

Welcome to

# INSTINCTS



FEB 2023

Vol 12:1

*"The newsletter helping you follow your Wild Instincts."*

## 2022 in Review

As 2022 began, we thought we would be getting back to a semblance of normal. We thought we'd be allowing the public in the building again and be able to exhale.

Then Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) made its way to the U.S.

Not only were we not able to relax our biosecurity, it had to be enhanced!

We rose to the challenge again, though, even establishing quarantine areas of the parking lot!

We managed to keep our doors open to all species with the exception of a few individual animals exhibiting symptoms of the disease.

Not all facilities were able to do this which, as with SARS CoV2 and wildlife issues, resulted in more animals being diverted to us from areas of the state we don't normally admit animals from. Because HPAI is so highly contagious, we had to protect our residents and cancel any education programs. We even had to limit our volunteers again.

The biosecurity requirements made for a challenging year for interns as well. Normal raptor handling was limited and even photos of their handling their first eagle required gowns and masks that hid their smiles.

HPAI brought not only disruption, but devastation. Even though it is an avian disease, it was found to affect certain mammal species that ate infected birds. Red fox kits were especially hard hit and the effects they suffered were heartbreaking to deal with, even for seasoned rehabbers used to dealing with heartbreak.

As fall migration ended and HPAI faded away with it, we were able to resume a few education programs before 2022 ended.

As we look forward to 2023, we are bracing for the possibility HPAI repeats again this year. For now, however, we have opened our doors again. Public is allowed in the lobby until further notice. We will likely need to close to general public again if not for HPAI, then later for SARS CoV2 risks to fawns.

We are also hoping the WDNR removes its restrictions on otter, mink, weasel, fisher, bobcat and bats. We have offered suggestions to this end, including we would keep shuttered to the public to help keep the risk minimal. Currently, we have resumed education programs, presenting three in one week in January already!

The year 2022 was the first year in our 12- year history we did not set an admission record. We are very grateful for that considering the toll the season took on all of us without the extra admission numbers.

We admitted 1074 patients from 114 different species from 46 different counties and three different states in 2022.

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO US!

On January 25, Wild Instincts turned 12! We celebrate every day we have the privilege of being able to do this work.

The only reason we can continue to do so, though, is because of the support of all of you.

Therefore, any celebration is really to celebrate all of you.  
Happy Anniversary to YOU ALL!



### **AMAZON LOSES ITS SMILE**

Millions of non-profits were notified in January that after ten years, Amazon has ended its AmazonSmile program. Their program gave a small percentage of your purchase to a charity of your choice. It will be a financial hit to us for sure. Your shopping had given us enough funds each quarter to bridge between fundraisers. We are disheartened by this decision and know we are not alone. You may continue to use our [Wish List](#) to find items we need you could purchase for us should you choose. There are a wide range of items with a wide range of prices.



### **IN HONOR OR MEMORY OF**

~In Memory of Rita Staus, a long-time wildlife rescue transporter and friend of Wild Instincts  
~In Honor of Norma Christiansen's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday  
~In Memory of Dr. Charles H. Faulkner who loved wildlife

~In Honor of Joanne DeWig  
~In Honor of Nancy Cameron  
~In Honor of Dave Hering  
~In Memory of Michael J Wanty 1999-2016  
~in Memory of Denny Gramins and in thanksgiving for Cheryl Gamins  
~In Memory of Sonja Mackey  
~In Memory of Al Matthiesen  
~In Memory of Meg George 3/17/45-7/16/22, City Girl blossomed into Country Girl  
~In Memory of Ron Brekke  
~In Memory of Uncle Jim  
~In Honor of Erinn Brogren  
~In Honor of Kathy Hoffman  
~In Honor of Kathy Hilgers  
~In Honor of Wild Instincts' 12<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
~In Memory of "Ruby"

### **RUBY**

In August 2012, Sharon was messaged a photo by a friend with the question "Is this legal?" The photo from Facebook was of a young red-tailed hawk perching on the back of a Lazy Boy recliner. The answer to the question was an emphatic "No!".

Sharon contacted the conservation warden immediately. As luck had it, way back in 2012, he was the only warden dealing with cyber-based investigations and was excited to get this resolved. He hunted down the responsible parties quickly but being the kind of people who kidnapped injured wildlife, they actively moved the bird around, playing hide & seek with the warden for a couple days.

When the bird finally arrived on August 27<sup>th</sup> it was clear she had head trauma and a serious eye injury, likely from a collision with a car. Just like with people, the faster medical attention is administered to an animal, the chances of a better outcome are increased. We did our best, but she couldn't overcome her injuries enough to be released. She did, however, graciously agree to be Wild Instincts' first education ambassador and became known as Ruby.

Late last summer Ruby became gravely ill. She couldn't even stand. The cause most likely was

West Nile Virus (WNV), a virus spread by mosquitoes. This illness can be difficult to overcome and can leave long-term neurological issues.

After nine weeks of intensive treatment, she regained her neurological functions. She started eating on her own and was able to stand and perch again.

She even participated in an education program in December!

We were very hopeful but also very guarded. Unfortunately, despite all efforts, she was unable to overcome the ravages the disease did to her liver and kidneys. She passed away January 5, 2023 at 10.5 years of age.

In those 10 years, she was a perfect education ambassador. She was patient with the interns learning to handle raptors. She was rock-solid in the chaos of crowds. She taught 1000's of people how to be better to their wild neighbors. We are heartbroken but know that the lessons she helped teach will make the world a better place.

beautiful bird; she was a teacher, an ambassador for wildlife, and an incredible coworker to all who had the privilege of working with her. Through her time at Wild Instincts, she touched countless lives, including mine, inspiring wonder and respect for the animal kingdom. It breaks my heart that it was time to say goodbye to Ruby, but her legacy will live on through the lessons she taught us all. Rest in peace, dear Ruby and one final thank you for helping inspire my decision to become a Wildlife Rehabber.”  
Lauren Gibbons, Wildlife Care Specialist, Pennsylvania

“I am so extremely grateful to have worked with such an astounding raptor like Ruby. She was not only stunning, but magnificently well-trained and intelligent. Sending my condolences.”  
Dr. Jennifer Nhu Y Nuhguyen, DVM, Texas

Some former interns share some memories of Ruby:



Intern Lauren with Ruby.  
Summer 2018

“Ruby was the first bird of prey I had the honor of working with. She was such a patient and gentle bird. She left an incredible mark on all who knew her. Ruby was more than just a



Intern Jen with Ruby  
Summer/Fall 2015

“I met Ruby during my second internship at Wild Instincts. She had the best demeanor and allowed many interns, including myself, the opportunity to learn how to handle their first bird of prey on a glove. On my days off, I enjoyed going up and hanging out with her. We would practice putting her equipment on, picking her up, and being comfortable sitting on the glove. Ruby helped me to become more comfortable talking in front of groups of people. This has helped me in my current role as a zookeeper with having to give keeper talks.

Ruby was a wonderful ambassador for her species and will be missed by many.”  
Becky Semke, Zookeeper, Kansas



Intern Becky with Ruby  
Summer 2013

## **RAPTOR RESCUE & TRANSPORT DRIVERS NEEDED**

Rescue/Transport is one of the most important volunteer functions we have here at Wild Instincts. Not one of the 1074 patients we admitted last year drove themselves to us for help.

If an animal in need of help, can't get to help it doesn't even have a chance.

We treat all species and admit patients from any county in Wisconsin, therefore we need drivers from all geographic areas! Because this is such an important function, we are always looking for more volunteers.

Would you like to help injured & orphaned wildlife get to the help they need? Do you have a vehicle & a valid driver's license?

The Wild Instincts Animal Ambulance Team needs YOU!

Animal Transport means we would call you for an animal that is already contained and in a box that just needs a ride to us.

Raptor Rescue means we would call you to retrieve a hawk or owl or eagle that needs to be caught, put in a container and then given a ride to us. Raptor Rescue volunteers are also trained in Animal Transport.

The training is free. If at the end of the training session you decide you don't think it's for you, no problem. You can choose what level, if

either, you are comfortable with.

Sign up for one of the sessions and see if this may be a way you can help us help them.

