

WHEN EVERY DAY IS WILD, VETERINARIANS VALUE DEPENDABILITY.

The Enduras Wireless helps one wildlife rehabilitation center treat hidden injuries.



The Wildest Patients

Veterinary care can be a challenge under the best of circumstances, but for wildlife centers, the task can be Herculean. Small budgets mean they are often volunteer-run labors of love, much like dog or cat shelters. Unlike those shelters, wildlife rehabilitation requires volunteers who have experience caring for everything from pelicans to turtles to the occasional manatee, none of whom are used to being around people.

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Wild animals do their best to hide weakness from potential predators, which means illness and injury end up being hidden from potential caretakers as well. This makes diagnostic capabilities crucial when caring for wildlife. Many refuges and rehabilitation centers choose MinXray’s portable DR and x-ray systems because they’re built to perform in challenging situations like these.



Where you care, we’re there.

The Texas Sealife Center

Just offshore from Corpus Christi, Texas, Padre Island is home to hundreds of different shore birds and sea turtles. Despite Padre Island National Seashore being the longest stretch of undeveloped barrier island in the world, the many endangered species that have found safe nesting grounds there are not completely protected from human interaction.



Fortunately, the Texas Sealife Center is there to care for those who get entangled in fishing lines, exposed to oil spills, injured by boats or otherwise hurt.

Amid the hotels, burger joints, water parks and residential neighborhoods on the north end of Padre Island is an unassuming blue building that houses the Texas Sealife Center.

Founded in 2013 and run by volunteers, the center is dedicated to rescuing, rehabilitating and releasing coastal and aquatic wildlife back into the wild.

On any given week, the center has around 50 patients: mostly sea turtles and shorebirds, and the occasional bottlenose dolphin or manatee. Major events like Hurricane Harvey in 2017 can double or triple that number in a few hours. Although the center has a few permanent residents, the goal is to return patients to their native habitat. How long that takes depends on the injury: animals that swallowed a fishing hook may only stay a week; severe head trauma may require a year of rehabilitation or more.

Balancing Diagnostics and Logistics

Until recently, diagnostic imaging for new arrivals wasn't always feasible, since the nonprofit did not have its own imaging system. Valuable time and energy was swallowed up transporting injured animals to other hospitals for x-rays.

"For small animals it's not too bad," says Dr. Tim Tristan, DVM, who leads the center's volunteer team. "But some of the larger sea turtles, they're 100, 150, 200 pounds. That's more of a logistical challenge."

Sea turtles are pretty cooperative on the x-ray table. But getting them there required finding enough volunteers to lift them safely and a vehicle large enough to transport them to the hospital. For birds, even sedated, the stress of travel and examination was significant.

As the organization grew, so did the time, energy and money it was spending on imaging services. After five years, investing in an imaging system made sense. Many of the veterinary practitioners Dr. Tristan talked to spoke highly of their MinXray



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systems, so he met with MinXray at the 2017 Exotics Con.

MinXray’s longevity as a company inspired confidence, but Texas Sealife ultimately chose MinXray’s **Enduras Wireless** system because of favorable reviews from other practitioners about how easy it was to use.

As Dr. Tristan and veterinary technician Amanda Terry discovered, that’s partly due to the “very thorough, very complete” training MinXray provided. “You don’t have to be a computer specialist to get in there and make an image lighter, darker, magnify a certain area,” he says of MinXray’s DXR imaging software. “It’s very user friendly.”

MinXray’s help didn’t end there. If they have technical questions or something’s not working, Texas Sealife doesn’t have to wonder who to call—MinXray backs the complete system with 24-7 available support.

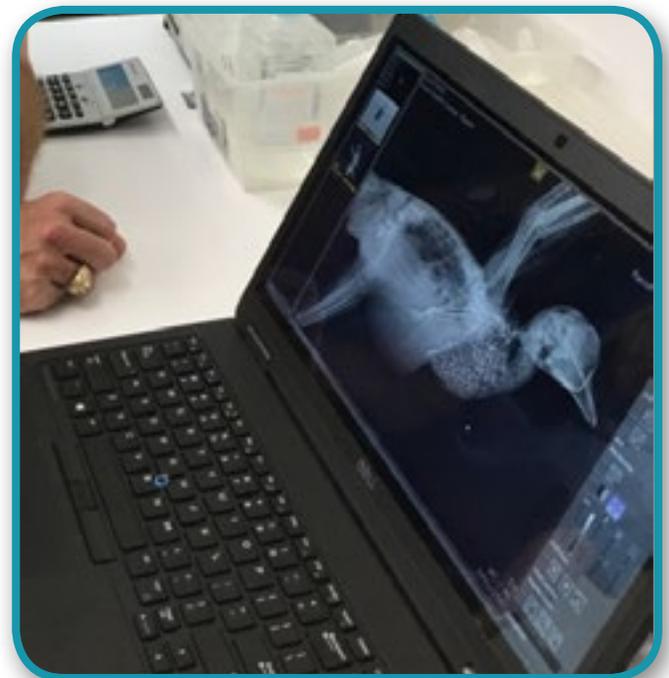
Better Images, Improved Care

For Texas Sealife, having an in-house imaging system is about more than convenience. The number of images the staff can take each week has increased from just a few each to around 20.

Having these extra diagnostic capabilities has made “all the difference in the world” in terms of quality of care.

They can respond to injured animals on the beach and determine if they need to be transported to the Center or take follow-up images by one of their rehabilitation pools instead of bringing them inside the hospital. Diagnostic imaging has become a standard part of the initial intake examination to look for broken bones or obstructions from foreign bodies.

Since logistics no longer prevent the staff from doing elective x-rays, Dr. Tristan and his staff are catching small but dangerous things they otherwise would have missed. A sea turtle coming in for a routine check-up may seem fine, but an x-ray will reveal a swallowed a fishing hook:



“Unfortunately, a rather common find.” Even if the cause isn’t visible, being able to see gas buildup in a turtle’s GI tract lets them know they need to adjust their treatment to include more fluids or antibiotics.

Tips for developing a technique chart

Unlike cats, dogs and other companion animals, there aren’t a lot of established imaging guidelines out there for exotics like sea turtles and shore birds. So for Texas Sealife, the biggest learning curve has been developing its technique charts.

Since more radiation is required to penetrate a turtle’s outer shell, established techniques for a 50-pound dog do not transfer well to a 50-pound sea turtle. In the past, zoo and exotic animal veterinarians might use a technique chart designed for companion animals or horses as a starting place to determine an appropriate technique for their patients. Often, it was a guessing game of numerous exposures and technique adjustments to get it right.

Now, with the aid of the MinXray imaging software, Texas Sealife is able to determine exactly what settings provide the image quality required for diagnostic radiographs for the wild animals they commonly treat.



Imaging capabilities also help the staff ensure the healing process goes well and improve the chance of a full recovery. When a Kemp’s ridley sea turtle with head trauma and a broken jaw was stable enough for orthopedic surgery, Texas Sealife did pre-surgery imaging to determine the best placement for pins to stabilize her jaw. After surgery, imaging helped them make sure the pins were in the right place and the jaw was in the right position.

In just a few months, Texas Sealife has significantly improved the quality of care it provides. Over the past 50 years, MinXray’s experienced staff has helped dozens of zoos, aquariums and wildlife refuges do the same. Our durable, high performance veterinary DR systems can be found around the world, from the Toledo Zoo to Thailand’s Elephant Park. Wherever you care and whatever you care for, we’re there with complete systems and complete support.

For more information about MinXray products, contact your local dealer or MinXray at:

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Where you care, we’re there.