



D V E A

NATURE'S NEWSLETTER

O N L I N E E D I T I O N

W I L D L I F E A N D T H E E N V I R O N M E N T



BE SAFE, BE WELL!

The Delaware Valley Eagle Alliance

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Front Cover Photograph

© Courtesy of the Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center

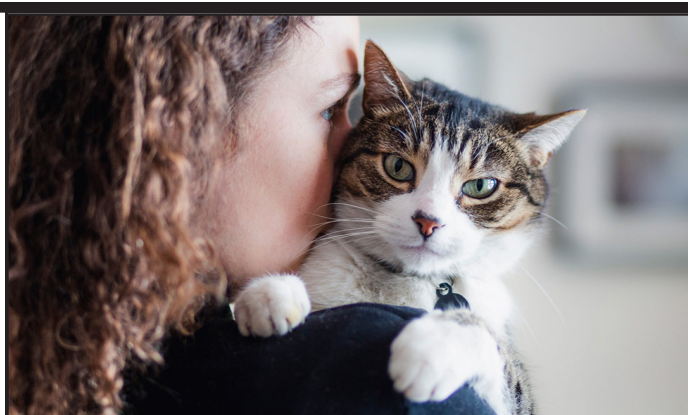


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The Delaware Valley Eagle Alliance



© Photo courtesy of HSUS

COVID-19 PET Preparedness and Guidance

Introduction by Kristen Tullo

*Pennsylvania State Director, State Affairs /
Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)*

Emergency planning for people simply works better when it takes animals' needs into account. So, Governor Wolf's inclusion of animal-related services within the rubric of life-sustaining businesses for the "Stay at Home" order in our state was vital and laudable. While observing strict social distancing protocols, staff and volunteers may continue to provide essential veterinary care and health-related services, food, shelter and other necessities of life for animals.

The Humane Society of the United States Administrative Volunteer Leader, Anita Sardo, plays a crucial role with the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). Her passions and values align with the greater HSUS mission and we are honored she is an ambassador of our organization and for the animals. Working hand in hand with me, Pennsylvania State Director, on the Covid-19 project, Anita has been focused on the communications program which has been a multi-faceted approach using various communication mediums from e-alerts to social media. The purpose of this program is to provide Covid-19 guidance to pet owners, essential businesses and nonprofits and state legislators.

Anita graciously crafted this letter to raise awareness on what we can do to keep our beloved companions happy and healthy as well as ways to do something to help our communities animals amid the crisis. Our pets are a source of love, comfort and companionship, especially in these times of social distancing.

Please keep them safe! All they have it YOU.

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COVID-19 PET Preparedness and Guidance



© Photo courtesy of HSUS

"As I watch the coronavirus pandemic unfold across the globe, the human toll is unthinkable to me. In an effort, to help stop the spread, my family is hunkered down at home with very limited trips for provisions. The displeasure of our social withdrawal is ameliorated by the constant presence of our wonderful friend, Glory, a sweet 9-year old golden retriever. Glory, by the way, is loving this lockdown!"

The World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and World Small Animal Veterinary Association (Global Veterinary Community) report that dogs and cats do not contract or transmit COVID-19. Even so, I hear awful stories about families surrendering their pets to shelters in unfounded fears of catching the virus from a dog or cat. This drastic action only serves to put unnecessary additional burden on already strained animal shelters operating with reduced staff and volunteers, limited resources and supplies, less adoptions, and fewer fosters.

There are smart things to do now to take care of a loyal animal companion. The HSUS recommends developing a Pet Preparedness Plan. Here are some tips. Maintain an adequate supply of pet food, clean water, and any required medications. Identify a trusted person to take care of your pet if you become ill. Make sure vaccinations are up-to-date in case boarding becomes necessary. Have a leash with an ID tag, crate, and extra supplies in case the pet needs to be relocated. Prepare written instructions for the temporary caregiver about feeding times and amount of food, exercise routines, any health issues, etc. Provide specific details about medicine dosages and manner of administering. Include the name, location, and phone number of the veterinary clinic. Ideally, make a copy of the pet's medical record.

There are many resources available to help people create preparedness plans for pets, manage this COVID-19 crisis, and make sound decisions. The HSUS website offers guidance specific to the current coronavirus, but also for eventualities of natural disasters. The PA Veterinary Medical Association posted lots of information and links useful to pet owners.

Rightly so, Governor Wolf's order, effective March 19, 2020, includes pet food manufacturers and distributors as life-

sustaining businesses. So, there is no need to stockpile food at the risk of reliable access by other pet owners. In addition, Amazon classifies pet supplies as essential goods, along with baby products, health and personal care items, and groceries. According to the PA Animal Response Team, anyone in dire need of pet food, supplies, or care, should contact their county emergency management agency to request support from the county animal response team.

