

Winter 2007

Edition



NEBRASKA WILDLIFE REHAB, INC.

The Critter Chronicle

A Site To See

Several years ago, NWRI was in need of a way to track our animals in an efficient, electronic manner, to aid us in our state and federal reporting requirements. At that time, Lynne and Jack Baldwin of Baldwin, Hackett & Meeks, Inc. (BHMI), came to our rescue. The Baldwins and their staff created a web-based database that allows us to track animal information, assign case numbers, and print reports for our state and federal permit requirements.

Last year, when we decided it was time to create a more dynamic Web site, we registered a new domain name, and then we asked our members for help in getting the new site up and running. Once again, the Baldwins immediately came to our aid. They volunteered not only to design our Web site, but to provide an employee to serve as our Web master to keep the site current, and to provide us with server space to maintain our site.

The result was a professionally designed site that allows us to keep the public informed about NWRI efforts and activities. In less than one year, this site has brought dozens of new volunteers and donors to NWRI, and helped us reach school and community groups, as well as the public at large to educate, and to assist when wildlife is in need. At a time when more and more people rely on the Internet to find the help they need, this Web site has not only become a vital part of our communication with the public, but now actually forms the backbone for our contact with the community.



Lynne and Jack Baldwin

BHMI is a Omaha-based company that designs software applications for clients in our area and nationally. As their company has grown to include clients such as Union Pacific, MCI and Greyhound, the people at BHMI have not forgotten the "little guys" in the community. Not only do they provide professional services to start-up businesses, but the Baldwins and their staff work to help non-profits in their community and donate their time. Without them, NWRI could never have grown into the professional wildlife rehabilitation organization that it is today.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to Lynne and Jack Baldwin, for without them, we could not help the number of people and animals we help every year. We also thank Scott Borders, who keeps our database running smoothly, and Robert Frank, who designed and maintains our public Web site, for all of the hard-work they do for us. Our needs require us to sometimes be demanding, but they have always exceeded our expectations with their skills, speed and kindness.

Please take the time to visit our Web site and let us know what you think!
<http://www.nebraskawildliferehb.org>



Robert Frank and Scott Borders

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It has been awhile since our last newsletter, and a lot has been happening since then. Early last year, our new Web site became fully functional, thanks to the generosity of Lynne and Jack Baldwin, and the hard work of their staff. The Web site has been a blessing to us, and to the animals, as many people in the metro area have found us through the site.

Our volunteers have been busy, not only with animals, but also with the community. We were out for Earth Day in April in Elmwood Park, and in June, we met with the public at the Offutt Air Force Base Pet Fair. Also in June, we set up a booth for two days at Nebraska Furniture Mart, and educated the public about wildlife and nuisance issues. In addition to broad public appearances, we also presented programs for dozens of groups, including schools, churches, day camps, and the Nebraska Humane Society.

We are also excited to be hosting The International Wildlife Council's 1AB Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation Skills course in January. This course will help our volunteers sharpen their animal care skills.

There are many changes taking place in our organization right now. We are in the process of forming a "Transportation Team" to assist NWRI with the flood of animals that comes to us through the Nebraska Humane Society. Several volunteers have already started on the Transportation Team, but several more are needed. Please see page four if you are interested in helping out with this critical task.

We are also going to change the way our hotline is answered. At this time, team leaders also answer the hotline for their teams. Often times, this distracts them from their important work of organizing their volunteers and caring for their animals. We will be forming a "Hotline

Team" of trained volunteers to assist the public. One member of the hotline team will hold the hotline cell phone each week, answering calls from the public, and assisting them with their wildlife concerns. This new team is critical to the public, and the well-being of our animals. We are currently looking for volunteers to staff this team. The commitment will require two to three weeks of hotline duty per year, plus initial training and updates. If you are interested in helping, please contact Laura Stastny at 402-960-4366 or lastastny@yahoo.com.

In September, we applied to the Nebraska Environmental Trust for a Habitat Restoration Grant. The purpose of our grant will be to involve area elementary and high school students in hands-on habitat creation and protection. From bat houses to prairie restoration, we hope that involvement in these projects will educate our young people, and create environmental leaders for the future. Grant awards will be announced in the spring. Wish us luck!

January marks the kick-off of our annual membership drive. Please renew your membership for 2007 now by using the form in this newsletter. To save on postage, we will not be sending out a separate mailing this year. We are trying to economize and save the funds for our needy friends. Your generous support makes it possible for us to care for thousands of animal each year, and to educate the public.

In our spring newsletter, look for our 2006 Animal Statistics and other NWRI updates.

We hope that you and your families have a happy holiday season! Your kindness and support are appreciated as we work to help Nebraska's native wildlife.

