

Caring for wildlife  
for 39 years!



# Wildlife Matters

Quarterly newsletter of the St. Francis Wildlife Association

St. Francis Wildlife is a local, nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation of native wildlife through the rehabilitation of sick, injured and orphaned wildlife and public education since 1978.

V. 17, No. 3

Summer 2017

## Not your typical pussycat

### Helpless orphaned kitten grows into feisty bobcat

Story and photos by Teresa Stevenson



Above and center: newborn bobcat kitten. Above right: at two months old. Below: Our young bobcat meets her new brother for the first time.

A tiny bundle of fur, discovered in a recently clear-cut forest, was delivered to St. Francis Wildlife. The bobcat kitten was just one week old, and her eyes were still closed. After a thorough exam, a good meal, and a warm nap, wildlife caretaker Michelle Robinson returned her to the former forest that evening. Michelle waited and waited, but mama did not show up.

We raised the bobcat kitten in our wildlife hospital for two months. To keep her wild, we were careful not to speak to her or cuddle her. So she wouldn't feel "abandoned," she snuggled in a donated fur coat, and we "rubbed" her like a mama bobcat would — while avoiding those razor-sharp claws.

However, in order to behave normally when they are released, bobcats, like most wild mammals, need to grow up with others of their own

kind. So while the wild kitten received our careful nurturing, I searched for another wildlife rehabilitation center that had a baby bobcat about the same age as ours.

When I found a lonely, little male in Tennessee, I packed her up, and we embarked on a road trip.

After just 20

minutes with her new brother, instinct kicked in, and the little girl, who had been shy and calm with us for two months, immediately and completely transformed into an unapproachable, un-touchable wild bobcat!

The two will be released on a large tract of secluded forest in a few months.



### The secretive bobcat

Bobcats, the most common wild cats in North America, are about twice the size of a domestic cat. They weigh 15 to 30 pounds (males are larger) and can measure up to three feet in length, including the tail.

While the animal gets its name from its "bobbed" tail (most do have short tails), bobcat tails have been documented as long as 18 inches. Consequently, some reports of rare panthers are actually bobcats with long tails!

These solitary animals prefer to live in forests and swamps where they stalk mainly rabbits and rodents, usually at night. Catching even a fleeting glimpse of this mysterious and beautiful wild cat is an unforgettable experience.



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Staff members, left to right: Shelby Boykin, Teresa Stevenson, Kelley Gray, Ann Lewis.

**Thank you from the bottom of our wild hearts for these donations.**

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From  
JoAnn Bixler

**Jersey**

From  
Sue Henrikson

**Jeff Sabeff**

From  
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**Buddy, the Becks' beloved black Lab & best friend of Mississippi Kite, "Havana"**

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From  
Creston Nelson

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From  
Stan & Margie Tullos

**Sandy Beck's birthday**

From  
Quincie Hamby  
Kathleen Hubbard  
Helen Hunt  
Linda Miles  
Deborah & Dave Ring



Above: When **Girl Scout Troop 40310 from Donalson, Georgia**, and troop leader **Nicole Touchton** arrived for our monthly Behind-the-Scenes Visit (first Saturday of every month, noon to 1 p.m.), they carried a load of Wish List items (page 8)!

"I'm thankful for St. Francis Wildlife, Nicole said, "not only for rehabilitating wildlife, but also for educating the public, like my Girl Scouts, with their monthly tours and outreach wildlife programs."

Photo/Nicole Touchton



Left: **Volunteer Dale Finch**, our Mr. Fix-it, repairs an outside cage. Dale always has a smile on his face!

