

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Florida Wild Mammal Association Inc. (FWMA)?

Florida Wild Mammal Association (FWMA) is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation and release of injured/orphaned wildlife. FWMA is equally committed to educating the public on wildlife issues.



How and when did FWMA start?

FWMA was incorporated in August 1994 and moved to Wakulla County in 1995. FWMA was founded by the Beatty family as a place to bring sick, injured and orphaned wildlife in need of treatment and care until recovered and subsequently released back into their natural habitat.

Who runs FWMA?

FWMA is run by a board of directors. Jessica Beatty is the Executive Director. She and her family own and live on the property. They oversee the daily operations as well as the animal caregiving staff and volunteers.



The facility is maintained through the efforts of participants in the FWMA Wildlife Wonders Education Program. It is only because of the hard work of students and other volunteers in this program that FWMA can care for the many wildlife patients that are brought into the facility every day. The program is in turn supported by dedicated volunteers who help by cleaning cages, picking up supplies, presenting educational programs, animal rescue, performing bookkeeping functions, supporting fundraising events, preparing publications, and helping with the general care of the animals. Through the services of both the young people and volunteers, FWMA remains open to care for the growing number of animals it receives each year. Thank goodness for these very special people who give so freely of their time to help our community.

Where is FWMA located?

FWMA is located on the south side of Crawfordville, Florida in rural Wakulla County on 6-plus acres. The center provides wildlife rescue services and education programs to Wakulla County and three additional rural counties including Franklin, Jefferson and Taylor. This section of Florida coastline extends from Perry westward to Port St Joe and includes an area commonly known as the Forgotten Coast. The property was rezoned as a wildlife hospital in 1996 and is located at 198 Edgar Poole Road, Crawfordville, FL, 32327. The facility consists of 28 outdoor enclosures, 3.5 acres of deer pens, a small kitchen/laundry room, a baby bird room, an isolation room and a medical room.

How to contact FWMA.....

By phone: (850) 363-2351

E-mail address: choppaotta@aol.com

Website address: www.fwma.org

Facebook: facebook.com/pages/Florida-Wild-Mammal-Association/281494464924

Or write to: FWMA, 198 Edgar Poole Road, Crawfordville, FL, 32327.



When is FWMA open?



Unfortunately, FWMA is not open to the general public due to permit restrictions. Volunteer hours are seven days a week, 8am to 12 noon and you must be 16 or older to volunteer or be accompanied by an adult. Animal rescues are performed by volunteers on a limited basis. Therefore, if you find sick, injured or orphaned wildlife, please bring them to the center as quickly as possible. (Remember... animals such as baby birds need to eat every 20 minutes – the first hours are critical to survival). Please do not feed or provide water for any animal that you have found – the wrong treatment, however well intended, can be fatal. You may call the center 24 hours a day for advice about animal emergencies.

What type of animals does FWMA care for?

Although we are called Florida Wild Mammal Association, we take care of all native wildlife including birds. FWMA also receives exotics and some farm animals on a limited basis.

FWMA does not provide care for people's pets. In 2019 FWMA provided care for:

- 556 wild birds (including hawks, owls, songbirds, seabirds and waterfowl)
- 594 mammals (including deer, opossums, squirrels, flying squirrels, beavers and bobcats)
- 43 reptiles (including box turtles, gopher tortoises and water turtles)
- 80 exotics, domestics & farm animals (including turkeys, pigs, ducks and exotic turtles)
- 29 permanent education animals (animals who cannot be released back to the wild)

Over seventy percent (73%) of the animals brought to the facility were released back into the wild, transferred to other permitted wildlife sanctuaries or were adopted out through various sources. Five percent (69) remained in care at FWMA as of year-end. Overall, nearly seventy-eight percent of the animals brought to FWMA survived.

What is the charge for taking care of wildlife patients?

There is no charge to bring any animal to FWMA for treatment, though donations are greatly appreciated.

Animals are treated until they are recovered and ready to be released. For those with injuries considerable enough to prevent their return into their natural habitat, FWMA either places them with another permitted education facility or provides a permanent home at FWMA where they often become the stars of our educational programs. Most of the animals brought to FWMA are sick or injured and require veterinary care, natural diets and special caging. The cost of running the facility is significant. All donations are greatly appreciated and are tax deductible.



