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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **EAGLETS BEING REMOVED FROM NEST** *Wildlife Center of Virginia to raise eaglets to be released back into the wild*

**NORFOLK, VA (April 27, 2011)** – The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) has confirmed that the female of the eagle pair nesting at Norfolk Botanical Garden was killed by an airplane strike yesterday morning. VDGIF wildlife biologists, acting on concerns that the adult male will not be able to provide sufficient food for the three five-week-old eaglets, determined that the birds should be removed from the nest. While the male may be able to meet the needs of the chicks in the near term, the amount of food they will require as they grow will increase exponentially, likely exceeding the hunting capacity of even the most capable provider.

A number of options were considered as the VDGIF assessed the situation, including no intervention, providing supplemental food for the chicks, or separating them for placement in the nests of other eagles. Ultimately, the biologists and agency eagle expert determined that the most appropriate response would be to remove the eaglets and transport them to The Wildlife Center of Virginia (WCV). There the birds can be reared in specialized facilities and cared for by trained, permitted eagle rehabilitators until they are old enough to be released back into the wild.

According to VDGIF Biologist Stephen Living, “The agency recognizes that there is a very high degree of public investment in these birds. Thousands of people worldwide have watched these eagles over the years and followed their progress.”

Living continued, “Without intervention, it is all but certain that one or more of these eaglets would not survive the next three months. Pulling the birds and sending them to the Wildlife Center gives them their best chance. The birds are already old enough to know that they are eagles and to recognize their siblings. Maintaining them as a family unit and releasing them together when they are ready to go will certainly improve their survival potential.”

Nuckols Tree Care Service is assisting with the removal of the eaglets from the nest. They had participated in the banding of the eaglets that took place on April 21 and have been long-time supporters of the Eagle Cam project at the Norfolk Botanical Garden.

At WCV the eaglets’ health will be evaluated and monitored closely throughout their treatment. They will be placed in an artificial nest that has been constructed in the Center’s 200-foot eagle flight cage. Other adult Bald Eagle patients may also be in this enclosure. While the chicks will be separated by a physical barrier from direct contact with other eagles, the eaglets will be able to see other eagles flying and feeding. As they begin to fledge, the barrier will be removed and the young eagles will have full access to the long enclosure, to build their wing strength and to learn to fly. The goal would be to get the young eagles ready for release back into the wild in late summer. .

In 2008, an eaglet was removed from NBG because it had a growth on its beak caused by avian pox. That bird – known as Buddy – is not able to be released back into the wild and still resides at the Wildlife Center and serves as an education bird.

According to Don Buma, Executive Director of Norfolk Botanical Garden, “The eagles have put Norfolk Botanical Garden on the map. They have increased awareness and developed an appreciation of nature for millions of school children and Eagle Cam viewers from around the world.”

Many people followed the progress of the Norfolk Botanical Garden eagles through the Eagle Cam hosted by WVEC TV 13 in Norfolk

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### **About Norfolk Botanical Garden (NBG)**

Norfolk Botanical Garden represents an oasis of over 30 theme gardens encompassing 155 beautiful acres. This diverse natural beauty can be explored by tram, boat or walking tours. NBG is accredited by the American Association of Museums, is recognized as a Virginia Historic Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

For more information about the Garden and classes, visit [www.norfolkbotanicalgarden.org](http://www.norfolkbotanicalgarden.org).

### **About Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF)**

It is the mission of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries to manage Virginia's wildlife and inland fish to maintain optimum populations of all species, while providing opportunities for all Virginians to enjoy the wildlife of the Commonwealth. VDGIF’s efforts are guided by Virginia’s Wildlife Action Plan. This Plan focuses on the species and habitats of greatest conservation need, but it is also a plan for the conservation of all Virginia's wildlife.

Learn more about Virginia's Wildlife Action Plan

[bewildvirginia.org/wildlifeplan/](http://bewildvirginia.org/wildlifeplan/)

Learn what's happening at the DGIF Blog

[www.dgif.virginia.gov/eaglecam/](http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/eaglecam/)

### **About WVEC.com**

WVEC.com is the award-winning website for WVEC Television, the ABC affiliate serving Hampton Roads and surrounding areas of Virginia and North Carolina. WVEC.com has hosted the Eagle Cam images since the camera went online in 2006. The station provides regular updates on the eagles on 13News.

View the Eagle Cam at [wvec.com/eaglecam](http://wvec.com/eaglecam).

### **About The Wildlife Center of Virginia (WCV)**

The Wildlife Center of Virginia is an internationally acclaimed teaching and research hospital for wildlife and conservation medicine located in Waynesboro. Every year, more than 2,000 animals - ranging from Bald Eagles to chipmunks - are brought to the Wildlife Center for care. Additional information about the Wildlife Center is available at [www.wildlifecenter.org](http://www.wildlifecenter.org).

### **Additional Support**

#### **Center for Conservation Biology at William & Mary (CCB)**

Center for Conservation Biology at William & Mary provides additional support for eagle banding, camera operation and educational support for the moderated chat.

<http://www.ccb-wm.org/>