

Fall 2010

Edition



NEBRASKA WILDLIFE REHAB, INC.

The Critter Chronicle

A Home of Our Own

We've finally done it! We have a new "starter" home for NWRI! Through the generous support of Ash Grove in Louisville, NE, we have the opportunity to move into a beautiful 4,500 square foot building just off of Highway 50, and just 10 minutes south of the I-80 Sapp Brothers exit.

Ash Grove is offering to lease this building to NWRI for just \$10 per year! We need now only to raise the funds to cover utilities and insurance on the building — approximately \$10,000 per year.

Our new center at Ash Grove will truly allow NWRI to grow — to help more animals and to educate more children throughout the state. It will be our first center of operations ever, giving us a real street address and a base for conducting the business end of our work.

We will run our wildlife hotline, staffed by volunteers from this center. This will allow the public to get an immediate answer to their inquiries during business hours. We'll also be able to host wildlife training and certification events, and call board and volunteer meetings in our very own space! This will allow us to continue our mission of wildlife rehabilitation by well-trained, professional rehabilitators.

From the center, we will coordinate volunteers, animal care, and supplies, making it easier for our volunteers, partners and the public to get the help for the animals whenever they need it!

Our new center at Ash Grove will also give us a base of operations for planning and implementing innovative wildlife education programs from the youth of Nebraska and Iowa, like our current Outdoor Science Classroom at the Underwood Hills Focus School in Omaha (see story on page 3).

We also intend to further develop our partnerships with local conservation groups to advance environmental education and conservation research in our communities by using our new center for collaborative projects that will allow us all to work for the conservation of our native wildlife and plants together.

With your support, we can truly make a difference for the animals and students in our states!



Before we sign our lease, we need your help! We need to secure funding to make sure our first year in this new home can be a success. Please consider donating as generously as you can today! We've included a donation form on page 7 of this newsletter that will allow you to give a gift that will truly help wildlife in Nebraska. The form even includes a way for you to give a monthly gift to NWRI—a perfect way to include the animals in your monthly budget!

Once we have secured funding and signed our lease, we will also need the help of our volunteers and the community to get the building ready for NWRI. A new coat of paint, new carpeting and furniture are a must. If you know of anyone who can help by donating paint, new carpeting, or good quality office furniture, please let us know! Additionally, if you would like to help us out by cleaning, painting and carpeting, we'll love to have your help! Watch the events page of our Web site and your e-mail inbox for a schedule of times when we will all be meeting to make our new center ready for business!

Once the center is up and running, we need you to keep it going! This fall we will be training new volunteers to man the hotline, help the public, and triage animals. If you have a few hours each week to dedicate to NWRI, we'd love your help!

If you are interested in donating money, goods or services to make our center a success, or if you'd like to be a part of our next chapter by working as a center volunteer, please let us know! You can forward your inquiries to Laura Stastny at lastastny@yahoo.com or 402-960-4366. Thank you for helping us make our dreams a reality!

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A Message From Our Board

For this newsletter, we've decided to let the articles speak for themselves. From the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to start a new wildlife center from the Ash Grove property in Louisville to the fantastically important (and fun!) Outdoor Science Classroom at the Underwood Hills Focus School in Omaha, it is an exciting and fulfilling time to be part of NWRI! As local businesses and grant-makers begin to realize the importance of what we are doing to protect the wildlife and habitats of

Nebraska and educate tomorrow's leaders, we have the opportunity to grow and help our communities more effectively than ever!

As we wrap up another very successful year of wildlife rehabilitation, we ask you to continue supporting us. It is only with your help that we are able to help thousands of wild animals return to the wild to live out their lives and we couldn't do it without you! Thank you for your support!

Thank You to Our Many Friends and Donors

NWRI is deeply grateful to the following individuals, businesses and foundations for their contributions to our work in providing medical management and compassionate care for the injured, sick and orphaned wildlife. Thank you!

