coast occur at much higher rates than previously documented. Oceanic dolphin species, such as the dusky dolphin and Burmeister’s porpoise (both found in the coastal waters of South America), are also showing higher rates of genital carcinomas. Other virus-induced cancers can affect the feeding ability or eyesight of wildlife. Green sea turtles—a migratory species in oceans across the globe—suffer from fibropapillomatosis, a disease that causes skin and

internal organ tumors. A virus is suspected as the cause these tumors, and environmental factors such as human-manufactured carcinogens might exacerbate their severity or prevalence.

Monitoring the health of wildlife can illuminate the causes of cancer in animal populations; thereby, better safeguarding animals and humans against possible disease. Evaluating cancer threats in wildlife populations requires the collaborative efforts of biologists, veterinarians, and pathologists as well as the earnest engagement of governments and international agencies. The paper concludes that more resources are necessary to support wildlife health monitoring.

“Examining the impact of cancer in wildlife, in particular those instances when human activities are identified as the cause, can contribute to more effective conservation and fits within the One World–One Health approach of reducing threats to both human and animal health,” said Dr. William Karesh, Vice President and Director of WCS’s Global Health Program.

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**Q.** How are rehabilitators able to administer euthanasia to their wildlife patients?

**A.** In New York State, if you are incorporated as an animal shelter or wildlife shelter, you can become certified as an agent for purchasing sodium pentobarbital for euthanasia. Another person in the corporation becomes certified as a NYS licensed euthanasia technician or a NYS licensed vet tech. Vet techs are licensed by the University of the State of New York Education Department, Office of the professions. Euthanasia techs need to take an initial certification class and then must take a refresher certification class every two years thereafter. The medication can be ordered and sent directly to the shelter, but the supplier must use your veterinarian’s DEA license number. We found the procedure relatively easy, and did not cost us anything. Of course, you must have a working relationship with a veterinarian.

I think all means must be considered to achieve a humane, peaceful death to our wild patients; and we must also be mindful of the feelings and emotions of the people that brought them to us.

Here is the computer link to the regulations and forms: <http://www.health.state.ny.us/professionals/narcotic/forms.htm> Then go to the laws and regulations links on the right side of this screen, click Health Rules and Regulations, Title 10 and use the search function to type in 80.134.

## An Unusual Rehab Experience, by Amy Freiman



**Meet the “thunder pumper.”** This young American bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) was found wandering a marsh and brought home by a well meaning tourist. Unfortunately, it probably had parents nearby, but due to the bird’s terrific ability to hide, they were not noticed. A day later I received a box with this youngster inside. It was weak and needed rehydration followed by a diet of fish/vitamin slurry. Within days it was eating live fish and feeling just fine. American bitterns are notorious hiders, and attempts to find the nest area were futile. When I looked I could not locate its family to reunite them. When I thought about it, I’d only seen two bitterns in the wild, one while canoeing and one near a boardwalk in a local marsh. Both were in the “freeze,” “sky-gazer,” “stake bird” pose they are so famous for. So I made the decision to raise it until the flight feathers were grown in, and then release it in the same marsh area where it was found.

Raising the bird meant daily trips to a nearby pond to collect bait fish/minnows in traps. This baby could eat! (But never when we were watching.) I put the bird in an empty raptor cage and lined the gravel floor with spagnum moss and shallow rooted shrubs from our pond. The live fish went into a shallow pool. Even with lots of shrubs (and a few potted plants from the house) to hide behind, the bittern would freeze each time I entered the cage. With its cryptic plumage and elusive behavior it could sit undetected, and I’d really have to search to find it—even in a cage. Now I understood why it was such a difficult bird to find in the wild.

All the books talk about the American bittern’s booming voice and it’s characteristic “pump-er-lunk” call. I never once heard that call. What I did hear was a tremendous hiss--imagine a snake hiss, but ten times louder and longer. As I approached the bittern it would stand in the hiding pose. If I got any closer it would then mantle, yes, like a raptor. It would sway back and forth and produce a loud hiss. At that point I knew to either grab the bird or back off. The

spearing bill coming at me would be next, just normal behavior of course. What a cool bird! I was privileged to care for it for a few weeks, and to be able to release it back into its wild home.

With a little research I found that during the breeding season, American bitterns inhabit emergent wetlands, such as cattail ponds, sedge marshes, and marshes created by impoundments or beaver dams. Nesting habitats typically contain shallow water, often at depths less than 10 cm (4 in.), with dense vegetation. During nonbreeding seasons bitterns may be found in freshwater wetlands, coastal salt or brackish marshes, phragmites marshes, grassy fields and marsh edges. Their population numbers have been steadily decreasing, primarily due to habitat loss, and bitterns are now considered endangered, threatened, or of special concern in most states.

