



EAST SUSSEX
WRAS
WILDLIFE RESCUE

The Rescuer

FEBRUARY 2024 EDITION

REG CHARITY 1108880

RECORD NUMBER
OF CASUALTIES
DEALT WITH IN
2023!



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EAST SUSSEX
WILDLIFE RESCUE AMBULANCE
SERVICE
UNIT 2
THE SHAW BARN
WHITESMITH
EAST SUSSEX
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24 HOUR RESCUE LINE: 0300-10-26-999

GENERAL ENQUIRIES: 01825-873003

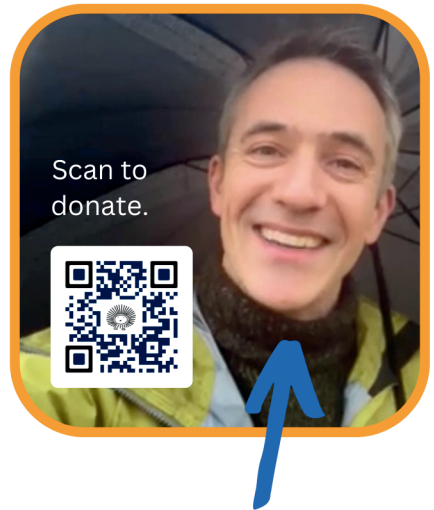
[HTTPS://WILDLIFEAMBULANCE.ORG](https://wildlifeambulance.org)



Trevor's Review

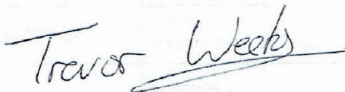
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We received a lovely Christmas message from Joe Crowley, which took us by surprise. During his first appearance on Countryfile back in 2014, Joe spent a day at WRAS and had the opportunity to witness our team rescuing a deer in distress. He has been a friend of WRAS ever since, and he fondly remembers his visit. In his message, Joe expressed his gratitude towards the hard-working staff and volunteers of WRAS for their efforts in 2023. You can view his message on our YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/LTF9-Ezh8bY>.

We have had an extremely busy 2023, but unfortunately, our income has decreased due to the cost of living crisis. We need your support more than ever before to ensure that our charity does not have to cut back on its services. If you're able to donate extra in 2024, set up a Direct Debit or consider leaving us a gift in your will, it would go a long way in helping us continue our vital service of rescuing and caring for sick, injured, orphaned and trapped wildlife.



Trevor Weeks MBE
Founder & Operations Director.

WRAS's mission is to save, care and protect our precious and endangered wildlife across East Sussex. Our vision is to be the leading provider of veterinary care and treatment to all wildlife in East Sussex.

Rare Waxwing in care!

At the time of this newsletter going to print (Tuesday, January 9th) an uncommon waxwing was discovered in front of a hedge outside an Uckfield school and taken to the care of WRAS.

The bird was found on the ground, not moving, by a passerby who contacted staff at Harlands School to obtain a box. East Sussex WRAS was then called for professional assistance, and a veterinary ambulance was dispatched to the school.

At the Casualty Centre, WRAS's Care Team assessed and treated the bird. The bird was found to be concussed and incapable of flying, and it is unclear what caused it to become grounded. There is a possibility that the bird suffered a head injury or was involved in a collision. The bird was placed in an incubator for recovery, and its condition will be monitored closely.

According to Trevor Weeks MBE, the founder and Operations Director of WRAS, it is uncertain whether the bird will survive, but the first 48 hours are critical. There are only around 10,000 birds that migrate to and spend time in the UK during the winter, and waxwings had recently been spotted around Hailsham and Uckfield.