Lifetime Members:

Greg Kluck	Pamela Seina
Lynne and Jack Baldwin	Patti Smith
Kuba Travnicek	Jessica Sueper
Brian & Brenda Mainwaring	Dr. Christine Webster
Cella Quinn	

Patron Members:

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Supporting Businesses:

Baldwin, Hackett, Meeks, Inc.
 Animal Medical Center, Dr. Keith Halsey and Staff
 Gentle Doctor Animal Hospital
 Veterinary Eye Specialists, Dr. Tanya McInay and Staff
 Lowe's—72nd and Dodge
 Target, 180th and Center, Omaha
 Walmart, 132nd and L, Omaha

And the numerous people who support us with general memberships and donations throughout the year! THANK YOU!

A Special Project, With A Special Partner

The Underwood Hills Focus School Outdoor Science Classroom

NWRI volunteers present to many schools and community groups each year about our native wildlife, and it has long been a dream of ours to implement additional programs that truly invigorate students to learn more about nature and wildlife so that they will grow to love and protect the natural world around us.

This spring, we were granted funds from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, administered by the Nebraska Academy of Sciences, through their PIE Grants program, to design and install an Outdoor Science Classroom at the Underwood Hills Focus School in Omaha. A group of students (3rd through 6th) grade, began this spring by deciding what elements they wanted in their classroom, researching native plants and wildflowers, and deciding what types of wildlife they'd like to attract and study in the future. They decided that their classroom would include a large native garden, several bird houses of different types, a large bat house, butterfly houses, and a digital weather station. Before they left for summer break, a plan was in place to get their Outdoor Science Classroom up and running in the fall.

Behind the scenes, 4th grade teacher Glenn Mitchell, and NWRI educator Laura Stastny, kept working—procuring permission to dig, gathering supplies and making sure the students could place their plan into action when they returned to school in August.

When the students returned, they were excited to start in on their project, and to date, have built four cedar bird houses, one very large bat house, and two beautifully designed butterfly houses. They have marked off the 500-square-foot space for their native prairie garden, that will include scientific markers and a large path for junior scientists and visitors alike to access the garden. In the upcoming weeks, the land will be cleared and the students will be laying pavers, planting seeds and bare

root plants and then bedding their garden down for the winter. They still have some houses to mount on trees and poles as well, ready for the critters in the spring. Another group of students is filming and photographing the project to



Mr. Mitchell Helping Students with a Science Project

make a documentary about their efforts! Mr. Mitchell and his colleagues are working to develop curriculum to incorporate the Outdoor Science Classroom not only into science classes, but also into reading, writing, math, and Social Studies.

Although the majority of this project has already been funded, we are hoping donors will be willing to come through with some “extras” for the students. They would still like to get reference books and field guides, as well as their digital weather station, and a web cam for their bat house! These were not included in the original grant, but if you would like to help, please use the donation blank on page 7. Thank you for your support!

This is a fantastic and exciting project, and one that will give these students a unique learning tool for years to come! We hope to refine the process, share the curriculum developed and to build additional Outdoor Science Classrooms at other Nebraska schools as well, so all of our students can have the same opportunity.

Specialized Training For NWRI's Bat Team Leader

This spring, NWRI's bat team leader, Kaci Caldwell, got the opportunity to attend a very special seminar on bat rehabilitation, sponsored by BatWorld, the U.S.'s foremost bat rehabilitation authority. Kaci travelled to Texas for the all-day seminar, and although she already has a great handle on many of the topics taught that day, she says she learned a lot too. The course covered topics such as bat triage, working with vets, rabies, handling procedures, food determination and feeding techniques. It also had a lab component that taught exam, injection, and fracture stabilization. The participants also learned about caging requirements, environmental enrichment and how to raise their own mealworms!

Kaci says she decided to attend simply because she wanted to learn more, and to meet other people who care about, and want to protect bats as much as she does. When asked what she liked most about the training, Kaci said, “Since white nose syndrome and habitat destruction are decimating bat populations, everyone in the class seemed to sense the urgency and importance of learning how to care for bats. We were all inspired by the instructors, and that's what I remember

liking the most about the training.”

We are thrilled that Kaci took the time to go to Texas to learn more about bat rehabilitation, and to bring those skills back to NWRI. We are truly lucky to have such a talented and dedicated woman as our bat team leader!