Training sessions will be Thursday, March 9<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8:00 p.m. or Saturday, March 11<sup>th</sup> from 10:00-11:30 a.m.

You only need to attend one of the days.

Please email [info@wildinstinctsrehab.com](mailto:info@wildinstinctsrehab.com) or call 715-362-9453 to RSVP by March 7<sup>th</sup>.

## **LIGHTS!**

For the last seven years, Lights of the Northwoods, a non-profit organization, has placed thousands of lights at Hodag Park in Rhinelander to brighten the holidays. There is a free-will monetary donation and collection of items from people enjoying the display which is then distributed to non-profit organizations in the area. December 2022 was the first time Wild Instincts was asked to participate.

Our volunteers enjoyed the evenings spent among the lights and people, plus Wild Instincts received newspapers, canned pet food and \$500.00 to brighten our holidays.

Looking forward to next year.



Wild Instincts Volunteers Terry, Dawn, Patti and staff Kaitlin volunteer at Lights of the Northwoods 2022.

## **WE'RE LOOKING FOR INTERNS!**

[www.wildinstinctsrehab.com](http://www.wildinstinctsrehab.com)

715-362-9453 (362-WILD)  
4621 Apperson Dr., Rhinelander, WI 54501

715-490-2727(cell)

Do you know a college student wondering what they should do for summer employment/experience? Or someone who may have graduated at semester and wants something for spring? We have some internship vacancies.

<https://wildinstinctsrehab.com/internship-opportunities>



Interns performing various intern tasks.

### **PREPARE FOR SPRING BIRDS**

It may not look like it outside, but in a few short weeks, the avian migrants will be passing through and the harbingers of spring will be arriving.

As these incredible miracle athletes of the sky make their way hundreds of miles, thousands for some of them, feeding stations can be important way stations to help them with their journeys.

It's important to remember to clean our bird feeders, especially leading up to and during migration. Many birds are putting on so many miles and are depleting their energy stores making them more vulnerable to all sorts of calamities. Let's not make our feeders one of those!

Mold, bacteria like Salmonella and pathogens can all thrive in and around feeders. It's important to clean all old seed, dirt and feces from all feeders. Take feeders down, take them apart as much as possible, using soap and water, scrub them with a toothbrush. As an alternative, you could run them through the hot cycle on your dishwasher.

After they are clean and sparkly, then soak them in a 10% bleach solution for 10 minutes. After all that, rinse, rinse, rinse!

Let them dry and refill as usual.

It is also important to clean the areas around the feeders. Spent seed, feces, wet weather,

etc. make for prolific breeding grounds for all sorts of pathogens; pathogens that can be harmful to many different animals and spread easily.

Because feeders offer you an up-close view of birds, and because birds seek out easy meals when their health is compromised, you may sometimes see a sick bird at your feeder. If you see a bird that appears to be sick or injured, call us or another wildlife rehabilitator. Do not try to care for the bird yourself. It is illegal for you to possess most wild birds unless you are under the direction of someone licensed for their care. If a sick bird comes to your feeder, minimize the risk of infecting other birds by thoroughly cleaning your feeders as outlined above.

If you see several sick birds, take down all your feeders for at least a week to give the birds a chance to disperse. Remember that prevention is the key to avoiding the spread of disease. Cleaning your feeders and the areas around them every couple of weeks, even if there are no signs of disease, will help keep our feather friends healthy and spreading their joy and not spreading their disease.

In addition, monitor the news in your area to see if the Highly Pathogenic Avian Flu makes another appearance this year. If it does, follow the advice given for your local area regarding feeders.

## **SALMONELLOSIS**

Salmonellosis is a bacterial disease caused by a group of bacteria in the genus salmonella. All species of birds are susceptible to salmonella infection. Salmonellosis is a common cause of sickness and death in birds at birdfeeders. There are many different strains of salmonella. Many different types of animals can carry salmonella, including rodents. The bacteria live in the intestines and pass out with the feces. The organism can be spread from bird to bird through direct contact, or through ingestion of food or water contaminated with feces from an infected bird or mammal. Carriers of the organism may appear healthy but shed the organism periodically in their feces.

There are no distinctive signs associated with salmonellosis in wild birds. Different species and

ages may exhibit different signs even when infected with the same strain.



A Pine Siskin exhibiting some of the signs of Salmonellosis such as fluff/ruffled feathers, droopiness. Below shows same bird unsteadily perching on a dish.



Commonly reported signs include ruffled feathers, droopiness, diarrhea, and severe lethargy; chronically infected birds often appear severely emaciated. Sick birds may also be observed to seizure.

Birds fly many miles, especially during migration periods. Remember, just because a bird shows up at your feeders with signs of the disease, doesn't mean it became infected at your feeding stations.

Because the disease is spread through close contact with other birds and their feces, the

USGS National Wildlife Health Center recommends taking down your feeders for at least a week (even two) to allow the birds to disperse and help stop the spread of the disease.



**CULVER'S SHARE NIGHT**

Most of us in the Midwest (especially Wisconsin!) know eating Culver's Butter Burgers can make most things better.

Did you know eating them can also help make bears better? Or eating fries can help finches? Or drinking malts can mend merlins?

On Thursday, March 23, eating those things or anything on the menu can help all the wildlife Wild Instincts treats.

Culver's in Rhinelander will donate 10% of the sales from 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> to Wild Instincts when they host a Culver's Share Night for Wild Instincts.

Gather up your family and friends then head to Culver's in Rhinelander to get great food to help a great cause!

Species Admitted 1/1-12/31/22

American Beaver	1
American Bittern	2
American Black Bear	10
American Coot	1
American Crow	13
American Goldfinch	6
American Kestrel	6

American Robin	42
American Toad	1
American Woodcock	2
Bald Eagle	41
Baltimore Oriole	1
Barred Owl	12
Belted Kingfisher	12
Big Brown Bat	4
Black-and-White Warbler	1
Black-capped Chickadee	4
Blue Jay	5
Broad-winged Hawk	18
Canada Goose	19
Cedar Waxwing	6
Chipping Sparrow	13
Common Garter Snake	2
Common Grackle	13
Common Loon	6
Common Merganser	1
Common Nighthawk	1
Common Raven	7
Common Redpoll	7
Common Snapping Turtle	15
Common Yellowthroat	1
Cooper's Hawk	1
Coyote	4
Dark-eyed Junco	2
Deer Mouse	46
Downy Woodpecker	3
Eastern Chipmunk	7
Eastern Cottontail	193
Eastern Fox Snake	1
Eastern Gray Squirrel	92
Eastern Painted Turtle	2
Eastern Whip-poor-will	1
European Starling	7
Evening Grosbeak	1
Flying Squirrel, Southern	21
Fox Sparrow	1
Gray Fox	3
Gray Treefrog	2
Great Blue Heron	3
Great Horned Owl	5
Green Heron	1

Hairy Woodpecker	6
Hermit Thrush	2
Herring Gull	1
Hooded Merganser	7
House Sparrow	6
House Wren	1
Least Sandpiper	1
Lincoln's Sparrow	2
Little Brown Bat	1
Mallard Duck	40
Meadow Jumping Mouse	5
Meadow Vole	26
Merlin	6
Midland Painted Turtle	1
Mourning Dove	10
Muskrat	1
Nashville Warbler	1
North American Porcupine	2
Northern Cardinal	4
Northern Flicker	1
Northern Raccoon	24
Northern Saw-Whet Owl	1
Northern Short-tailed Shrew	1
Northern Water Snake	1
Norway Rat	1
Osprey	6
Ovenbird	4
Pileated Woodpecker	1
Pine Grosbeak	2
Pine Siskin	3
Purple Finch	3
Red Fox	23
Red Squirrel	30
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1
Red-eyed Vireo	6
Red-tailed Hawk	5
Ring-billed Gull	4
Rock Dove	4
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	7
Rough-legged Hawk	1
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	14
Ruffed Grouse	12
Sandhill Crane	3

Snowshoe Hare	3
Snowy Owl	4
Song Sparrow	1
Spotted Salamander	2
Striped Skunk	1
Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel	1
Trumpeter Swan	3
Turkey Vulture	2
Veery	1
Virginia Opossum	7
Western Painted Turtle	26
White-breasted Nuthatch	3
White-tailed Deer	39
White-throated Sparrow	2
Wood Duck	11
Wood Turtle	2
Woodchuck	7
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	7
Yellow-rumped Warbler	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1074</b>

St. Germain Community UCC Thrift Shop donates to Wild Instincts.



