



On Track...

Fall 2020

Lead Poisoning: a National Problem

By: Rene Brown

Woodford Cedar Run Volunteer

Recently I was catching up on the news when a headline struck me, "7th bald eagle dies of lead poisoning". This particular patient was reported by a concerned homeowner who was concerned for the eagle as it seemed to be unable to fly. Soon after being rescued, it began experiencing respiratory distress, started seizing, and died shortly after that. This same facility has treated five other eagles since January, all off of which died in care.

The influx of these cases is directly related to hunting season; as the eagles, vultures and other birds along with small mammals, such as opossums, feed on the carcasses and gut piles that hunters leave behind. These animals then unknowingly ingest the ammunition, which mixes with the acid in their digestive tracts and then gets absorbed into the bloodstream. This process takes time, and it may take several weeks for any signs of poisoning to be displayed.

Once in the body, the lead affects the nervous, muscular/skeletal and digestive systems by limiting brain, liver, and kidney functions. Some signs of lead poisoning include weakness, emaciation, respiratory distress, the inability to fly or walk, seizures, and lack of judgment when flying across roads.

Another facility reports having treated seven eagles in the past month for this same issue. They note that depending on how severe the poisoning, some veterinarians will use chelation therapy. This process involves injecting a medication into the bird that will bind to the toxins in their bloodstream. It and the toxins are then naturally eliminated from the body. This process could take several weeks. Unfortunately, even after treatment, the eagles may suffer long term damage affecting their vision and hearts, which will prevent their release back into the wild.

The good news for our beloved bald eagles is that once all of the lakes and rivers thaw, they will switch over to fishing. In the meantime, there are a few things we can do to help. One recommendation is for hunters to use copper bullets that do not shed fragments like their lead counterparts and are proven to be just as effective. Another easy way to prevent accidental poisoning is by burying gut piles and retrieving carcasses, which will prevent scavengers from ingesting any fragments left behind.

My heart hurts at the idea of these beautiful creatures suffering by the hand of a human, whether it be knowingly or not. I hope to bring some awareness and offer ideas of prevention to try and ensure a safe environment for them for years to come.



Wildlife Rehabilitation is Necessary

By Elizabeth Benjamin

A New York Times Magazine article (Macdonald, 2015) came out a few years ago entitled “Rescuing Wildlife is Futile, and Necessary.” The article introduced us to Judith Wakelam, a wildlife rehabilitator in England who focuses on helping common swifts. She may rehabilitate a few dozen swifts in a year; do her efforts really mean anything in the grand scheme of life?

The human race has now spread to every corner of the globe; in many places this spread has been accompanied by a philosophy of “conquering nature” where our actions ignore consequences for non-human animals. Especially for those that live in cities and have little opportunity to get into nature, wildlife is considered something to be seen in zoos, something separate from our world, not connected to our reality.

So why do we try to save animals we find in need of help? Two reasons: sentiment and responsibility. Sentiment explains the gut feeling that we cannot see a helpless creature suffer. We know that concerned people will drive many hours if necessary to bring an injured or orphaned animal to someone who can help. Macdonald’s article cites Terry Masear, a hummingbird rehabilitator in Los Angeles, who writes that rescuing animals draws out “raw emotions that unleash our deepest insecurities about our humanity, mortality and place in the natural world” (2015). Responsibility takes the sentiment to another level, where we recognize our part in the wildlife crisis. Urbanization, agricultural land use change, and climate change are all man-made, and all push wildlife towards a crisis of habitat loss and human-wildlife conflict. Thus, we are responsible to do whatever we can to help wildlife meet these inflicted challenges. Why does Judith Wakelam rehabilitate swifts? Perhaps because the percentage of swifts in Britain has fallen 35% over 20 years.

Can we save them all? No. Can we save a species from extinction? Maybe. Can we save one life at a time? YES. Indeed, wildlife rehabilitation may in one sense be futile, but does it still matter? Is it necessary? Absolutely.

Reference

Macdonald, Helen. 2015. “Rescuing Wildlife is Futile, and Necessary.” The New York Times Magazine (online). August 13, 2015. Accessed February 15, 2020.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/16/magazine/rescuing-wildlife-is-futile-and-necessary.html>



Become a Board Member!

We are always looking for NJAWR members to join the team!

Find out how to join [here](#).



Photo of Odin the Great Horned Owl from Freedom Center for Wildlife, Inc., Cinnaminson, NJ

Lead Poisoning Incident

By: Maki Murakami

A red tail hawk was rescued by a wildlife rehabilitator in Brooklyn, NY on January 28, 2020. The hawk was taken to the Wild Bird Fund and is currently under their care for lead poisoning.