Feeding a Mexican free-tailed bat (Above)



(Left) Kaci waiting for the bats to come out of Bracken Cave

After Long Winter, Bats Fly Free

Although it had to be postponed to April Fool's Day, our 10th annual Spring Bat Release was no joke: we had our largest public response ever, with around 250 spectators coming out to see us release 200 bats! Local media were on hand to cover the event, as well; KETV Channel 7 and WOWT Channel 6 were both there, in addition to *The Omaha World-Herald*. In addition to teaching the public some important lessons about bats, we also raised over \$500. We would like to extend a huge "Thank You" to everyone who participated! In case you missed it, you can always visit our blog at <http://nebraskawildlife.blogspot.com> to catch up with the news. We also plan on inviting the public in the spring of 2011 for our next bat release. Watch our Web site for a new feature to be added soon, our "Bat Release Watch" page!



Left: NWRI Board Member and Opossum Team Leader Gini Magnuson is the center of attention as she reaches up to release a bat. **Top:** the cameras are rolling as Operations Chair Laura Stastny lifts a bat out of its temporary home. **Insert:** The crowd gathers round as Gini removes the lid from the temporary bat cages; Laura raises a bat into the air for some encouragement — we have liftoff!

Night at the Museum — Wildlife Style!



Left: NWRI Bat Team Leader Kaci Caldwell releases bats before a crowd of onlookers. **Center:** Wildlife-lovers of all ages turned out to see the bats fly free. **Right:** An inquisitive crowd leans in to get a "bat's-eye" view! The event was held at the Joslyn Art Museum, 22nd & Dodge.

Brownie the Raccoon Helps Children Heal

This spring, Sue Lindblad, a raccoon team member picked up an orphaned raccoon from Robin and Ken Stratton. Robin is a counselor and works with children who have had traumatic life experiences. Here are some excerpts from her e-mails, telling us about her story:

Once again thank you for the video, when they come I yell for Ken and we watch it together! We have so enjoyed seeing them grow, and thrive. What a beautiful place for them to be released, it seems perfect!! This is what I had hoped for when I found the little guy that he could live in the wild and be free. I must admit however it was bittersweet seeing them go and knowing we would miss seeing his video progress.

I have passed this on to the kids I work with and it has opened up new discussions on having to let go and moving on. They wondered how you deal with the release and if you feel sad. I told them it must be a lot like seeing kids go away to college or move out on their own you are both happy and sad but it what you hoped for them. I let them know that you were checking on them and making sure they were okay. This experience has been so healing for these kids. When I first picked up Brownie and I looked at his cute little face and I wondered "oh no, how is this story going to have a happy ending" and then after listening to him cry for four days and worrying if I was feeding him right or if he was going to be dead every time I looked into his box. I was so grateful when you called and then picked him up, my tears were of relief that he was going to be alright. I felt a prayer had been answered.

So thank you for giving the kids and me a happy ending to this story. I am truly grateful for all that you have done and continue to do by helping these animals. I also am truly grateful for you taking

the time to share the updates and videos. Also I have learned so much about these animals that I have passed on to both the kids I work with and adults that they are amazing animals that we need to protect. There seems to be so many myths out there that are not true.

Sue has been wonderful in keeping in touch and sharing information with Ken and I. So I could then pass this on to the kids I work with and give them hope that there are people in the world that are commented and loving and will help the vulnerable who need protected. The kids continue to ask questions about "Brownie" and what Wildlife Rehab does to help animals that are hurt and abandoned, which is really asking questions about themselves and their situation. I keep a picture of "Brownie" on my desk at work he has become a symbol for hope and healing a mascot of sorts. I even have some kids who carry a picture of "Brownie" with them. Not a week goes by that I am not talking about his story to a child who may need reassurance and hope.

I believe love takes on many forms and the more that is shared the better our world is for everyone (Of course that includes all animals). Thank You for sharing our story!



