

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. Christine and Jessica Beatty are both licensed rehabilitators and oversee the daily operations and animal care at the Center. The Beatty family own and live on the property.



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 30+ outdoor enclosures, 3.5 acres of deer pens, a small kitchen/laundry room, a wildlife nursery building, an isolation room and a medical room building.

How can I contact FWMA?

By phone: (850) 363-2351 or (850) 363-1032

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, 8 am 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 and reptiles. FWMA also receives exotics and some farm animals on a limited basis.

FWMA does not provide care for people's pets. In 2021 we provided care for:

- 524 wild birds (including hawks, owls, songbirds, seabirds and waterfowl)
- 485 mammals (including deer, foxes, opossums, squirrels and otters)
- 42 reptiles (including box turtles, gopher tortoises and water turtles)
- 49 exotics, domestics & farm animals (including turkeys, pigs, ducks and exotic turtles)
- 28 permanent education animals (animals who cannot be released back to the wild)



Over 61% (671) of the animals taken in were released back into the wild. Another 5% (63) were transferred to other permitted wildlife sanctuaries and 2% (27 domestics) were adopted out through various sources. About 8% (87) remained in care at year end, and 77% of the animals brought to FWMA last year 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 specialized 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?

Between 1100 and 1500 wildlife patients are cared for 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.

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 and other parasites. 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. The main facility is open year round and requires around 22 staff hours per day to maintain numerous outdoor habitats and medical room building. Our busiest time of the year is from March through October that we refer to as “Baby Season”. The phone literally rings non-stop, and this is a great time to volunteer!!! This is the time of year when an assortment of injured and orphaned wildlife is brought to the center for treatment and care.



Many of these patients are baby birds that require hand feeding every 20 minutes from sunup to sundown, and orphaned mammals being fed every 4 hours throughout the day and night. Therefore, the nursery remains open from 7am to 8pm every day until Baby Season ends. At the end of Baby Season the nursery is used to winter over a variety of other patients. The nursery requires 14 staff hours per day.

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 by working hands-on with our wildlife patients under close supervision. Features of this program include:



- **Wildlife Wonders Students:** FWMA offers a work program for a few youths who are chosen from our diverse volunteer programs and need work experience in the animal field. We offer employment opportunities that involve taking care of the animals and their habitats. This is a great opportunity for students interested in a career in zoology, biology, or veterinary studies.
- **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 through Wakulla High School. Several 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



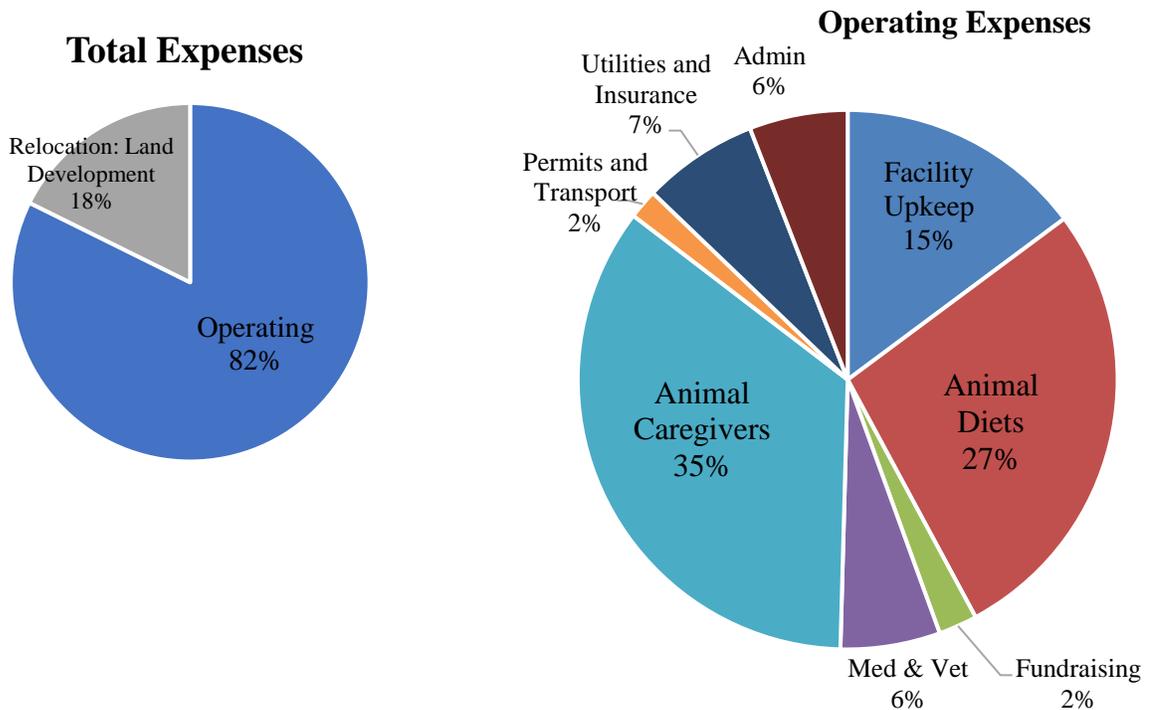
How is FWMA funded?

FWMA has over 500 generous members and donors who contributed \$124,126 during 2021 and our Facebook page has over 5,000 likes. Last year FWMA raised \$38,837 through fundraising activities including newsletter mailings, community events and online fundraisers. Grants totaling \$137,060 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 2021 it cost approximately \$215,354 to run the facility. The largest expenses were \$75,313 for animal care staff and \$58,834 for animal diets, and the average cost per animal was \$195. Another \$46,257 was used to purchase a mobile home and begin installing utilities at our nearby property in Medart, the site that will become our future home.