Pictured are L to R: Betty Shufelt, Mark Naniot and Pat Rockafeld.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Raptor Rescue & Transport Training  
Thursday, March 9<sup>th</sup>



6:30-7:00pm Animal Transport only  
7:00-8:00pm Raptor Rescue\*

OR

Saturday, March 11<sup>th</sup>  
10:00-10:30am Animal Transport only  
10:30-11:30am Raptor Rescue\*

\*Those wishing to be trained in Raptor Rescue  
must also attend the Animal Transport session

Culver's Share Night (Rhinelanders Only)

March 23 from 4:00-8:00 p.m.  
Culver's, 620 W Kemp St., Rhinelanders  
10% of sales benefit Wild Instincts

Welcome to

# INSTINCTS



MAY (now really JUNE 2023

Vol 12:2

*“The newsletter helping you follow your Wild Instincts.”*

## JUST IN TIME

On March 31, 2023, WDNR announced they were revisiting the temporary ban placed on Mustelids and Felids if facilities could meet additional extra biosecurity protocols. We’re thrilled to announce Wild Instincts met those protocols and as of April 26, 2023, can now admit all species we did before the Pandemic began.



Some of the species affected by the temporary ban we will again be able to admit.

The timing of this decision could not be better. While it certainly doesn’t look like Spring out there, Nature is nonetheless keeping to her schedule. All these babies are being born at this time.

Now we are again able to help otters, fishers, badgers, weasels, and bobcats.

In addition, the ban on certain bat species has also been removed - just in time. We admitted a female silver-haired bat two days after it was removed.

We can again admit otters, minks, fishers, weasels, badgers, bobcats and all species of bats!

## SILVER-HAIRED BAT

Silver-haired bats are named for the silver ticking on their dark fur. They are one of Wisconsin’s four species of “Tree Bats”. Tree Bat is a name given to those seasonal resident bat species that migrate to warmer places of the country during the winter. Cave Bats are those species considered to be year-round residents of Wisconsin. Silver-haired bats are found roosting in trees and outside shelters in the summer. Like many of the returning summer residents this year, the return of the snow and cold likely caused some hardship.



Female silver-haired bat being examined. Notice the silver tips on the hair from which the species gets its name.

## SUMMER INTERNS

Every year we rely on interns to help get us through the busy season. Not only does it help us, it gives people interested in future careers in animal care such as veterinary science, zoo-keeping, wildlife biology as well as wildlife rehabilitation invaluable hands-on experience.

By the time the Summer Interns start, Babies have already been arriving for a few weeks.

This means six Summer Interns arrive to over 160 patients to care for with more coming in every day.

The first few days are absolutely overwhelming for them, but as the weeks fly by, they all get into a routine.

In an immersion program such as ours, it's impossible for them not to become a different person by the time they leave. Watching the growth and development of the interns is almost as rewarding as watching the growth and development of the patients.

Our interns come from all over the country so please be patient when you

are talking to an intern on the phone. They often don't realize there is a community called Lake Tomahawk that is different than the community of Tomahawk.

We consider ourselves a "teaching hospital".

You will also likely be asked to be put on hold a few times on the phone while they ask questions. There is a lot involved in wildlife rehabilitation and every situation is unique. We don't want to give out incorrect advice, so your patience will help them learn about our patients-and ultimately about themselves along the way.



Top Left: Lorena

Top Right: Morgan

Bottom L-R: Ainsley, Margaret, Kiana, Ben

## RED FOX WOES

Last year it was discovered Red Foxes were highly susceptible to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). It was brutal and heartbreaking, especially affecting the young.

Adult foxes would catch infected birds and bring them back to feed their young, which would then become infected with the virus and die.

Now new research has shown that Red Fox are also able to carry the SARS CoV2 virus. They were added to the list of species requiring extra biosecurity protocols this year.

We are happy to be able to provide care to a species facing extra challenges. These two were admitted just days after our tightened biosecurity protocols. They had been wandering outside someone's place of business for a couple days.

These two were followed shortly by eight more bringing the total in care currently to 11!

The last eight were really kidnapped. The finders lied to us, didn't follow our directions and destroyed the den. While they will do well here, the sad part is a whole family was separated for no reason AND now resources for those who really would need help are being used by those who didn't need help.



Red fox napping



Fox feet stick out as they nap comfortably between meals.



Two approximately six-week old red fox orphans

## YOU CAN HELP

In normal years, wildlife rehab is difficult work. This year Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) appears to not be a great concern in Wisconsin, but we are continuing to be cautious.

We still have many SARS CoV2 concerns in many different species requiring diligent biosecurity, so it looks as if wildlife rehab this year will remain more challenging than most years.

Baby Season is here in full force.

We know you are reading this because you care about our wild neighbors and want to help.

Here are important ways you can help:

1. BE KIND!

Wildlife rehabbers receive no funding from State or Federal agencies but must follow the rules of those agencies. We do not make the rules but to keep our permits we must follow them. There are many valid reasons why you cannot keep the wild baby you found. These reasons protect not only the animal but people as well. We do not have time to explain each of them to you. Rest assured because we follow the rules does not mean we don't care. Calling us uncaring or unhelpful or other names not repeatable here says more about you than it does about us but still can take a toll on us.

2. DON'T LIE!

When you call regarding an animal, we will ask many questions. Some may seem irrelevant or silly to you. They are not. Answer truthfully. We are experts in natural history of hundreds of different species, especially for certain geographic areas. We will likely know you are lying. It will delay getting the animal you profess to care about the help/care it needs.

3. LISTEN!

There used to be many more rehabbers able to admit fawns three years ago as there are

today. After an all-time low of two facilities covering the needs of orphaned and injured fawns across the entire state, a few more are slowly being added. Each of these facilities have limits on how many they can admit (see #1 above).

Please follow our advice and work with us, not against us. We all want what's best for the animal in front of you and the one tomorrow that will need our help even more.

4. BE RESPECTFUL!

We are professionals. A lot of time, education, effort and expense goes into what we do. The Internet does not. Google may seem to have all the answers, but it rarely has THE RIGHT answers.

Just because our professional assessment doesn't match your desire to abduct that precious little creature you found doesn't mean we don't care about it. Likely it means we care about the *animal* more than we care about YOU feeling like a hero or trying to give your kids a "fun" experience. Yes, there are coyotes and other predators in nature. Wild babies are given traits to protect them from natural predators. Most are not given protection from human predators, however well-meaning they may be. Your insults truly say more about you than they say about us. Would you insult (or hang up on) the emergency service personnel you called for

help because you don't like their professional assessment?

5. CONTROL YOUR PETS

There has been an unusually high amount of calls regarding dogs bringing home baby animals, especially fawns, from some unknown spot. So much during baby season is out of our control: animals darting in front of cars, accidentally digging up something by the rototiller.

Keeping your cats inside or supervising your dogs while out is something totally within your control.

6. PREVENT WINDOW STRIKES

Stop birds from hitting your windows by using window decals or our favorite: use window screen replacement available from any hardware or building supply store. Cut the screening to fit your window, but instead of using it on the inside, Velcro, thumbtack, staple or otherwise fasten it to the OUTSIDE window framing. The screen is on the outside of the window, stopping all glare and reflection, but you can still see through the window from the inside.

7. SLOW DOWN & ENJOY

It's that time of year when people and wildlife are out an about in larger numbers. Remember that wild babies are also about and trying to navigate all the same areas you are. Slow

down so we ALL have a great, enjoyable summer

8. SUPPORT US

We receive no funding from State or Federal agencies. In fact, it is illegal in Wisconsin for rehabbers to charge for their services. We rely completely on the generosity of people like you. Give what you can, no matter how big or small, we appreciate it all. It does make a difference to our wild neighbors.



