



2023

Annual Report

*Saving wildlife through
state-of-the-art veterinary
care, research, education, and
conservation medicine!*



Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife

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From Executive Leadership

Rebuilding. It is one word that seems so simple but encompasses more than we can ever imagine. Like most of Southwest Florida and all of Sanibel, our team has pulled together to rebuild after Hurricane Ian, making CROW stronger than ever. We entered 2023 with a renewed commitment to continuing Shirley Walter's mission and nothing could stop us!

Our focus for rebuilding came with an intentional perspective . . . "future-proofing." Every decision for the hospital and enclosures rebuild began with considering future growth of patients and staffing and strengthening with a mind toward sustainability. The hospital rebuild/renovations gave new life to a building that has seen tens of thousands of patients. With fresh paint, hospital grade flooring, and new appliances as well as improved workspaces for our growing staff, the "like new" hospital welcomed back the hospital and rehabilitation team in March. In September we broke ground on our enclosures replacing those lost in the storm, but this time built like the ones from 2022 which survived Hurricane Ian's wind and storm surge. Fundraising and educational programs were "rebuilt" as well. The ever popular WILD about CROW raised a record amount of funds for our enclosures and attendees enjoyed learning from the hospital and rehabilitation team what they do 365 days a year. And Taste of the Islands was back! Restaurants on and off islands leant their culinary skills to the two week long event culminating in a fun "crawl" around the islands and CROW's campus to visit our education center. Education didn't stop in the education center as we've also welcomed back interns at the hospital as well and have even housed a few SCCF interns while their dorms are being rebuilt. 2024 will continue our efforts to move forward. You are the reason CROW is able to continue in our mission. You are the reason CROW has been able to rebuild. On behalf of President Paul Ben-Susan, the Board of Directors and myself, I end this message with simple words again. Thank you.



Snowy Egret (23-4263)
Photo by Sam Warren

Alison Charney Hussey
Alison Charney Hussey

Notice of Annual Meeting

Members are invited to attend CROW's Annual Meeting on Wednesday, March 27 at 4:00 pm via Zoom. Information to access the Zoom call will be sent via email one week prior to the meeting.

Included on the agenda will be the selection of new members to the Board of Directors. In accordance with the CROW bylaws, additional nominations from the membership may be submitted in writing to the Nominating Chairman at least 40 days prior to the election, supported by letter or petitions from at least five percent of the membership, accompanied by the resume of the nominee's educational and professional experience, and a letter from the nominee stating a willingness to run and attend Board meeting regularly. Nominations should be submitted to Board@crowclinic.org.

Board Members whose terms are up for renewal and are re-committing:

Karen Buck
Ron Clayton
Dr. Dave Nichols

Nominations Received to Date:

Roy Gibson
Roger Grogman

2023 Finances in Review

CROW is extremely appreciative of each and every gift helping to further our mission: saving wildlife through care, education, and collaboration. It is because of your generous support we are able to maintain the highest quality of patient care and excellence in education, both of the next generation of wildlife professionals and the public. We strive to improve the relationship with our native and migratory wild neighbors wherever you call home. Patient care, operations, and rebuilding efforts were supported by individuals, foundations, and corporations alike.

2023 Income - preliminary, unaudited

Membership.....	\$255,245
Contributions/Gifts/Bequests/Memorials	\$1,597,590
VEC Admission/Programs	\$6,387
Grants	\$658,574
Miscellaneous Income	\$207,229
Events	\$180,690
Gift Shop/Online Sales.....	\$66,792

TOTAL PROJECTED INCOME **\$2,972,507**

2023 Expenses - preliminary, unaudited

Hospital	\$1,582,842
Visitor Education Center.....	\$150,551
Management and General	\$280,391
Public Relations/Fundraising	\$268,771
Special Events.....	\$125,551
Gift Shop.....	\$15,078

TOTAL PROJECTED EXPENSES **\$2,384,961**

CROW's Fund Balance Carry Forward of \$587,546 reflects specific contributions toward CROW's rebuilding efforts from Hurricane Ian damages and as capital improvements are not reflected in the operational figures above.

