

January 21, 2023

I was present at Beatty Gulch, mid-morning on 1/17/2023. There were about 12 treaty hunters present including myself. 7 to the north of me on my right, and 4 to the south of me on my left. The hunters seemed to all have presence of mind and as I glanced to the north, I motioned the closest person, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) to take 2 steps forward, I looked to my south and asked the closest hunter to take one step back to create a straight line. We then proceeded to aim and shoot bison. I was shooting in a standing position with shooting sticks, about ½ between the north boundary of USFS land and the access road that goes up thru beatty gulch. **This was very close to where old ditch crosses the shooting markers.** I shot my 26 Nosler 5 times and left my brass. After about 1-2 minutes of shooting and about 50-75 rounds fired, I saw a bullet impact the ground, about ½ way between (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and myself, and about 5-6 ft west of the line between (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and myself. I immediately yelled, ***"Stop shooting, someone is shooting at us."***

I glanced to the north and everyone rifle was pointed west away from us, except for (b) (6), (b) (7)(C). He was slightly east of his original spot and was quartering away from me. His rifle was not pointed at the bison, and it was covered by his back so I could not see what direction it was pointed in.


I glanced to my south and all the hunters had their rifles pointed at the bison away from us. There were 6-8 more rounds fired at bison from the north as word spread to stop firing. The complete cease fire took about a minute to achieve.

I watched (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) as he took 3 steps to the east, away from the line, and asked him if he was ok. He replied he had been hit and he reached under his vest to touch his lower right back. His hand did not have any blood on it when he withdrew it.

Then the other hunters were gathering around (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and it became chaotic. The other tribal game wardens were on site, and I tried to show them where my shooting sticks were standing, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) showed them where he was standing, and I marked the ground with my shoe where the bullet strike had hit the ground between us.

I stayed on that site until everyone dispersed to process the downed bison.

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)



Incident details

U.S. Department of the Interior , National Park Service
Printed: 01/24/2023 13:26
Incident: **NP23013986**

Incident details:

Report no.: NP23013986
Incident Type: Assistance (Agency/Visitor)
Incident time: 01/17/2023 08:59 -
Reported time: 01/17/2023 08:59
Place of offence: OLD YELLOWSTONE TRAIL, YELLOWSTONE, PARK MT USA 82190 (BEATTIE GULCH)
Clearance status: Closed - Incident only
Concluded: No
Concluded date:
Summary: YELL_NORTH_BACKCOUNTRY. Agency Assist - Report of bison hunter struck by apparent ricochet bullet.
Remarks:

Associated occurrences:

Involved persons:

- (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) / Crime victim / Gender: Male

Involved addresses:

- OLD YELLOWSTONE TRAIL / Dispatch address / YELLOWSTONE, Montana, USA 82190 (BEATTIE GULCH)

Involved comm addresses:

Involved vehicles:

- (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)
- [Redacted]

Involved officers:

- Assisting officer / (b) (6) NPS / Police Officer / NPS YELL / (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) 01/17/2023 / 20230117 --:--:--
- Reporting officer / (b) (6), (b) (7) NPS / Police Officer / NPS YELL / (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) / 01/17/2023 / 20230117 --:--:--

Involved property:**Modus operandi:****Reports:****Investigation log:**

Type	Entry time	Event time	Author	Link	Log entry
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General report:

Incident: NP23013986 Assistance (Agency/Visitor) @01/17/2023 08:59 (OLD YELLOWSTONE TRAIL, YELLOWSTONE, PARK MT USA 82190 (BEATTIE GULCH)) (YELL_NORTH_BACKCOUNTRY. Agency Assist - Report of bison hunter struck by apparent ricochet bullet.)