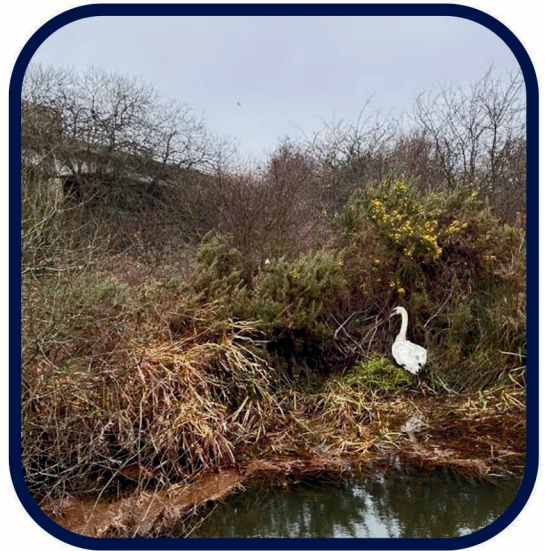


Christmas Rescue Report

At WRAS, the holiday season can be quite unpredictable. The volume of calls received is heavily reliant on the weather and activity of the public. On Christmas Eve, rescuer Ollie Long was out on the road all day responding to various emergency calls. These included an injured fox outside Co-op in Peacehaven, an injured pigeon in Uckfield, a wood pigeon with Canker in Seaford, and a road casualty gull in Eastbourne. While Ollie was busy, Keith Ring and Katie Nunn Nash tended to a dog-attacked swan at Shinewater Park. On Christmas Day, Jan McCord and Keith Ring were on duty. Things were fairly quiet, with only two rescues requiring ambulances. The first was a road casualty gull in Manor Park Road Hailsham with a badly broken wing, followed by an injured pigeon in Halland.

On Boxing Day, Keith was once again on duty. He first attended to a gull that had fallen down a chimney and needed medical attention after removal. He then tended to a road casualty pigeon in Pevensy Bay, a white pigeon unable to fly in Lewes, and a 250-gram hedgehog in Westham.

We extend our gratitude to all the WRAS staff and volunteers who worked or volunteered during the festive season. Thank you for your tireless efforts and dedication.





Over 5900 Casualties in 2023!

The figures for 2023 have exceeded our expectations, as revealed in our previous newsletter. The number of casualties we dealt with in January, June, July, August, September, October and November marked new records, with June recording over 1000 casualties and July coming close with over 900. This year's figures have even surpassed those of the incredibly busy 2020 lockdown year.

5916 CASUALTIES IN 2023!

Breeding season was delayed due to the cold spring, but many species made up for it during the rest of the spring, summer and autumn. Over the last decade, we have dealt with more than 38,000 casualties. Our service in East Sussex covers less than 1% of the UK. It's therefore shocking to think of how many casualties there might be in total across the entire UK.

As the demand for our services grows, we at WRAS always strive to expand and help more animals. We can only achieve this goal with your support.

Please consider showing your support by setting up a direct debit by scanning this QR or by visiting our website www.wildlifeambulance.org



To donate scan the QR code using a smart phone or call 01825-873003.

Muddy rescue in Bexhill Park

On a dark Halloween night, WRAS rescuers received a call for help after a plea on social media. The team rushed to Egerton Park, Bexhill, where a gull was trapped in the lake. The bird had a fishing lure caught in its beak and wing, and was struggling to escape the water.

Unfortunately, the recent flooding in the park had resulted in the council lowering the water level, leaving deep silt and smelly thick black mud. The rescuers could not wade through it safely, and needed to call in the assistance of the WRAS rescue boat. However, the silt made it difficult to navigate the waters and mud, and a land-based team had to pull the boat like a sledge across the mud using two ropes to reach the distressed bird. Working by torch light rescuers slowly approached the bird and were eventually able to catch it.

Finally, after a considerable effort, rescuers were able to secure the gull and bring it back to shore. Back at the Casualty Centre, the bird was examined and the hooks were carefully removed.

The team began treating the bird with medication and provided a warm, safe place to recover. Although the road to recovery was long and challenging, the bird eventually regained its strength and was released back into the wild in January, thanks to the dedication and hard work of everyone at WRAS.



Most difficult deer rescue to date!

On October 20th, a challenging and hazardous deer rescue operation took place near High Hurstwood.

A team of 6 rescuers were led to the location where the deer were last spotted but they broke free from their location, leading rescuers across a field and into a wooded stream. Eventually the deer ran either side of a tree and became entangled. This was the break rescuers needed.

Rescuers Trevor and Thea were able to perform leg grabs on the two deer. Brian and Ollie took over, allowing Trevor and Thea to pinned the deer down from the shoulders. With four rescuers controlling the two deer, Abbie and Daryl were able to start cutting the mass of rope attached to them both. This was made even harder due to two large wooden posts after being attached.