The American bittern is a stocky, medium-sized wading bird. The neck and body are buffy-white with brown vertical streaking and the upperparts are a rich brown. Black flight feathers contrast with brown upperwing coverts, giving the wing a two-toned appearance in flight. The heavy spear-like bill is yellow with a dark wash on the upper mandible and a dark tip. Adult bitterns have yellow eyes, which turn orange during courtship. The legs of the American bittern are long and yellowish-green. Sexes are similar, although males are slightly larger than females. Juveniles closely resemble adult birds, although their eye color begins as a light olive in nestlings. Appearing awkward in flight, the American bittern flies with stiff, laboring wing beats that are quicker than those of other herons. They fly characteristically low over marshes and their legs trail behind the body. I hope you all get to see one.



Love those feet!

### A Robin's Fate, by Lia Pignatelli

I know these pictures are difficult to look at, and I'm sorry. But let this be a reminder to all of us why we do what we do, and how important it is to get the message out that we desperately need to find and train more people to become qualified licensed wildlife rehabilitators.



Would you believe it if I told you that this is a Robin? Sadly, it's true. It was raised from a nestling by a woman who is NOT a rehabilitator, on Kaytee "Exact" hand feeding formula. The bird was confiscated by a DEC police officer and brought to me yesterday. Weighing only 57 grams, her feathering, as you can see, was horrifically poor, her long bones did not grow to proper length and showed signs of metabolic bone disease, her joints were knobbed, and her feet were inverted causing her to have to walk on what should be the top of her foot, causing calluses on them, and rendering her unable to perch. All as a result of an insufficient diet. To boot, the poor thing couldn't even feed herself! She just simply didn't know how. I knew what inevitably needed to be done, and with agreement and assistance from Dr. Laurie Hess we humanely put her to rest that evening.



#### Editor's Note:

I congratulate Lia and Dr. Hess for making a humane decision for the poor robin shown in the above article. I've included a photo of a robin of the same age who was raised correctly, so that we can end the article on a happy note. Proper care can save a life.



*"Simply passing the test does not ensure good judgment. It's up to us to do our job correctly."*

- \*A NYS rehabilitation license is for mammals only.
- \*A NYS RVS license is required for rabies vector species, including raccoons, skunks and bats.
- \*A Federal license is necessary to handle birds.
- \*Neither allows you to do education programs. This is another, and different, license.
- \*Assistants must be licensed, and may not bring animals to their homes.

**Come to Seminar to learn more about the various licenses required to rehabilitate wildlife.**

## STATE POLICE RECOGNIZE DEC FOREST RANGER FOR BRAVERY

**Congratulations to Julie Harjung, former NYSWRC Board Member and Seminar Chair!**



New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Forest Ranger Julie Harjung, of Saranac Lake, NY was given a special commendation for bravery at the New York State Police Annual Awards Day Ceremony for her role in preventing a suicidal man from taking his own life, Commissioner Pete Grannis announced today.

The ceremony, held May 11 at the New York State Police Academy in Albany, paid tribute to the courage and perseverance of members of the State Police and other law-enforcement officials.

Forest Ranger Harjung, joined by Commissioner Grannis, was presented a certificate of appreciation by State Police Superintendent Harry Corbitt for her role in rescuing a suicidal man in August 2008.

“Ranger Harjung is a valued member of our environmental law enforcement team,” said Commissioner Grannis. “She has demonstrated strong professional qualities and abilities as an enforcement officer, wildland firefighter and wilderness first responder. Today’s award serves as an honor for the Department, and as an extraordinary acknowledgment for Ranger Harjung’s courageous efforts in this case. It clearly defines her expertise and dedication to serving and protecting the people of the state.”

On Aug. 27, 2008, a multi-agency search began for a man who had called Franklin County 911 and had made suicidal threats. Emergency responders traced his location through his cell phone. The man had fled onto the Racquette River in a canoe and was threatening suicide and pointing a muzzle-loading rifle at his own head.

Two State Troopers, Dustin E. Fleishman and George M. Stannard, boarded a small boat along with Forest Ranger Harjung, who navigated it out into the river. The party approached the suicidal subject, approximately 500 feet from shore, and the troopers and the ranger engaged him in a dialog for more than an hour, attempting to prevent his suicide.

At one point the state troopers and Forest Ranger Harjung were able to convince the subject to allow them to navigate closer to the canoe, at which time an attempt was made to gain physical control of the subject. During that struggle the muzzle-loading rifle discharged and seriously injured Stannard’s hand.