How Your Donations Were Spent:		OPERATIONS	
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 215,354	Animal Diets	\$ 58,834
		Animal Caregivers	\$ 75,313
		Facility Upkeep	\$ 31,916
		Fundraising	\$ 4,998
Building for the Future (for future relocation)	\$ 46,257	Medical & Vet	\$ 12,856
		Permits, Transport	\$ 3,807
		Utilities, Insurance	\$ 14,932
		Administration	\$ 12,698

What were the major accomplishments in 2021?

1. **Wildlife rescue and rehabilitation.** FWMA provided clean safe facilities, food, and medical care for 1,100 animals in 2021 including 485 wild mammals, 524 native birds, 42 native reptiles, and 49 exotics or domestics. In addition, we housed 28 permanent wildlife ambassadors for educational purposes. 61% of the animals (671) were rehabilitated and returned to the wild. Another 2% (27) were adopted, 6% (63) were transferred to other facilities for education or further conditioning, and 8% (87) 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 3 high school students with disabilities who earned 91 credit hours, 13 at-risk individuals who earned 252 community service hours, 12 students who earned 563 credit hours towards a scholarship, and 5 adults that volunteered their time at 310 hours. Project workdays at the center included 8 young missionaries from a local church group. Unfortunately, all our outreach programs were canceled this year due to the pandemic.
3. **Staffing.** FWMA relied heavily on our small staff to care for all areas at the Center in 2021 as the effects of COVID-19 continues to effect volunteer participation which remained limited especially during baby season our busiest time of year.
4. **Building for the Future initiative.** FWMA had to commit to the challenges we faced during 2021 due to the COVID pandemic refocusing our efforts on keeping the facility open during this crisis. Despite this challenge we did make progress on this initiative. We purchased an additional 10 acres resulting in a total 40 acre tract to establish FWMA's new home. In addition we purchased a used mobile home for the purpose of intern housing and underground electric service has been run on the property. FWMA also received \$26,000 late in the year through private donations to add to our goal of moving forward on this project in 2022.
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 until we can move. Many projects took place during 2021 including rebuilding several habitats such as the educational Barred Owl habitat, the rehabilitation owl habitat, adding a new roof to the nursery building, replacing the roof on the office building, renovating one of the older deer stalls making into a multipurpose habitat, and general clean up and habitat maintenance after several tropical storms. In addition to facility maintenance we also replaced one of the freezers, a washing machine and a refrigerator. Over \$31,900 was spent on these repairs/upkeep and equipment replacement.
6. **Major Fundraising.** Unfortunately, due to the pandemic all major fundraisers including Brews by the Bay were postponed or cancelled during 2021 with the hopes of rescheduling in 2022. To raise funds we relied on 3 newsletter mailings, Giving Tuesday, and an online Thanksgiving raffle of stained glass artwork to benefit FWMA that was hosted by a supporter.



What are the goals of FWMA for 2022?

- A. **Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation.** Provide quality care for the 1100–1500 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.** Despite many precautions to keep our staff and volunteers safe during the pandemic our onsite and outreach volunteer programs have been adversely affected by COVID-19 over the past year. We have found that much fewer civic groups are willing to participate in workdays and have fewer on-site volunteers. In addition to this we have had to cancel participating in all our local events including festivals and classroom activities. We will be monitoring the situation and as soon as we can determine it is safe, we will return to providing a variety of outreach and in-house programs through the Wildlife Wonders Education Program. These programs utilize our permanent animals to act as ambassadors of their species.
- 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 and illness while participating at the facility. Projects for 2022 include keeping up with regular facility maintenance and equipment while also focusing our efforts on moving forward in building our new facility.
- D. **Fundraising.** Fundraising has been very challenging through the pandemic, and we cancelled or rescheduled our main fundraising events until later in 2022 in hopes that they will not be disrupted by the pandemic. Every effort will be taken to come up with strategies to keep participants safe while also making these events successful such as Christmas for the Critters and yard sales. We still plan to send 3 mailings this year to keep supporters apprised of progress.
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- E. **Future sustainability.** Considerable progress was made during 2021 to prepare the property in Medart to become FWMA's new home. Now that a mobile home is available onsite for future use as intern housing, the focus this year will be to install utilities including septic, electric, and well. A steel building in the Carolina barn style is being erected to provide a workshop onsite and secured storage for equipment and supplies.
- F. **Staffing.** Due to the annual increase in minimum wage as of September 1st our budget and fundraising strategy will need to increase to meet the higher cost not just to overall payroll but also for supporting items such as workers compensation insurance, payroll taxes, and liability insurance. Our 24/7 facility runs on a bare minimum number of employees to keep the animals properly cared for and the grounds maintained, so we cannot cut a position to meet this need. In addition, volunteer support has decreased as a result of the pandemic so the option of using volunteers to supplement employee hours is not a viable option.

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 2022 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 \$_____



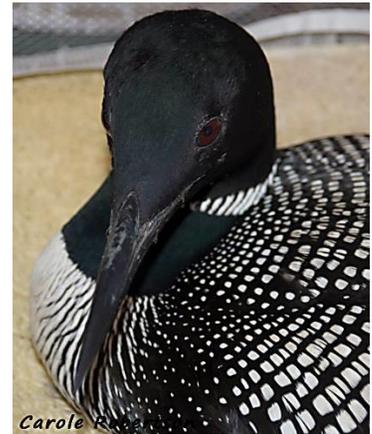
- My donation is a gift in memory / honor of: _____
- Please send me information about remembering FWMA in my will
- I am interested in becoming a volunteer

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 learn about FWMA!