Deer are more prone to capture myopathy than other animals, which makes rescues more complex. Sedating deer can worsen capture myopathy, require a vet on site, and delay the release of the deer. The rescuers worked together despite the deer's attempts to break free, and they were able to release both deer within a short period of time.

The team believes that the first deer released was the first to become entangled before rutting with the second deer, causing them to become attached to each other. Although the rescue operation was risky, the team's teamwork and expertise paid off, despite them all walking away shaking afterwards.





Be our Hero and make a donation!



Scan to donate!

Contrary to popular belief, the winter months are not peaceful for wildlife rescues as people think. Hedgehogs struggle with the fluctuating temperatures, which force them in and out of hibernation, burning up their precious fat reserves. Freezing weather conditions make things even worse for any wildlife which is already struggling to survive. Even those in urban areas seek shelter but often find themselves in conflict with humans.



WRAS works tirelessly to provide care and support for these animals in need. However, we can only continue our work thanks to the generous donations of our supporters. We're getting busier and busier each year, and we need your help to keep up with the demand.

There are many ways you can support our cause, from making a cash donation or regular monthly gift, to purchasing goods from our charity shop or taking part in our online lottery. If you're planning to fundraise to help us, we'd love to hear from you! Whether it's a cake sale, donations instead of gifts, or something more ambitious, we're here to support you every step of the way. Simply email fundraising@eastsussexwras.org.uk for more information.



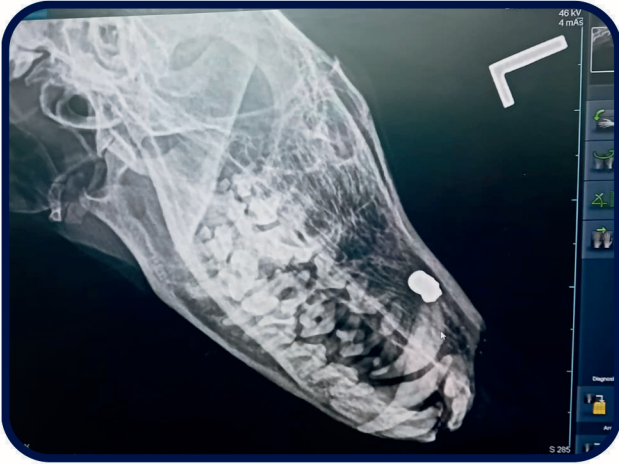
**Weekly
Lottery WIN
up to £25,000**



Take part in our online weekly lottery. Sign up from £1 a week and receive 6 unique numbers, every Friday numbers are drawn and if all six match you could win up to £25,000. Head to the website to find out more or call us on 01825 873003

Your donation will directly help us to prevent the suffering of our declining wildlife!

Shot Fox's suffering ended.



able to stand and attempted to flee but rescuers were able to easily catch the fox with nets. The fox was then secured in a transport cage and driven back in one of WRAS's ambulances to the Casualty Centre.

WRAS's veterinary surgeon and Care Team assessed the fox under sedation and X-rays revealed an air gun pellet lodged in the mouth. The damage caused and resulting infection which had built up over time meant the charity had no option but to save the fox from suffering and put the poor creature to sleep.

"The fox has probably been running around for weeks after being shot and slowly been getting worse" said Trevor Weeks, "the poor creature must have been in pain and felt very unwell because of the infection. This is the worst part of our job to see a life wasted in this way because of such a deliberate act of cruelty. We regularly see casualties being admitted which have also been shot with air guns".

The incident has been reported to Sussex Police and East Sussex WRAS is urging anyone who is aware of any illegal shooting or poaching to report incidents to Sussex Police's Rural Crime Team.

A fox has had to be put to sleep due to the severity of its injuries and the resulting infection caused by being shot in the head by an air rifle.

Rescuers were called down to Pinewood Close, Hampden Park this afternoon after receiving reports of a poorly collapsed fox with flies buzzing round it. When rescuers arrived the fox was



WRAS writes to...

