



Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife

GRATITUDE IN ACTION

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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Wildlife First Responder

A message from our

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR



My word of the year for 2025: *gratitude.*

Gratitude seems like such a small word with realization of all our team accomplished together this year. We built upon our firm foundation of wildlife medicine, rehabilitation, and conservation education, elevating our leadership in coastal wildlife conservation.

Our veterinary, rehabilitation, and support teams worked tirelessly to provide the highest level of care to our wildlife. Under the leadership of Dr. Jessica Comolli and Dr. Rodney Schnellbacher, our hospital remained a place of innovation, excellence, and compassion.

We also marked significant milestones, including progress on the Harkey Sea Turtle Complex—enhancing our ability to meet the needs of injured and ill sea turtles—and investing strategically in our facilities, programs, and people.

Of course, 2025 also brought its share of challenges. Increasing admissions, environmental pressures, and rising operational costs required careful financial stewardship. Avian influenza demanded stricter biosecurity measures, greater flexibility, and greater vigilance. Even so, our determination, compassion, and ingenuity kept us focused and resilient.

CROW’s greatest strength lies in our community. We saw that truth in the triumphant return of Taste of the Islands at Sanibel City Hall. This beloved event once again brought our supporters together, raising vital funds while celebrating the shared commitment to wildlife, conservation, and FUN!

This year was a powerful reminder of what we can accomplish together. Our members, donors, volunteers, partners, and advocates help transform concern for wildlife into action—and action into lasting impact. I can’t thank you enough! Because of you, thousands of animals receive a second chance at life, and countless individuals are inspired to care deeply about our natural world.

What’s next? I know CROW will keep meeting the needs and challenges—guided by our mission, the wildlife that depend on us, and crucially, the people who share our mission.

Gratitude. Simple gratitude. Thank you.

Alison Charney Hussey
Executive Director, CROW

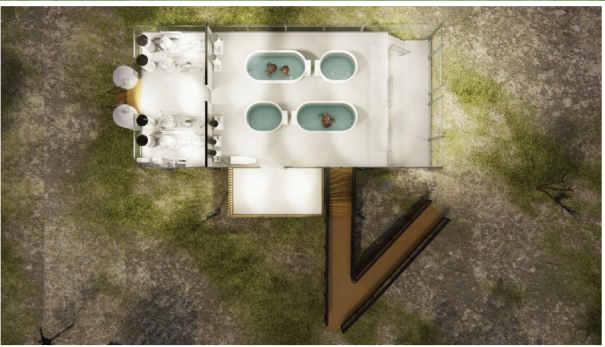


HARKEY SEA
TURTLE COMPLEX
Groundbreaking and Update

On June 16, which was World Sea Turtle Day, CROW officially broke ground on the Harkey Sea Turtle Rehabilitation Complex—an exciting and long-awaited milestone in bringing dedicated sea turtle care back to Southwest Florida. The new facility will replace CROW’s original sea turtle center, which was destroyed by Hurricane Ian in 2022. Construction has been made possible through a \$1.2 million grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and a generous gift from longtime conservation supporters Bill and Laurie Harkey, as well as numerous other new and long-time CROW donors.

As Executive Director Alison Charney Hussey shared at the groundbreaking, this project represents a major step forward—not just for CROW, but for sea turtle conservation across the region.

The Harkey Sea Turtle Complex will be the only licensed rehabilitation facility between Sarasota and the Florida Keys, giving sick and injured turtles a crucial place to heal while expanding opportunities for research and education. Construction wrapped up in January 2026, and once the final permits are in hand, we expect to welcome our first sea turtle patients in early 2026—marking a hopeful new chapter for these iconic coastal residents.



INTRODUCING OUR
Senior Staff Veterinarian

As we wrap up another busy year at CROW, I'd like to take a moment to introduce myself. My name is Dr. Rodney Schnellbacher, and I joined CROW seven months ago as Senior Staff Veterinarian. Over the past several months, I've had the opportunity to see firsthand the scope and importance of the work done here every day. The care provided to each patient, from intake to release, is the result of a strong collaborative effort among our veterinarians, staff, interns, students, volunteers, and supporters. The level of commitment to patient welfare and high medical standards at CROW is exceptional, and I'm proud to be part of our team.

Joining the hospital and the surrounding community has been especially meaningful. The island's dedication to wildlife conservation and recovery is evident in every aspect of CROW's mission, and I'm grateful for the support and welcome I've received since arriving.

