

Hambone Award Contender

Have you ever heard of the Hambone Award? It's a prize given out by Veterinary Pet Insurance, the nation's largest and oldest pet insurance company. Each month, the company selects the most unusual claims and chooses a monthly winner to vie for the yearly prize – the Hambone Award. Don't worry, all the contenders are pets who survived their ordeals. Last year's winner Ellie, a Labrador retriever from California, went to the emergency room after eating an entire beehive. She vomited large piles containing hundreds of dead bees, but Ellie was not harmed by the dead bees nor by the pesticide that killed them.

When reading suburban Chicago newspaper The Daily Herald's online headlines, the following caught my eye, "Owl Vs. Chihuahua", and that's where I read about Chico the Chihuahua's brave fight against a Great Horned Owl. Chico's owner was taking him for a walk in the wee hours of the morning, when a Great Horned Owl swooped out of nowhere (owls are silent flight birds) and picked up poor Chico, intending him for his late night snack. Chico and his owner won the tug-of-war, and Chico won the VPI 'most unusual' story for the month of January, beating out such claims as a Labrador retriever that ate a marijuana cookie, a Golden retriever that swallowed a 5-inch barbecue skewer, a mutt that got wedged between banister bars and a Boston terrier who collided with a skier. If you'd like to read the other entries and be part of the public voting in September, you can go to the [VPI Hambone Award's website](#).

Oh, and how did the Hambone Award get its name? There was a dog insured by VPI who got himself trapped in a refrigerator and ate an entire Thanksgiving ham before he was discovered. He was treated for a mild case of hypothermia whereupon he fully recovered.