Wildlife casualties in East Sussex have increased, and East Sussex Wildlife Rescue and Ambulance Service (WRAS) is asking for help and support from local authorities and housing developers. Founder Trevor Weeks MBE acknowledges the strides made by councils and developers in wildlife and environmental preservation since he began rescuing animals in the 1980s. However, he believes the long-term impact of human disturbance, including extra cats and dogs, children, vandalism, pollution, litter, shooting, extra cars, noise, and light pollution, is causing additional casualties. The impact of many of these are being ignored, despite the majority of casualties being caused by human activity.

According to Trevor, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find and access wildlife rescue organisations across the UK, as most groups struggle with funding. While many trusts and companies fund conservation projects, they do not view wildlife rescue as conservation or benefiting the community. This is despite the fact that over 51% of birds rescued by East Sussex WRAS are in the Red and Amber conservation status, and over 55% of mammals are in the Endangered or Vulnerable category. Wildlife welfare charities, many of which operate on a shoestring budget, do not receive the same level of funding as conservation charities.

East Sussex WRAS is struggling to expand, as finding land and suitable buildings is almost impossible. The land and buildings that are available are being sold at a premium in the local area.





...councils and developers

East Sussex WRAS is requesting that developers, MPs, and councils consider making donations, grants, and other funding available to help local wildlife rescue organisations cover the increasing costs as more casualties occur due to housing development.

When deer, badgers, foxes, swans, gannets, and other wildlife are sick or injured, members of the public cannot be expected to pick them up themselves and safely handle them. Veterinary practices are already overstretched, and many cannot take in wildlife due to new isolation procedures that are now required because of avian influenza. This often results in casualties going unhelped or being put to sleep, regardless of their conservation status, unless wildlife rescue organisations step in.



East Sussex WRAS does not receive calls from the animals but rather from concerned, anxious, upset, and emotional people who come across what can be horrendous scenes and need help and assistance. Anyone wanting to support East Sussex WRAS can visit their website at www.wildlifeambulance.org, scan the QR code below, or call 01825-873003 to make a donation.

Scan to donate!



To donate scan the QR code using the mobile or call 01825-873003, or visit our website.



Making a lasting impact on local wildlife

Leaving a Gift to East Sussex Wildlife Rescue & Ambulance Service in Your Will.

Have you ever considered leaving a gift to East Sussex WRAS in your will? It's a beautiful way to express your passion and love for the local wildlife. Our organization specializes in rescuing, caring for, rehabilitating, and releasing injured, lost, abandoned, and displaced wildlife. As a non-profit organization, we depend on the generosity of our supporters, and gifts left in wills (legacies) are especially significant to our work. Regardless of the size of your gift, it has the power to create an opportunity for our wildlife to have a second chance. Once you have taken care of your loved ones, please consider including East Sussex WRAS in your will. Your act of kindness today can make a difference tomorrow.

The impact of leaving a gift to East Sussex WRAS in your will can be enormous. For instance, after the passing of one of our volunteer's mothers, we were fortunate enough to receive a £10,000 donation from her will. This gift helped us replace one of our veterinary ambulances, and we were able to honour her support by inscribing "In Memory of Betty Arber" on the ambulance. This simple act has had a tremendous impact on our work. Since its purchase, the ambulance has driven over 75,000 miles and helped rescue thousands of casualties.

Currently, WRAS is raising funds to purchase a property to construct a new hospital and rescue centre that will better suit our needs than our current hospital. Legacies will play an essential role in ensuring we can complete this project.

Here's how you can leave WRAS a gift in your will. The most crucial information to include in your will is our name, "East Sussex WRAS," and our registered charity number, "1108880." Your executors will be able to find additional information on the Charity Commission's website when the time comes, ensuring they have the most up-to-date details of our charity.

Finally, it's always best to seek professional advice when writing a will. WRAS has previously lost out as a result of wills not being signed or witnessed correctly. Thank you in advance for your generosity and compassion towards local wildlife.



Help us make the switch!

If you have a standing order set up with us, we need your help to save us time and money by switching over to a direct debit please.

The process of setting up and recording standing order payments is very time consuming and with more people each year supporting us in this way, we need to simplify the process. With standing orders, it can be difficult to match up every payment with each generous donor - due to the limited information which appears on our bank statements.

To save time and money we have joined forces with Charities Aid Foundation who offer direct debit services to charities at discounted prices. This means supporters can set up their direct debits online themselves or we can via a postal donation form or over the phone, making the recording and processing much clearer and efficient without the ambiguity.



