



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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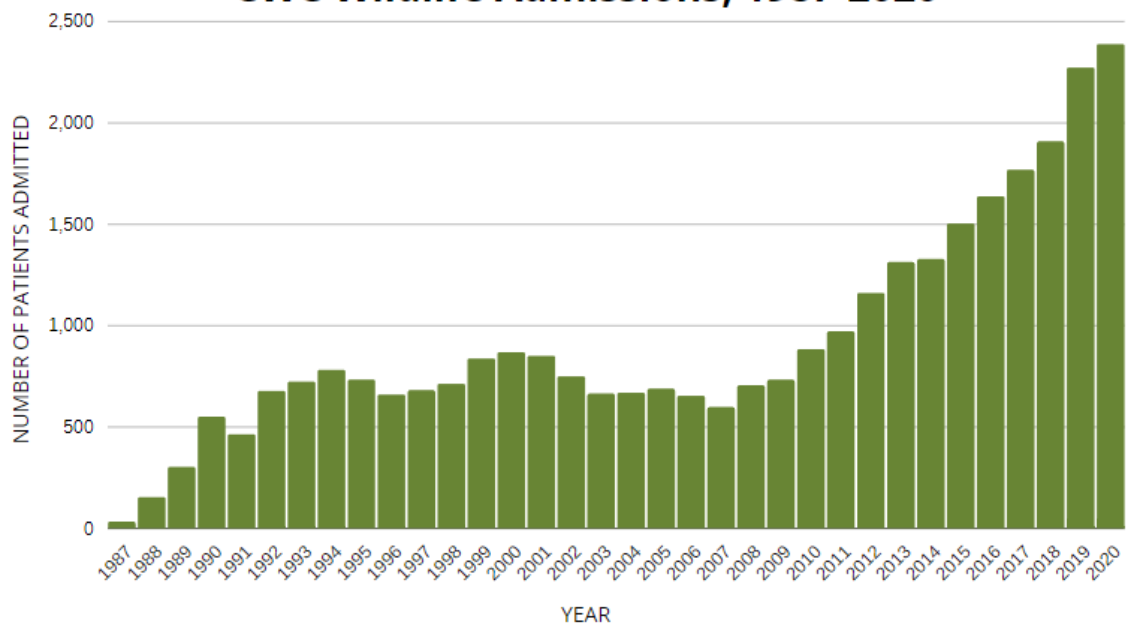
Chintimini Wildlife Center exceeds capacity for first time in three decades after closure of neighboring facilities; Increased demand endangers operation

Corvallis, OR: Chintimini Wildlife Center (CWC), the last operational “all-species” wildlife rehabilitation center in the Willamette Valley from Salem to Eugene, has exceeded patient capacity for the first time in organizational history. With the recent closure of two similar organizations in the area, CWC is now struggling to meet the demand on its own. Unlike many nonprofits providing expensive emergency care, wildlife rehabilitation centers in Oregon tend to receive no government or contract funding. This means that an expansion in service area does not result in an increase in funding. CWC is asking the greater Willamette Valley community for financial support so that it may serve the needs of these additional animals until a long-term solution can be implemented.

For the past three decades, CWC has been part of an established network of large wildlife centers and a handful of in-home rehabbers serving the mid-Willamette Valley. Previously, when people found wildlife in need of help, they had a host of resources available to them. Now, a string of closures has resulted in a reduced capacity for the region, with CWC’s patient intake numbers increasing at an alarming rate. To prevent the increased caseload from overwhelming and endangering the center’s operation, CWC has already implemented several measures to slow intakes; These include limiting admission hours, restricting the species it admits, and reducing its service area.

Today, CWC’s admissions are on track to result in yet another record-breaking year, with patient #1,000 being admitted on June 6. During the month of May alone, CWC received more than 3,200 phone calls on its wildlife hotline.

CWC Wildlife Admissions, 1987-2020



The most recent difficulties began with the closure of Eugene's Willamette Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in 2018. Thankfully, Cascades Raptor Center in Eugene serves injured and orphaned raptors from the area, but mammals and all other birds are referred up to Chintimini Wildlife Center for care. Since 2018, CWC has observed a steep increase in annual admissions, with about a quarter of all patients coming from the Eugene area. More recently, Turtle Ridge Wildlife Center in Salem has been closed for several months without a clear path to reopening. Chintimini Wildlife Center is currently the only all-species wildlife rehabilitation facility serving these areas.

CWC's patient intake data from just the last 30 days shows that 30% of patients are coming from the Salem area, and 20% are coming from the Eugene area. In other words: Half of the patients currently in care at CWC were admitted from outside of its service area. As desperate as CWC staff and volunteers are to try to help all of these animals in need, they are nearing capacity and in need of support.

- To serve these additional animals in the short-term, critical infrastructure expansion is needed at CWC including improvements to the center's phone system; recruitment, onboarding, and training of additional staff and volunteers; and the construction of new enclosures. Additionally, CWC's existing buildings, many of them aging, are simply not large enough to humanely accommodate double the caseload.
- In the long-term, the solution is less straightforward. The amount of resources required to serve an area spanning nearly 100 miles and containing two of the state's largest cities is staggering. There is potential that, with adequate funding, CWC could expand and absorb these service areas permanently. However, there is also hope that new wildlife centers or in-home rehabbers will work to become established in the next few years, restoring the regional network that once existed.

Executive Director Sarah Spangler wishes to convey the following: "What we hope the public understands is that this has been a difficult situation for *everyone*. We know how frustrating and agonizing it feels to not be able to help an animal in need. It feels that way to us, too. What's important to remember is that we're legally and ethically required to maintain a humane standard of care and we aren't able to do that if we choose to work beyond our capacity. We sincerely hope that members of our community, including those in Salem and Eugene, will work with us to develop and implement solutions to this problem, both in the short and long term."

To find more information or donate to Chintimini Wildlife Center, go to www.chintiminiwildlife.org

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ABOUT CHINTIMINI WILDLIFE CENTER: Since 1989, Chintimini Wildlife Center has been dedicated to protecting and celebrating Oregon's native wildlife. Their efforts have served more than 35,000 injured and orphaned wild animals to date, and improved the lives of countless others through community outreach and education. Tax-deductible donations can be made to Chintimini Wildlife Center, a 501(c) 3 charitable organization, via check or online at <http://chintiminiwildlife.org/>