Photo/Sandy Beck

**Sincere thanks to our community of wildlife lovers for their hard work and in-kind donations**

- **Target Print & Mail** for donating their mailing services.
- **ElectroNet** for our web site space & email.
- **Law, Redd, Crona & Munroe, P.A.** for doing our taxes pro bono all these years!
- **Albritton Electric** for donating their electrical work in our wildlife hospital.
- **Greybar Electrical Supply** for donating the supplies that **Albritton** used in our hospital.
- **New Leaf Market** for donating all their customers' reusable bag refunds and matching the donations for the entire month of August!
- **Mark and Laurie Forare**, our great neighbors who help maintain our property with their tractor.
- **Bill Armstrong Tree Service** for sending his crew and truck out to help us return owls and hawks that fall from their nests and remove fallen trees from our cages — no charge at all!
- **Donna Antolchick, The Fix It Chick** for repairs.
- **Bill's Signs** for donating our banners.
- **Lee & Martha Canady** for a Canon printer.
- **Mr. & Mrs. David Cochran** for a clothes dryer.
- **Judy Gross** for a shed.
- **Akerman LLP employees** for their generous donations!
- **The Florida Center at AHCA employees** for donating a load of SFW Wishlist supplies.
- **The Pregnancy Center** for 15 cases of baby food.
- **Ethan Sheridan, McKenzie Glover & Jenna Murray — kids with big hearts** — for raising money for St. Francis Wildlife.
- **Tania Pendarakis** for a fur jacket for baby mammals to snuggle.
- **Native Nurseries** for fielding a zillion calls about eclipse glasses during our Totality Awesome Eclipse Fundraiser!
- **Goodwill of the Big Bend** for t-shirts and linens.
- **Dale Finch** for making so many repairs at our wildlife hospital.
- **All of our amazing, selfless volunteers!**

# Summer took flight for two local college students

Every spring, we select part-time employees from our most dedicated volunteers to help care for the thousands of orphaned and injured babies we receive during “baby season.” Read about these two amazing young women and their wild summers.



Above: Tori Bakley, an FSU biology major, holds an injured Bald Eagle while our wildlife rehabilitator examines him.  
Below: Tori helps a Canada Goose. Photos by Shelby Boykin.



Above, left: Shelby Boykin (on right) helps Michelle Robinson give Pepé Le Pew, our educational opossum, a bath. Photo by Teresa Stevenson.

Above: Orphaned bluejays. Photo by Sandy Beck.

Below: Common Nighthawk. Photo by Shelby Boykin.

## Tori Bakley

St. Francis Wildlife is a hot spot during the summer, and I’m not just talking about the weather. Every day we welcome dozens of new patients and release healthy ones.

I enjoy working with birds of prey the most — eagles, kites, hawks and owls. Every interaction with these strong and independent creatures is intense and thrilling.

A Bald Eagle was admitted in early spring. When Teresa, our director and wildlife rehabilitator, asked if I wanted to hold the eagle, I said “yes” without hesitation.

When I held it in my arms for her to examine, I felt the strength of its feet through my gloves and the power of its wings in my embrace. I have handled large hawks and owls, but the Bald Eagle was a whole different story.

It had only minor lacerations on its legs from being tangled in fishing line, so after a short stay the eagle was able to be released.

Another patient that was particularly interesting to me was a Canada Goose that had been hit by a car. Her injured leg required daily physical therapy — stretching and pool exercises. Holding the goose’s webbed foot, I worked the leg through its full range of motion. Then I guided the goose to the pool and helped it “pedal” in place. The goose made a full recovery and returned to its home and family!

Watching an animal’s first steps or flaps back to the wild makes every hour we have worked truly fulfilling.



### Bread and crackers, foul for quackers!

Please do not feed it to the ducks and geese at Lake Ella and their other hangouts around town. This human food will make them fat, cause nutritional problems and make them sick. Their natural diet is algae, insects and a variety of plants and seeds. If you have waterfowl on your property, cracked corn is an acceptable treat.

## Shelby Boykin

I have had the amazing opportunity the past two summers to work at St. Francis — a biology major’s dream job.

I spent most of this summer working in the baby songbird room. I learned so much about tiny, feathered creatures, such as Mourning Doves, Blue Jays, Carolina Wrens, and Chimney Swifts. Just thinking about them makes me smile.

They called out to me all day, impatient for their next cricket or syringe full of formula. Each little bird has a unique personality, and it is incredibly rewarding to watch them grow from naked nestlings, to clumsy, fluff balls with legs, and finally to elegant, independent birds.

One strange little bird I cared for was a Common Nighthawk. Its tiny beak opened to a very wide mouth that it will use to scoop up flying insects as it zips across the sky at dawn and dusk.

St. Francis has taught me not only how to care for animals, but also how to appreciate each of them. Working alongside our wildlife rehabilitator and all the other staff members and volunteers has been an eye-opening experience, as they teach me something new each day.