**IN HONOR OR MEMORY OF**

- ~In Honor of Mike & Jill Bowles
- ~In Memory of Kenneth Miller
- ~In Memory of Paul Iwanski
- ~In Memory of Dave Rasmussen, great person & friend, best golf coach ever
- ~In Memory of Helen Halverson
- ~In Memory of Judy Bedard
- ~In Memory of Winnie Tomasek
- ~In Honor of the Bear Cubs
- ~In Memory of Elsie Van Tassell
- ~In Memory of Sue Mixis
- ~In Honor & In Memory of all Mothers & Other Mothers
- ~ In Memory of Jerry Maynard
- ~ In Honor of Jesse & Laurie Bielen's wedding
- ~ In Honor of Mike Bowles 76<sup>th</sup> Birthday
- ~ In Honor of Bo Marvin's 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday

## ARE YOU BEARWISE?

Black bears are out of hibernation. The long, cool, wet spring has been difficult for them in places.

Like for all of us nowadays, quick, easy meals are very alluring. For bears, that may be your garbage, your grill or your birdfeeders.

Bears have adapted to living near people. Now it's time for people to adapt to living near bears with the least amount of conflict possible.

Click [HERE](#) to visit BearWise to learn more about living in harmony with one of our iconic Northwoods Neighbors.



One of 12 orphaned bear cubs currently in care at Wild Instincts.

## FIFTH ANNUAL WILD ScaVenture

Do you love wildlife?

Do you love puzzles?

Do you love a challenge?

If you answered yes to even one of those questions, then Wild ScaVenture 2023 is for you!!

Over the years we heard lots of feedback from people who support our mission but couldn't get to local fundraisers because they weren't local.

**WE HEARD YOU!**

We developed the family-gearred Wild ScaVenture. The game's clues and missions are designed to be played from your smartphone wherever you are in the world provided you have a cell phone signal.

### What is a Wild ScaVenture?

A ScaVenture is part scavenger hunt and part adventure (**Scavenger** hunt + **Adventure**). It's also one of Wild Instincts' annual fundraising events.

missions using a free app downloaded on your smartphone.

### Why should I participate?

Wild Instincts is permitted by the state & federal government but receives no funding from them. Wild Instincts ONLY funding comes from generous people like you This fun, family-friendly event helps raise funds for Wild Instincts to care for orphaned and injured wildlife by moving some gold coin from your treasure chest into our treasure chest while you have fun and learn things along the way.

### How do I participate?

Gather a team of no more than 6 people. At least one needs to have a smartphone with a data plan.

Decide on a FAMILY FRIENDLY team name and chose a team captain.

Register (on-line registration is scheduled to open July 1st)

If you cannot get a team together, there is a Lone Wolf option to assign you to a team.

Cost is \$100/team or \$25 for the Lone Wolf option.

Download the free GooseChase app to your phone. You will be given a game code. Complete as many missions as you can.

#### What do I win?

You mean other than that warm fuzzy feeling for helping us help them while having a blast with your friends and family?

First Prize = \$100

Second Prize = \$75

Third Prize = \$50

#### Wild ScaVentures RULES

*Safety first for everyone-* This ScaVenture is fun for the entire family, but make sure any minors are supervised, everyone always wears their seat belt and no one runs with scissors.

*Stranger Danger-* Some missions deal with strangers. These types of missions have been changed to be COVID compliant.

It's very important to be kind and respectful with strangers, and with that said – always be on guard and stay safe, use your healthy judgment when it comes to people you don't know.

*Play Fair-* Have fun and try to win but don't let your competitive instincts drive you to ruin other peoples' chances to win. If you do, your team will be disqualified. That means no sabotaging, lying, cheating, stealing or copying other people's work.

*If You Fight the Law (and the Law Wins)-* You're participating to have fun but do so legally. If you break any laws at any time during any portion of the ScaVenture, your team will be disqualified. This includes, but is not limited to, moving violations, trespassing, burglary, larceny, embezzlement, grand theft, petty theft, shoplifting, assault, plagiarism, blackmail, indecent exposure, decent exposure, recent exposure, bribery, forgery, perjury, fraud, computer fraud, mail fraud, telemarketing fraud, tax evasion, tax fraud, insurance fraud, securities fraud, halitosis and bad

hair. Seriously, if you get so much as a speeding ticket, you lose.

*Always be Humble & Kind-* Teams must be courteous and respectful to their teammates and all the outside people involved in the ScaVenture (It doesn't hurt to be courteous and kind to all, whether inside or outside the ScaVenture).

*NO harassing* citizens of your town or even your galaxy, physically or verbally for items or photographs. It is their right to choose not to help you and you should respect that (even if you think they are lame for not helping you). NO harassing wildlife or disturbing landscape. Take photos, do not chase or interfere with wild animals and do not pick flowers, etc.

*Tick Tock-* All Missions must be completed during the duration of this specific ScaVenture. Missions completed outside this time frame will be disqualified.

*Ties-*The game kind not the bow or Father's Day kind. The winning team will be the team obtaining the most points. In case of a tie, the winners will be determined by a Trivia Quiz Off.

*Appeals-*There is no appeals process in this scavenger hunt. There is also no crying. There's no crying in ScaVentures! All decisions by the judges are final. No exceptions.

*Play hard until the end.* Don't know who is penalized for what. Can get extra points for creativity.

Void where prohibited.



Two young coyote pups.



Species Admitted 1/1/23-6/2/23		Rock Dove	23
American Beaver	1	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	2
American Black Bear	10	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	2
American Coot	1	Ruffed Grouse	2
American Goldfinch	2	Silver-haired Bat	1
American Robin	10	Sora	1
American Toad	1	Southern Flying Squirrel	41
Bald Eagle	9	Trumpeter Swan	2
Barred Owl	11	Virginia Opossum	2
Big Brown Bat	2	Western Painted Turtle	7
Broad-winged Hawk	2	White-breasted Nuthatch	2
Canada Goose	8	White-tailed Deer	16
Common Goldeneye	1	Wild Turkey	2
Common Grackle	3	Wood Duck	3
Common Snapping Turtle	4	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2
Coyote	6	Total	373
Dark-eyed Junco	1		
Deer Mouse	13		
Downy Woodpecker	2		
Eastern Chipmunk	8		
Eastern Cottontail	62		
Eastern Gray Squirrel	34		
European Starling	1		
Gray Fox	2		
Gray Treefrog	1		
Great Blue Heron	1		
Hairy Woodpecker	1		
Hooded Merganser	1		
Mallard	9		
Mourning Dove	4		
Muskrat	2		
North American Porcupine	1		
Northern Cardinal	1		
Northern Flicker	1		
Northern Raccoon	15		
Northern Saw-whet Owl	1		
Pileated Woodpecker	2		
Pine Siskin	1		
Purple Finch	2		
Red Crossbill	1		
Red Fox	12		
Red Squirrel	14		
Red-tailed Hawk	1		



#### **CULVER'S SHARE NIGHT SUCCESS**

Thursday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> Culver's in Rhinelander had a Share Night to Wild benefit Wild Instincts. Leading up to the Share Night, they had a donation drive. Their donation drive brought in much needed supplies for the Baby Season just beginning and their Share Night brought in not quite \$450 which they generously rounded up to \$500. In addition, you generous diners donated over \$500 into our donation jar meaning the night brought in over \$1000!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Brat Sale

Saturday, June 10th, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
Trig's Brat Hut, 232 S Courtney St.,  
Rhinelanders

### Wild ScaVenture 2023

July 21-23  
Played on your smartphone from  
wherever you happen to be!



The 10 cubs observe from their "penthouse"



It's that time of year. Don't abduct wildlife.  
Call us FIRST if you see an animal without  
its mom.



Both these fawns need to be here. The one on the left has a  
broken ankle while the one on the right was spontaneously  
born when her mom was struck and killed by a car.

Welcome to

# INSTINCTS



AUG (now really Sept 2023)

Vol 12:3

*"The newsletter helping you follow your Wild Instincts."*

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## CHANGING CHALLENGES

One of the unwritten rules of newsletters is to emphasize the good and maybe just look away from the bad and the ugly.