Perhaps not open to the general public, shelters, rescues, and sanctuaries are attending to the animals in their care. Many are overwhelmed now with more animals and less help. Please consider contacting your local shelter to find out their urgent requirements. Maybe you could send items on their wish list or make a donation.

Our beloved Glory brings so much joy and happiness to our lives. We want to do everything in our power to keep her safe and healthy. I wish all pets enjoyed comfortable homes with loving families. They deserve it!"

Anita Sardo

PA Administrative Volunteer Leader for the HSUS

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on people with animals in their care and prompted urgent responses from animal organizations and other stakeholders. The Humane Society of the United States, veterinary experts, other animal welfare organizations and state government agencies have developed resources to provide animal care businesses, shelters, rescues, sanctuaries and individual pet owners with information and tools to prepare for emergency situations like the current pandemic:



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

<https://www.humanesociety.org>

<https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/make-disaster-plan-your-pets>

<https://www.pasart.us/Pages/Home.aspx>

<https://www.pavma.org/blogpost/1674843/341926/Can-My-Pet-Get-Coronavirus-COVID-19>

<https://www.animalsheltering.org/blog/expand-your-foster-network-combat-covid-19>

<https://www.animalsheltering.org/blog/compassion-time-crisis>

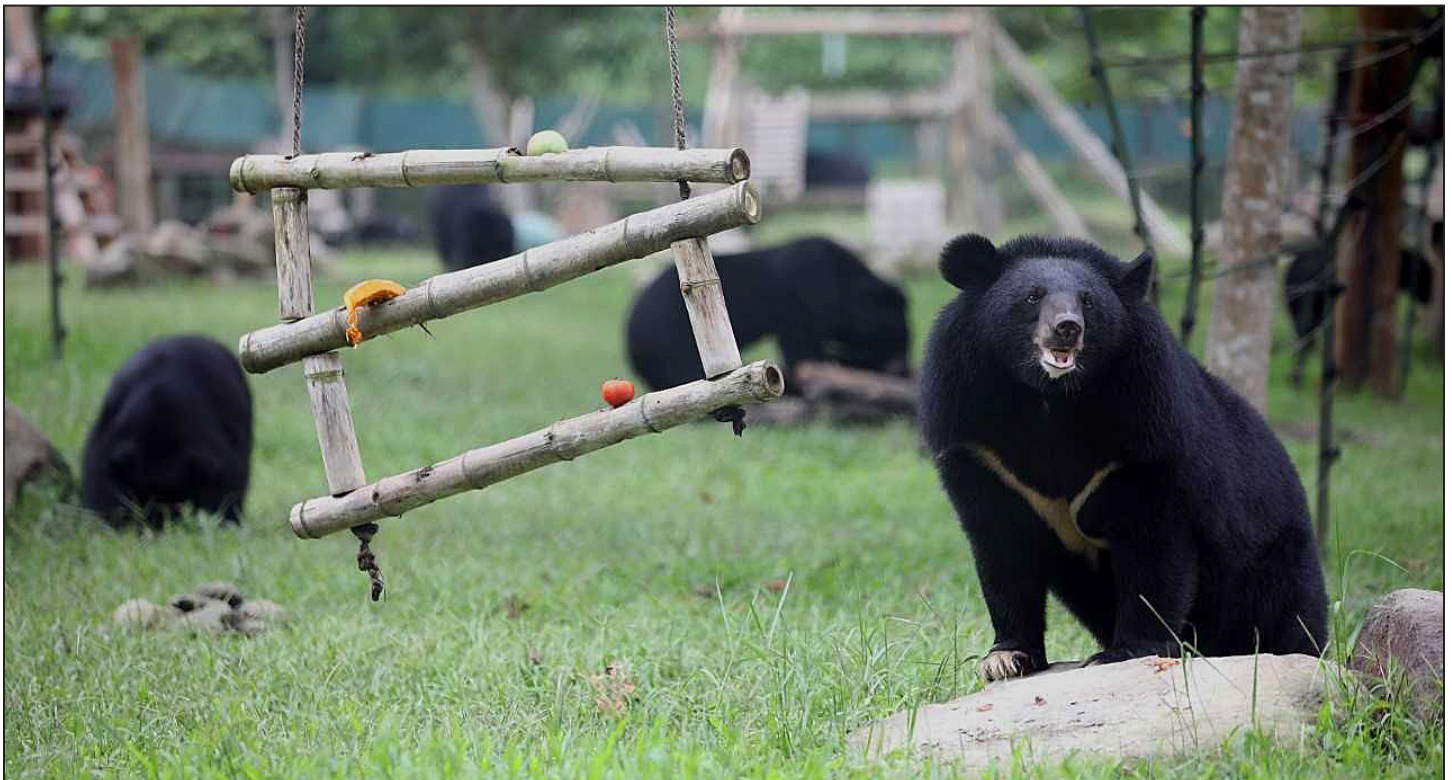
<https://www.animalsheltering.org/COVID19>