I hope that my passion continues to grow while others also learn to understand the importance of saving wildlife.



# Florida's elegant summer visitors

**“Neotropical migrants” are birds that winter in South America and return to Florida every spring to raise young.** By Sandy Beck



Above: One of many orphaned Chimney Swift nestlings raised at St. Francis Wildlife this summer. Photo by Sandy Beck.  
Below: Grown up Chimney Swift fledglings (almost ready to fly)! Photo by Tori Bakley.



the babies' calls will last only a couple of weeks, until they begin to fly. After that, they'll just use the chimney for roosting at night.

“During the day, they'll eat thousands of flying insects around your house, including mosquitoes, beetles, flies, ants and termites, and the birds and their nests are protected by law.”

To muffle their high-pitched chittery calls and protect any nestlings that might fall, consider wedging a Styrofoam cooler up in your chimney.

Because of a switch to metal chimneys and the practice of capping chimneys, Chimney Swift nest sites are becoming scarce.

So next summer, put out the welcome mat for nature's little bug zappers.

## A Mississippi kite sailing, swooping and diving on air currents without flapping a wing is a thrilling site.

These crow-sized raptors ride the thermals, rich with insects, higher and higher until the soaring birds are but glints of sunlight. With graceful acrobatic maneuvers, they snatch an airborne insect with one or both feet, and then transfer it to their mouth, eating on the wing.



Above: Adult Mississippi Kite feeds its juvenile kite. Photo taken and graciously donated by Tom Sangemino.

Below and Left: Orphaned Mississippi Kite raised at our wildlife hospital this summer, and then released in August! Photos by Sandy Beck.



## Chimney Swifts, little ‘arrows’ with long, curved wings, are among the world’s fastest flyers.

Every July, St. Francis Wildlife receives calls and emails like this one: “I heard chirping in my chimney so I opened the flue. Two small birds zipped out and flew around the house.

“I caught the birds in a net and put them in a box. Then I heard more noises in the chimney. So, I shined a flashlight up the shaft and saw some baby birds on the chimney wall. I put the poor little things in another box. How did the birds get stuck in my chimney? What should I do?”

“Please put them all back in the chimney,” we tell the caller. “They are chimney swifts; they nest in chimneys in the summertime, and then fly south by September.

“The nests won't damage your chimney, and

# St. Francis Wildlife's spring and summer fun/fund-raisers, wildly successful!



3rd Annual St. Francis WildlifeFest at White Dog Plantation



2nd Annual In Concert for Wildlife at the Miccosukee Land Co-op Community Center

### Thank you!

#### Music (photos below)

Del Suggs, Rachel Hillman, Kenny Hill Band

#### Sponsors

Ian Waldick, Beethoven and Company, Thomas Howell Ferguson P.A Tom Buchanan

#### Volunteers

Judith Lyons, Lisa LazarusBrown, The MLC Community, Capital City Woman's Club, Pat Simmons, Kat Gossman, Kelly Gregg, Barb Barnett, Ian Waldick, Allan & Kelli Franklin, Sandy Beck, Mary Miley, Shelby Boykin, Jamie Boykin, Ruth Parramore Boykin, Kelly Craft, Lynn Badger, Leesa Gibson, Donna Antolchick



### Thank you, WildlifeFest volunteers, donors & sponsors!

#### Sponsors

Earl Bacon Agency, Bill's Signs, The Pod Advertising, Brennan Law Office P.A., Barbara Barnett Pat Simmons & Katharine Gossman

#### Music

Belle & the Band (photo on left)

#### Photography

Kris Peterson, The Pod Advertising

#### Silent Auction

Karen Loewen, Cathy Baldwin, Quarter Moon Imports, Bella Bella, Midtown Pies, Native Nurseries, Wild Birds Unlimited, Kool Beanz, Jinsey Amber Smith, Suzanne Conner, Sandy Beck, Pat Simmons, Lindsey Waldick, Nancy Thomas, Mary Fowler, Ian Waldick

