Dear WHL Supporters,

It is with great sadness that I write my last director’s column. My decision to leave Louisiana State University was the most difficult decision I have had to make in my life, as I have truly enjoyed my past 12 years in Baton Rouge. The ultimate reason for the move was based on my decision to return to Illinois to be closer to family. With the recent expansion of our family (the addition of an adopted daughter, Mary), my wife (Dr. Lorrie Hale) and I decided that our return to Illinois would provide us with an opportunity to maintain the same close family ties we have observed in so many families from Louisiana.

In Illinois, I have accepted a position at my “other” alma mater, the University of Illinois. In this new position, I will continue to focus my energies on the care of injured wildlife and the development of a wildlife conservation program focused on protecting both animals and people. I will also continue to maintain research programs at LSU that will allow me to continue to work in my “adopted” state.

With my departure, I have left the program in some very capable hands. First, Dr. Javier Nevarez, a former raptor co-chair, will serve as the director. Dr. Nevarez has been affiliated with the program for over nine years and is well aware of its inner workings. Mrs. Marlana Roundtree, the assistant director, will continue to serve in her current role to ensure that the education programs run smoothly and that the children of Louisiana continue to have the opportunity to see these magnificent animals up close. Finally, Dr. Tom Tully will continue to serve in the same capacity as a clinician and researcher for the facility. His mentorship during my tenure was greatly appreciated.

One of the long-term goals of the Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana is to build a free-standing facility to meet the growing needs of the program. Fortunately, this goal will continue. Dr. and Mrs. William Jenkins have agreed to serve as the co-chairpersons for the advisory board for the Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana. Their participation in the program will certainly guarantee its success!

So that is pretty much it for me. Twelve years and a lifetime of memories. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve the people and wildlife of Louisiana, and although I have moved away, I will always cherish my time in Louisiana and look forward to future visits.

Sincerely,

Mark A. Mitchell, DVM, MS, PhD
Director, Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana
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Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana

Dr. Javier Nevarez
Director, Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana

Marlana Roundtree
Rehabilitator Coordinator,
Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana

Dr. Peter F. Haynes
Interim Dean, LSU School of Veterinary Medicine

Ginger Guttner Editor

Published by the Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana.
Correspondence should be addressed to: Ginger Guttner, Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana, School of Veterinary Medicine, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803.

Telephone: (225) 578-9525

http://www.vetmed.lsu.edu/rwru/

Would you like the WHL to provide a raptor education seminar for your school, church or civic group?

The WHL believes that the first step to ensuring our success in preserving and conserving our native wildlife is to educate our young Louisiana citizens. Our program is delivered by the Director or Assistant Director and our veterinary students. The WHL will bring one to four of our education raptors and provide a fun and educational presentation detailing the natural history of the birds and the importance of conservation. Of course, this program is not limited to the youngest Louisiana citizens, as the WHL is also happy to provide the same presentation to adult church and civic groups! Best of all, these educational seminars are free; however, donations to the WHL are always welcome.

Show your support for the Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana by purchasing one of our shirts! All sizes are available. The cost is $22 per shirt. Please contact Dr. Mark Mitchell or Marlana Roundtree at 225-578-9525 to order your shirt today!
Meet the New Director of the Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana

Dr. Javier Nevarez has recently been named as the Director of the Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana. Dr. Nevarez has been affiliated with the program for over nine years, and was first introduced to the program as a veterinary student. During his tenure at LSU, Dr. Nevarez has served as a raptor co-chair, veterinary intern (2001-02) and clinician for the program. In addition to his new role as Director of the facility, Dr. Nevarez will be completing his dissertation in the Spring 2007 semester. His dissertation has focused on studying the epidemiology of West Nile Virus in captive American alligators (Alligator mississippiensis). During his dissertation, he has developed a strong relationship with the state and is currently recognized as the veterinary crocodilian expert in the state. For questions or concerns related to the program, you can contact Dr. Nevarez through the LSU veterinary hospital at 225-578-9600.

2006 Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana Wildlife Rehabilitator of the Year

It is with great pleasure that the Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana recognizes Mrs. Leslie Lattimore as the Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana Wildlife Rehabilitator of the year (2006). This is the first time this award has been given, and Leslie is certainly the most deserving. Leslie has been working with the Wildlife Hospital since Dr. Mitchell started as director in 1996. Leslie has assisted the Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana by serving as the final rehabilitation stop for thousands of animals prior to release. At Leslie’s rehabilitation facility, Wings of Hope, in Livingston, La., wildlife are provided the opportunity to develop their stamina prior to release. Without Leslie, our facility would not have been capable of managing the numbers of animals we have had over the years. Leslie has also played important roles in both state and national wildlife rehabilitation associations. Leslie was a co-founder of the Louisiana Wildlife Rehabilitation Association and served as its president for many years. She is currently serving as a board member for the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association and has contributed on many different levels in that organization. Congratulations, Leslie, and thanks for so many years of service!
Meet the 2006-07 WHL Intern
Dr. Megan Kirchgessner is currently serving as the 2006-07 Veterinary Intern at the Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana. Dr. Kirchgessner comes to us from New York. She is a 2005 veterinary graduate of Cornell University. After completing her veterinary degree, Dr. Kirchgessner performed a one-year small animal internship in Rhode Island. During her time as a veterinary intern at LSU, Dr. Kirchgessner has been very busy. In addition to her clinic caseload, she has also written two book chapters (a chelonian medicine chapter and a wildlife therapeutics chapter), and conducted a research project in El Salvador evaluating hormone levels in green iguanas (Iguana iguana). The wildlife experience Dr. Kirchgessner has received at LSU has apparently made a strong impact on her, as she is currently planning on pursuing a veterinary position at a wildlife rehabilitation facility after completing her program in June 2007. If you see Dr. Kirchgessner at LSU, be sure to say hello!

