

Engaging Barry Students to Protect Florida's

Wildlife: A Partnership with Pelican Harbor

Barry University
Center for Community Service Initiatives
11300 NE 2nd Ave.
Miami Shores, FL 33161

AUTHOR: Shayna Ramirez

Abstract

As the population in Florida continues to grow, urban expansion threatens native habitats and the animals living there. Pelican Harbor Seabird Station rehabilitates injured animals native to Florida and releases them back into the wild. This is a key strategy in projecting Florida's wildlife. This project supports Pelican Harbor's important work by engaging Barry's Pre-Veterinarian Club and other students in the work of the organization. Students will volunteer in several capacities, including assisting with event coordination, at Pelican Party 2019, a fundraising event.

Community Impact Outcomes

- Engage pre-veterinary club students with a local organization that addresses animal rights.
- Provide event coordination support to Pelican Harbor.
- Create on-going volunteer opportunities.
- Reengage Barry's partnership with Pelican Harbor Seabird Station.
- Raise awareness about urban impact on Florida's native animals in their ecosystems.

Collaboration with Community Partner

Pelican Harbor Seabird Station (PHSS) is a non-profit organization focused on rescuing, rehabilitating native seabirds and wildlife and preserving them through educating the community and scientific means. Staff worked with the author to identify service opportunities for Barry students.



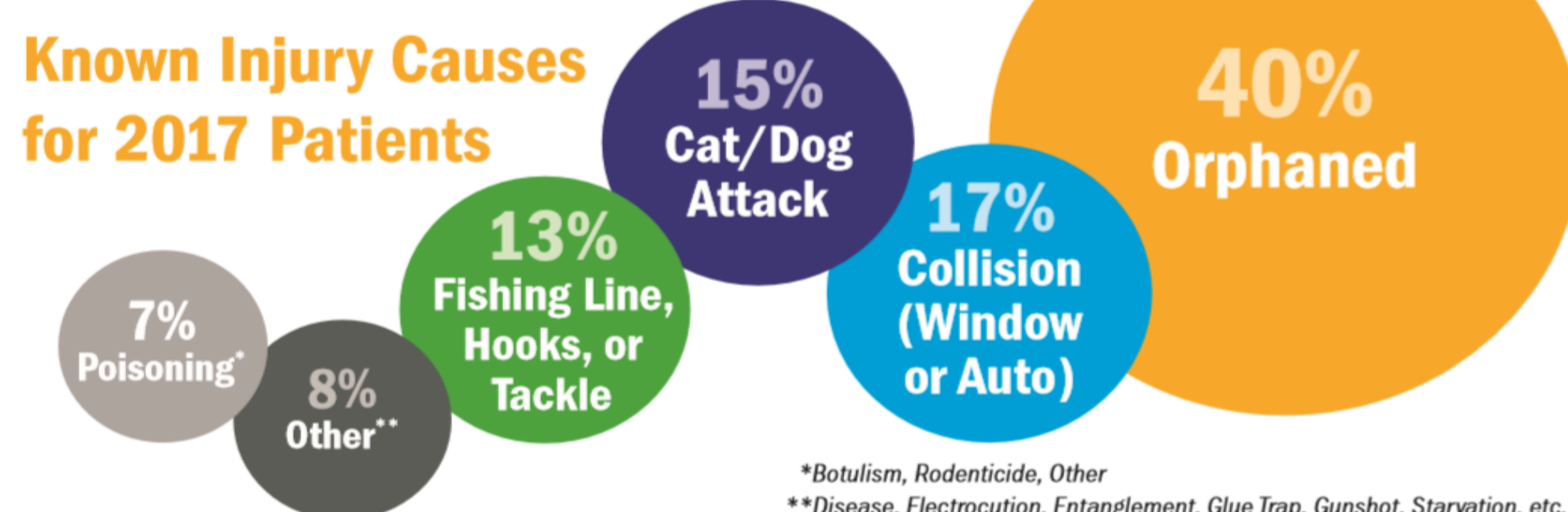
Issue Background

South Florida is home to native animal species that are unique to the South Florida ecosystem, many of which are threatened by development and human activity. According to the University of Florida, Florida Bay surrounds Miami and is home to several species federally designated as threatened or endangered: sea turtles, the American crocodile, the American alligator, the manatee, and the wood stork.

Pelican Harbor Seabird Station (PHSS) was founded in the 1980's by the Kelton family. The Keltons lived in a boathouse on the Pelican Harbor Marina in Miami, and it was there that the Keltons noticed an abundant number of brown pelicans injured from human activity. The Keltons decided to take it upon themselves to rescue these sick and injured Pelicans into their boathouse to help rehabilitate them. Thus, PHSS was born.

Today the organization serves all native birds, mammals, and reptiles. In 2017, PHSS took in 1,487 native animals and created an annual report, measuring "Known Injury Causes" impacting the local wildlife. Many of the animals in 2017 were brought in due to the actions of humans, such as poisoning, fishing equipment injuries, and collisions.

PHSS raises awareness about how to reduce human impact on Florida's wildlife by working with schools. Through the generosity of the community an estimated \$360,000 was raised alone in 2017. This ensures the continued efforts of the organization to use education and research to support their mission.



Assessment and Evaluation

The success of this project is assessed by the number of volunteers who participate in Pelican Party 2019. PHSS asked for 15-20 volunteers to participate. Prior to this project, PHSS was not utilizing service-learning students due to other prioritized projects. Since the profile has been updated in CEMS, PHSS can now utilize this source to create and advertise future service projects.