The hawk has been named Blair, "He also has right leg paresis, which could be also from the lead. He was given pain medication and tube fed. The lead is not at a high level and the good news is he does not have any breaks."

Like rat poison, lead can cause so much harm to wildlife. Lead has been studied extensively for over 100 years because of its negative impacts to life on earth. Lead causes widespread damage to cells and organs when it is ingested, inhaled, or absorbed in surprisingly small quantities. There are numerous scientific papers about the proven harmful effects of lead for both predatory and scavenging wildlife.

In 2017, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke overturned one of the Obama administration's final acts, banning the use of lead bullets for hunting on wildlife refuges. The ban on lead ammunition and fishing tackle was enacted the day before President Obama left office, and applied to federal wildlife refuges and any other lands where the United States Fish and Wildlife Service regulates hunting and fishing. It was intended to prevent fish, birds and other animals from being poisoned by the lead left behind in carcasses, on the ground or in water. Hunting groups rallied against the ban, calling it an "assault on gun owners' and sportsman's' rights."

Lead is harmful to human and wildlife. There are alternatives to lead bullets.

<http://www.huntingwithnonlead.org/>

And great news for Blair the Hawk! He was released in Central Park in February 2, 2020.

<https://gothamist.com/arts-entertainment/blair-red-tailed-hawk-rescued-brooklyn-released-central-park>



ATTENTION:

Wildlife Rehabilitators,
Stay informed about the
SARS-CoV-2 Pandemic
with the NWRA

<https://www.nwrawildlife.org/page/COVID-19>



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Make a Difference

By: Maki Murakami

Many of us are here to help and assist wildlife whom we cherish. But not all of us are fortunate enough to have a career as a rehabilitator. There are so many things that each one of us can contribute to saving wildlife. We can donate, we can volunteer, but protecting their habitat is one of the most critical ways to save wildlife. Human and human activities cause the biggest challenges to protecting their habitat.

Here are a few things we can do every day!

1. *Be a conscious consumer.* Educate yourself before purchasing products. Understand the impact on the environment. Always know the options of buying sustainable products. We as consumers control what sells in the market. Consumers demand creates supply. An educated consumer can demand environmentally friendly products.
2. *Plant native flowers, trees, and bushes in your backyard.* This gives local wildlife food, shelter, and a place to raise families. Avoid chemical pesticides and fertilizers.
3. *Leave the wildlife alone in the park, on a trail, or near a water source.* It is in their best interest to leave them in their own habitat.
4. *Support policies that protect wildlife habitat and restrictions on wildlife trade.* Get to know your elected officials and get involved. Your vote counts!
5. *Make your windows safe for birds.* An estimated one billion birds die each year from window strikes. You can take steps to prevent bird strikes by making windows bird friendly. Remember birds have a different vision compared to ours.
6. *Drive slowly!* There are many lives living in the city and suburbs. Slow down so you can brake for animals.
7. *Keep your cat indoors for their safety and to protect wildlife.* A cat is a natural hunter. A well-fed cat still hunts. Wildlife has enough challenges as is.

Talk to others. Spread the word for conservation and how each of us can make a difference by taking small steps.



Nominate a hardworking team member today for the

NJAWR Achievement Awards!

Nomination forms are [here](#).