Teaching and mentorship are central to my role at CROW. Working closely with interns and students, helping them develop clinical skills, and watching their confidence grow is one of the most rewarding parts of this position. I look forward to continuing to support CROW's educational mission while providing excellent care to the animals we serve.

Thank you for your continued support of CROW. It is a privilege to be part of an organization making such a tangible difference for wildlife and the community.

With warm regards,

Rodney W. Schnellbacher, DVM, Dipl. ACZM
Board Certified Specialist in Zoological Medicine®
Senior Staff Veterinarian, CROW



A message from the
RESEARCH &
MEDICAL DIRECTOR



This past year marked my first full year with CROW, and I could not be more proud of what we have accomplished. Stepping into this role was an exciting new chapter, and experiencing a full year working alongside this incredible team has been rewarding and motivating. Each day reinforces how important CROW's work is, both to the wildlife we treat and to the community that supports our mission.

In 2025, with generous donor support, we significantly expanded our medical capabilities through the acquisition of new radiography equipment, a blood lead analyzer, updated patient monitoring equipment, and a new autoclave sterilizer — investments that have already elevated care for our most critical patients. We also are continuing to advance our role in wildlife health research and professional training. In addition to intern-led projects, we are participating in collaborative initiatives across the country, including a burrowing owl genetics study, a raptor anticoagulant toxicology investigation, and surveillance for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), further establishing CROW's role in advancing wildlife health research. Additionally, our veterinary team continues to share expertise both locally and internationally, helping train the next generation of wildlife health professionals.

This year also marked another remarkable milestone with the addition of Dr. Rodney Schnellbacher as our Senior Staff Veterinarian. For the first time in CROW's history, we now have **two board-certified specialists in Zoological Medicine** on staff, strengthening both patient care and further elevating our training programs.

Significant progress was also made with our patient care and rehabilitation capacity. This year, we proudly **released our first group of raccoons since Hurricane Ian**, restoring a major part of our mammal rehabilitation program. **Construction of our new shorebird enclosures was completed**, enabling us to once again rehabilitate pelicans and other coastal bird species, an essential milestone in our post-storm recovery. Another important achievement is that, for the first time since Hurricane Ian, we are no longer reliant on transferring patients to other facilities for care. Instead, we have fully restored our treatment capacity and are now accepting transfers from other wildlife centers, giving back to our colleagues who supported us during our most challenging times.

Looking ahead, excitement continues to build around the much-anticipated Harkey Sea Turtle Complex, which remains on track to open in 2026 and will further expand our ability to provide specialized marine wildlife rehabilitation.

With gratitude to our dedicated team and supporters, I look forward to another year of advancing our mission and caring for the wildlife that depends on us.

Jessica R. Comolli, DVM, MS, CWR, Dipl. ACZM
Board Certified Specialist in Zoological Medicine®
Research and Medical Director, CROW

2025 CROW
STUDENT PROGRAM
OVERVIEW

CROW's reputation as a premier wildlife teaching hospital continues to draw students from across the country and around the world who seek hands-on experience in wildlife medicine and rehabilitation. Over the past year, CROW was honored to mentor a diverse group of students, including:



In total, these **students represented 18 states, 2 countries, and 27 colleges and universities**. Each year, we are inspired by their commitment to providing exceptional, around-the-clock care to our avian, mammalian, and reptilian patients. This year also marked the successful launch of our Clinical Year Veterinary Medical Externship Program, designed to offer clinical year veterinary students advanced, specialized training in wildlife medicine during their clinical rotations. This initiative expands our teaching capabilities and strengthens our role in developing the next generation of wildlife health professionals. CROW remains deeply committed to strengthening our student programs in the coming year and continuing to educate the future leaders of wildlife medicine, research, and rehabilitation.

2025 CROW DVM Interns Breakdown:

- Dr. Danielle Kreis (July 2024 – July 2025)
- Dr. Kaitlyn Crocker (July 2025 – July 2026)
- Dr. Taylor Lashlee (July 2025 – July 2026)

2025 CROW DVM Fellowship Breakdown:

- Dr. Kasey Mitchell (July 2024 – June 2025)



Schools Represented by
2025 CROW Students:

Amherst College
Antioch College
CalState University Long Beach
Consumes River College
Covenant College
Eckerd College
Federal University of Bahia
Iowa State University
Louisiana State University
Macallister College
Michigan State University
North Carolina State University
Ohio State University
Saint Petersburg College
Tufts University
Tuskegee University
University of Delaware
University of Findlay
University of Missouri
University of North Carolina
University of South Carolina
University of Tennessee
University of Vermont
University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Utah Valley University
Ventura College



States and Countries
Represented by
2025 CROW Students:

Alabama
Austria
Brazil
California
Delaware
Florida
Georgia
Iowa
Louisiana
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Missouri
North Carolina
Ohio
South Carolina
Tennessee
Utah
Vermont
Wisconsin

FEATURED PATIENTS

These are a few of the 5,046 wildlife patients we had the honor of rehabilitating at CROW in 2025.