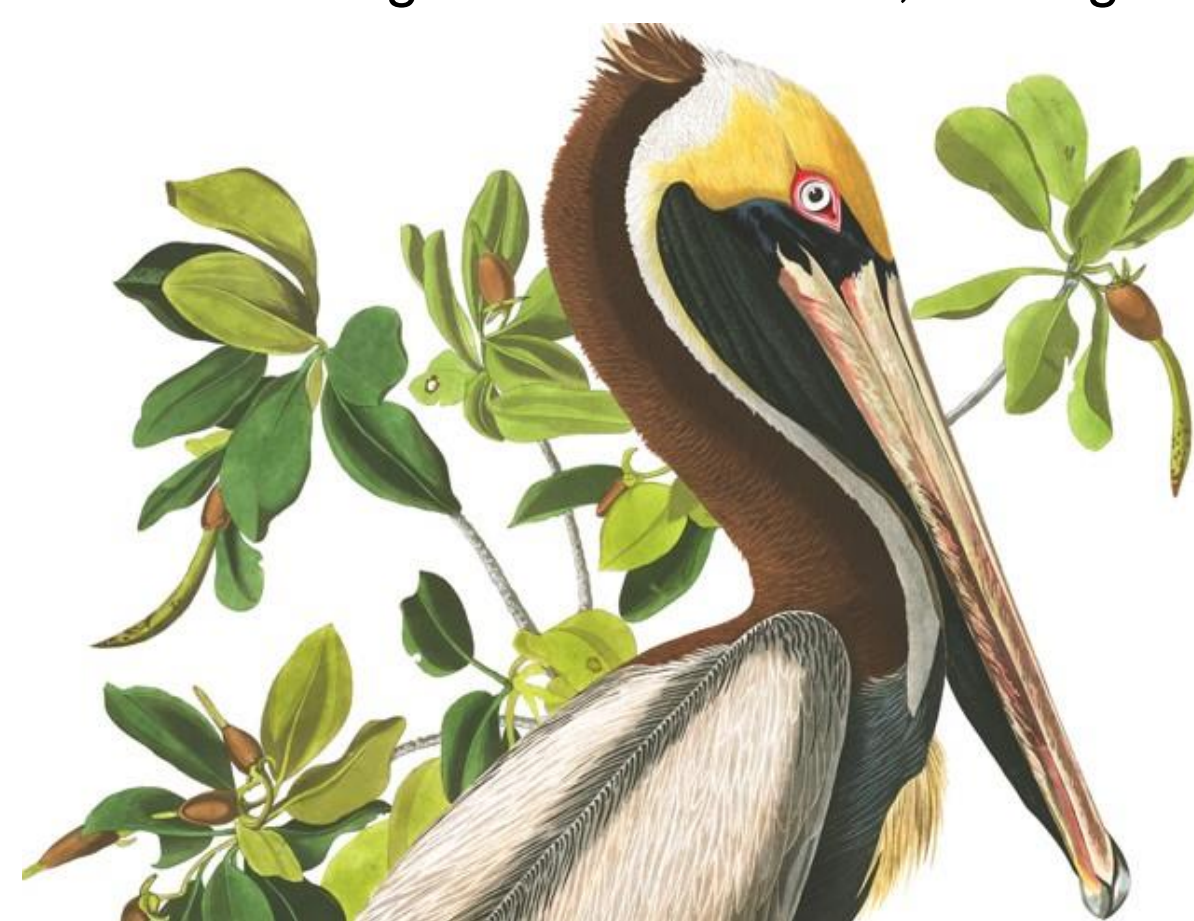
"I am so excited to include some interested students in the event, to have some extra hands to help as well as to offer them a chance to connect with us and our work with wildlife." – Teresa Kowall, Operation Coordinator at Pelican Harbor Seabird Station.



Project Implementation

This project recruited Barry University students and pre-veterinary students to help in the preparation and execution of a fundraising event for PHSS. The author:

1. Participated in a PHSS Natural History Speaker Series about Florida panthers in October 2018 and formed a relationship with PHSS staff.
2. Collaborated with PHSS staff to identify volunteer opportunities and Barry's role at Pelican Party.
3. Coordinated a visit and presentation by PHSS staff to Barry's Pre-Veterinarian Club to educate students about the organization's mission and to recruit volunteers for the Pelican Party.
4. Re-established the organization's profile on Barry's Community Engagement Management System (CEMS) and make available volunteer opportunities students can access to complete service hours for a class or other reasons.
5. Coordinated two volunteer shifts at Pelican Party, including transportation arrangements and shift duties: helping with registration, monitoring the silent auction, closing out the silent auction, etc.



Pelican Party

APRIL 13, 2019
MIAMI SHORES COUNTRY CLUB

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS
of Serving Native Florida Wildlife

Reflection

Pelican Party is important because wildlife restoration is an issue that impacts everyone. If there is a depletion in native species within Florida, then the whole ecosystem will be impaired. Thus, the work of the organization is crucial to keep native species alive and healthy so that the entire ecosystem will not falter due to our habits. Overall, the Pelican Party raises an influential portion of PHSS annual income, approximately 20%. By helping to volunteer at the event, we are ensuring the success of the organization and its ongoing endeavors to save pelicans and other native wildlife.



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