#### Volunteers

Pat Simmons, Katharine Gossman, Barb Barnett, Kelly & Anthony Craft, Judy Gillan, Lynn Badger (White Dog Plantation), Doug Crowley, Shelby Boykin, Mary Miley, Sandy & Bob Beck, Teresa Stevenson, Betty Tapp, Erin Canter (Big Bend Group Sierra Club), David Cook (FWC), Eric Shaw (Hairstreak Chapter of N. American Butterfly Assoc.), Lydia Eldridge (Magnolia Chapter, FL Native Plant Society), Jessica Woodall (Gulf Specimen Marine Lab), Clyde Benedix, Ian Waldick, Ann DelRossi, Regan Ward, Anthony Maccarone, Maria Kuzina, Jamie Boykin, Kelxy Butler, Cavell Kyser, Elenita Gomez and Jack Brennan, Bonnie Holcomb, Billie Blaine, Hunter Frankeberger, Luciano Garcia-Baylleres

### Native Nurseries' Eclipse Fundraiser was TOTALITY AWESOME!

Thank you to everyone who received a pair of Eclipse Glasses for their donation to St. Francis Wildlife!





Above: Two of the orphaned striped skunks we raised this summer. Photo by Teresa Stevenson. Below: One of the released skunks, explores our wildlife sanctuary. Photo by Sandy Beck.

## So stinking cute

By Sandy Beck

We had received only three skunks in the last six years, but this summer a total of nine baby skunks were brought to our wildlife hospital!

The first six arrived in June. Before Teresa Stevenson opened the box, the distinct “fragrance” told her exactly what was inside.

“They were all old enough to be weaned and to be in an outside enclosure, which made everybody in the hospital very happy,” she said.

Then soon after, three more baby skunks arrived. A dog had killed the mother and broke one baby’s leg.

“They were picky eaters and very shy,” Teresa said. “It took us a few days to figure out what they liked and didn’t like. They wanted worms but no crickets. They liked blueberries but not strawberries, watermelon but not apples.”

Striped skunks are usually solitary animals.



They interact with each other during winter, when they are mating, or when a mother is taking care of her new babies.

They are usually nocturnal, but don’t assume that one has rabies if you see it in daylight. Like raccoons, foxes and other animals, during the spring and summer they may need to shop for groceries during the day to feed a growing family.

Skunks use their long claws to dig a den. They also feel at home in hollow logs, woodpiles, or beneath porches. A skunk’s burrow may have several “rooms” and up to five entrances, each about eight inches in diameter.

While they relish insects and fruit, they also eat rodents, frogs, and bird and turtle eggs.

Skunks waddle about slowly and rely on their infamous spray for protection. However, if threatened, it will first issue several warnings: a raised tail, an arched back, and foot stamping. Spraying is a last resort.

Because of their effective defense mechanism, skunks only have one main predator, the Great Horned Owl. Owls, like most birds, do not have a developed sense of smell.

All nine of the young ones we raised this summer were released by the stream on our 35-acre wildlife sanctuary. We see them, from time to time, waddling about, happily digging for worms.

Saving one animal may not change the world, but it will change the world for that animal.

## GET WILD WITH US! Fall Event Calendar

**Annual Prefontaine Forest 5K Run at Silver Lake Recreation Area.** Saturday, Sept. 16th, 8:30 a.m. Proceeds benefit St. Francis Wildlife! Registration begins at 7:15 a.m. or pre-register online: [stfranciswildlife.org/Prefontaine5K\\_2017.pdf](http://stfranciswildlife.org/Prefontaine5K_2017.pdf)

**Raptors of the Red Hills** program with live birds of prey, Thomas University’s Science Cafe, Thomasville, GA. Tuesday, September 26th, 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. (reception 6 - 6:30 p.m.) [www.stfranciswildlife.org/ScienceCafe\\_TU.pdf](http://www.stfranciswildlife.org/ScienceCafe_TU.pdf)

**In Cold Blood With St. Francis Wildlife,** reptile program at Blessing of the Animals, Saturday, October 7th, 11:30 - 12 noon. Mission San Luis 2100 W Tennessee St., Tallahassee. [missionsanluis.org/visitorInfo/specialEvents.cfm](http://missionsanluis.org/visitorInfo/specialEvents.cfm)

**Raptors in the Sky** program at Native Nurseries. Saturday, October 14th, 10 a.m. - 11 a.m. Class size is limited; call 386-8882 to register. [www.nativenurseries.com](http://www.nativenurseries.com)