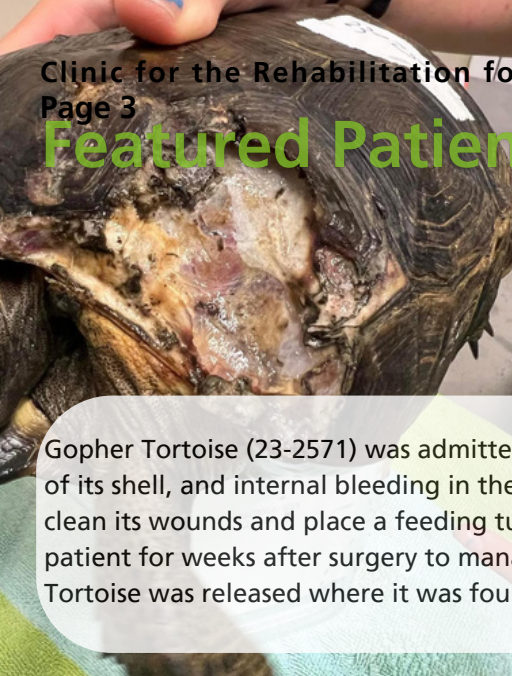
President's Circle

The President's Circle recognizes those who support CROW's mission with contributions of \$10,000 or more. Originating in 2012 with a small group of loyal CROW benefactors, these generous donors extended their much needed support to CROW in 2023:

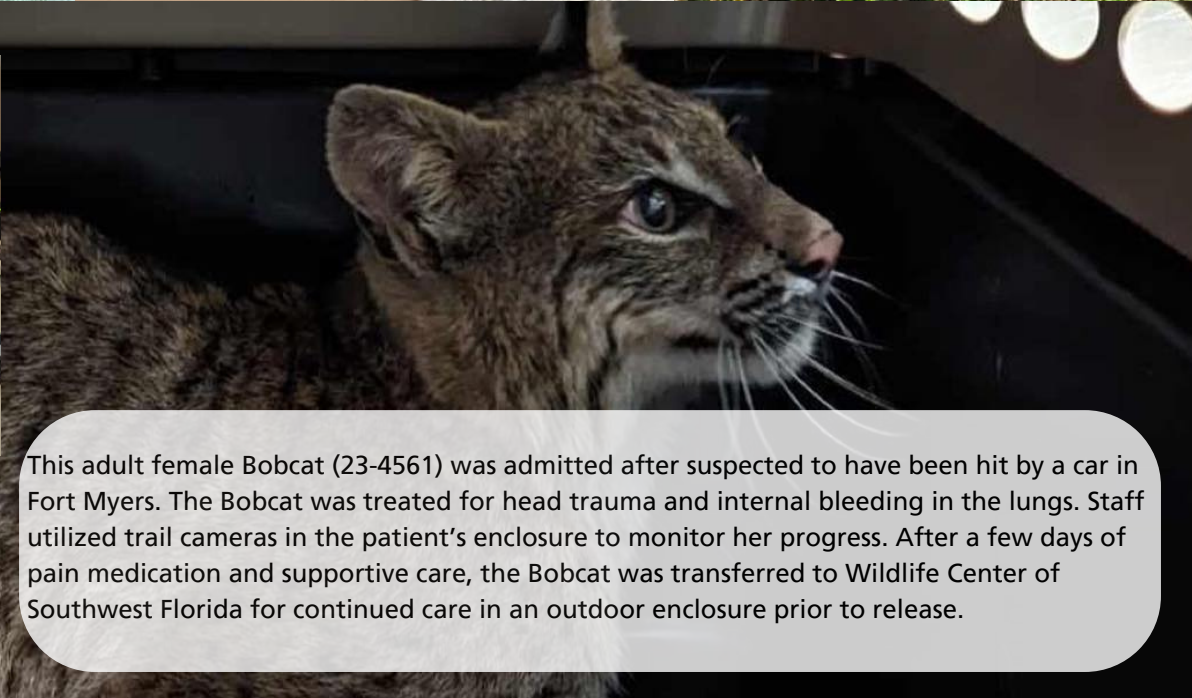
Anonymous
Bank of the Islands/Edison National Bank
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Frank and Pat Middendorf
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Sargent Family Foundation
Brian and Samanta Seasholes
Howard and Brenda Sheridan
Shipley Foundation, Inc
Jonathan and Evelyn Rose Silverman
Van Sloun Foundation
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Featured Patients



Gopher Tortoise (23-2571) was admitted on July 1 with severe shell fractures, missing parts of its shell, and internal bleeding in the lungs. Staff performed surgery on the Tortoise to clean its wounds and place a feeding tube. Daily bandage changes were given to the patient for weeks after surgery to manage the wounds. After 4 months in care, the Gopher Tortoise was released where it was found in Fort Myers!