<https://www.pavma.org/>

<https://pafederatedhumane.org/>

<https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Documents/Guidance%20for%20Kennels,%20Shelters,%20Rescues.pdf>

<https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Documents/Guidance%20for%20Pet%20Owners.pdf>



"Emma", a resident at GFAS Accredited Animals Asia / a Hong Kong-based charity that seeks to end cruelty to animals in Asia. / To date, over 610 bears have been rescued. / [www. https://www.animalsasia.org/](http://www.https://www.animalsasia.org/)

© Photo courtesy Animals Asia

"HELPING SANCTUARIES HELP ANIMALS"



by Valerie Taylor

Executive Director, *Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries*

We are the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS), the only globally recognized organization for certifying that a facility meets the GFAS Standards of Excellence and recognizes those as a "true sanctuary".

Throughout the world, thousands of wild animals are found to be displaced or in-need each year. Many face risks such as loss of habitat or are targeted for removal from their homes because humans want to use them for some reason, such as trophies from canned hunts or as "exotic pets". However, there is some good news in that we seem to be in the midst of a cultural shift in which the use of some exotic species for commercial, research, and entertainment purposes is becoming less acceptable. This is certainly a step in the right direction, but it poses the question of *where do these abused and abandoned animals go?*

Unlike domesticated dogs and cats, wild animals do not typically have any comparable central municipal or government-run sheltering system available to support their needs or to find them permanent sanctuary homes when they are displaced. These animals rely on the efforts of independent rescue centers and sanctuaries to receive their second chance.

In the United States, there are thousands of entities that

describe themselves as a "sanctuary" or "rescue" for displaced, wild and exotic animals. However, the quality of animal care and sustainability of the organization can vary widely among them. It is a poorly regulated industry, in which facilities that keep animals in deplorable conditions can identify themselves as comparable to those of the



© Photo courtesy Skydog Sanctuary

Mustangs at GFAS Accredited Skydog Sanctuary / a non-profit wild mustang and burro rescue with sanctuary locations near Bend Oregon and in Malibu CA. / [https://www.https://www.skydogranch.org/](http://www.https://www.skydogranch.org/)

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HELPING SANCTUARIES HELP ANIMALS

highest quality. For anyone invested in the welfare of captive animals, there is a need to differentiate the best sanctuaries and rescues to determine where funds would be best invested, where the need for help is greatest, who provides a model to follow and who can be turned to in times of crisis.

GFAS was founded in 2007 by a group of experts from leading animal welfare organizations to fulfill this need to differentiate outstanding organizations for the animal welfare industry. The primary mission of GFAS is to promote excellence through an internationally recognized accreditation program. As such, GFAS has developed and maintained a set of 24 animal-specific standards that we use to promote excellence in captive animal care all over the world and use to evaluate organizations' operations. These standards include valuable information for the proper space, enclosure, diet and social needs of each animal group and also general information for promoting organizational health and sustainability such as proper governance; safety training and protocols; financial practices; and education and outreach.

GFAS serves a variety of "sanctuaries"—a term that we define as animal care facilities supporting animal needs for any length of time. This includes facilities providing lifetime care (a more traditional sanctuary) or temporary care. The latter includes facilities that support rehoming of domestic species, such as equines or farmed animals, and those that rehabilitate and release or reintroduce wildlife back into their native habitat. GFAS currently supports more than 190 sanctuaries that care for more than 30,000 animals across 30 U.S. states and 18 countries worldwide.

Our Core-Certification and Capacity Building

GFAS accreditation supports the animals whose lives are dependent on the success of these sanctuaries, and the benefits include:

Ensuring Humane and Responsible Care: Some facilities may not have adequate animal care protocols until they work with GFAS. Accreditation ensures appropriate veterinary care practices and behavior/enrichment protocols are in place.

Promoting Sustainability: Accreditation dramatically decreases sanctuary collapse. GFAS Standards protect against founder-transition issues and unexpected events, by creating succession/contingency plans, personnel, and operational manuals, as we raise thinking collaboratively with the sanctuaries on these absolutely core matters.

Investing in Better Governance: Lack of governing oversight can cause difficulties, including sustainability struggles. GFAS works with Boards to realize the need for clear roles and responsibilities. The Standards also require sanctuaries carry appropriate insurance coverages.



© Photos courtesy The Wild Animal Sanctuary

ABOVE: The Wild Animal Sanctuary is a 789-acre animal sanctuary in Keenesburg, Colorado, US. / Home to more than 500 rescued animals, this sanctuary specializes in rescuing and caring for large predators which are being ill-treated, for which their owners can no longer care, or which might otherwise be euthanized. / <https://www.wildanimalsanctuary.org/>

Sound Financial Principles: GFAS helps keep sanctuaries financially fit. Standards require sanctuaries have a strategy in place to save, maintain, and increase financial reserves. GFAS helps sanctuaries create a financial plan,

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HELPING SANCTUARIES HELP ANIMALS



Goodheart Animal Sanctuaries is the first farm sanctuary in Europe to be verified by Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries a farmed animal sanctuary / provides humane and responsible care of "farmed" animals. / <https://www.sanctuaryfederation.org/>

© Photo courtesy Goodheart Animal Sanctuaries

budgets, and long-term strategic/financial plans.