Task: T230016363 [Review - <<Overdue>> Sup chk] Due: 01/22/2023 12:39 CAD INTERFACE - (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) [Med] Import of CAD event into IMARS incident NP23013986 Assistance (Agency/Visitor) @01/17/2023 08:59 (OLD YELLOWSTONE TRAIL, YELLOWSTONE, PARK MT USA 82190

Author: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) **Report time:** 01/24/2023 13:18

Entered by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) **Entered time:** 01/24/2023 13:18

Remarks:

Narrative:

Summary:

On January 22, 2023, I, US Park Ranger (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was patrolling the north boundary of Yellowstone National Park near Reece Creek when a concerned citizen alerted me that a hunter had been struck by a bullet outside of the park while engaged in a legal tribal treaty hunt. The victim was reported to have suffered only minor injuries and denied needing medical attention. I immediately notified the USFS and Park County Montana Sheriff's Office of the incident. I, along with Montana FWP Game Warden (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) secured the area until the above agency representatives arrived and began their investigation.

Narrative:

On morning of January 22, 2023, I was patrolling the Beattie Gulch area just outside of the Yellowstone National Park boundary to monitor bison movements into and out of the legal USFS hunt area for state and tribal hunters in furtherance of Interagency Bison Management Plan goals.

Around 0820 hours, I parked at the north end of the hunt zone on the Old Yellowstone Trail South, facing south in order to best observe hunting activities as a bison herd moved into the area from the southeast. From this vantage point, I observed two hunters in orange hiking along the park boundary from the Beattie Gulch Trailhead (later identified as state bison license holder(s)). I also could see right in front of me a group of tribal hunters from Nez Perce and Umatilla tribes, maybe 8 to 10 hunters plus associated tribal game wardens, form a line along the

road and begin hiking in a coordinated fashion into the hunt area to the west and towards the incoming bison. As the bison herd entered the hunt area, I observed and heard the tribal hunters fire 30 or more bullets at the bison. I noticed that several bison appeared to have been hit/injured and were starting to make their way back to the park with the surviving members of the bison herd. It appeared that the shooting was over at this time, and the herd of bison continued moving southwesterly back towards Yellowstone National Park (closed to hunting).

I started to drive towards the Yellowstone National Park boundary where I believed the bison would be crossing back into the park so that I could observe the animals and check for injured or shot bison that may be wounded. As I was driving past the gated entrance to the Beattie Gulch Road, I had my windows down and could hear an additional shot (possibly a small caliber firearm discharge). I then heard a thud followed immediately by the whizzing sound of a ricocheted bullet.

I continued to a location just inside of the park and observed the bison as they passed by me. A local citizen, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), pulled up to my patrol vehicle and informed me that someone had been shot and there was a lot of commotion back in the Beattie Gulch hunt area. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) stated he thought the hunter that was shot was now field dressing his harvested bison and didn't seem injured. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) described hearing a small caliber shot followed by the sound of a bullet striking metal.

I immediately returned to where the tribal hunter vehicles were parked along the roadway.

As I drove back to the area of the tribal hunters, I could hear someone yelling from the hunt area stating "the white man shot the Indian." I could not identify the subject from my location, but I could hear the phrase repeatedly yelled for next several minutes.

At the gated entrance to the Beattie Gulch Road, I met MT FWP Game Warden (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and shared the report I had just received about a hunter being shot. I could also see that several Nez Perce and Umatilla game wardens were in the field in a group with numerous hunters near the clean zone/hunting boundary.

Seeing Warden (b) (6) and I arrive on scene, "(b) (6) a game warden for the Nez Perce tribe, left the group of tribal wardens and hunters and began walking toward us. (b) (6) met us at the roadside and relayed that a hunter had been struck by a ricochet bullet. (b) (6) pointed towards a hunter off in the distance indicating the apparent victim. (b) (6) stated that the hunter was fine and was beginning to field dress his bison harvests. We asked (b) (6) to help get the hunter out to our location in order to gather additional information. A young boy (10-12 years old) was with (b) (6) I noted the young boy had a black hand gun stuffed into an open binocular chest harness. The young boy pointed to a hunter in the field and stated that the hunter was (b) (6), (b) (6), (b) (6) and that he had been shot.

The apparent gun-shot victim, self-identified as (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) arrived at the roadside a few moments later and showed Warden (b) (6) and I where the bullet hit.