Deadline is October 31, 2020

A Simple, Free, and Fun Way to Create Marketing Content

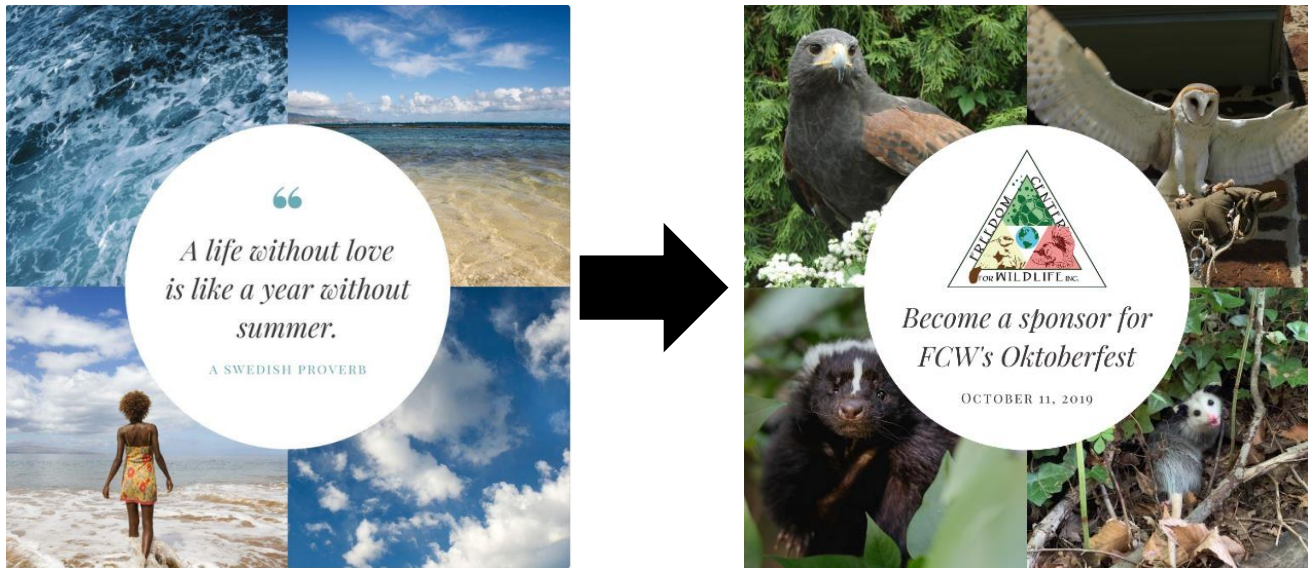
By: Denise Hassinger

[Canva.com](https://www.canva.com) is a valuable tool for the wildlife rehabilitation community to use. It allows anyone, despite their graphic design skill level, to create professional marketing content. It has a friendly user format with design templates to choose from for any occasion, and the best part is that it is free! There are options to upgrade to paid plans, but it is not necessary to do so—the free account works wonderfully!

It really is easy. Create an account and search through the templates to see what they have. There are templates for everything you can imagine: flyers, Instagram, infographics, Facebook, Twitter, banners, posters, and so much more. What is nice about these templates is you can search for what you are looking for, select the template you like, and then change the information within it to your liking.

Need to make an Instagram post about an upcoming fundraising event? No problem! Search the Instagram templates, pick the design you like, and change the text and photos to your needs. When you are finished with your design, download it, and you are ready to use your new marketing content. The templates are pre-formatted to whatever category they are in. Facebook cover templates are the perfect size for Facebook covers; flyer templates are the generic letter format; postcards templates are postcard size, etc.

Check it out today and get started on making professional marketing content with ease and for free.



On the right is the template used to create an Instagram post. The photos, text, and color were all changed and then the Freedom Center for Wildlife (FCW) logo was added. Afterwards, it was downloaded and shared on the FCW Instagram page. It was professional looking and took about ten minutes to create, freeing up time to complete other tasks.



“The least I can do is speak out for those who cannot speak for themselves.” —Jane Goodall



President's Message

I want to thank everyone who currently serves on the NJAWR Board of Directors and to those who have previously served. Without your commitment, NJAWR would not be here today to assist the wildlife rehabilitation community.

Nominations for the 2020 NJAWR Lifetime Achievement Award are now being accepted. Nominees do not have to be a NJAWR member. If you previously selected someone who did not win this year or in a previous year, please consider nominating them again for another chance to win this award! The 2020 NJAWR Lifetime Achievement Award forms are available [here](#).

Nominations for the 2020 NJAWR Rising Star Award are now being accepted. Again, nominees do not have to be a NJAWR member. Please take the time at some point before the annual deadline (October 31st) to nominate someone from your facility that is consistently working hard. Recognition of someone's hard work and dedication is paramount for continued success. The 2020 NJAWR Rising Star Award forms are available [here](#).

NJAWR is accepting applications for two (2) scholarships offered only to NJAWR members for admission reimbursement to one of the following 2021 conferences: the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association Symposium, the Pennsylvania Wildlife Rehabilitation & Education Conference, the New York State Wildlife Rehabilitation Council Seminar, and the Call of the Wild Conference—Virginia. *In light of the pandemic, the NJAWR scholarship may also be used towards any virtual conference within the United States that is related to wildlife rehabilitation.* If you are attending one of the above conferences or a virtual one and are a NJAWR member, then apply and save some money! All applications are due by October 31st, and application forms can be found [here](#).

Interested in becoming an NJAWR board member?

President's Message (cont.)

Look no further! Nominations for becoming an NJAWR board member are now being accepted. You do not need to be a licensed wildlife rehabilitator, but you must be an NJAWR member before being nominated. We are looking for active board members from an array of backgrounds. For more information, please go [here](#).

Thank you for taking the time to read this message and for being a part of NJAWR.

Stay healthy and safe!

Cheers,
Denise Hassinger, MSc.
NJAWR President