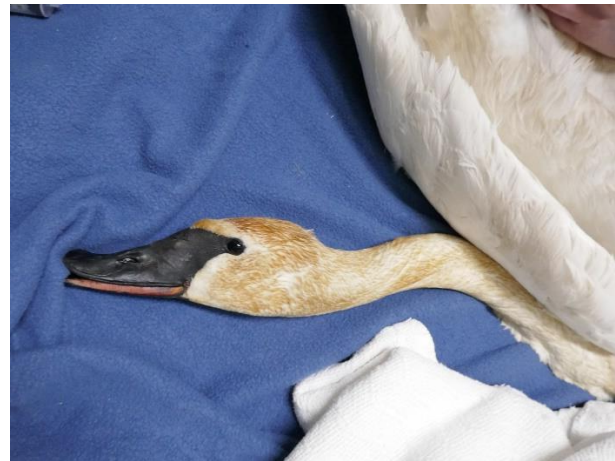
This article is going to break that rule and discuss the challenges staring us in the face. The challenges that resulted in this newsletter being late getting to you among other things. Wildlife rehab has *always* been challenging. After 40 years of rehab for each Sharon & Mark, they have met and overcome many challenges. Nowadays the challenges are magnified and different and felt by many across all fields of work, rehab and non-rehab.

One thing that you may not think about affecting wildlife rehab is supply-chain issues, after all animals in the wild don't order from Amazon. We do try to mimic their wild diets and habitats as close as possible, but we still need drugs and special formulas.

On April 18<sup>th</sup> we admitted a Trumpeter Swan from Ashland. Northland College students were doing some fieldwork and came across this bird not acting right. When it was admitted we tested it immediately for lead poisoning. It had high lead levels and 3 foreign bodies in its digestive tract. We worked hard with this bird. Lead levels were coming down and then weeks into treatment, the medication we use to treat lead poisoning became unavailable. We scrambled for an alternative. Instead of an injectable medication, we could get the same medication only in an oral form. Decades ago

we switched away from this particular formulation because it didn't work

as well. But we needed something right away and a pharmacy could compound it immediately. Just after two doses of switching medications, on day 50 of care, it passed away. Was it a coincidence? We also had an eagle in care with lead poisoning. Not as high of levels as the swan, but elevated and being treated. He also was switched to that new medication. He did not pass away, but his lead levels went up. And went up.



Trumpeter Swan victim of supply-chain issues.

We scrambled for another alternative and found another medication. The eagle's lead levels decreased when we switched to the new alternative. He is now lead-free, recovered from a shoulder injury and awaiting release. It took three months with the new medication to reduce the lead. The unavailable medication would have

done that in about two-three weeks-and the new medication costs A LOT MORE. On a side note, the unavailable medication is the same medication used to treat lead poisoning in people, too.

Some special formulas we use as our standards for some mammals have also been unavailable resulting in us spending valuable time scrambling for often less than desirable replacements.

These kinds of challenges have been around for as long as rehab, but not to the degree and frequency we are experiencing currently. So far, we have been able to adjust.

The most concerning challenge the last few years, like almost everywhere, has been staffing. Up until now we have relied on interns to help during Baby Season. They learn skills they cannot get at any college and we used to get youth willing to learn and work.

We are very honest with our applying summer interns. This is not summer camp but an immersion experience much like an honors class. It's intense and demanding. The animals are our bosses. Providing them the best care is our priority.

The number of applicants for these positions has decreased dramatically over the last several years. We provide free housing. It's nice housing within a couple minutes walk to work. One of the parents of an intern even commented that it was nicer than their first place as newlyweds. We provide toilet paper, paper towels, bedding, towels, dish soap, laundry detergent, a grill, several bicycles, Kuerig, high-speed WiFi, all furnishings, etc. They get a \$75/week food stipend. Some of our volunteers will provide a big lunch about 1/week (including special food allergy or eating preferences like gluten-free or vegan). We are very aware the sacrifices they will make for the 12 weeks they are here because we make the same sacrifices 365 days a year. We do what we can to off-set that. They work 5 days/week. About 12-hour days with breaks. It is intense with little monetary pay, but the experiences are priceless. They will hold an eagle among many other animals. They will care for 100's of different species. They will learn about time-management, how to deal with the public and emotionally charged situations.

Mostly they will learn about themselves and what path they may or may not want to take in the future.

With an extremely small staff we count on interns to keep their written contracts, their word. We base the number of animals we can take into care on the size of our enclosures AND on the number of caregivers to provide for them. In recent years, multiple interns have just left. Some in the middle of the night. No notice, no nothing. They are just gone. The wave overtaking the country has arrived in wildlife rehab.

The animals they pledged to help care for, however, are still here. Animals needing 24/7 care. Unlike a store or a restaurant that can reduce hours or services when they lack staff, we cannot tell an animal they can't eat or get medication today. There isn't any technology that replaces hand-feeding orphaned wildlife or cleaning enclosures. Our choices then become work ourselves harder, close to new animal admissions or euthanize animals here because we can't cover the workload. These are all difficult choices. Overwork ourselves more has been our choice but we can't do that forever. Changes must happen.

In fact, one difficult decision we made early this year was to reduce the number of fawns and raccoons we would take this year, *just in case interns quit*. We also turned down education programs. That was 10 less animals up front we "bargained" with just in case. Turning down education programs means turning down potential revenue. We are a non-profit. Any monies used on overhead and staffing means less monies available for animal care. It is a very delicate balance. We can't increase prices we charge like other businesses. We cannot by law charge for animals we take into care. It is a service offered to the public but not funded by any federal, state or local government. Only by donations of generous people who care about their natural environment, often inspired by educational programs we offer.

While it was a difficult choice, it turned out to be the right one. An ivy-league college graduate wanting to be a wildlife vet left in the cover of the early morning hours without a word. She just didn't show up to work her shift in mid-July

leaving everyone, including her fellow interns wondering where she was. A couple more interns decided to leave shortly after. Because we put animal care first and are already a small staff, the interns not honoring their words or commitments, have long-reaching ripples. We are busy covering animal care we had planned on them doing so can't keep up with social media like normal. Not keeping up with social media, reduces our donations which reduces the number of animals we can admit. This is a very scary trend affecting so many in wildlife rehab. Many of our colleagues are experiencing the same trends. It's being seen not just in rehab, but every industry. If we can't get people to replace those of us in service positions aging out, the world will be a very different place. There is a nearby volunteer fire department that had to dissolve because no one would come forward to volunteer. That township is now being covered by a neighboring fire department.

We will be posting intern vacancies around Christmas break. If you know someone not afraid of hard work and willing to honor their word and commitments, even if it's not what they thought it would be, please point them in our direction.

While those above-mentioned challenges are wearing us very thin, what drains us the most is: RUDE PEOPLE!

We have been doing this for a very, very long time and are very, very good at it. When you call us for advice, please believe us, even if what we say is different than what you read from the Google gods.

We are overworked, and understaffed. We can't always offer a way to help with transport. Arranging that takes time...time away from animal care. We CAN promise that when you get it to us we will for sure do everything we can for it. Without any cost to you. HELP us help the animal you cared enough to call about. Telling us you won't help the bird you are standing right next to because you are on vacation and then hanging up on us wears on us. Just calling to report it to someone but not following through does nothing more than make us aware that there is another animal we can't help.

If our answers to your questions or situation aren't what you want to hear, please don't call us useless or uncaring or anything else unkind. Rest assured we are none of those things. While you may think you are trying to help ease our workload by trying to care for that raccoon, squirrel, bunny, bird (fill in the blank) you found, you really aren't. In fact, you are making it worse. It is illegal for you to do so for many good reasons. Most of the animals brought to us after being kept by the public for any longer than 24 hours are not in good shape. Many are very critical and then require MORE work from us. Often dying in our hands, despite our best efforts. Each death is personal and affects us. Help us out by being kind, prompt, courteous. If you see an animal in need, call promptly and be willing to listen to and follow our expertise. If you're able to donate, please do! A little bit each month really does help us get through. If you don't have extra money, the fish or chicken that's been in your freezer a little too long for you would be great for our animals. If you can't do that, simply spreading the word about us and our mission is helpful, too.