All you need to do is scan this QR code or head to:

<https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/24454>

Alternatively go to our website, fill in one of our new donation forms, or call 01825873003.



If you don't already have a regular donation set up please consider setting one up to help us plan and budget for the future making a bigger difference.

Don't forget to cancel your current standing order, which you can do via your online banking, in branch or over the phone direct with your bank.

Hand feeding foxes?

Social media has become a popular platform for raising awareness and support for a wide range of causes. However, it can also be responsible for promoting irresponsible trends, such as the recent upswing of people hand feeding wild foxes in their gardens. Though it may seem exciting, harmless, and even uplifting, this trend poses serious risks to wildlife.

Feeding wildlife, even when done responsibly, is never without risk. By teaching wild animals that humans are a safe source of food, we alter their natural instincts and behaviours. This can lead to dangerous and potentially fatal outcomes, especially when those animals try to replicate the same behaviour with other humans.

The act of handing feeding wild foxes, in particular, can lead to a host of problems. For example, fox cubs that are fed by humans from a young age may

become accustomed to human presence and learn to associate people with food. This can cause them to lose their natural fear of humans, which can ultimately lead to unwanted interactions between humans and foxes.

Furthermore, individuals who are not fond of wildlife may resort to extreme measures to get rid of them, such as setting traps, using poison, or calling pest control. This not only puts the lives of other wild mammals at risk, such as hedgehogs, but it can also result in severe suffering or fatalities for the foxes.

To prevent these negative outcomes, we strongly advise against hand-feeding wild foxes. Instead, we recommend that people avoid putting food out while foxes are present and always place food away from the building. What may seem like harmless fun can have serious consequences, so let's work together to keep wildlife safe and healthy. If you want to help wildlife why not volunteer with your local wildlife rescue and get to see wildlife close up that way.



Unusual rescue at Lewes Tesco

On Saturday, November 11th, Wildlife Rescuers received an unexpected call for help when a swan was found perched atop a storage container at Lewes Tesco.

Concerned for the bird's welfare, rescuers arrived at the scene at 9:30 pm, where they found the swan had been sitting on the container for most of the day.

Using a ladder, rescuers Charlotte and Andrew Loftus successfully rescued the swan from the 8ft high container. Although there were initial concerns of blood on the swan's chest, it was determined that the bird had only suffered minor grazes on its feet.

The swan, which had crash landed on the container, was cared for at East Sussex WRAS's Casualty Centre at Whitesmith, where it underwent observations for a few days before being released. If you would like to become a volunteer rescuer, please visit our website to learn more and start the application process: www.wildlifeambulance.org.



Fundraising Thank yous!



We have received some amazing support over the last few months. Back at Christmas, Infinity Foods Cooperative chosen WRAS as one of their charities encouraging customers to donate. They raised £xxxx

Barwell Solicitors presented WRAS with £2,000 after being their chosen charity for the year.

Hailsham Voices Pop Choir raised £653,68 for WRAS at their

Christmas Concert. They also raised £167.26 by singing Christmas songs outside Morrisons in Hampden Park on the 20th December.

The Spotlight Player also raised funds for WRAS at their performances of Mother Goose in Hampden Park raising £1,400.00. A big thank you to everyone who purchased Christmas cards, calendars and entered our raffle too.

These make a profit of over £1,600.00.

A big thank you to Barwell Solicitors for raising money for

our charity. Greg Hall their

Marketing Manager visited WRAS to meet a hedgehog and present WRAS with a cheque for £2584.75.

Residents of Pages Lane Bexhill ran a scarecrow competition and managed to raise £125.00 with some very impressive entries!

A big thank you to Kerry Thather for making home made candles and raising over £125.00. We have also received £143 from Warbleton & Rushlake Green Bonfire Society and £102 from the Crown & Anchor plus the Alexandra Arms from Pub Quizzes.

Over the past few months we have also received £305 via Facebook Birthday Fundraisers - Tracy, Julien, Laura and Kerry - thank you!



If you can organise a fundraising event or get your company to select us as a chosen charity please get in touch.