The other state trooper and the suicidal man fell into the water where a struggle continued. Forest Ranger Harjung, realizing the extent of injury to Stannard, immediately brought him to shore and secured medical assistance. She enlisted additional law enforcement personnel and returned to the scene of the struggle where Fleishman subdued the subject, who was taken into custody, placed in the ranger’s boat and transported to shore.

In addition to the certificate of appreciation, Superintendent Corbitt presented Forest Ranger Harjung with a letter of commendation which states that her “bravery and decisive action resulted in the saving of a human life and provided invaluable assistance to the New York State Police in the resolution of this incident.”

Harjung has been a Forest Ranger for 13 years; currently she covers the Towns of Harrietstown and Tupper Lake in Franklin County in the northern Adirondacks. She is also an Emergency Medical Technician, Captain of the Saranac Lake Volunteer Rescue Squad and lead instructor for the DEC Wilderness First Responder Training.

DEC Forest Rangers are responsible for protecting the natural resources of state lands, including the New York State Forest Preserve, through education, enforcement of state land regulation and wildland fire fighting. They also ensure the safety of the people who recreate on state land through education and search and rescue efforts. Forest rangers are the premier land stewards, search & rescue and wildland fire fighting organizations in New York State.

**REHABILITATORS** - If you want to be listed on the NYSWRC website or check your current listing, go to [www.nyswrc.org](http://www.nyswrc.org) and click on Find a Rehabilitator. This list is completely voluntary and you are responsible for keeping your information up to date. This is an on-line list for New York rehabbers only and is separate from the one DEC keeps. You do not need to be a member of NYSWRC to be listed, but we welcome and appreciate your membership.

## NYSWRC SEEKS VETERINARIAN OF THE YEAR, 2009

### AWARD SELECTION CRITERIA

The "Veterinarian of the Year" award is presented to a veterinarian who has demonstrated outstanding qualities and skills that have contributed to a cooperative working relationship between the veterinary community and wildlife rehabilitators. When considering candidates for the "Veterinarian of the Year" award the Council recognizes and appreciates the efforts of all the veterinarians who have contributed their time and skills, frequently without charge, to wildlife rehabilitators across the state. The selection of the "Veterinarian of the Year" is based on the following criteria:

**DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT:** The Council recognizes that veterinarians are highly skilled animal health care professionals who must also manage a small business. When considering the dedication and commitment of a veterinarian, we recognize:

- the willingness of a veterinarian to provide the time to work with a wildlife rehabilitator and to share his or her knowledge and skills to improve wildlife health care
- the sincere interest of the veterinarian to provide professional services for wildlife often without compensation
- the professional demeanor of the veterinarian that fosters open dialogue and respect between a veterinarian and a wildlife rehabilitator

**SKILLS:** The Council recognizes that veterinarians are professionals who possess the critical skills that are required to treat an injured or sick wild animal for eventual release to the wild. When considering the SKILLS of a veterinarian we recognize:

- an ability by the veterinarian to apply their unique skills to wild patients
- a sincere desire by the veterinarian to listen to the wildlife rehabilitator and to learn about the wild patient so that he or she can render the best care
- a willingness by the veterinarian to share his or her knowledge with the wildlife rehabilitation community through participation as speakers in educational forums such as seminars and workshops
- a desire to learn more about wildlife and wildlife rehabilitation so that the veterinarian can enhance his or her skills
- contributions to the field of wildlife rehabilitation through the development of innovative wildlife health care techniques, by encouraging other veterinarians to 'volunteer' to support and work with local wildlife rehabilitators and by assisting with the professional development of wildlife rehabilitators

**PEOPLE SKILLS:** The Council recognizes that veterinary skills alone do not define a professional. When considering the PEOPLE SKILLS of a veterinarian, we recognize:

- the interaction between the veterinarian and his or her wild patient
- the confidence of the veterinarian that fosters a willingness to listen and learn
- the understanding by the veterinarian that he or she has a leadership role in the community and that this often entails acting for the 'greater good'

The commitment to provide care to wildlife not only involves contributions of time, money or expertise. It involves a great deal of compassion and heart fueled by a genuine interest in and concern for the welfare of animals in need regardless of their species.

**If you would like to nominate your special veterinarian, please send us a letter of support using the above criteria.** You may also include information relevant to your veterinarian's nomination such as: where they graduated from veterinary school, any wildlife experience obtained while in school, and any outside activities demonstrating an interest in wildlife. You may resubmit a letter from previous years. If selected, you will need to supply a photograph of the winner.