This adult female Bobcat (23-4561) was admitted after suspected to have been hit by a car in Fort Myers. The Bobcat was treated for head trauma and internal bleeding in the lungs. Staff utilized trail cameras in the patient's enclosure to monitor her progress. After a few days of pain medication and supportive care, the Bobcat was transferred to Wildlife Center of Southwest Florida for continued care in an outdoor enclosure prior to release.



A nestling Burrowing Owl (23-1224) was admitted after both of its parents were found dead outside of its burrow. The Owl was treated with anti-inflammatories for mild swelling of its right foot which was resolved in a few days. After the Owlet was treated, a renesting attempt was made with a wild adult Burrowing Owl family in Marco Island. Renesting attempts were a success and the parents accepted the baby as one of their own! We partnered with local biologist to band this Owlet prior to release. Recently biologists reported to have spotted this Burrowing Owl as a thriving adult!

From the Staff Veterinarian



This past year has been one for the books in CROW's long history of caring for sick and injured wildlife in southwest Florida. At the beginning of this year, the clinic was still providing care for patients out of buildings at ARC (North Fort Myers) while renovations continued on our island campus in the wake of Hurricane Ian.

We moved hospital operations back to our island home mid-March, where we were greeted by our ever-supportive volunteers who helped us settle back into a new normal. With a facelift to the interior of the hospital (including a fresh coat of paint and medical grade flooring), we turned our focus to the rebuilding of our outdoor rehabilitation space and broke ground on six of those enclosures with the goal of having them ready to house patients by Spring 2024. We also began the intensive planning process to rebuild a state-of-the-art sea turtle facility, which will allow us to treat more endangered turtles on our campus upon completion in 2025. Shortly after returning to the island, we were thrilled to welcome students back to CROW's hospital once again.

Teaching students has always been a pillar of our mission, and our programs continue to provide a uniquely hands-on immersion in all aspects of patient care. Just like releasing patients back to their wild homes, it is equally rewarding to watch students grow in their skills and knowledge throughout their time at CROW. Upon completing their programs, we love to see them spread their wings and continue to make an impact in wildlife health and conservation across the globe.

We continue to strengthen and grow partnerships in our community, including providing veterinary care for the mollusks and fish at the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum. Clinical research in collaboration with labs across the country to surveil for a variety of toxins and infectious diseases continue to be a focus for us this year in a broader effort to protect our wildlife, especially with the ongoing avian influenza pandemic. Additionally, we became the veterinary consultant for FGCU's research program to ensure animal welfare standards are being met throughout the university. I'm excited to see what opportunities for growth this next year holds for CROW as we expand our dedicated hospital team and continue to provide compassionate care for our wild neighbors.

Robin Bast
Robin Bast, DVM

Research & Conservation Projects

- Mange in Eastern Cottontails
- Anhinga meningeal worms
- RLP (regional limb perfusion) in seabirds with hook-related injuries
- Efficacy of multiple doses of ILE (intralipid emulsion) in treating brevetoxicosis in seabirds
- Efficacy of Capromorelin as an appetite stimulant in wild bird patients
- Surveillance of burrowing owls for rodenticide
- Surveillance of freshwater turtles for Fraservirus (1)
- Surveillance of osprey for new species of GI parasite called Scaphanocephalus
- Surveillance of bobcats for evidence of feline leukomyelopathy
- Surveillance of snakes for lungworms
- Surveillance for HPAI (highly pathogenic avian influenza)
- Undetermined neurologic syndrome in red-shouldered hawks – investigating with FWC

Top Species admitted in 2023



Eastern Cottontail: 868 Patients
Survival Rate after 24 hours: 67.74%

Virginia Opossum: 445 Patients
Survival Rate after 24 hours: 86.38%



Mourning Dove: 306 Patients
Survival Rate after 24 hours: 76.19%

187 Species Admitted

Avian: 138
Mammals: 23
Reptiles: 24
Amphibian: 2

Top Reasons for Admission

Unknown Trauma	1,314 cases
Orphaned	1,008 cases
Systemic Disease	627 cases

Who are our patients?



2,409
Birds



1,901
Mammals



286
Reptiles



2
Amphibians

Education & Outreach

Education and Outreach programs at CROW returned slowly to campus post-Ian. We were fortunate to have opened our doors early in the first quarter and welcomed guests back. It was wonderful to return to the island to see previous and new guests once again! In late-September, CROW welcomed our new Education and Outreach Coordinator, Brittney Laster to further education and outreach efforts.