 **Black Skimmer**
(patient 25-3918)

With its oversized orange bill and graceful black silhouette, this charismatic seabird was tangled in fishing line, with a large lure hanging from its wing. Thankfully, it wasn't wounded and was in excellent physical condition, so it was just kept overnight. Not all animals entangled in fishing lines are so lucky. The next morning at Lighthouse Beach it became the first black skimmer we've released since 2021.

Caring for Black Skimmers

Black skimmers can develop secondary issues in captivity. For example, their long, fragile primary flight feathers can become tattered, affecting their flight ability and delaying release. Also, black skimmers are specialized piscivores (fish eaters). They hunt by dipping their long lower bill into the water while skimming over the surface. Once they contact a fish, they snap their beak shut and eat the prey in flight. This makes feeding them in captivity a challenge, as they don't recognize pre-caught fish as food right away. CROW was able to address this difficulty for a great outcome.



 **Red Fox**
(patient 25-3471)

This female red fox was trapped on a construction site in Lehigh Acres and suffered from severe mange. She arrived at CROW hairless, covered in sores and scabs, and emaciated. Our hospital team treated her mange, vaccinated her against diseases like rabies, and provided nutritious meals, enrichment and space to roam. She transformed bit by bit, her skin healing and her beautiful fur growing back. After two months, we released her in a preserve near where she was rescued.

Caring for Red Foxes

Keeping a red fox in rehabilitation brings challenges. They are high energy, tend to be territorial and need a large, vibrant environment to thrive. At the same time, they are versatile and can adapt to a rehabilitation setting—key to helping this fox recover. CROW has extensive experience rehabilitating red foxes for their return to the wild. Given the rough physical condition when she first came to us, helping this one was a distinct pleasure.



 **Bald Eagle**
(patient 24-4860)

A juvenile bald eagle spent four months with CROW recovering from a fractured coracoid (collarbone) and lead poisoning. The eagle endured a body wrap to stabilize its fractured bone, feather guards to protect its crucial primaries, chelation treatment to remove the lead from its body, and other procedures. Then it graduated to an outdoor enclosure, where our team helped recondition its flight muscles and regain its strength. Its release was our best-attended of the year.

Caring for Bald Eagles

Rehabilitation is as equally important as treating a patient's disease or injury. A fractured coracoid kept this bald eagle from flying for weeks. Lead poisoning is common in raptors due to lead shot or sinkers in their prey. After treatment, we focused on making sure the bald eagle could rebuild its strength and have the best chance at success when released. It was beyond rewarding for the team to see this young eagle soar free.



 **Common Snapping Turtle**
(patient 24-4779)

This female turtle had a severe scrape along her shell due to a car strike. The wound exposed her coelomic membrane, which protects internal organs. CROW promptly administered pain medication—turtles have nerve endings in their shells—and cleaned and bandaged the wound. We waterproofed the dressing using beeswax, petroleum jelly and hydrogel bandages. We also applied silver honey, a natural antimicrobial ointment. Eventually, the shell healed, and we released her—active and healthy.

Caring for Common Snapping Turtles

Car strikes are the number-one injury among reptiles that come to CROW. Although her injury was severe, turtle shells are made of bone covered in keratin, so even large wounds like this one can heal given time and appropriate care—including frequent wound flushing and dressing replacement. That proved true for this turtle, as her shell slowly firmed up as the bone grew back, leaving only a large scar to mark her experience.