How to get involved!

GFAS sanctuaries and rescue centers are always in need of support! Animals are rescued, rehabilitated and given a secure place, forever safe, from the risks of neglect, abuse, and abandonment. There are many ways to lend a helping hand:

- Participate at a GFAS accredited sanctuary or rescue center through a volunteer or internship opportunity
- Visit or take a tour of a GFAS accredited sanctuary or rescue center; many have guided, educational programs available
- Make a financial or in-kind donation to a GFAS accredited sanctuary or rescue center of your choice

You can find more information and GFAS accredited sanctuaries and rescue centers who offer volunteer, internship, and education programs on our website:

<https://www.sanctuaryfederation.org>



© Photo courtesy The Elephant Sanctuary

"Shirley" at GFAS Accredited The Elephant Sanctuary / provides elephants retired from entertainment and exhibition with herd, home, and individualized veterinary and husbandry care for life. / <https://www.elephants.com/>



© Picture provided by The Whale Sanctuary Project

UPDATE: GOOD NEWS FOR BELUGAS AND ORCAS

by Lori Marino, Ph.D.
President, The Whale Sanctuary Project

At a time when we are all dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic it is good to remind ourselves that we still have the ability to remedy many of the problems we have created for wild animals and nature. Perhaps more than any other time the concept of sanctuary comes to the fore. And so, it is with the latest news from the Whale Sanctuary Project.

Whales and dolphins held in concrete tanks and forced to do tricks in marine parks suffer tremendous stress and ill-health, as they cannot adapt very well to such an artificial and limiting environment. They are meant to swim in natural social groups for many (sometimes >100) miles a day, dive deep to explore the contours of their environment, and choose how they spend their days with family and friends, hunting together for food, raising their young in a complex society. None of these fundamentals are obtainable in an entertainment park.

We at the Whale Sanctuary Project have spent the last two and a half years searching for a coastal site where we can create a better life for captive whales – specifically belugas and orcas – the species who do the worst in concrete tanks of any captive marine mammals.

Sanctuaries are places where we can restore some (but not all, unfortunately) of what captive whales have been deprived of while living in concrete tanks and where exercise, exploration and autonomy are facilitated in a natural environment with tides, other animals and plants. All a microcosm of the world these whales were meant to live in while being fed, cared for and protected by marine mammal specialists around the clock.

On February 25th, 2020 we were privileged to hold a press conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia to announce that we have chosen Port Hilford- a big, beautiful bay on the eastern shore of Nova Scotia a little over 2 hours from Halifax – as our site for the first permanent seaside sanctuary for belugas and orcas in North America. Port Hilford offers an expansive area that can be netted off for the whales in a bay that's open to the ocean but is sheltered from storms. It has access to necessary infrastructure

and plenty of room along the shore for the facilities that will be needed to care for the animals.

And adjacent to the site is the wonderful community of Sherbrooke who has embraced our project from the very beginning and who have become cherished partners in this journey. Plans for the sanctuary include an interpretive center, nature trail and viewing spots. The sanctuary will also work with schools and museums to offer educational programs about the whales at the sanctuary and their counterparts in the wild.

And now we enter a very exciting phase of our project in which we work with communities, scientists, engineers, government officials, and many others to amass and analyze the information needed for a permit, to begin the creative task of designing and building the sanctuary structures, and develop opportunities for Nova Scotians and others to actively participate and contribute in the future. And all of this must be done by the time we plan to accept our first whale resident(s) at the end of 2021.

We are eager to share our vision of a new way to relate to dolphins and whales through our sanctuary and will keep you updated on our progress over the next several months. Please stay updated on our progress at www.whalesanctuary.org.



The Whale Sanctuary
Project

™ Back to Nature

....is the first organization focused solely on creating seaside sanctuaries in North America for orcas and beluga whales who are being retired from entertainment facilities or have been rescued from the ocean and need rehabilitation or permanent care.

While there has been a change in public attitudes toward keeping these intelligent and socially complex animals in concrete tanks for the purposes of entertainment, there is still no possibility of retiring them as they cannot simply be released into the ocean. Seaside sanctuaries will change that by providing a place for them to live out their lives. www.whalesanctuary.org



Double-crested cormorant in the hand. This species has shown a dramatic recovery since the DDT era that has included a broad range expansion.

© Bryan D. Watts, Photographer

COUNTING COMORANTS

by Bryan D. Watts, Ph.D.