How many animals are treated at FWMA each year?

Animal interactions with humans increase proportionately as the population grows. Interactions with people, domestic pets, man-made structures as well as being displaced by development are the main causes of injuries to our wild neighbors. FWMA provided care for 1,273 animals in 2019 - an incredible increase when compared to statistics in 1995 when we treated 73 animals.

What types of injuries are most common in the animals FWMA receives?



Wildlife injuries, such as being hit by cars, caught in fences, caught by cats or dogs, are becoming part of our daily caseload. In most cases animals become sick, injured or orphaned due to interaction with humans and/or their pets. Natural disasters such as the wrath of storms that have ravaged the Florida Panhandle are just as deadly to wildlife as they are to humans. We also see many animals caught in fishing lines, shot, made sick from pollutants, and hung in fences. Although most of our patients are brought in because of these reasons, we have also provided care for animals suffering with West Nile, Distemper, Tetanus and Lung Flukes. These animals are but a small percentage of our overall intake. FWMA works closely with Wakulla County Health Department and Wakulla County Animal Control during outbreaks of any disease.

What is the busiest time of year for FWMA?

FWMA maintains a full schedule year-round. But our busiest time of the year is from April through October and is what we refer to as “Baby Season”. An assortment of orphaned wildlife is brought to the center during this time. Many of these patients are baby birds who require hand-feeding every 20 minutes from sun up to sun down. Therefore, the nursery remains open from 7am to 7pm every day until Baby Season ends. At the end of Baby Season, the nursery is closed. The nursery requires 13 staff hours per day.



The main facility is open year-round and requires 20-22 staff hours per day to maintain numerous outdoor habitats and the medical room. Baby squirrels, baby opossums, baby foxes, baby raccoons and baby deer arrive on a daily basis too, dehydrated and in need of continual 24-hour care. The phone literally rings non-stop !!this is a great time to volunteer!!! Along with feeding the patients, all their cages must be cleaned on a daily basis too.

Does FWMA offer any education programs?

Our organization offers the local community a wide variety of educational programs. The FWMA Wildlife Wonders Education Program is administered at our center and provides young people with the unique opportunity to learn about wildlife while working in a hands-on environment. Features of this program include:



- **Wildlife Wonders Students:** FWMA offers a work program for youths who are chosen from our diverse volunteer programs and are in need of the financial support we can offer in exchange for taking care of the animals and their habitats.
- **Scholarship Service Hours.** FWMA is approved to provide local students with the opportunity to earn community service hours towards various scholarships.
- **Juvenile Justice.** FWMA partners with the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice to allow young adults to complete their court-ordered community service hours while learning useful vocational and life skills.
- **Exceptional Student Education Program.** The Wakulla Employability Skills Training (WEST) Program is a locally run program that provides training and mentoring to students with disabilities at Wakulla High School. The students who work at FWMA are given the opportunity to reach their full potential while learning important vocational and life skills.
- **High School – High Tech Club.** FWMA partners with Wakulla High School’s High School High Tech club (HSHT). The HSHT club’s goal is to provide career exploration opportunities for disabled students during their high school years so that they are prepared to follow their dreams after they graduate. One of the opportunities we provide is a paid internship with local businesses and/or non-profit organizations. A number of students participate over the summer months. Students work a 40 hour week with FWMA feeding and caring for the rescued animals and cleaning their cages. This is a great benefit to both FWMA and the students. The students learn responsibility and job skills that are immeasurable.
- **Other Groups / Partnerships.** Partnerships with FSU Environmental Group, FSU Pre-Vet Club, Americorps, Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, and Girl Scouts Troops to participate in work/education days at the facility. These focus on larger project like cage building, maintenance, and repair and clean up days.