**17th Annual Witches’ Ball** Saturday, October 14th, 8 p.m. - 11:30 p.m., with Brett Wellman and the Stone Cold Blues Band at the American Legion Hall. Proceeds benefit St. Francis Wildlife. [www.stfranciswildlife.org/WitchesBall.pdf](http://www.stfranciswildlife.org/WitchesBall.pdf)

**St. Francis Wildlife’s 15th Annual Owl-O-Ween!** Saturday, October 14th, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., at the Downtown Market, N. Monroe and Park Ave. [stfranciswildlife.org/Owloween2017.pdf](http://stfranciswildlife.org/Owloween2017.pdf)

**6th Annual Science Festival at Kleman Plaza.** Saturday, Saturday, October 28th, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Please look for St. Francis Wildlife’s booth! [www.tallahasseesciencefestival.org](http://www.tallahasseesciencefestival.org)

**Raptors of the Red Hills** program. Saturday, November, 11th, 11 a.m. Live hawks and owls will help education director Sandy Beck share their personal stories, the amazing adaptations that enable them to hunt and survive, the important roles these raptors play in Florida’s ecosystems, and what we can all do to help them. For adults and school-aged children. Birdsong Nature Center, 2106 Meridian Rd, Thomasville, GA. Call (229) 377-4408 to reserve your space.

**St. Francis Wildlife Behind-the-Scenes** First Saturday of every month, 12 noon - 1 p.m., at St. Francis Wildlife, 5580 Salem Road, Quincy (4 miles west of Havana). Call for reservations: (850) 627-4151.

Updated list of our events at [www.stfranciswildlife.org](http://www.stfranciswildlife.org).

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**St. Francis Wildlife cared for 1,650 wild birds, mammals and reptiles from January 1 - June 30, 2017**



**Injured mother opossum** nursed her babies while we cared for her. Photo/Shelby Boykin



**Gopher tortoise** had an address painted on its shell with nail polish and glitter that took several days and cleanings to remove. We set it on a drinking cup so it couldn't walk away while we worked on it. The gopher tortoise is a threatened species. We reported this violation to FWC. Photo/Teresa Stevenson



This **Red fox** was injured. After our TLC, she was returned to her home. Photo/Tori Bakley



**Orphaned Barred Owl**, raised and released. Barred Owl fossils that are over 11,000 years old have been found. That means they flew above the Woolly Mammoths! Photo/Sandy Beck

Today, more than ever before, life must be characterized by a sense of universal responsibility, not only nation to nation and human to human, but also human to other forms of life. Dalai Lama

**Help St. Francis Wildlife Go Green**

Would you prefer to read our newsletter online? If so, please send an email to [stfrancis@tds.org](mailto:stfrancis@tds.org) with "Add to Email List" as the subject and your full name and mailing address in the body of the email (so we can remove you from our snail mail list).

If you chose the email option, rather than clipping and sending in the Donation Form (on right), with your donation, you can use PayPal at [www.stfranciswildlife.org](http://www.stfranciswildlife.org) or send a check to us at P.O. Box 38160, Tallahassee, FL 32315.

**Thank you!**

P.S. We hope you like our new full-color format! The smaller size page offsets the cost of color printing! Comments? Suggestions? Please let the editor know: [stfranciswildlife@comcast.net](mailto:stfranciswildlife@comcast.net).

**Donation Form: Please renew your annual support.**



**Mail your check to:** St. Francis Wildlife Assoc., P.O. Box 38160, Tallahassee, FL 32315  
Or make a secure **online donation** with PayPal at [www.stfranciswildlife.org](http://www.stfranciswildlife.org).

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How would you prefer to receive our quarterly newsletter, *Wildlife Matters*?

- I prefer to have a printed copy of *Wildlife Matters* mailed to my home.
- I prefer to read it on-line. (It is a PDF file, so you will need Adobe Acrobat.)

To make this donation in honor of someone (for a special occasion, memorial, etc.) please include a note with the honored person's name and the name and address of the person to receive acknowledgement of the gift. Your gift will also be noted in our next "Wildlife Matters" newsletter.

Please check the appropriate box and return this form with your tax-deductible donation.

- Donor Levels:**  Angel \$35  Hero \$50  Friend \$100  Sponsor \$250  Guardian \$500  
 Steward \$1,000  Patron \$2,000  Saint \$5,000  Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Please contact me about:**  Volunteering  Your "Wild Classroom" wildlife education programs.