*Mitchell A. Byrd Professor of Conservation Biology / Director, Center for Conservation Biology
College of William & Mary / Virginia Commonwealth University*

The Center for Conservation Biology (CCB) has joined forces with the North Carolina Wildlife Commission to estimate the number of cormorants that spend the winter months (October – March) within the sounds and near-shore waters of North Carolina. CCB is using surveys of birds within communal night roosts and a network of aerial transects to estimate numbers, distribution, and seasonality.

The project responds to concerns expressed by the waterman's association about potential impacts of cormorants on the commercial fisheries. Numbers from surveys will be used along with a simple

metabolic demand model to estimate fish consumption by the birds.

The double-crested cormorant is a fish obligate that is endemic to North America and the western Caribbean. It has five described subspecies that are associated with large bodies of water that support abundant prey populations. All subspecies have experienced wide population swings reaching a low in the early 1900s associated with persecution, exploitation, and habitat loss followed by a recovery that peaked in the 1950s and a subsequent decline attributed to pesticides.

Since 1975, populations have exhibited explosive population growth

that has included range expansions back into historic breeding/winter areas and extensions into new territories.

The highly migratory northeastern population breeds in the upper Midwest, through the Great Lakes, and along the coast from the Canadian Maritimes to the mid-Atlantic. Breeding populations west of Lake Huron migrate west of the Appalachians and primarily winter along the Mississippi River and upper Gulf Coast. Breeding populations east of Lake Huron migrate east of the Appalachians and winter throughout the Southeast from the Chesapeake Bay to Florida.

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COUNTING COMORANTS



LEFT: A communal night roost (black dots are standing cormorants) on a sandbar within Core Sound along North Carolina's Outer Banks. CCB has been surveying a network of roosts monthly. **RIGHT:** Foraging flock of cormorants in near shore waters along the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Foraging flocks are highly concentrated and may exceed 10,000 individuals.



© Bryan D. Watts, Photographer

Sara Batchelor created a short video of cormorants loafing along the beach on Ocracoke Island. To view: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=15&v=THTw62ma7w&feature=emb_logo

The increase in cormorant numbers over the past four decades has led to concerns about impacts to fish stocks throughout primary breeding and winter areas by the recreational and commercial fishing industries. Double-crested cormorants are efficient predators capable of exploiting a wide range of fish species. As breeding populations within the Northeast have reached record highs, coastal North Carolina has emerged as a significant wintering site. The population appears to be concentrated within the Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds and associated near-shore waters.

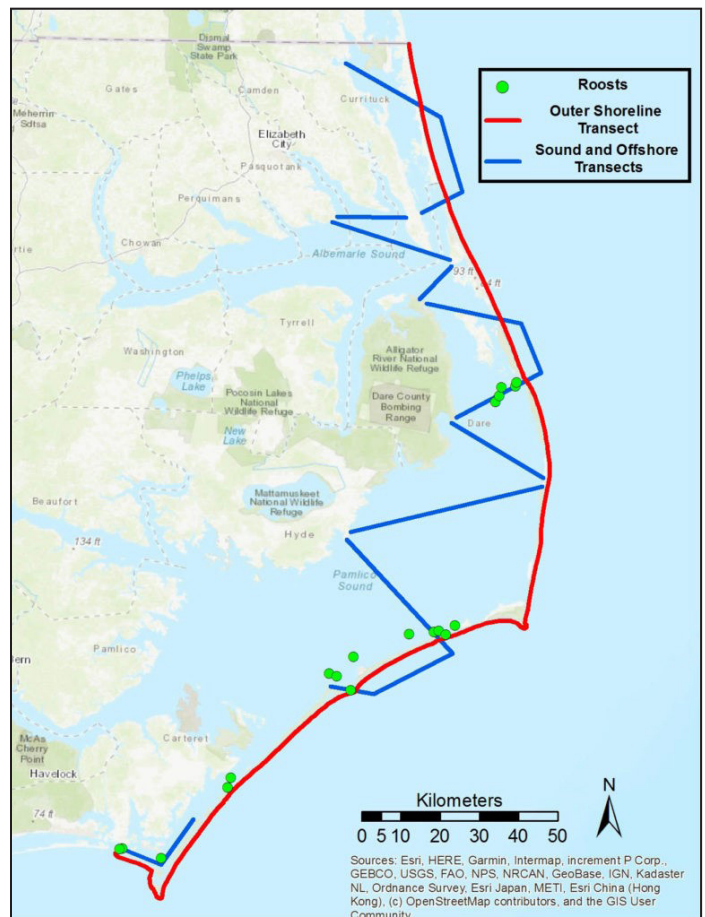
Fieldwork began in October of 2019 and is scheduled to run through two winter seasons. Information collected will provide baseline data needed to inform industry and management communities.