We confirmed with him that he did not wish for medical care (ambulance) and that the bullet was not inside of him. I used my government cell phone to photograph the injury. There was no damage to his clothing where the bullet impacted. The injury appeared to barely break the skin and left a badly bruised circle about half to one inch width on (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) lower right back.

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) described being the first hunter headed out towards the bison. He said after he successfully shot and dropped a bison, he waited for the other shots to end before deciding to walk forward with the rest of his hunting party to their harvested bison. As he began forward, he stated that he heard more shots coming from behind and north of him (pointing to an area towards the main road – Old Yellowstone Trail South – and north towards the end of the line of hunter vehicles). He said his back hurt instantly after hearing the shots, and he discovered he was hit with the bullet/bullet fragment.

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) shared that his uncle told him that the shots came from the hunters who were south of their location along the park boundary and that this theory “made more sense” to him. He further stated that other hunters he was in line with all walked forward at the same time (in a line, walking due west) when the additional shots were fired that supposedly struck (b) (6), (b) (7)(C).

Warden (b) (6) finished talking with (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) while I took a call from the responding PCSO deputy. I did overhear (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) tell (b) (6) that he did not want any warnings issued for whoever shot him. Warden (b) (6) told (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) that he could return to his harvested bison to begin field dressing it. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) was instructed to stay in the area until Forest Service and a sheriff deputy arrived on scene.

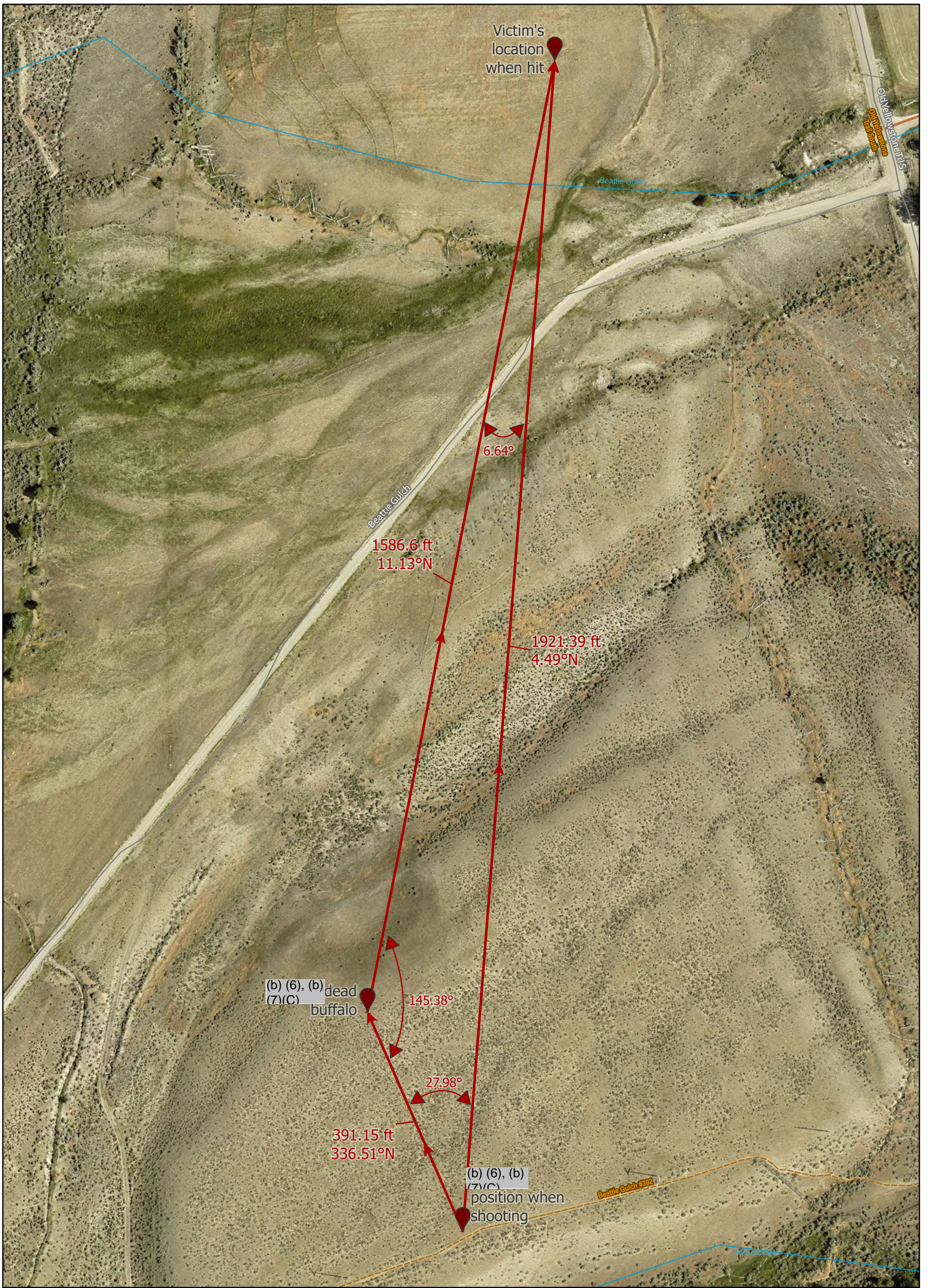
Supervisory US Park Ranger (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) also responded to the area and assisted by identifying the state hunting party vehicle that was parked at the Beattie Gulch Trailhead. (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) ran the vehicle through dispatch and held that information for the responding (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) USFS and PCSO deputy.