2009 Wildlife Statistics

Bats		Songbirds		Yellow Warbler	4
Big Brown	370	American Robin	41	Squirrels	
Hoary	3	American Crow	1	13-line Ground Squirrel	9
Northern Long-Eared Myotis	1	Barn Swallow	13	Eastern Gray Squirrel	1
Eastern Red	5	Blue Jay	6	Fox Squirrel	101
Silver-Haired	1	Brown-Headed Cowbird	1	Waterfowl and Wading Birds	
Carnivores		Cedar Waxwing	1	American Coot	5
Coyote	3	Black-Capped Chickadee	1	American Bittern	1
Red Fox	2	Chimney Swift	6	Blue-Winged Teal	1
Gamebirds		Common Nighthawk	4	Canada Goose	9
Button Quail	1	Mourning Dove	24	Belted Kingfisher	1
Ring-Necked Pheasant	6	Rock Dove	46	Mallard	17
Miscellaneous Mammals		Ring-Necked Turtle Dove	1	Pied-Billed Grebe	1
Field Mouse	1	Eastern Bluebird	2	Ruddy Duck	2
Woodchuck	14	Grackle	8	Snow Goose	1
Muskrat	1	House Sparrow	8	Virginia Rail	2
Mink	1	House Wren	3	Wood Duck	68
Shrew	1	Golden-Crowned Kinglet	1	Reptiles and Amphibians	
Opossums	93	Northern Cardinal	2	Garter Snake	4
Eastern Cottontail Rabbits	262	Northern Flicker	8	Painted Turtle	1
Raccoons	165	Pileated Woodpecker	3	Ornate Box Turtle	1
		Purple Finch	4	Red-Eared Slider	3
		Red-Headed House Finch	1	Snapping Turtle	1
		Western Meadowlark	1		

Coyote Back in the Wild

The following story was originally published in the Midlands section of The Omaha World-Herald. It was written by reporter David Hendee and ran on Tuesday, November 17, 2009.

LOUISVILLE, Neb. — A young male coyote caught freeloading in Papillion is back in the wild. Reluctantly.

For seven minutes, the coyote laid with his nose just inches from an open kennel door. A sun-splashed country hillside beckoned, but the presence of a few people nearby kept the coyote in hiding.

So Laura Stastny removed the top of the kennel and unceremoniously dumped the coyote out the door. It leaped to its feet and dashed across a field of foxtail weeds and disappeared in a wooded ravine of cottonwoods, oaks and cedars.

"I really have great hopes for him," Stastny said.

Stastny is a member of Nebraska Wildlife Rehab, a non-profit Omaha organization of volunteers that cares for injured, sick and orphaned wildlife and then reintroduces them to the wild.



Laura gives some encouragement to the rather reluctant coyote. Photo by David Hendee

The coyote released Tuesday on a willing landowner's property in rural Cass County was scavenging — living off pet food — in Papillion neighborhoods when it was captured by the Nebraska Humane Society last month.

It was in good health but slightly thin. It also suffered from a mild case of mange, a disease caused by mites that may cause an animal's fur to fall out. Mange is typical for coyotes in areas with limited food resources, Stastny said.

Caretakers reintroduced the coyote to a diet of rabbits, rats, mice and deer parts. "We had to reeducate him about his natural diet," Stastny said. "We needed to reteach him the appropriate food to eat."

The animal gained about five pounds during its five weeks in captivity. It weighed an estimated 25 pounds — the typical adult weight of an eastern Nebraska coyote — when released. Its fur regained luster and thickness.

Coyotes are found across Nebraska. They are curious, clever and adaptable, said Scott Taylor of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

They also are the least-tolerated natural predators. Although they take advantage of seasonal changes in food, such as deer or livestock carrion, an individual coyote sometimes learns that sheep, lambs and calves are easy prey. They are one of the top wildlife species responsible for ranchers' complaints.

"Some people are not fond of them," Stastny said. But coyotes are an important part of nature's balance of predators and prey, Stastny said. "One of the reasons our deer and rabbit populations



The coyote was shy at first, preferring the familiar carrier to its natural habitat. Photo by David Hendee

there have mange. "It may have been kicked out of a pack, or maybe it came from a small pack and all the others were killed. It's hard to tell," Stastny said.

The animal should easily return to life in the countryside because there is a healthy population of coyotes in the area where it was released, Stastny said.

But when it comes to social skills, this coyote is a lone wolf. "He's a loner and he'll have to do a little work," Stastny said. "Animals are suspicious of newcomers, but he's young and acts submissive. That will serve him well."

The coyote's fate is a wild card. Coyotes are an unprotected, non-game species in Nebraska. They can be hunted or trapped at any time. Nebraskans don't need a hunting permit, but non-Nebraskans must buy one.

An average 20,000 Nebraska coyotes have been killed for their pelts during each of the last five years, according to Game and Parks fur harvest statistics. Those pelts were sold for about \$16 each. Coyote fur is commonly used to line the edge of parka hoods.