In July, presentations and tours began three times a week. Rehabilitation staff and volunteers, and education staff, happily provided great insight into different wildlife topics and CROW. Visitors slowly increased along with hurricane recovery with an estimate of approximately 1000 visitors and 100+ guests on campus tours in the last quarter. Education is a core fundamental goal of CROW's Mission and its return marked a milestone of recovery post-Ian.

Outreach efforts also started slow, with a few visits to libraries or events on a volunteer basis early-to-mid 2023. Like presentations and visitors, outreach began to increase in October, with 18 programs in the last quarter. Outreach events included Halloween and fall festival tables, schools, and community outreach. Summer camp was put on hold for Summer 2023, while planning for 2024 began. Taste of the Islands also made a triumphant return and hosted activities and educational content in the CROW Visitor Education Center.

CROW happily saw the return of four ambassadors to the visitor center between October and December. Irwin, the Florida box turtle; LC, the ball python; Cobb, the corn snake; and Red Fred, the Eastern Indigo snake; all returned home to their enclosures and have once again begun educating visitors about their species and CROW's mission. Stay tuned for more of CROW's education ambassador animals to return in 2024!

Volunteers

What a year it's been for CROW and our incredible volunteers! Can you believe CROW Volunteers accumulated 7,800 hours in 2023!? Volunteers are one of the main reasons we have come so far in our recovery from Hurricane Ian. Volunteers stepped up in ways we could not have imagined and played an instrumental role in preparing the CROW Campus for both visitors and wildlife patients.

As if that wasn't enough, our wonderful CROW Volunteers also committed to their regular "jobs" – working in baby room, grazing gopher tortoises, rescuing sick, injured and orphaned wildlife, transporting patients from drop off sites to CROW, transporting wildlife patients hundreds of miles all over the state for continued care, helping in the clinic, answering phones as a first responder, doing laundry and cleaning dishes, and grazing VEC animals.

Once our rehabilitation enclosures are completed and our patient admissions increase, CROW will need more volunteers to help care for our wildlife. One thing is certain – CROW will once again be successful because of our wonderful volunteers!

This year, the CROW Volunteer Program switched over to the POINT Volunteer Platform. In August, we made the transition from entering hours from paper time sheets into a computer database to using POINT. POINT is a volunteer platform for non profits. It allows the volunteer to enter their own hours, track their hours and volunteer for other non-profits. It allows CROW to track volunteer hours more efficiently, schedule volunteer opportunities that link directly to the CROW website, send out mass emails to volunteers and specific groups of volunteers and more! There will be more to come with POINT in 2024. Our goal is to get most if not all volunteers using POINT.



Student Programs

CROW's reputation as a wildlife teaching hospital has continued to attract students from around the world to learn about wildlife medicine and rehabilitation through hands-on learning and research. Uncertain of what our student program's future may entail following the aftermath of Hurricane Ian, we were fortunate to reopen our programs starting in May 2023. Experiencing our student program for the first 5 months of the year was a situation our staff had not previously, but we are thankful for our resilient staff and volunteers to fill in our student roles. From May thru December 2023, CROW hosted 10 Veterinary Medical Students representing 10 veterinary schools, 5 undergraduate Wildlife Care Externship students, 2 Veterinary Medical Interns (1-year program starting July 2023), and 2 six-month Wildlife Rehabilitation Internship students. Of these students there were 9 states and 6 countries were represented. Each year we are astounded by the new faces we meet, train, and mentor as students begin their career in the wildlife veterinary field.

As our campus continues to undergo construction of our important outdoor patient enclosures lost to Hurricane Ian, we are fortunate to continue collaborating with our tremendous network of partnering wildlife rehabilitation clinics in Florida to allow our patient's to transfer to for the next step in their rehabilitation journey. Our students played an invaluable role in assisting with patient transfers, releases, patient care, and continued cleanup of our campus grounds. Our students continue to learn standard protocols of wildlife triage, husbandry, blood work, diet preparation, surgery, disease control, and treatment plans for various wildlife species. Students who have completed our programs this year have since completed/started veterinary school and participated in other externship/internship opportunities in wildlife medicine and research. As we continue through the aftermath of Hurricane Ian rebuilding, we look forward to building upon our reputable student program in the coming year to continue educating the future leaders of the wildlife medicine and rehabilitation field.