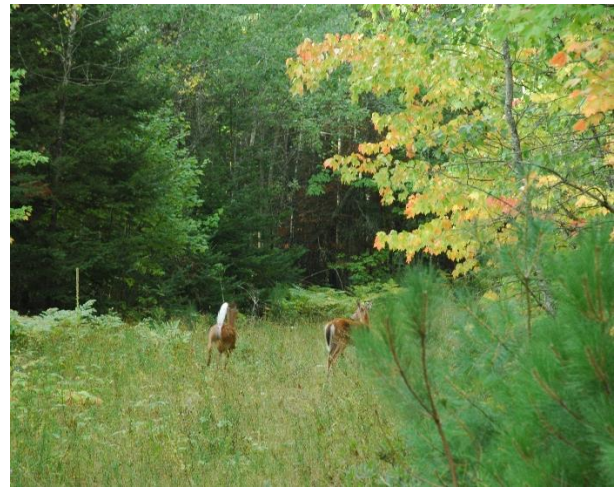
#### **IN HONOR OR MEMORY OF**

- ~In Memory of "Finny", World's Finest Equine
- ~In Memory of Philip Curle
- ~In memory of our Dad, Fred Kuester, who loved all animals and showed compassion and kindness to all
- ~In Memory of Jane Bishoff
- ~In Memory of Michele Sadauskas' mother
- ~In Memory of Michele Sadauskas' sister
- ~In Honor of "Jukka" Wikoff's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday
- ~In Honor of Jack & Carol Koch's 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary
- ~In Honor of the Bakers & Volunteers for the Aug 5<sup>th</sup> Fundraising Bake Sale
- ~In Memory of Janet Bruso

~In Honor of and in gratitude to Janet and Dale Hickle. Their love and devotion to creatures and nature are contagious.  
~In Honor of Nancy Nebgen

### DEER RELEASE

In early September, the ten fawns we raised were released. This included the one admitted with a fractured ankle.  
Another interesting fact is one of the doe fawns had the beginnings of antlers. Will she develop into an antlered doe? Only time will tell.



Yep. This will do. WE'RE FREE!



Fawn on left with immobilized ankle fracture.

### RED FOX & RACCOON RELEASE

In August we released 11 of the red fox and our 10 raccoons.



Exploring their new wild home.



Red fox upon admission.





Red fox kits returned to the wild.



Young raccoons upon admission



Raccoon returned to the wild.

## WILD SCAVENTURE 2023

Our 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Wild ScaVenture fundraising event took place a couple weeks later than usual this year but was still a success.

Fun is always had by all in this mix of learning new things and enjoying family bonding outdoors.

It was great following the adventures of some veteran teams along with some newcomers.

Congrats to the winners:

1<sup>st</sup> Place: Nature Nerds (\$100.00)

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: blackcatrails (\$75.00)

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Trailbenders (\$50.00)

We are looking forward to next year!

## Species Admitted

Species Admitted 1/1-9/5/23

American Beaver	1
American Black Bear	11
American Coot	1
American Crow	3
American Goldfinch	4
American Mink	1
American Robin	35
American Toad	1
American Woodcock	1
Bald Eagle	14
Barred Owl	12
Belted Kingfisher	6
Big Brown Bat	9
Black-and-white Warbler	1
Black-capped Chickadee	1
Blue Jay	6
Bobcat	4
Broad-winged Hawk	19
Canada Goose	21
Cedar Waxwing	9
Chipping Sparrow	8
Cliff Swallow	1
Common Garter Snake	5
Common Goldeneye	1
Common Grackle	8

Common Loon	1	Red Fox	19
Common Merganser	1	Red Squirrel	25
Common Snapping Turtle	10	Red-eyed Vireo	6
Cooper's Hawk	1	Red-tailed Hawk	1
Coyote	7	Ring-billed Gull	3
Dark-eyed Junco	1	Rock Dove	29
Deer Mouse	50	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	3
Downy Woodpecker	5	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	10
Eastern Chipmunk	21	Ruffed Grouse	7
Eastern Cottontail	155	Sandhill Crane	3
Eastern Gray Squirrel	60	Sharp-shinned Hawk	1
Eastern Phoebe	3	Silver-haired Bat	1
European Starling	6	Snowshoe Hare	2
Gray Catbird	2	Song Sparrow	2
Gray Fox	1	Sora	1
Gray Treefrog	3	Southern Flying Squirrel	43
Great Blue Heron	2	Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel	13
Great Horned Owl	1	Trumpeter Swan	8
Hairy Woodpecker	5	Unidentified Baby Bird	2
Hermit Thrush	3	Virginia Opossum	3
Herring Gull	2	Western Painted Turtle	20
Hooded Merganser	6	White-breasted Nuthatch	2
House Mouse	7	White-tailed Deer	23
House Sparrow	1	Wild Turkey	2
House Wren	5	Wood Duck	16
Little Brown Bat	4	Wood Turtle	1
Mallard	63	Woodchuck	2
Merlin	5	Woodland Jumping Mouse	5
Mourning Dove	16	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	4
Muskrat	2	Total	946
Nashville Warbler	2		
North American Porcupine	2		
North American River Otter	1		
Northern Cardinal	1		
Northern Flicker	2		
Northern Goshawk	2		
Northern Raccoon	33		
Northern Saw-whet Owl	1		
Osprey	1		
Pileated Woodpecker	6		
Pine Siskin	1		
Pine Warbler	2		
Purple Finch	2		
Red Crossbill	1		

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Harvest Hoe Down

Saturday, Sept 30 at Pioneer Park in Rhinelander. We will have a booth from 11 am. – 5:00 p.m.

### Giving Tuesday

Tues, November 28<sup>th</sup>  
A worldwide day of giving.  
On Meta/Facebook



**Culver's Share Night 2023**

Tues, Dec 5<sup>th</sup> 4:00-8:00 p.m.

Culver's in Rhinelander



The "Bear Cub Class of 2023" continues to grow.

# INSTINCTS

NOV 2023

Vol 12:4

*"The newsletter helping you follow your Wild Instincts."*

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## **WHO YA GONNA CALL?**

Several decades ago, wildlife biologists working for Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) were required to have their home phone number listed in the phone book. Members of the public could call them with any wildlife concerns any time.

Since then, many things have changed. WDNR staff members are no longer required to share their private home phone numbers. In addition, WDNR has established multiple switchboards. This means if you call your local WDNR office for any reason, your call may be routed to an office at the other end of the state. Gone are the days of calling local and knowing who you are speaking to or even if they person on the other end of your call will know the person you want to speak to. In addition to the general switchboard, wildlife personnel have their own switchboard.

While this arrangement may be touted to be more efficient from the WDNR's standpoint, these layers of communication insulation are akin to most tiered-level customer service phone trees that frustrate most of the public to no end.

On top of this change, you may be surprised to learn that Wisconsin Conservation Officers, also known as "game wardens", are no longer allowed to help with wildlife matters. Unless a situation puts someone in imminent danger such as a bear actually attacking someone or an injured deer in the middle of the road posing a traffic hazard, wardens cannot help. They can't even humanely euthanize injured

wildlife without first getting permission from the wildlife biologist for the county where the incident is occurring.

That adds yet another layer of communication hoops, this time internal, to jump through to help an animal in need. Wildlife Biologists generally work 7:45 am-4:30 pm M-F. If your wildlife issue happens outside of these hours, you are likely out of luck. This includes even the wardens trying to reach the biologists for permission to do something.

It's obvious to all of us dealing with wildlife in need, this system does not favor wildlife in trouble or wildlife emergencies.

What can you do?

If you have a wildlife emergency that needs immediate attention, call the closest wildlife rehabilitator first. You may get a recording that will give some basic instructions and request you leave a number they can call you back in between providing care for animals they already have.

If it is a very pressing situation, call us. We answer the phone 24/7. If you are not in our local area, we can provide advice and instructions until your local rehabber is available. We routinely get calls from all over the state and even the country because we answer our phone.