"Being a wild animal is a rough, rough job," Stastny said. "One coyote — is he really going to make a difference in the grand scheme of things? No. Someone else is killing five today."

"We're working on one life here," she said, "but we're also teaching people that there's a natural balance and if everybody just does a little bit, we'll all be doing our part."



Finally home & running free in Cass County! Photo by David Hendee

YOU Can Make a Difference!

With so many noteworthy projects, like a new building, education programs, and yet another baby season just around the corner, we at NWRI need your support now more than ever! Whether it's volunteering your time, donating items from our wish list, giving a monetary gift, or even setting up a recurring monthly donation, there are more ways to support the wildlife of Nebraska than ever before. We couldn't do what we do without YOUR support! Thank you!

Wildlife Wishlist



If you have items to donate, please let us know. We are always in need of the following items:

- Towels
- Flannel material
- Aquariums/reptile cages
- Disposable gloves
- Reptile lights
- Pet bedding
- Dry dog/cat food
- Canned dog/cat food
- Bird seed
- Hamster/gerbil/rabbit food
- Dry baby cereal (oatmeal, wheat, rice, mixed)
- Pedialyte (all flavors)
- Baby food (banana, applesauce, lamb, and veal)
- T-shirts

- Incubators (human or veterinary)
- Stackable pull-out plastic storage drawers
- Rubbermaid containers of various sizes
- Hay & straw (square bales)
- Hot water bottles
- Electronic gram scales
- Plastic storage boxes
- Fencing
- Small animal cages
- Gauze
- Storage cabinets
- Heating pads
- Receiving blankets
- Sweatshirts

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iGive is an online service that allows you to raise funds any time you shop online at over 700 participating stores or when you search the Internet using the iGiveSearch engine. Go to www.iGive.com to register with iGive and choose Nebraska Wildlife Rehab, Inc. as your favorite cause. Next, use their Internet search box whenever you search the web. You can also start at iGive when you need to make an online purchase, and you will raise money for NWRI! Start shopping today!



Tax-deductible donations help meet the financial costs of veterinary care, medication, diet and housing for our wildlife rehabilitation patients. Planned giving can be arranged to meet your individual needs. Please visit our website at www.nebraskawildliferehab.org, click on "Get

Involved," and go to our "How You Can Help" section to conveniently make your tax-deductible donation via the PayPal.com

I want to help save wildlife and educate the youth of Nebraska!

Please accept my one-time gift of: \$ _____

Membership levels:

- General (\$25) Benefactor (\$50)
 Patron (\$100) Lifetime (\$1,500)

Please make checks payable to Nebraska Wildlife Rehab, Inc.

- I'd like my gift to be monthly
- \$10.00 each month \$15.00 each month
 \$25.00 each month Other \$ _____ each month
- continue until I request it to stop
 continue for a 12-month period
- Please withdraw my gift each month on the:
- 15th 30th

I will fulfill my gift with the following method:

- Via credit or debit card
- Please charge my: VISA MasterCard

- Discover American Express

Name as it appears on card:

Card number:

Expiration Date: _____

Signature: _____

Please mail this form to:

NWRI, PO Box 24122, Omaha, NE 68124



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*Tiny lives leaving paw
prints on our hearts.*

We're on the web!

www.nebraskawildliferehab.org

NWRI ... Nebraska Wildlife Rehab, Inc. ... is a 25+ year old, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to *rehabilitate and release orphaned and injured wildlife, and through education, preserve and protect the natural habitat and species indigenous to Nebraska and the Great Plains. The means to accomplish this mission is to educate the public to an understanding of our Great Plains ecosystem and its component parts.*

Upcoming Events

Sunday October 24th— Spooktacular at the Henry Doorly Zoo
NWRI will be at the zoo's annual Spooktacular Halloween event to educate the public about bats. Stop by and see us from 10 AM to 3 PM that day!

February 26-27, 2011—NWRI will be hosting 1AB Basic Wildlife Training through the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council. Stay tuned for more details!

Watch the Events page on our Web site for information about upcoming volunteer orientation and training sessions! If you'd like to be added to our e-mail notification list, please e-mail us at nebraskawildlife@yahoo.com!