Congratulations Dr. Trevor Zachariah!
Dr. Trevor Zachariah, the 2004-05 Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana Veterinary Intern, recently completed his Master of Science degree at LSU. Dr. Zachariah’s research evaluated the effect of two different commercial antimicrobial products on Salmonella in the aquatic habitat of turtles. This research is important because it can be used to minimize the zoonotic risk (transmission of disease from animals to humans) associated with maintaining wild or captive turtles. The results of his research have recently been submitted for publication. In addition to receiving his Master of Science degree, Dr. Zachariah has also recently been awarded a zoological residency through the University of Illinois. During his residency, he will work closely with the animal collections at the Lincoln Park Zoo, Brookfield Zoo and John G. Shedd Aquarium in Chicago. Congratulations, Dr. Zachariah!

Bald Eagle Released in Gibson, La.
On January 24, the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine’s Wildlife Hospital released a rehabilitated bald eagle in Gibson, La., where the bird was rescued by Evans Naquin of Gibson and Tony Porché of Bayou Blue, La. The eagle, an adult (possibly a male) was found by Naquin near Turtle Bayou Road in Gibson on November 24, 2006.

“Upon presentation at the Wildlife Hospital, the eagle was very weak and thin but eating well,” said Dr. Javier Nevarez, an instructor of zoological medicine at the School of Veterinary Medicine and director of the Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana. An examination revealed a severe anemia, and the mercury levels in the blood were high, indicating a possible mercury toxicity. The eagle also developed pododermatitis (bumblefoot), which is a common occurrence with eagles in captivity and creates a soft area on the bottom of the foot; if left untreated, it can lead to infection of the bones. After treating the eagle for the mercury toxicity and the pododermatitis, the bird showed good improvement and was sent to Leslie Latimore, a licensed rehabilitator, on December 29, 2006. Latimore reported to the School that eagle was doing well and was ready for release. The School of Veterinary Medicine features a video of the release on its website at www.vetmed.lsu.edu. Click on “News and Events” and then on “LSU School of Veterinary Medicine Released Bald Eagle in Gibson, Louisiana.” Tony Porché, who helped rescue the eagle, is seen in the video releasing the bird.
Five Pelicans Rescued by LSU Facility Services and Treated by LSU SVM

Five pelicans were rescued by LSU Facility Services employees on January 8 and taken to the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine for treatment. The birds were released at the LSU Lake at Baton Rouge Beach on January 10.

Facility Services employee P.M. Spoon discovered the pelicans stuck in one of the drains at Campus Lake near Miller Hall on the LSU campus. The drains consist of four vertical culverts about six feet deep. In the bottom of two of them were five white pelicans. The pelicans had apparently waded up 200 feet of horizontal culverts to get to that point and were unable to find their way out. It could not be determined how long they had been there.

Concerned that the pelicans might die in the bottom of the drain pipes, Spears and Allen went to the LSU School of Renewable Natural Resources for help and resources to rescue the birds. Dr. C.F. “Niels” de Hoop, associate professor, and Dr. Al Afton, a researcher with the U.S. Geological Survey Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Unit specializing in waterfowl, contacted Dwight LeBlanc with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services.

LeBlanc offered to help rescue the birds and told Dr. de Hoop to get crawfish sacks, which were obtained from Dr. Robert Romaine of the LSU AgCenter Aquaculture Research Station. LeBlanc cut a four-inch hole in the bottom corner of each crawfish sack. Using a Facility Services ladder, LeBlanc simply climbed down, grabbed a pelican, and handed it to the rescuers. Holding its bill closed and wings tight, the bird was slipped into a bag, letting its head and neck stick out of the hole.

Several other Facility Services personnel arrived to help out. Hank Taylor, dressed in waders and rain gear, descended the second drain to pick up the other four trapped pelicans. Three were picked up as easily as the first. The last bird moved part of the way out the horizontal culvert. Taylor crawled out the long culvert to shoal the bird out the far end. LeBlanc and several Facility Services workers waited at the far end and grabbed the pelican as it came out of the culvert on its own.

In addition to Dr. da Hoop and the LSU Facility Services workers mentioned, other LSU personnel who assisted included Danny Ricaud, Evelyn Dixon, Debbie Coltharp, Lawanda Selder, Lynn LeBlanc and Jerry Williams, all with Facility Services.

