

# Florida Keys Wildlife Rescue, Inc.

## 2010 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:

In 2010, FKWR treated 1,397 wildlife critters. Of this, 1,374 were birds, and 1,041 were wading birds (including 571 Brown Pelicans and 173 Double-Crested Cormorants). Other species, which fared better this year, included raccoons, Key deer, rat snakes, turtles, and opossums. Many of the rescues were Federally or State listed as endangered, threatened, or species of special concern. We were able to rehabilitate and return 87% of these critters back to the wild.

Brown Pelicans disabled by being fed fileted fish carcasses numbered 49 this year, an increase of 3 from last year. As with last year, over 50% (28) of these disablements came from one camping resort on Big Pine Key, and FKWR, having attempted to work with them to resolve this issue for several years, has been forced to seek the assistance of the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission to enforce the rule against feeding pelicans. The second largest number of disabled pelicans was nine from a camping resort on Cudjoe Key, with whom we continue to work to resolve the issue, and the balance were found on various islands.

Entanglement in fishing line and fish-hook injuries continue to be a major problem, accounting for 351 of our rescues (up significantly from 258 last year and 251 the year before). Brown Pelicans were the primary victims, with 295 suffering injuries including pouches torn by hooks. The balance were an assortment of wading birds. 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, despite our efforts to educate the public about the detrimental affects of fishing line.

Emaciated birds accounted for 504 (up from 414 last year) of our rescues, primarily affecting wading birds but evident in raptors and vultures as well. Pelicans disabled by fish line/hooks and carcasses accounted for 33 of these, parasites severely affected 4, and 2 suffered wounds. For the others, it was

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difficult to determine the cause. Often juveniles of the species simply do not know how to hunt effectively for food. As well, an additional 128 rescues displayed symptoms of poisoning by unknown toxins, most likely from polluted water. Of these, 52 exhibited partial or complete paralysis.

Approximately 60 rescues suffered cold-related disablements from the unusually cold weather which affected Florida at the beginning of the year. Other rescues suffered injuries from being hit by cars, flying into windows, and flying into power lines as well as attacks by predators, disablements from improperly-discarded trash, and encounters with fences. We cared for numerous orphaned or abandoned babies as well. approximately 60 were the result of illnesses caused by the extremely cold weather at the beginning of the year.

We continued to conduct environmental education programs with youth groups and at various venues in the Lower Keys. 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.

When the Deepwater Horizon exploded in the Gulf on April 20, 2010, no one had any idea that stopping the flow of oil would take months. Initially, people of the northern Gulf States were concerned by pollution of coastal areas by surface oil, but as time went on and oil continued to flow, it became evident that the Florida Keys, in close proximity to the loop current, could see oil in its environment as well.

The first organization to act on this possibility was FKWR. Director Maya Totman began to organize habitat cleanups in coastal mangrove areas, particularly areas difficult to access where trash abounded. As other organizations began to organize cleanups everywhere in the Keys, Maya's next step was to get appropriate training to handle any oil emergency. She completed the OSHA Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response Standard (HAZWOPER) course and took training with Save Our Seabirds (SOS), a recognized leader in oiled wildlife response. (SOS was on standby with BP.) Ultimately, she was hired by BP to work two weeks in Alabama, rescuing oiled wildlife.

Operational expenses for 2010 totaled \$126,967; income was \$118,121. Thus, a deficit of \$8,846 was incurred, bringing our total deficit to \$27,669. Donations from foundations were down considerably, but homeowners associations, local businesses, and individuals made up for some of the shortfall. The balance was supplied by the Totmans.

### **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

Dr. Linda Gottwald, Consultant

Paul A. Totman, Vice President

Jerry and Phyllis Curry, Directors

Dr. Lois Sargent, Veterinarian

Cynthia Kulp, Director

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.*