MT FWP Warden (b) (6), Ranger (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and I stayed in the area ensuring no hunters left the area and waited until USFS LEO (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and PCSO Deputy (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) arrived. All hunters in the area remained in the field dressing and processing their bison harvests.

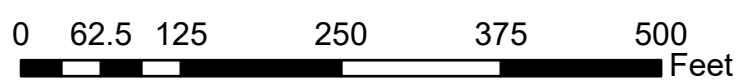
PCSO Deputy (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) arrived on scene at approximately 0945 hours and the scene was turned over to him. USFS LEO (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) arrived a few minutes later at 0948.

Ranger (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) and I stayed on scene at the Beattie Gulch Trailhead until 1042 hours when we cleared and returned to normal duties in Yellowstone.

END OF REPORT.



Beattie Gulch Incident Park County, MT



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Lab Accession #71993

Received from: (b) (6), (b) (7) USFS

Samples submitted: One bison head

Examinations Performed: radiographs, wound examination

Diagnosis: gunshot to head

One bison head was received at the FWP Wildlife Health Lab on 1/23/23. Upon visual inspection, there was a large amount of dried blood in the poll area and near the left horn. A large incision was present just to the right of midline on the poll. Beneath the incision, a round hole (diameter approx. 15mm) was present in the frontal bone of the skull, approximately 3.5 cm to the right of midline.

X-rays were taken of the head. On dorsoventral images, several very small, moderately radiodense fragments were observed in the area of the skull wound.

The wound was explored to attempt retrieval of any of the small fragments. Four pieces of copper casing ranging from 3-5 mm in length, 2 copper fragments measuring 1-2 mm in length, 2 suspected lead fragments measuring 1-2 mm in length, and 5-10 tiny pieces of blue polymer tip were retrieved from the wound.

No large bullet fragments were observed on radiographs or found during exploration of the wound, and it is my opinion that there are no large lead fragments present within the bison head that we received. The USFS officer reports finding a larger fragment in the area of the shoulder.

It is common for projectiles to fragment when hitting or penetrating large dense bone such as the skull. Small lightweight fragments are more likely to remain near the area of impact while larger heavier fragments may have enough momentum to travel farther from the site of impact. Radiographs can be challenging in very large animals with very dense bone with the x-ray equipment FWP has available. While lead fragments are much more radiodense than copper, very small lead fragments can be difficult to visualize on radiographs, especially when surrounded by large, dense bone. Moderately sized or large lead fragments are generally much easier to detect on x-rays. Copper fragments often have very similar radiodensity to bone, so very small copper fragments can be difficult to differentiate from bone fragments unless they can be retrieved. Large copper fragments can often be differentiated from bone based on their shape.

(b) (6), (b) (7)

Montana FWP Wildlife Veterinarian