Patients treated in 2025

2,775	1,985
Avian	Mammal
283	3
Avian	Amphibian

Total patients admitted
5,046



VOLUNTEERS

At CROW, volunteers are the heart and soul of our mission, and their dedication makes everything we do possible. Each year, we are continually inspired by the selfless contributions of these incredible individuals who give their time, skills, and passion to help further our cause of saving sick, injured and orphaned wildlife. It's important to recognize all of the areas where volunteers play a pivotal role in making CROW successful:

- Volunteer Emergency Rescue & Transport (VERT)
- Transport Driver
- Admissions – First Responder
- Answering Phones
- Clinic
- Baby Room
- Laundry & Dishes
- Rehabilitation
- Gopher Tortoise Grazing
- Ambassador Animal Grazing
- Facility & Grounds
- Gift Shop
- Administrative Help
- In-House & Outreach Education/ Presentations
- Special Events

And if all of that isn't enough volunteers also helped with special projects like sanding enclosures, painting sealant on slat boards, building perches and nest boxes, power washing, knitting nests, sewing opossum pouches and more!

It's obvious our volunteers are vital to CROW's success. Their unwavering commitment not only strengthens our organization, but also ensures a brighter future for our wildlife.

We are deeply grateful to every volunteer who has walked alongside us in this journey. In April of 2025, we were able to celebrate and recognize these incredible individuals by hosting a luncheon at Tutti Pazzi. The afternoon was a chance to come together for camaraderie, food, games and fun and of course, gratitude for all they do for CROW.

2,952

entries for hours

10,573

total hours

\$33.49

average value of a
volunteer hour

Volunteers saved
CROW over

\$354,000!



2025 FINANCES

2025 was an extraordinary year of fundraising for CROW, made possible by the incredible generosity of our supporters. We celebrated our most successful Giving Tuesday ever, raising the funds needed to purchase critical care chambers that will soon make a lifesaving difference for our patients. Thanks to our community, we also reached our endowment match goal and proudly launched our Legacy Giving Program, helping secure the future of wildlife care for generations to come. As we look ahead to 2026, we are inspired and energized to continue saving lives—and we are deeply grateful to every donor who made this remarkable year possible.

2025 Income
preliminary, unaudited:

Membership

\$217,477.59

Contributions/Gifts/Bequests/Memorials

\$1,529,190.48

Visitor Education Center Admissions/Programs

\$67,377.61

Grants

\$1,272,005.38

Miscellaneous Income

\$93,096.78

Events

\$237,474.39

Gift Shop/Online Sales

\$84,300.57

Total Projected Income

\$3,500,922.80

Say 'Hello!' to Crowline, Our New Education Animal Ambassador

CROW welcomes a unique new member to our educational ambassador team: a fish crow named Crowline.

In February, a rescuer in Miami found an unusually friendly wild crow with clipped wings. Typically this is a sign that the bird was kept illegally as a pet. The rescuer brought the crow to Pelican Harbor Seabird Station (PHSS) in Miami, where staff soon realized the crow was too comfortable with humans to be returned safely to the wild. So Crowline came to CROW.

Crowline enjoys a spacious, enriching environment tailored to her natural curiosity and intelligence. Her outdoor enclosure is filled with interactive toys, natural perches, and foliage encouraging her to explore and engage in species-specific behaviors. She'll also play an important role as an educational ambassador, fostering a deeper understanding of native wildlife, the dangers of habituation, and the importance of keeping wild animals wild.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

“How can you help wildlife if you don’t know they need help in the first place?”

That question—posed by Education Coordinator Brittnay Laster—neatly describes what inspires us at the Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW). Since treating our first patient, a royal tern rescued by Shirley Walters in 1968, CROW has actively aided wildlife while educating our community.

Across Southwest Florida, residents, partner organizations and visitors work together to help CROW protect the regions diverse wildlife.

Among our activities in 2025:

-  **More than 1,000 hours invested** in local programming at schools, festivals, communities, and the Visitor Education Center by our education team—over and above our daily presentations and tours.
-  CROW **visited the Sanibel School monthly** to present on our activities and conservation. We also attended community events in five counties.
-  The Visitor Education Center (VEC) **welcomed an estimated ### visitors** in 2025. Some ### people took part in campus tours.
-  **### daily presentations with speakers** from the VEC team, volunteers, and rehabilitation interns on topics from species-specific presentations to ‘A Day in the Life of a CROW Student’ insights.
-  The CROW Speaker Series **hosted 17 experts** in wildlife conservation and medicine who shared insights with over 300 participants. Proceeds were reinvested in our wildlife hospital.
-  The VEC unveiled its **new ambassador enclosures**, complete with inhabitants: Red Fred, a seven-foot eastern indigo snake that could grow to nine feet; Cobb, a corn snake; and LC, a ball python. The Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF), which is partnering with us on its eastern indigo reintroduction plan, helped enhance the realism of Red Fred's habitat by adding live mangroves.
-  **Two conservation camps**, including the annual Summer Camp (30 campers) and our first "Fall Into The Wild!" day camp (16 campers) during Lee County School System's fall break. Local donors provided scholarships for students who otherwise couldn't afford to experience CROW camp.
-  **Education and Communications Internships** brought Sarah Rinne (now our Social Media Coordinator) and Eliza King to the VEC. Over their internships, they helped create, promote and deliver educational programs onsite and in the community, as well as support grant writing, press releases and event planning.