Two of the pelicans had bands on their legs. A quick check of the bird banding database revealed that one pelican was banded in 2002 in Chase Lake, N.D. The other pelican was banded in July 2006 in Marsh Lake, Minn.

The pelicans were set gently in the back of an LSU pickup truck, and Spears and Allen brought them to the Wildlife Hospital at the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine. The pelicans were treated for shock by Dr. Javier Nevarez, instructor of zoological medicine, and released on January 10.

Several members of the group that rescued the pelicans were on hand to assist in the release. The birds were released one at a time and joined a larger flock of pelicans on the LSU Lake.
WHL Adopt-A-Bird Program

The Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana has introduced an Adopt-a-Bird program. The WHL currently has six education raptors that reside at the School of Veterinary Medicine on a permanent basis. The Adopt-a-Bird program provides the public with an opportunity to learn about these birds and contribute to their care.

Morgan, Red Tailed Hawk

Athena, Barn Owl

Princess, Red Tailed Hawk

Brise, Mississippi Kite

Squirt, Screech Owl

Sydney, Turkey Vulture

Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana Donation Form

If you would like to make a monetary donation to the Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana, please complete this form and return it with your donation to Mariana Roundtree, Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana, LSU School of Veterinary Medicine, Baton Rouge, LA 70803.

Print Name: ____________________________________________ Date: ___________________
Address: __________________________________________________________________________
City/State/Zip: ____________________________________________ Phone: __________________________
E-mail: ________________________________________________________________

Payment must be made payable to the LSU Foundation:  □ Check  □ Money Order

For credit card contributions:  □ Visa  □ MC  □ AmEx  □ Discover  Amount $ ________________
Card Number ____________________________________________ Exp. Date ________________
Cardholder’s Signature ____________________________________________

Thank you for your support!
Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana Annual Adopt-a-Bird Form

Print Name: ____________________________________________________________ Date: _________________
Address: ___________________________________________________________________________________________________
City/State/Zip: _____________________________________________ Phone: ______________________________
E-mail: ____________________________________________________

Payment must be made payable to the LSU Foundation: □ Check □ Money Order
For credit card contributions: ___Visa ___ MC ___ AmEx ___Discover
Card Number _________________________________________________________ Exp. Date ___________
Cardholder’s Signature __________________________________________________________________

There are two ways to support the adoption of a raptor. You can be a gold or silver contributor. A gold contribution covers the expenses for the bird for the entire year, while a silver contribution covers the expenses for a quarter of the year. If you wish to adopt more than one bird, please do!

If you are adopting a bird for someone else, please provide the following information and notification will be sent to that person. This gift is □ in honor of or □ in memory of
Name: __________________________________________________________________________________
Address: _____________________________________ City/State/Zip: ____________________________

Bird(s) you wish to adopt: Silver Gold
Sydney (Turkey Vulture) □ $100 □ $400
Morgan (Red Tail Hawk) □ $100 □ $400
Princess (Red Tail Hawk) □ $100 □ $400
Athena (Barn Owl) □ $50 □ $200
Brize (Mississippi Kite) □ $50 □ $200
Squirt (Screech Owl) □ $25 □ $100

Send this form with check, money order, or credit card information to:
Marlana Roundtree, Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana, LSU School of Veterinary Medicine, Baton Rouge, LA 70803
This is an annual adoption. A renewal form will be sent with the last quarterly newsletter of the year.

Spotlight on Our Education Bird:
Princess, Red-Tailed Hawk (Buteo jamaicensis)

Princess, a red-tailed hawk, is one of the Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana’s younger residents. We estimate that Princess is approximately 5-7 years old. She presented to the WHL with a gunshot injury to her wing that led to a contracted patagial tendon. Because of the contracted tendon, Princess cannot open her wings fully and fly.

Red-tailed hawks are the largest hawks that live in Louisiana. These large birds are approximately 17-22 inches tall and their wingspan can be 43-56 inches long. These large birds can weigh as much as 3.3 pounds!
Mission of the Wildlife Hospital of Louisiana

- Serve as the primary medical and surgical wildlife referral center in Louisiana and provide compassionate medical care for injured wildlife with the goal of returning the animals to their natural habitat.
- Provide an educational resource for the citizens of Louisiana that focuses on the importance of wildlife conservation and on the relationship between humans and animals.
- Provide a quality educational experience in wildlife medicine, surgery, and rehabilitation for veterinary students.
- Preserve the biodiversity of Louisiana wildlife through scientific investigation and establishment of a conservation medicine research program.

History of the WHL

The WHL was founded in 1981 at the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine. It partners with area rehabilitors, wildlife agencies, marine mammal stranding groups, and zoological parks to provide care for injured and orphaned wild animals. Endangered animals are commonly treated at the hospital.

The WHL has more than 1,700 native and migratory animals presented annually. In addition to providing medical and surgical care for these wildlife patients, the WHL provides educational presentations to school and civic groups. By sponsoring one of our education raptors, you can help contribute to the conservation message we deliver to the citizens of Louisiana.