In addition to onsite programs at the center, FWMA offers educational opportunities throughout the community. These include:

- **Project Learning Tree.** This program is hosted by the St. Marks Refuge to educate elementary school children about wildlife and the environment, and FWMA participates by bringing our educational animals as a tool to help spread environmental awareness.
- **Outreach programs.** During the year we are asked to provide educational program in our schools, local libraries, and to participate in community events. This involves taking our educational animals and materials offsite and may include setting up an educational booth with interactive activities.
- If you are interested in having our wildlife ambassadors at your event or classroom please contact Terri at fwmaeducator@gmail.com

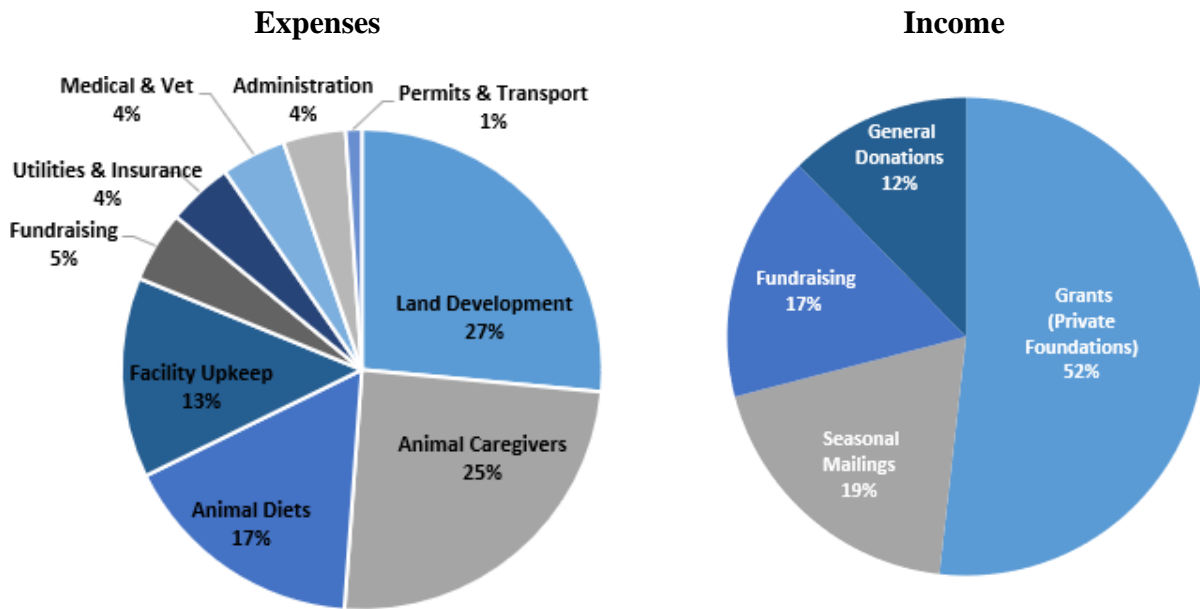


How is FWMA funded?

FWMA has over 600 generous members and donors that provided \$29,282 in donations during 2019 and our Facebook page has over 4,300 likes. Last year FWMA raised \$85,242 through fundraising activities such as quarterly mailings, Christmas tree sales, yard sales, silent auctions, and an online fundraiser. Grants totaling \$123,000 were received from private foundations. FWMA does NOT receive funding from county, state or federal government agencies.

How much does it cost to run FWMA?

In 2019 it cost approximately \$197,453 to run the facility and \$70,546 was used for road development and surveys for our new home. The largest expenses were \$65,838 for animal care staff and \$44,191 for animal diets. Our cost per animal for 2019 was around \$155.



Expense	Amount
Land Development	70,546
Animal Caregivers	65,838
Animal Diets	44,191
Facility Upkeep	35,876
Fundraising	12,718
Utilities & Insurance	11,709
Medical & Vet	11,612
Administration	11,190
Permits & Transport	2,883
Total	\$ 267,999

Income	Amount
Grants (Private Foundations)	123,000
Seasonal Mailings	45,542
Fundraising	39,700
General Donations	29,282
Total	\$ 237,524

What were the major accomplishments in 2019?