ANNUAL MEETING 2026

CROW invites our members to join us for a recap of the past year and exciting plans for the years to come. Free, unlimited access to the Visitor Education Center is included. Also on tap is the election of new board members.

Nominees are Barbara Lasky, Fran Peters, Matthew Pierce, and Matthew Zwack. Renewing for second term are Fred Ryckman, MD, Fred Weinman, and Jason Maughan, Esq.

Wednesday, March 25 | 4:00 P.M.

Members may submit additional nominees in writing to the Nominating Chairman (board@crowclinic.org) at least 40 days prior to the election. Nominations must be supported by letters from, or a petition signed by, at least 5% of the membership, as well as the nominee’s detailed resume’ and a letter from the nominee stating a willingness to run and attend board meetings regularly.

WILD ABOUT CROW

The annual “WILD About CROW” event proved to be an unforgettable night at the Forest Country Club, celebrating CROW’s incredible hospital staff who make our life-saving work possible. Everyone showed up in their wildest outfits, from animal prints to tropical vibes. Live and silent auctions raised crucial funds to further our mission. CROW also announced our plan to rebuild the Sea Turtle Complex, which Hurricane Ian destroyed, and to name the new facility for Bill and Laurie Harkey, whose deep love for wildlife inspires us all. We’re deeply grateful for everyone involved, especially presenting sponsor Bank of the Islands/ Edison National Bank.



TASTE OF THE ISLANDS

After several years re-imagining and rebuilding due to COVID and hurricanes Ian and Milton, Taste of the Islands came roaring back with indescribable energy. The food, laughter, dancing, and island spirit—all were a beautiful reminder of what makes Sanibel and Captiva so special. More than 100 volunteers and CROW staff gave their time and commitment to make sure Taste of the Islands ran smoothly, serving as a symbol of healing, resilience, and resolve. Special thanks to our presenting sponsor, Bank of the Islands/Edison National Bank.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS!	THANKS TO OUR PARTICIPATING RESTAURANTS!
Best Appetizer Tutti Pazzi – Nonna’s Polpetta Slider	Cielo Restaurant Tutti Pazzi
Best Seafood Cielo – Seared Chilean Sea Bass with Polenta	The Shack of Sanibel
Best Dessert Sanibel Deli – Smores Cheesecake	Mud Bugs Cajun Kitchen
Best Meat BRGR – Double Bacon Cheeseburger Slider	Timbers Restaurant Home of the Sanibel Grill
Best Vegetarian Tutti Pazzi – Farfalle Pesto Primavera	Boops by The Bubble Room Restaurant
Best Breakfast Lighthouse Café – Banana Fosters French Toast	Sanibel Deli
Best Adult Beverage Rosalita’s – Rosa’s Favorite Margarita	The Green Flash Restaurant
Taste of the Taste Cielo – Seared Chilean Sea Bass with Polenta	Lazy Flamingo 2
People’s Choice Award Sanibel Deli	Rosalita’s Cantina Sanibel
	Lighthouse Cafe of Sanibel
	BRGR Kitchen & Bar (Sanibel Island Beach Resort)
	Sunshine Seafood Cafe and Wine Bar
	Keylime Bistro
	Shima Japanese Steakhouse and Sushi Bar (Sundial Beach Resort & Spa)



Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife

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The spirit of our islands.

You feel it everywhere on Sanibel and Captiva. It shines like a beacon in every sunrise and sunset. Most of all, it lives within every person and every creature that calls these islands home.

We not only share that spirit, but also a deep commitment to preserving it. CROW embodies this dedication each day through exceptional veterinary care, impactful education and outreach, and vital wildlife stewardship.

Bank of the Islands/Edison National Bank is proud to support CROW and celebrate its staff, volunteers, and supporters. As the oldest locally owned and managed community bank on Sanibel and Captiva, we're honored to do our part to sustain the spirit of our islands.

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

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



CROW Hospital
Open 7 days
a week

**Visitor Education
Center**
Open Monday - Friday
10 am to 4 pm

**Daily
presentations**
at 11 am

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