Pigeon Post

by Kathy Martyn Rehab Supervisor

At home this is often a quieter time for me where I can focus on caring for young ferals which are the key species I am presented with in January. Most youngsters are being found at a decent size so don't need my close "at-home" monitoring.

Despite our focus on wildlife, we do come across domestic or fancy birds that need help finding suitable homes. Being a "wildlife" charity we try our best to avoid taking them in but some do still make it here.

The biggest issue is trying to find suitable and safe homes for them. We have found some kind local people who can provide a temporary home for them. But we always have to make sure not to overcrowd these spaces and prioritize the welfare of the birds. Such facilities must meet the standards of the Five Freedoms and the Animal Welfare Act.

Many of these birds are allowed to free fly and return to their lofts, to pair up and live a natural life. In the past, we have taken care of birds like 'Ducky', a beautiful white bird with fluffy feet, 'Malteaser', a lovely brown ball of polish breed, 'Trousers' and 'Fluffy Feet', two stunning tumblers, and more recently, 'Albert', a bird with stunning colors and long feathered feet, and a gorgeous white female fantail. We always receive regular updates and photos of them.





Rescue Training

Wildlife rescuers happen in all weathers, despite the rain back in October, WRAS rescuers were out practicing various scenarios using models and WRAS founder Trevor Weeks as casualties!

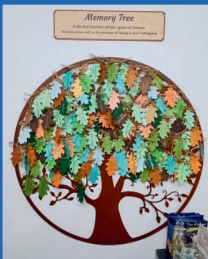
Although fun at times, it did bring home the serious safety considerations and planning which need to go into all wildlife rescues. Its important to keep yourself safe and not be lead by your heart and emotions.

Well done to all WRAS rescuers who are training to help our precious wildlife.

If you are interested in joining our team of volunteer rescuers be it to just help with pick-ups and transportation or also get involved in the more technical rescues please visit our website

www.wildlifeambulance.org

to read more about how you can help.



Let their memory live on!

Scan this QR code if you want to make a donation in memory of a lost loved one. We will display a leaf on our memory tree in reception, for every person remembered.



Please help us improve our success rate by making a donation today!

Amazing Birds of Prey



Over the past decade, the admissions trend of wildlife has noticeably shifted at WRAS.

Buzzards, which were once rarely admitted, became the most commonly rescued bird of prey species in 2021 and 2022. However, the Tawny Owl, regained its title as the most frequently admitted bird of prey in 2023, with a total of 42 rescues.

Additionally, the number of Kestrels rescued has been steadily increasing each year, but it took a sharp downturn last year.

Meanwhile, Sparrowhawks saw a sudden surge. In 2023, WRAS treated a Merlin that was thin and had suffered head trauma, but unfortunately, despite our best efforts it sadly did not survive.

On the other hand, a Buzzard that was discovered near Cooksfield Train Station was admitted and treated successfully. The fractured wing was fixed using a figure of 8 bandage to stabilize the fracture site, and the bird was placed on cage rest. After the fracture had calcified, the bird was given space to fly and regain its strength before being released back into the wild at Cooksbridge.

Lastly, WRAS also dealt with four peregrines in 2023, more than ever before!



Please help us improve our success rate by making a donation today!

And Finally...



A big thank you to staff at East Sussex National Golf Course who closed a couple of holes after finding a fallow buck entangled in rope on their course. Rescuers attended on site and very efficiently managed to rescue the deer within 6 minutes of their initial approach. The deer was soon running off free into the distance.



British Wildlife
Rehabilitation Council

ASSOCIATE ORGANISATION 23-24

East Sussex Wildlife Rescue & Ambulance Service (WRAS)

Casualty Centre: Unit 2, The Shaw Barn, Whitesmith, BN8 6JD.

Registered Address: 8 Stour Close, Stone, Cross, East Sussex. BN24 5QU.

Rescue Line: 0300 10 26 999 **Non-emergency Line:** 01825-873003

E-mail: admin@eastsussexwras.org.uk

Fundraising: fundraising@eastsussexwras.org.uk

Volunteering & Work Experience: volunteers@eastsussexwras.org.uk

Website: www.wildlifeambulance.org

RCVS Premise # 6548370

To make a donation call: 01825-873003.

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www.youtube.com/user/eastsussexwras

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Thank you to Aspen and International Animal Rescue for their continued support.

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