1. Wildlife rescue and rehabilitation. FWMA provided clean safe facilities, food, and medical care for 1,273 animals in 2019 including 594 wild mammals, 556 native birds, 43 native reptiles, and 80 exotics or domestics. In addition, we housed 29 permanent wildlife ambassadors for educational purposes. 57% of the animals (722) were rehabilitated and returned to the wild. Another 5% (58) were adopted, 11% (140) were transferred to other facilities for education or further conditioning, and 5% (135) remained in care at year end.
2. Public Education. The Wildlife Wonders Education Program at FWMA provides employment and volunteer opportunities for young people while caring for animals. Onsite participation included 6 high school students with disabilities who earned 110 credit hours, 13 at-risk individuals who earned 187.5 community service hours, 16 students who earned 684 credit hours towards a scholarship, and 26 college student interns that earned 455 hours, 4 adults who earned 95 hours towards probation, and 4 adults that volunteered their time at 92 hours. Project workdays were organized by FSU Environmental Service Group and FSU Pre-vet Club and involved over 30 students. Outreach programs included 22 community events we attended with educational animals from the center. We were also honored to be the chosen organization for an Eagle Scout project that produced two new outside hutches that were built and delivered by 8 students.
3. Staffing. FWMA was able to acquire and maintain workers compensation insurance coverage during 2019 for employees.
4. Building for the Future initiative. FWMA continued to make progress with land development on the new tract of land (20 acres) that will eventually be the Center's new home. The last of the permitting was approved, and Phase III was started by clearing land and installing a retention pond, fill was brought in for a 2 lane dirt road leading to the building site, culverts were installed at the entrance to the property to ensure proper water flow, building pads were graded, and silt fencing was erected to protect wetlands for future development. In addition, a conceptual rendering of the medical room building was done which will allow us to move forward on an actual building plan.
5. Facility Maintenance. Due to the length of time and the financial requirements of the new property it is apparent that we need to maintain the property where our wildlife patients are presently cared for, as it may take a few years before we are able to move. Therefore a decision was made by the Board to make much-needed repairs to the existing structures. Many projects took place during 2019 including repaneling the medical room building and the nursery building, electrical repairs and exterior wall repairs for the medical room, putting shelving and steps into and inside the two storage trailers, replacing the roof on the medical room, tearing down and replacing the ceiling and 2 exterior walls in the portable office, repairing the steps to the outside kitchen and a number of other maintenance projects. Over \$35,000 was spent on these repairs.
6. Major Fundraising. FWMA held its inaugural "Brews by the Bay" Festival on February 2nd that was a huge success and raised \$19,962. These funds will be used to purchase a newer rescue vehicle for the organization in 2020.

What are the goals of FWMA for 2020?

- A. Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation. Provide quality care for the 1200–1500 wildlife patients received on average each year. Maintain above-adequate caging that meets or exceeds standards and regulations of the USFWS. Provide a wide variety of diets needed to ensure the animals receive proper nutrition and their diets are simulated with their natural food sources. Provide trained, conscientious, and dependable staff members to ensure that all of the animals are well cared for, receive their medications in a timely manner, receive veterinary care when required, are provided with the proper diets, are handled in a safe and humane manner, and their cages are cleaned throughout the day.
- B. Public education. Continue providing a variety of outreach and in-house programs through the Wildlife Wonders Education Program. These programs will utilize our permanent animals to act as ambassadors of their species. Expand on these programs as resources permit.
- C. Facility maintenance. Maintain the facility in a manner that it is safe for the animals being kept and cared for by FWMA until we can relocate to our new location. Ensure that all staff, volunteers and visitors are protected from injury while at the facility. Projects for this year include rebuilding the outside walls and replacing the roof on the nursery building, repair outside habitats as needed, replace the drain field, obtain new freezers for the kitchen and keep up with regular facility maintenance.
- D. Rescue Vehicle. The 2004 Trailblazer needs replacement as the transmission and ABS units have both failed. Plan to purchase a vehicle less than 5 years old, has less than 100,000 miles, no mechanical issues, effective a/c and heat, roomy enough for large carriers, and that has at least a one-year warranty. The Board decided in December that the budget is \$20,000 of which \$5000 has been provided by an anonymous donation.
- E. Animal Intake. To accommodate the increasing number of animals arriving for treatment each year, implement a new system of receiving the animals in order to keep track of new patients and their treatment plan. A sign-in area is being created just behind the entrance where intake cards can be filled out on arrival. These cards will follow the animal through their treatment process.
- F. Future sustainability. Tremendous progress has been achieved within the Building for the Future initiative. A 20-acre tract of land in Wakulla County has been purchased as the site for our new home, and in 2019 we completed all survey and permitting requirements, began road development, and a rendering of the medical building was prepared. The goal is to complete the road leading to the building site by adding gravel and grading (\$60,000), purchase the adjacent ten acres that has been offered by the seller (\$20,000), and create a building plan done that includes utilities (cost to be determined) in order to establish a realistic construction budget. We will continue to reach out to the public for assistance in writing grants for this project and for advice on commercial construction.