2023 Schools Represented

*Bowdoin College
Colgate University
Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine
Kansas State University
Kent State University
Korat School of Veterinary Medicine
Lees McRae College of Veterinary Medicine
Long Island University College of Veterinary Medicine
Michigan State University College of Veterinary Medicine
Ohio University College of Veterinary Medicine
Purdue University*

*Ross University College of Veterinary Medicine
Royal Veterinary College of Veterinary Medicine
Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine
University of Bern College of Veterinary Medicine
University of Findlay
University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine
University of Glasgow College of Veterinary Medicine
University of Wisconsin-Madison College of Veterinary Medicine
Utrecht University College of Veterinary Medicine*

2023 Wildlife & Conservation Medicine Interns

Dr. Melanie Dittmer (July 2022 - June 2023)
Dr. Kristen Schott (July 2022 - June 2023)
Dr. Kasey Mitchell (July 2023 - June 2024)
Dr. Maddie Chilcote (July 2023 - June 2024)



WILD about CROW supporters know how to party . . . and raise much needed funds!

WILD about CROW is that kind of party! You know – the one you can't wait for all year and then don't want it to end? This year, WILD was just what the community needed after months of relentless Hurricane Ian clean-up efforts. A time to enjoy each other and celebrate CROW's dedicated staff members. Attendees enjoyed a wonderful meal, a gorgeous venue at the Burrough's Home and Gardens, competed "wildly" in the silent and live auctions and of course tried to be the last one standing during the ever popular game "heads or tails!" Generosity was in no short order and the event raised a record-breaking amount for the "Hurricane Ian 6" enclosures needing to be completely rebuilt from the storms devastating winds and surge waters. WILD's presenting sponsor, Edison National Bank/Bank of the Islands made sure everyone left with a special gift – a commemorative Tunaskin shirt with art specially created for the event by Anabelle Brewster.



Taste of the Islands - Back with a Twist

Cancelling Taste of the Islands in 2022 was a disappointment to all who worked so hard in planning for a fantastic event. But that planning made it so much easier to execute the vision for 2023! And, as we have over the past few years, this Taste also had to pivot and became "Taste of the Islands – Rebuilding!" Rebuilding CROW. Rebuilding Taste. Rebuilding many of the restaurants.

The planned trolleys during the CROW Crawl were implemented and although the causeway construction traffic posed a deterrent to some, many attendees enjoyed the fabulous food and drinks our island restaurants had to offer. The CROW Visitor Center became a popular stop on the trolley route and participants enjoyed our Ambassador Animals, touring the center and partaking in the refreshing free beer and custard provided by two of our Taste restaurants.

Judges met and feasted on the participating restaurants' offered selections and this year, even off-island restaurants participated to help their fellow island restaurants and fill the void of restaurants still rebuilding after Ian. The brand-new replacement trophies for Taste of the Taste and People's Choice Award were both presented to Cielo who swept their categories – Best Adult Beverage and Best Seafood Entrée. Please make sure to support all of the island restaurants as they continue to rebuild – Taste wouldn't exist without them.





**Clinic for the Rehabilitation
of Wildlife**
PO Box 150
Sanibel, FL 33957

Visitor Education Center
3883 Sanibel Captiva Rd.
Sanibel, FL 33957
(239) 472-3644
Open 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

***CROW offers daily presentations
Monday through Friday at 11 am***



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crowclinic.org

Publications of CROW's Annual Report has been generously underwritten by:



"As the oldest locally owned and managed community bank in Lee County and on our islands, Bank of the Islands/Edison National Bank cares deeply about all of our residents and visitors - both human and wildlife - on our coastal islands and throughout the county we call home. Now that we are more than a year beyond the devastation of Hurricane Ian, we join CROW in embracing a spirit of renewal and a focus on the future that only grows brighter with the passage of time. We are proud to support CROW now more than ever as they rebuild - and know the mammals, birds, and reptiles sharing our ecosystems are safer because CROW passionately cares for our injured, sick and orphaned wildlife neighbors. We salute the family of staff, volunteers, and supporters that sustain CROW's mission. They know, as do we, that CROW is irreplaceable in our community - not only in caring for our wildlife but also in teaching us how to live in harmony with our natural world."

– Geoffrey Roepstorff, CEO, Bank of the Islands/Edison National Bank