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR CONSERVATION BIOLOGY

CCB is a research unit shared by William & Mary and Virginia Commonwealth University. The Center is a part of the VCU Rice Rivers Center. Rice Center scientists conduct cutting-edge environmental research on the James River and around the world.

CCB's mission is to provide the global community with the information needed to drive thoughtful, science-based conservation, to educate and train the next generation of conservation scientists, and to make lasting contributions to the natural world through critical thinking, innovation, and ground-breaking research.

<https://ccbbirds.org/>



A Map of aerial transects within the sounds and near shore waters of coastal North Carolina. The outer (red) transect is 298 kilometers long and the sound (blue) transects are collectively 358 kilometers long. Data from CCB.

SHARK RESEARCH INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

(excerpt)

Good, Bad and Mixed News / Volume 29 / No. 1 / Page 7



© Photo courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

"On January 9, 2020, Governor Phil Murphy of New Jersey signed the bill banning the trade in shark fins throughout the state. Some 80% of New Jersey citizens supported this bill. The time, effort, and passion of dedicated members of SRI, The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), The American Littoral Society, and Jenkinson's Aquarium all worked together tirelessly on this bill and scored a big one for the sharks. <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2020/401>

We urge all SRI members in Florida, or have family and friends in the state, please contact your Representative and Senator to support HB 401. <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2020/401> "banning the sale of fins is not just good science and the correct moral thing to do, it is also a fantastic thing for Florida's workforce." Guy Harvey

Sharks are still being exterminated at an unprecedented rate. It is estimated that 73 to 100 million sharks are being slaughtered annually; they are being killed faster than they can reproduce, primarily for their fins or as bycatch. The shark fin soup trade is decimating shark populations. Virtually 60% of all shark species are threatened and some shark populations have plummeted by more than 90%. While it is illegal in the U.S. to remove a fin from a live shark, it is not illegal to traffic or trade shark fins in the U.S. As result, the U.S. remains a conduit for fins shipped to Asian markets, more and more states have enacted legislation banning the shark fin trade. Sharks have a vital role in the ocean ecosystem – the ecosystem that sustains you, me and everyone else on this planet.

On January 24, 2020, approximately 1,400 pounds of shark fins were seized in Miami, Florida. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Office of Law Enforcement was the lead agency for the seizure and Customs and Border Protection officials assisted. The fins, shipped from South America in 18 boxes and believed headed

for Asia, included CITES listed species and violated the Lacey Act. The shipment, valued at between \$700,000 and \$1 million, demonstrates why the U.S. Senate needs to pass the federal Shark Fin Sales Elimination Act (S.877) to ban the trade in fins throughout the U.S. If enacted into law, the Shark Fin Sales Elimination Act will make it illegal to possess, buy, sell, or transport shark fins or any product containing shark fins, except for certain dogfish fins and carry a maximum penalty for each violation of \$100,000, or the fair market value of the shark fins involved, whichever is greater.

Shark fins may be harvested legally in our waters. However, shark fins are also imported into the U.S. from other countries as well transshipments of fins of sharks caught on the high seas, yet NOAA readily admits they are unable to determine if those fins were harvested legally and meet the requirements of U.S. Laws and regulations. Instead of supporting the federal bill and closing the loopholes in previous bills to end US contribution to the global fin market, as many states have already done, Chris Oliver, Assistant Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Services, apparently now opposes S.877, claiming it would have little impact on the global fin market. SRI strongly disagrees and asks all our members to contact their senators and urge them to support S.877.

Thanks to HSUS, animal cruelty is now a felony in all 50 states. The Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture (PACT) Act was further strengthened. Now, under PACT, the FBI and other federal law enforcement agencies are able to bring federal felony charges when such acts occur within US federal jurisdiction (including on federal property) or when animals are moved across state lines, or the internet is used as part of a criminal enterprise."

For more information: www.sharks.org



© Provided by Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center

SPECIALIZED HAIRS OF PORCUPINES

by Robyn Moul

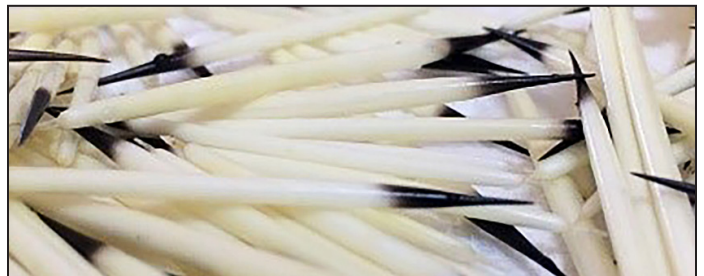
Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center

Porcupines are the prickliest of rodents. They are the second-largest rodent in North America, beat out only by the beaver. Scientists group porcupines into two groups: Old World porcupines, which are found in Africa, Europe and Asia; and New World porcupines, which are found in North, Central, and South America. The North American porcupine is the only species found in the United States and Canada.