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## Wildlife Matters

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Orphaned Great Crested Flycatchers Photo/Tori Bakley

Next time you shop at Amazon, go through Amazon Smile, select "St. Francis of Assisi Wildlife Association" as your charity, and Amazon will donate .5% of your purchase to us! [smile.amazon.com/ch/59-1888022](http://smile.amazon.com/ch/59-1888022)

## Wildlife Wish List

Wish List also online at: [www.stfranciswildlife.org/Donate.html](http://www.stfranciswildlife.org/Donate.html).

Please take items to St. Francis Wildlife, Northwood Animal Hospital, or Allied Emergency Veterinary Clinic.

Call St. Francis Wildlife about large items.

**Gift Certificates**

- Stone's, Lowe's, Home Depot, Walmart
- Native Nurseries
- Wild Birds Unlimited
- Panhandle Pet Supply
- COSTCO
- Squirrelsandmore.com
- Foxvalleynutrition.com

- Paper towels
- Dawn dish soap
- Odoban
- Scotch-brite heavy duty scrub sponges
- Hand sanitizer
- Rakes
- Heavy duty hoses

**Food/Feeding**

- Unsalted peanuts in the shell
- Raw, hard-shelled nuts, like walnuts, pecans, hickory, acorns
- Black oil sunflower seed
- Wild bird seed
- Keet seed
- Cat and dog food (dry and canned)
- Baby food: only fruit, vegetables, and chicken (no noodles, beef, gravy, etc)
- Eggs
- EXACT powder (baby bird formula)
- Plain and fruit yogurt
- Live or dried worms and crickets
- Waterfowl maintenance pellets
- Waterfowl starter mash
- Ziploc bags (quart & gallon, freezer)
- Jar lids, plastic
- Plant pot saucers, plastic
- Heavy stoneware food bowls

**Animal Housing**

- Heating pads, not automatic shut-off
- Humane live traps
- Baby blankets
- T-shirts, sweatshirts, pillow cases, top sheets, towels, baby blankets.
- Soft toilet paper or soft tissue
- Small animal cages (like one used for a sugar glider or ferret), metal wire only with 1/2" openings

**Maintenance**

- Lumber: plywood, 1x2s, 2x4s, etc.
- Tools
- Hardware cloth

**Office**

- Sticky notes
- Clip boards
- White, letter-size printer paper

**Big Wishes**

- Golf cart
- Gasoline Weed Whacker
- Gasoline Pressure Washer
- Van or SUV in good repair

If you find injured, orphaned, or sick wildlife . . .



- Call us at (850) 627-4151 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- After 5 p.m., call our After-hours Rescue Hotline, (850) 933-2735.
- Take it to our wildlife hospital, 5580 Salem Rd. Quincy, FL (4 miles NW of Havana), 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. Directions at: [www.stfranciswildlife.org](http://www.stfranciswildlife.org).
- 24/7, take it to Northwood Animal Hospital, 1881 N. Martin Luther King Blvd., Tallahassee or Allied Emergency Veterinary Hospital, 2324 Centerville Rd., Tallahassee. Or, during their regular business hours, take it to North Florida Animal Hospital at 2701 N. Monroe St., Tallahassee.

### Important Information

- Use a box with air holes punched in the lid. Place a t-shirt or blanket in the box (never a towel), put the animal in the box and tape securely. Keep babies warm with a heated plastic water bottle wrapped in a t-shirt. Keep it quiet, and handle as little as possible.
- Never give it food or water.
- Never handle rabies vectors: such as raccoons, foxes, or bats (even babies). Call us. Birds and reptiles do not carry rabies. Squirrels, opossums and rabbits are rarely rabies vectors, but it is still wise to use gloves.
- When calling to report an animal hit by a car, note exactly where it is, and, if possible, please remain with the animal until we arrive.

For more information about wildlife rescue:  
[www.stfranciswildlife.org](http://www.stfranciswildlife.org)

**NORTHWOOD ANIMAL HOSPITAL**  
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On right:  
Dr. George Simmons cares for our injured Red-shouldered Hawk at North Florida Animal Hospital.  
Photo/Sandy Beck