

Florida Keys Wildlife Rescue, Inc.

2008 Annual Report to the Public

Our Mission:

Florida Keys Wildlife Rescue, Inc., is an IRS-recognized tax-exempt organization established to (1) rescue abused, unwanted, disabled, sick, and orphaned wildlife; rehabilitate them; and provide permanent sanctuary, if necessary, or return them to their preferred habitat, and (2) educate residents and visitors about protecting wildlife and the environment and removing hazards that place wildlife and other animals (including humans) at risk, which in turn leads to a respect of the environment of the Florida Keys as well as all other areas of the United States from which many come.

Program Services:

To accomplish its mission, FKWR provides the following programs and services:

- ♥ Twenty-four-hour rescue service, seven days a week.
- ♥ Fully-equipped hospital and recovery facilities.
- ♥ Environmental education programs in schools and with youth groups.
- ♥ Presentations at meetings and other venues as requested.
- ♥ Organized habitat cleanup and restoration activities which include planting trees and shrubs in scarified habitat to provide food for and protect wildlife.
- ♥ Implementation of new ideas - such as construction of the first the monofilament recycling bin, now seen in many places in the Florida Keys - in an attempt to keep our environment clean.

The Year in Review:

The year 2008 saw a slight decrease in rescues, down to 1,123 from last year's high of 1,280. Of this number, 1,088 were birds, many of them Federally or State listed as endangered, threatened, or species of special concern. Other species included raccoons, Key deer, marsh rabbits, rat snakes, turtles, and opossums. We were able to rehabilitate and return 85% of these critters back to the wild.

Rescues of wading birds, primarily Brown pelicans, disabled because of being fed fileted fish carcasses dropped from 72 to 49 this year. In conversations with the operators of the three resorts where most of this activity occurs, we were able to verify that this was not due to a drop in visitors. We assume that our educational efforts in this area finally are making an impact.

Entanglement in fishing line and fish-hook injuries accounted for 251 of our rescues (up from 220 last year); these rescues were the "lucky" ones as hundreds of others die sight unseen, entangled in thick mangroves. Improperly-discarded-fishing-line is a perennial problem in the Keys, but it is beginning to receive widespread attention as endangered manatees and sea turtles become victims. Whereas we have been trying to educate the public for eight years about the detrimental affects of fishing line, the fact that marine mammals are now suffering seems to have brought this problem to the forefront.

Other human-caused problems we still encounter are: 1) deliberate shooting of wildlife with BB, blow, and dart guns by adults and juveniles, and 2) continued improper disposal of trash and toxins which pollute the lands and waters. Wide-scale pollution of our waters, also by red tide

and algae blooms containing toxins, accounted for disablement of many wading birds. We rescued 242 birds, some sick, others starving, unable to find fish in turbid or polluted waters.

This year, unexplained paralysis of wading birds affected 39 birds: 9 Black Skimmers, 16 Brown Pelicans, 2 Great Blue Herons, 9 Great White Herons, and 3 Wurdemann's Herons. One Great White and one Black Skimmer died, but the others survived, aided by Celebrex which hastened their recovery. We continue to work with an avian vet to determine the cause of this illusive illness, tentatively determined to be caused by a water-borne toxin.

An unusually high number of rescues suffered injuries from being hit by cars, flying into windows, and flying into power lines. Disablements from improperly-discarded trash continued, and not to be forgotten, the one Laughing Gull who had a chicken bone stuck in its throat.

Environmental education programs were conducted in schools, with youth groups, and at other venues in the Lower Keys and Key West. Presentations promoted protecting the Keys environment and wildlife by teaching children and adults about the human-caused dangers our wildlife face in their ever-decreasing habitat.

Conducting fundraisers in the Keys is difficult due to the lack of volunteers. However, Michele Adams took on the challenge, and, singlehandedly, managed to put together an extremely successful and fun event which yielded over \$5,000 for FKWR - this while working a full-time job! We deeply appreciate all her hard work.

Operational expenses for 2008 totaled \$90,834. Foundations provided approximately \$59,000, homeowners associations and individuals donated \$8,000, and the balance was supplied by the Totmans. Fortunately, the Lower Florida Keys were not affected by any major storms during the year, so while funding in this stressed economy was down, there were no unexpected major expenses.

Governance and Staff:

Florida Keys Wildlife Rescue, Inc., is governed by an all-volunteer board of directors who receive no compensation for their services.

Maya Totman, President

John Clark, Consultant

Paul A. Totman, Vice President

Dr. Lois Sargent, Veterinarian

Laura Quinn, Secretary

Dr. Linda Gottwald, Consultant

The organization is staffed by Maya Totman, Director, Paul Totman, and volunteers, all unpaid.

*We exist to care for those who need special attention and to ease their suffering as soon as possible.
We exist to speak for those who cannot speak.*