These amazing animals have soft hair, but on their back, sides, and tail it is usually mixed with sharp quills. Quills are specialized hairs that are composed of keratin, which is the same protein our hair is made of, but hardened. They are hollow and stiff, with a sharp, barb covered point at the end. Some quills can get up to a foot (30 centimeters) long, like those on the Africa's crested porcupine, the largest porcupine in the world. One single animal may have 30,000 or more quills. Shedding is a normal process of porcupine quills, just as it is with standard hair.

Porcupines use the quills for self-defense. They may shake them, which makes them rattle, as a warning to potential predators. If that doesn't work, they may charge backwards into the predator. The quills are loosely attached but cannot be thrown or projected as once thought.

This wild porcupine (above) is being kept well-nourished and protected in the quiet rehabilitation area of Southwest Wildlife until she (or he) is released back in to the wild this coming spring.



© Provided by Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center

TOP: Quills of the North American porcupine / **BOTTOM:** Quill of the African crested porcupine.

**SOUTHWEST
WILDLIFE**
CONSERVATION CENTER

Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center rescues and rehabilitates wildlife that has been injured, displaced, and orphaned. Educational and humane scientific research opportunities are offered. ASA accredited sanctuary is provided to animals that cannot be released back to the wild.
www.southwestwildlife.org



© Photograph provided by NYS DEC

ONGOING FISHER RESEARCH in New York State

The fisher (*Pekania pennant*), is a large, dark, long-haired member of the weasel family.

In 2019 NYS DEC, with the assistance of trappers, initiated a study on fisher populations, after data showed a possible decline in fishers in certain wildlife management units within the Adirondack Park. Found exclusively in North America, fishers inhabit forested and semi-forested lands from coast to coast. In the east, they range from West Virginia north to Quebec and the maritime provinces of Canada.

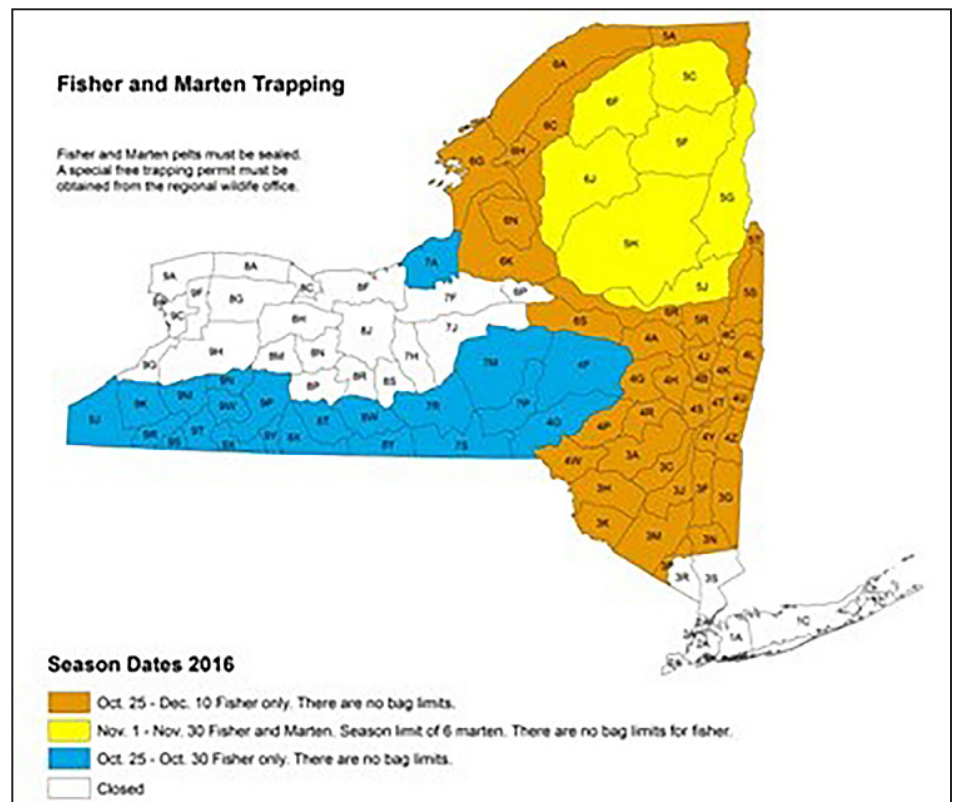
Fishers are pretty well established at this point throughout most of the State. The expansion into central/western NY is relatively recent, but has been going on for quite awhile. They have more recently begun recolonizing the lake plains areas of central and western New York (the portion of the state that is still closed to trapping).

DEC biologists hope to use the

study results to get reproductive and survival rates of fisher in the central Adirondacks. They will then compare results with more robust fisher populations in the Tug Hill area. Biologists have captured over 57 fishers this winter, including 13 females that have been outfitted with GPS collars.