## **SEASONS OF CHANGE**

Dear Wild Instincts family,

It is with a heavy heart that I have decided to leave Wild Instincts and return to Belgium, where I grew up and where my family lives. I have been at Wild Instincts almost two years and I cannot begin to describe how wonderful my time here has been. For starters, I learned more than I

could have ever imagined, and I have Mark, Sharon and Kaitlin to thank for this. I am so grateful for what they taught me and for their patience, kindness and passion throughout. It was truly an amazing team to be a part of and I know they will continue their great work at Wild Instincts and with whatever the future brings. I will also never forget how kind and wonderful all the volunteers and supporters have been and how they welcomed me into their community. Being far away from most of my family and friends, this truly made me feel like I was part of the Wild Instincts family from day one. I would like to thank everyone of you for making my time here so great!

Thinking back, I got to work with so many amazing species of animals. In my first few weeks here, I already got to work with and release a snowy owl, one of my (many) favorite memories. Not long after that the first bear cubs arrived, I was blown away to say the least. The list goes on and on, and with each new animal came new challenges and things to learn. I will really miss getting to make a difference in these animals' lives, but I will probably miss cleaning up after them a little less. As things became more routine, I had to stop myself every once in a while to really appreciate again how cool the work I got to do every day actually was. Many people ask me what my absolute favorite moment or patient was, and I must be honest, it is impossible to choose! There were so many incredible moments that I will cherish forever.

But I also learned so much more than just wildlife rehab. How for example driving through 20 inches of fresh unplowed snow does not work so well and will in fact get your car stuck halfway down the driveway. But, also things like how to lay a carpet, install kitchen faucets and my favorite thing, drive a tractor! Living in the Northwoods has been such a joy and I must admit,

sometimes a challenge, but I will always cherish this incredible time of my life. I will miss Wild Instincts and everyone so much! It is such an amazing organization that I was lucky enough to be a part of and I will carry these memories with me forever! I will definitely be back to visit and don't hesitate to look me up if you ever find yourself in Belgium.  
Lots of love,  
Margot Vermeylen



Margot getting ready to release her last eagle at Wild Instincts before returning to Europe.



Margot (L) & McKenna (R) celebrate with "thumbs up" after last year's juvenile bald eagle release. McKenna knows what she has to live up to and Margot knows she's leaving her position in good hands.

## **RETURN TO THE NORTHWOODS**

No, I'm not about to tell you about some rare species making an unexpected visit back to northern Wisconsin, or even about any of the patients currently in our care, but instead I'm going to tell you about me and my personal return to the Northwoods!

My name is McKenna Brocco and I am the newest member of the Wild Instincts team. If the name sounds at all familiar, you may remember it from the summer of 2022. Last summer I was fortunate enough to have been an intern at Wild Instincts from the middle of May to the end of October. I greatly enjoyed my time as an intern, and I am incredibly excited to be back with the slightly different title of Rehab Assistant. I am eager to get to know everyone, and I am thrilled to get to introduce myself to all of you.

I'm originally from Utah and I had never even lived outside of Utah until my internship last summer. I lived my entire first 18 years in a cul-de-sac house in a city called Orem, which is about 45 minutes south of Salt Lake City. Orem is a lot bigger than Rhinelander with a population of about 98,000 but it's still a pretty tight knit community. I, like most other people from Utah, come from a big family. I have 5 older sisters and 1 younger brother. Growing up I was always fascinated with animals, and I would often catch snakes,

bugs, and worms to just observe them for a few hours and then let them go. Even as a child I knew that I wanted to work with animals.

Throughout elementary school and most of middle school I thought I wanted to be a veterinarian, until one presentation in 8th grade introduced me to the idea of zookeeping and zoology. Luckily for me, the high school I would be attending offered a zoology class. This zoology class was my favorite class I had ever taken up to that point in my life. We got to do dissections and talk about cool animals the entire class period. It was awesome! This class also introduced me to bird-watching which really fostered my love for and interest in birds. Bird-watching has become one of my favorite hobbies since taking that zoology class 8 years ago. Throughout the rest of my time in high school I researched jobs in the zoology field and jobs that worked with wild animals. I knew at that point that I did not want to be a zookeeper, I wanted to be able to help the wildlife that lives all around me.

After graduating high school, I attended Weber State University in Ogden, Utah, where I majored in Zoology with a minor in Botany. During my time at Weber I was able to volunteer with a bird banding research station. I really enjoyed participating with this research. It helped me get better at my songbird identification while also allowing me to actually handle some wild birds. During college I also spent some time volunteering at Tracy Aviary in Salt Lake City, Utah. My time at the aviary introduced me to preparing specific diets for different bird species and cleaning and disinfecting dishes and carriers. These volunteer experiences gave me a tiny taste of what I would be doing at my internship with Wild Instincts.

Once I graduated, I was off to Wisconsin for my first introduction into wildlife rehabilitation. I loved my internship. I made lifelong friends during my time last summer

and I learned so much from the incredibly knowledgeable staff here at Wild Instincts. During my internship I was immersed into the field of wildlife rehab. I got to feed baby squirrels and baby birds, and I got to hold bald eagles and care for black bear cubs. I also got to clean and disinfect cages and wash lots and lots of dishes. Not many people get the privilege to do this type of thing, and so even though some days were long and hard I felt very lucky to be doing what I was. When the time came to go home it was bitter sweet. I was excited to be back with my family and all my nieces and nephews (I am the favorite aunt), but I was definitely going to miss working in rehab.

Back in Utah I was able to get a job as an educator at Loveland Living Planet Aquarium in Draper, Utah. In that position I was able to handle the aquarium's ambassador animals while also teaching the public about animals and conservation. I really enjoyed the work I did at the aquarium. I especially loved doing outreach to local elementary schools, and teaching kids about how they can help the animals and environment around them. Although I enjoyed working at the aquarium, I desperately missed doing wildlife rehabilitation. When I learned of the position opening-up here at Wild Instincts I started to think more seriously about a career in wildlife rehab. I came to the conclusion that if I wanted to learn how to successfully and ethically rehabilitate wild animals, the staff at Wild Instincts were the people I wanted to learn from. I submitted my application and after a zoom call and a few months' wait I was back on the road to Wisconsin, this time for good.



McKenna is happy to be back at Wild Instincts.

Being back in Wisconsin has been wonderful. I've been able to reconnect with old friends and I get to learn something new every single day. I am excited to continue to learn more about all aspects of wildlife rehab and fine tune the skills that I gained during my internship last summer. I love getting to know the people up here. Everyone is so kind and friendly and will even wave at you whether you're a stranger or an old friend. I had the pleasure of participating in the Harvest Hoedown recently and got to talk to many of the wonderful people up here, and I am so excited to meet more people through programs and fundraisers. Northern Wisconsin is surely different from northern Utah and I will have to get used to all the trees and water and snow, but I am thrilled to call the Northwoods my home.

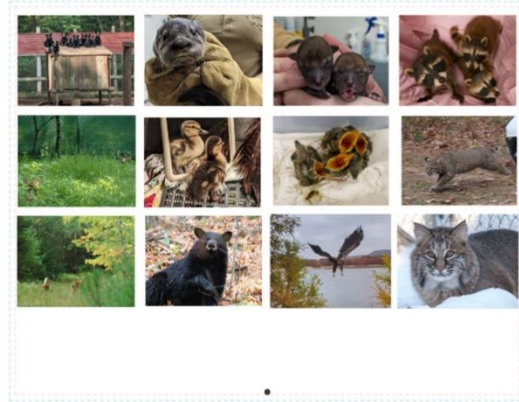


## IN HONOR OR MEMORY OF

- ~ In Honor of Katie Ericksrud's Birthday
- ~ In Memory of Rich Johnson
- ~ In Memory of Verona Hansen
- ~ In Memory of Steve Dietz
- ~ In Memory of Jane Bishoff
- ~ In Honor of Laura & Nate DeHart's Wedding Anniversary
- ~ In Memory of Bob & Elsie Thornton's Wedding Anniversary
- ~ In Memory of Frank & Hope Carmines' Wedding Anniversary
- ~ In Memory of Bill "Tex" Akan
- ~ In Memory of Shirley Frisque, long-time supporter and lover of wildlife
- ~ In Honor of Yvonne Bitney
- ~ In Honor of Cheryl & Tim Bonnie

### 2024 CALENDAR

We are again selling wall calendars featuring patients treated here at Wild Instincts.



