

Animal Care Department 2025 Year-End Report

The past year marked meaningful growth and progress for The Wild Center's Animal Care Department. Throughout 2025, the department advanced priorities outlined in the 2024–2025 Facilities & Animal Care Department Plan, with a focus on maintaining a safe, functional, and engaging campus while laying the groundwork for long-term sustainability and future growth. The team remained deeply committed to providing exceptional care for resident animals while enhancing the visitor experience and strengthening overall operational capacity.

Staffing & Team Development

This year, we successfully onboarded two new full-time Animal Care staff members. Their addition has strengthened daily operations, expanded our capacity for animal care and enrichment, and brought valuable skills and perspectives to the department. With a fully staffed and collaborative team, we are well-positioned to support both current and future animal residents.

In addition, the Animal Care team trained eight AmeriCorps volunteers to safely handle animals and develop interpretive programming centered on our live animal collection. This training expanded our educational reach, ensured consistent animal welfare standards, and empowered volunteers to confidently engage visitors with accurate meaningful messaging.

Animal Collection Updates

We were pleased to welcome several new animals to The Wild Center, including a mallard duck and a pigeon. These additions have enhanced our interpretive programming and provided new opportunities to engage visitors with stories about native wildlife, conservation and coexistence with animals in the Adirondacks.

Facilities & Future Growth

Life support systems supporting animal habitats and public exhibits were actively maintained and improved, with a focus on replacing sand in existing sand filters. These updates improved water quality, increased system reliability, and created capacity for more consistent routine maintenance, while also identifying equipment in need of future repair or replacement to support long-term animal health and operational efficiency.

A major milestone this year was the successful acquisition of funds for a new animal building. This future facility will significantly improve the quality of life for our animals by offering safer, more purpose-built living spaces. It will also create an improved visitor experience, allowing guests to

observe animals more comfortably while learning about their natural behaviors and care. This project represents a major investment in animal welfare, staff safety, and educational impact.

Looking Ahead

As we move into the coming year, the Animal Care Department is excited to build on this momentum. With a growing team, new animal ambassadors, and plans underway for an improved facility, we are well-positioned to continue advancing The Wild Center's mission of inspiring connection to nature through exceptional animal care and meaningful visitor experiences.