Blood tests done by Cornell University suggest that several of these females are expecting young. In the spring, DEC biologists will attempt to successfully track these females to dens. By monitoring these dens using game cameras, DEC can get a better idea of the number of kits each female has and monitor their survival and movements throughout the year.

Coyotes and bobcats will occasionally take fishers. Aside from that fishers have no other natural enemies, save humans. Historically, they experienced a severe decline during the late 1800s and early 1900s due to over-exploitation and loss of forested habitat due to unregulated logging and the clearing of land for farms.



© Chart provided by NYS DEC

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ONGOING FISHER RESEARCH in New York State



© Marty DeLong, Photographer

Reintroduction programs have proven to be effective in restoring populations, along with regulating trapping opportunities and initiating reforestation programs.

ABOUT THE FISHER

Relatively low to the ground, fishers have short legs, small ears and a well-furred tail. The color of their fur varies from dark brown to nearly black. Females and juveniles usually have a more uniform color, and males will have a blonde or grizzled appearance.

Males weigh between 7 and 13 pounds, and females between 3 and 7 pounds. Total lengths for males range from 35-47 inches, and females, 30-37 inches.

Fishers have large, wide feet with five toes on each foot and semi-retractable claws. This makes them well adapted for walking on snow, climbing trees and grasping and killing prey.

Did You Know?

Fishers are capable of rotating

their hind feet nearly 180°, which allows for a headfirst descent from trees.

The fisher is a dietary generalist. Their diet includes a wide variety of small to medium sized mammals and birds, and a variety of hard and soft mast such as beechnuts, acorns, apples and berries. They have been documented to travel over a hundred miles over the course of a few weeks in order to meet the demands of their dietary requirements.

Did You Know?

Fishers are one of the few North American mammals that succeed in killing and consuming porcupines, and probably the only species that regularly targets porcupine. They will consume the entire animal, leaving nothing but a quilled hide and a few of the larger bones.

Other species will kill them, but it seems to be more opportunistic.

Fishers reach sexual maturity in their first year of life, and females may have their first litter in their second year. Reproduction peaks in late

March, and breeding may occur as late as May.

Dens used for birthing of young are usually found in hollow sections of trees, high above the ground. Average litter size is 2-3 young, and kits are born partially furred with closed eyes and ears, essentially helpless at birth. Weaning occurs within 8-10 weeks, and dispersal of young may occur by their fifth month.

Fishers lead a solitary lifestyle except for brief periods during the breeding season. They have been found to be active at any time during the day or night.

Males generally have larger home ranges than females, and their territories seldom overlap that of other males, suggesting territoriality between the sexes.

RESOURCES:

Wildlife, Fish, and Marine Life Newsletter (Mar 11, 2020)
<http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/9357.html>

DISCOVERING NATURE



© Laura Heady, Photographer

NEWS FROM THE HUDSON RIVER ESTUARY PROGRAM

The forests of New York are inhabited by a group of salamanders that are seldom seen, as they spend much of their time under leaves and moss on the forest floor, in burrows created by small animals and hunkered down under rocks and rotting logs.

A mild winter and recent warm days have spurred an early start to the annual breeding migrations of species like spotted salamander and wood frog. As the ground begins to thaw, these forest amphibians emerge from underground shelters and move to small, temporary wetlands called woodland pools. They migrate on rainy nights when evening temperatures remain above 40F, usually in March and April, and large numbers often arrive at the breeding pools on the same few nights each season. Their journeys overland can be as far as a half-mile, and roads often bisect the forests where they live. They are especially vulnerable during road crossings, so volunteers in the Hudson River estuary watershed are locating these crossings, documenting the migration, and assisting the amphibians safely across roads.

How can you help? The Hudson River Estuary Program and Cornell University Department of Natural Resources are working with communities to conserve forests, woodland pools and the wildlife that depend on these critical habitats. You can help by participating in the Amphibian Migrations and Road Crossings Project.

For more information, visit DEC's Amphibian Migrations & Road Crossings webpage:

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/51925.html>

Subscribe to the Amphibian Migrations & Road Crossings newsletter at:

https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/NYSDEC/subscriber/new?topic_id=NYSDEC_180

THE DELAWARE VALLEY EAGLE ALLIANCE

*working towards the conservation of
our wildlife and natural resources*

The Delaware Valley Eagle Alliance is a 501 (C)(3) not-for-profit organization with a mission to increase awareness, understanding and promote conservation of our wildlife and the natural environment. We accomplish this through our publications, projects and programs.

We believe that raising awareness and understanding will change attitudes toward conservation and our natural resources.

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PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

We are available to work closely with biologists and conservation groups to document ecological and wildlife research on sensitive and endangered wildlife and environmental issues.

We collaborate with communities and other organizations to develop and organize wildlife and environmental educational and entertaining programs.

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