

Welcome to

INSTINCTS



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"The newsletter helping you follow your Wild Instincts."

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 Vermeeylen



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.

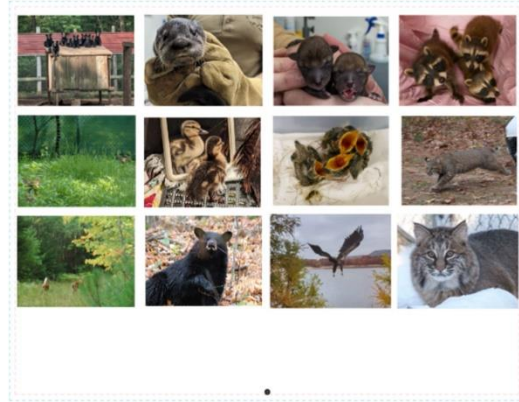


IN HONOR OR MEMORY OF

- ~ 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 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.

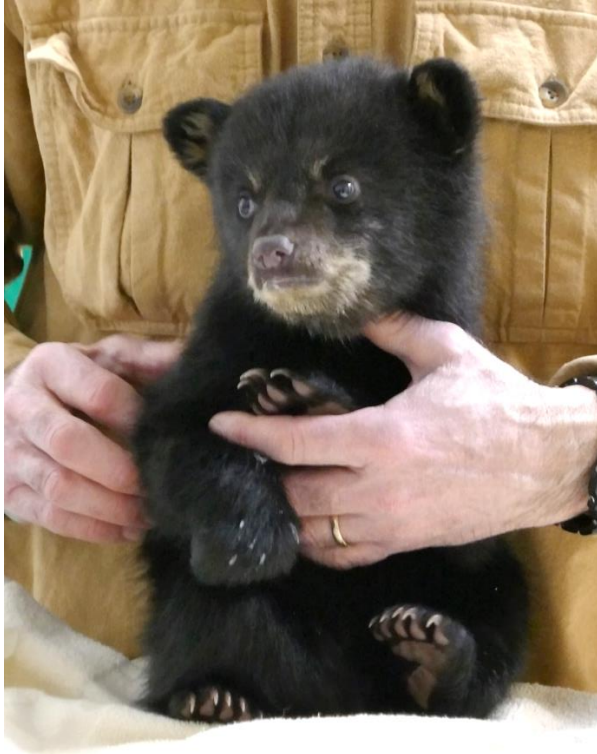
Depending on the age of their arrival, it costs roughly \$3000.00 per bear to raise them to release.

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 28th 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 5th 4:00-8:00 p.m.

Culver's in Rhinelander

Culver's donates 10% of proceeds to Wild Instincts.