The deadline for this year's submissions is **Aug. 10, 2009**. We will notify the wildlife rehabilitator and veterinarian within a few weeks of the selection. An award will be presented Saturday evening, November 14, at the Annual Seminar Banquet. The selected veterinarian will be welcome, as our guest, for the evening's festivities and will also receive a one year free subscription to *Release*. Please send your letters to the Council at:

**NYSWRC, Attention Veterinary Committee,  
1170 State Road, Webster, NY 14580**

### Previous winners:

Dr. Michael Bonda	Dr. Alison Hazel
Dr. Carl Tomascke	Dr. Basil Tangredi
Dr. Wendi Westrom	Dr. Carl Eisenhard
Dr. James Robinson	Dr. Laura Wade
Dr. Victor J. Dasaro	Dr. Brian Landenberg
Dr. Brian Hall	Dr. Karen Moran

**Nominate your Veterinarian to join this prestigious list! Send your letter today.**

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE PRESENTS SLATE FOR ANNUAL ELECTION:**

Four current NYSWRC Board Members are seeking re-election. They are being joined by Sue Heighling from Grand Island, NY. Sue belongs to NYSWRC and has been an SPCA wildlife volunteer for two and a half years.

NYSWRC board members volunteer their time to attend statewide meetings several times a year. NYSWRC board members present, discuss and lobby for current rehabilitation issues, write articles for *Release*, participate and present at the Annual Seminar, and are general watchdogs and ambassadors for wildlife rehabilitators in New York.

Nominations will also be accepted from the floor at the time of voting during Seminar.

Those lucky NYSWRC members attending the conference will have the opportunity to vote in person and can disregard this proxy ballot. NYSWRC members who cannot make the conference, but wish to express their vote should fill out and return the proxy ballot presented here.

**NYSWRC PROXY BALLOT for those who are unable to attend the meeting.**

This form needs to be filled out by all NYSWRC members who are unable to attend the Annual Meeting which will be held on November 13, 2009 at the annual seminar at the Fort William Henry Hotel in Lake George, NY.

In order to be eligible to vote you must be a member in good standing of the New York State Wildlife Rehabilitation Council, Inc. on, or before, October 15, 2009.

Using this form you may either submit your absentee vote at this time or may submit the Proxy permission for someone to vote in your place.

**If not voting in person: Cut and return to NYSWRC**

**YOUR VOTE:**

The following names have been submitted by the NYSWRC Nominating Committee for your consideration as members of the NYSWRC Board of Directors. Put an X by the names that you wish to vote for to fill the positions. Additional nominations will be accepted from the floor at the Annual Meeting. There are five (5) positions open at this time for the three year positions.

You may vote for all of these candidates or only those you choose to endorse.

\_\_\_ Jean Alden \_\_\_ Connie Feissner \_\_\_ Sue Heighling \_\_\_ Beverly Jones \_\_\_ Anne Rockmore

Signature of NYSWRC member casting these votes \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

or.....PROXY

I, \_\_\_\_\_, being a member in good standing of the New York State Wildlife Rehabilitation Council during 2009, do hereby appoint \_\_\_\_\_ to vote on my behalf during the election of Board of Directors at the annual membership meeting. This proxy also entitles the above named person to vote in my absence on any council business presented at the 2009 meeting.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please mail this form by Oct. 1, 2009 to:**

Steven Freiman, Seminar Chair  
PO Box 62, Newcomb, NY 12852



NYSWRC  
P.O. Box 62  
Newcomb, NY 12852



### NYSWRC MEMBERS

Please check the address label on this issue of *RELEASE* to determine your current membership type and the date that you joined the Council. Your membership in the New York State Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (NYSWRC) expires one year from this date. To guarantee uninterrupted membership services please utilize the application below to renew your membership. We encourage you to share your issue of *RELEASE* with new rehabilitators and other interested persons.

*RELEASE* is the quarterly newsletter of the New York State Wildlife Rehabilitation Council, Inc. and is included with membership. Papers, photographs, illustrations and materials relating to wildlife rehabilitation are welcomed and encouraged. Please send materials to:

***RELEASE, PO Box 62, Newcomb, NY 12852, Attention: Editor.***  
All materials are copyrighted, For permission to reprint portions, contact Editor.



### NEW YORK STATE WILDLIFE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, INC. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

\_\_\_\_ **NEW**

\_\_\_\_ **RENEWAL**

Complete all information below and make checks payable to: NYS Wildlife Rehabilitation Council, Inc. *Please print clearly.*

\_\_\_\_ **GENERAL:** \$25.00

\_\_\_\_ **HOUSEHOLD:** \$40.00

\_\_\_\_ **ORGANIZATION:** \$50.00

**NAME(S):** \_\_\_\_\_

**AFFILIATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY, STATE, ZIP:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE home:** (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ **work:** (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ **e-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Species handled:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Knowledge and skills willing to share:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Return form to: Jean Alden, NYSWRC Membership, 1850 N. Forest Rd, Williamsville, NY 14221**