Goals for 2020 (continued)

- G. Facility Maintenance Labor. Due to workers compensation insurance requirements we are restricted in using volunteer unskilled labor for project repairs. Such repairs must be done by a licensed contractor or paid employee. Currently we are using a licensed contractor to perform all repairs, even those that do not require a contractor's license such as painting, water pipe repair, minor repair to caging, hauling tree debris, yard maintenance, and shelving. This been a costly way to go although the work has been done to perfection. FWMA would like to hire a part time maintenance person for 20 hours a week at \$9 an hour for these less skilled jobs but continue using our contractor for major or structural repairs.

Can anyone visit FWMA?

FWMA is a wildlife rehabilitation center complete with the required state and federal permits necessary to carry out its mission. Permit restrictions do not allow us to publicly display rehabilitating animals. Therefore, the facility is not open to the public. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or sponsor and would like to see the facility, please contact us either by phone or email to arrange an appointment.

How can I help FWMA?

Donations: Monetary donations enable us to provide our services to this region. In-kind donations such as lumber, caging, feed and cleaning supplies (see our wish list on our website www.fwma.org) allow us to use the monetary donations for vet care, expansion of the facility and projects that benefit our wildlife patients in the care they receive.

Become a Volunteer: There are many volunteer opportunities at FWMA. For example; cleaning cages, taking care of the animals at the facility, chopping fruit, folding newspapers, picking up supplies, taking animals to vet offices, building bird houses, building habitats, never ending paperwork, fundraising and many, many, many more activities – if you have an interest or talent, we can put it to use!!!! Group workdays and projects are also appreciated. You must be 16 years or older to become a volunteer (unless accompanied by an adult) – the facility itself is not a good place for very young children but there may be projects you can do at home, so please get in touch to find out more.

Organize a Fundraiser: Get a group together to organize a fundraising event dedicating the proceeds to FWMA.

Workdays: During 2020 we plan to organize several workdays to refurbish and maintain many of our outdoor enclosures. If you would be interested in participating, please email Chris at choppaotta@aol.com



Membership Application / Donation Form

- Student / Senior \$15.00
- Individual \$25.00
- Family \$50.00
- Friend \$100.00
- Sponsor \$250.00
- Supporting \$500.00
- Life Member \$1,000.00
- Other \$_____



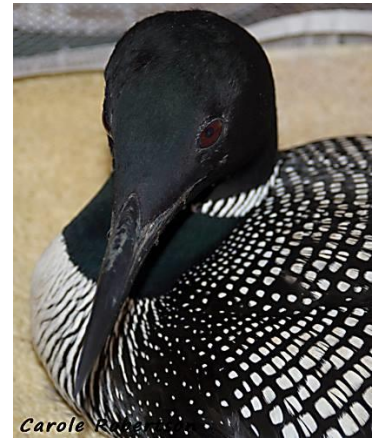
- My donation is a gift in memory / honor of: _____
- Please send me information about remembering FWMA in my will
- I am interested in becoming a volunteer

Please make checks payable to:

Florida Wild Mammal Association Inc.

Send to:

**198 Edgar Poole Road
Crawfordville, FL 32327
www.FWMA.org**



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

All donations are tax deductible.

Thank you for taking the time to read about FWMA!