They make wonderful Christmas gifts and raise funds to help us help them. Price is \$20/calendar if you pick them up at Wild Instincts or \$30 if you need us to mail them somewhere.

Quantities are limited so email [Sharon@wildinstinctsrehab.com](mailto:Sharon@wildinstinctsrehab.com) to reserve your calendar today.



Phoenix shortly after arriving at Wild Instincts.

### FAREWELL TO PHOENIX

Last fall we introduced you to our newly acquired Peregrine Falcon, Phoenix. He was transferred to us along with a red-tailed hawk named Erik after their caretaker passed away and the rehab facility closed.

Unlike many of our patients and residents, Phoenix had a complete history, complete with a hatch date!

He was part of a peregrine falcon recovery effort which included building nest boxes on suitable power plants.

Phoenix had hatched at WE Energies Presque Isle Power Plant in Marquette, MI on May 28, 2011. He and a female sibling were banded on June 18, 2011.

They were the first chicks to hatch within Marquette city limits although WE Energies had erected this nesting box in 2003.

On Aug 13, 2012, he was admitted to Chocolay Raptor Center in Marquette, MI after being found injured in a park near his original nesting box. Injuries to his eye made him un-releasable so he spent 10 years presenting education programs to the public for Chocolay.

He arrived at Wild Instincts being blind in his left eye and with some damage in his right eye. That didn't stop him from attending some education programs for us. Over this last year, he slowly became completely blind and in September, due to his declining quality of life, the difficult decision was made to euthanize him. He was only here a short time but touched everyone's heart. He will be missed. Fly free Phoenix!

### **CELLCOM GRANT**

Cellcom to the rescue!

This year Cellcom awarded us a Green Gift for \$1000.00 allowing us to upgrade our bat flight enclosure

Bat species have had a double whammy against them in the last few years.

First, White-Nose Syndrome wiped out entire populations and then SARS COV2 added another dimension to being able to rehab.

Our new flight enclosure will help us meet new extra biosecurity measures while caring for this important species.

The Green Gifts program uses funds generated from Cellcom's cell phone

recycling program to fund green nonprofit initiatives. Customers and community members can bring in their old or unwanted phones to be reused and recycled. Cellcom sends the phones to recyclers who in return send money to Cellcom for the materials that were saved from the phones. Cellcom's Green Gift program completes the green cycle that starts with consumers being environmentally conscious and donating their devices.

Visit [Cellcom's website](#) for the full list of award recipients. Cellcom is proud to support organizations of all sizes, whose work is impacting the community and building a greener tomorrow. The company's recycling program has generated over a half million dollars for local charities over the past 19 years.

### **BEAR RELEASE**

Wild Instincts raised and released 10 orphaned bear cubs this year.

Ten is generally how many we raise each year. A few years ago, we did 20 which was challenging.

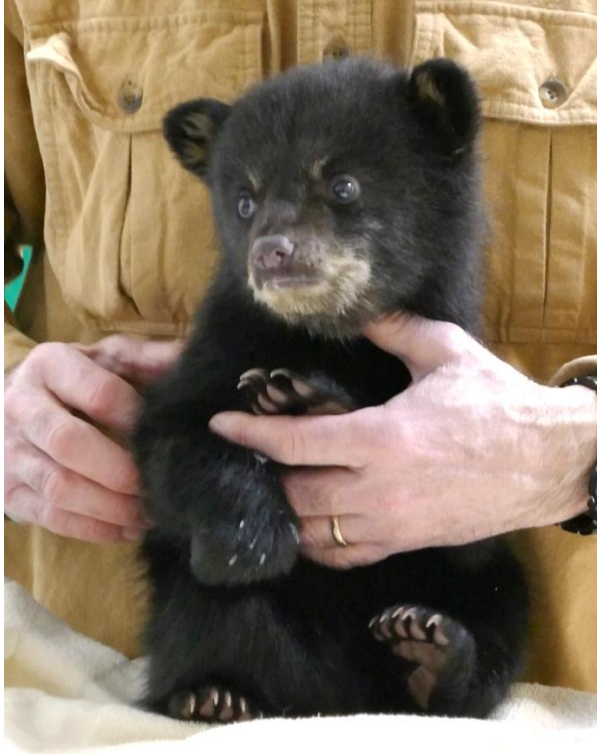
Depending on the age of their arrival, it costs roughly \$3000.00 per bear to raise them to release.

While very rewarding to accomplish, the budget gets drained very quickly.

It's amazing how much time is spent on preparing food for them, not only each meal, but planning, gathering and storing food for the next season!

Thanks to the Rhinelander Food Pantry and all who have donated produce, those who gathered and donated apples this fall & those who just drop a check in the mail with a note to feed the bears.

It really does take a team of supporters to help us help them!



Young orphan black bear cub being admitted.



All 10 of "The Class of 2023" on the Cub-house Clubhouse.



Bears on Release Day exploring their new freedom.



## Deer Release

Fall is a Season of Release. The bears, the juvenile eagles, the foxes, the bobcat to name a few, and of course, the deer. Despite the strict biosecurity required to rehab deer due to their susceptibility to SARS CoV2, we still raised and released 10.



## Species Admitted

American Beaver	1
American Black Bear	11
American Coot	1
American Crow	3
American Goldfinch	5
American Mink	1
American Robin	38
American Toad	1
American Woodcock	1
Bald Eagle	21
Barred Owl	12
Belted Kingfisher	6
Big Brown Bat	10
Black-and-white Warbler	1
Black-capped Chickadee	1
Blue Jay	6
Bobcat	4
Broad-winged Hawk	24
Canada Goose	24
Cedar Waxwing	9
Chipping Sparrow	9
Cliff Swallow	1
Common Garter Snake	6
Common Goldeneye	1
Common Grackle	9
Common Loon	2
Common Merganser	1
Common Snapping Turtle	11
Cooper's Hawk	1
Coyote	7
Dark-eyed Junco	1
Deer Mouse	64
Downy Woodpecker	5
Eastern Chipmunk	20
Eastern Cottontail	163
Eastern Gray Squirrel	68
Eastern Phoebe	3
European Starling	6
Gray Catbird	2
Gray Fox	2
Gray Treefrog	3

Gray Wolf	1	Silver-haired Bat	1
Great Blue Heron	2	Snowshoe Hare	2
Great Horned Owl	5	Song Sparrow	2
Green Frog	1	Sora	1
Hairy Woodpecker	6	Southern Flying Squirrel	43
Hermit Thrush	5	Swainson's Thrush	1
Herring Gull	2	Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel	13
Hooded Merganser	6	Trumpeter Swan	9
Horned Grebe	1	Unidentified Baby Bird	2
House Mouse	7	Virginia Opossum	4
House Sparrow	1	Western Painted Turtle	20
House Wren	5	White-breasted Nuthatch	2
Little Brown Bat	4	White-tailed Deer	26
Mallard	63	Wild Turkey	3
Merlin	6	Wood Duck	16
Mourning Dove	16	Wood Turtle	1
Muskrat	2	Woodchuck	2
Nashville Warbler	2	Woodland Jumping Mouse	5
North American Porcupine	3	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	5
North American River Otter	1	Total Admitted 1/1/23-11/3/23	1040
Northern Cardinal	1		
Northern Flicker	2		
Northern Goshawk	2		
Northern Raccoon	33		
Northern Saw-whet Owl	1		
Osprey	1		
Ovenbird	1		
Pileated Woodpecker	7		
Pine Siskin	1		
Pine Warbler	2		
Purple Finch	3		
Red Crossbill	1		
Red Fox	20		
Red Squirrel	25		
Red-eyed Vireo	6		
Red-tailed Hawk	4		
Ring-billed Gull	5		
Rock Dove	30		
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	3		
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	13		
Ruffed Grouse	12		
Sandhill Crane	4		
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1		

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Giving Tuesday

Tues, November 28<sup>th</sup> is a worldwide day of giving. Donate however you are comfortable doing so. All donations, no matter the size, make a difference in helping us help them.

### Culver's Share Night 2023

Tues, Dec 5<sup>th</sup> 4:00-8:00 p.m.  
Culver's in Rhinelander  
Culver's donates 10% of proceeds to Wild Instincts.