Thanks to Our Many Friends and Donors

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

*Lynne and Jack Baldwin
The Friedman Foundation
John Martin
John Malnack*

*Gail Yanney
Dr. Robert Bowen
Debby Easterling
Thomas & Michelle Kluge*

A Spring Release

For most of the animals we care for, our peak seasons are spring and summer. But not so for bats! Although we do receive dozens of orphaned and injured bats from April through September, the majority of the 200 to 300 bats we receive each year come to us during the fall and winter months. Most of these bats are big brown bats that hibernate in Nebraska from approximately October through early April each year, when their sole prey, insects, are scarce. These bats would naturally hibernate in caves; however, due to habitat destruction, they have had to adapt to the shelters available to them, man-made buildings. When bats roost in houses, it is inevitable that they will come in contact with humans, and the bat calls pour in to our hotline and to

Kaci Caldwell releasing a bat while the homeowner takes a photo



the Nebraska Humane Society all winter long. Because people generally do not want the bats they find to remain in their walls, these bats are transferred to NWRI for care. Even healthy bats cannot be released in the winter

months for several reasons. The first is that it is often too cold for bats to fly. Bats automatically go into a state of torpor when the temperatures drop, and cannot move quickly in this state. Additionally, even if the weather is warm enough for a bat to fly in the winter, flying burns precious stored fat the bat needs to survive the winter until the insects return. The bats we receive during the winter are weighed and measured to ensure they have enough fat stores to survive winter hibernation. Those that do are hibernated artificially with NWRI volunteers. Those that don't are kept awake and fed until their fat stores are replenished, and they are able to join their hibernating friends. Last April, we released over 100 big brown bats on private property south of Papillion, and several more in smaller releases in Omaha.

Dr. Bowen hanging bat houses on a radio tower



A Tale Of Two Bats

Last spring, NWRI received two bats belonging to species that are relative strangers to our rehabilitators. In April of last year, NWRI received a bat that is not often seen in Nebraska, a Mexican free-tailed bat. According to Thomas Lebedz of the University of Nebraska State Museum in Lincoln, our bat was only the fifth confirmed Mexican free-tailed bat recorded in the state of Nebraska. This made it a significant find to the bat biologists in our region, and a special case for our bat rehabilitators.



The bat was found near 72nd and Center St. in Omaha on the screen door of an apartment,

where he had stopped to rest. Of a species that is known to migrate, it is possible that he flew a few hundred miles farther north than he intended, and ended up in Omaha rather than in this species typical summer range of Texas and Oklahoma.

Unfortunately, the bat was in critical condition by the time it was received, suffering from severe dehydration and emaciation, and it did not survive. Although his ending was not a happy one, his presence here provides good information for those who study bats in the region. He will be donated to the State Museum in Lincoln for the biological archives there.

A few weeks later, we received a silver-haired bat into care. Although this species of bat is well documented in the state of Nebraska, it is rare for one to be admitted for rehabilitation. In fact, a silver-haired bat has not been received by NWRI for over six years! This bat was emaciated and dehydrated when it was received, but made great progress in care. She happily flew away



after a few weeks of TLC!

NWRI In the Community

On April 22, 2006, NWRI volunteers set-up an educational booth at Earth Day in Elmwood Park in Omaha. We spoke to dozens of people, and handed out hundreds of business cards and educational brochures. We also received indications of interest from several individual who would like to join NWRI and help us care for animals. The weather was beautiful, and we had a fantastic time sharing our photos, and our animals, with the people at Earth Day!



Kaci Caldwell manning NWRI's Booth at Earth Day

Bring On The Orphans!

Once again last spring and summer, the orphans poured in to our care. Hundreds of orphaned birds, squirrels, bunnies, opossums and raccoons were raised by their surrogate human parents and released back into the wild. Among our orphans, we received a young fox kit, which was found alongside his dead littermate. Both kits had been attacked by another animal, and the one that survived recovered from bite wound abscesses to his front leg, and infection. His wounds were monitored by a veterinarian, and he became strong and healthy. Later in the summer, we received two more fox kits. The trio were released late last fall. Below is a photo of our young friend.



Volunteer Opportunities

Animal Transporter

With this position, you will be given a single day of the week to act as the liaison for our organization with the Nebraska Humane Society. In this position, you will go to the Humane Society on your assigned days and triage and pick-up wildlife that is to be released or transferred into NWRI's care. You will then either release the wildlife into appropriate habitat, or you will transport it to the appropriate caregiver. Requirements include a vehicle (preferably not a compact!), valid driver's license and auto insurance. You will need to possess people skills and the ability to make independent decisions based on the training you are provided. You will have the opportunity to interact with the widest array of animals of any NWRI volunteer in this position. The time commitment for this position will be one to three hours per week depending on the season. We ask that if you sign-up for this position, that you commit to a minimum of one year of volunteer service. This is an incredibly important position, as the Nebraska Humane Society is our largest source of animals taken into care!

Hotline Specialist

Each volunteer is responsible for the hotline cell phone for one week at a time, three to four weeks a year. A hotline volunteer will educate callers about wildlife, how to handle nuisance issues, and how to determine if an animal is in need, or should simply be left alone. Additionally, the hotline volunteers will provide membership information, and put the caller in-touch with a caregiver if the animal needs to be taken into care. The time commitment for this volunteer position will vary, depending on the time of year.

Requirements include daily telephone availability, the ability to learn information and convey it to the public, and a positive attitude. As a hotline volunteer, you will be our organization's public face! We will count on you to educate the public, as well as instill confidence in each caller that we are here to help them and the animals about which they are calling. *Please note that you can do this position even if you work full-time. The phone will be equipped with voicemail so that you may return the calls when you are available.



Nebraska Wildlife Rehab, Inc.

Dear Friends:

It's membership renewal time for NWRI ... for those who joined or renewed after September 1, 2006, you are being "grandfathered" for the year 2007 and membership dues are not required until 2008. All other members are asked to renew their membership and send their dues for the year 2007. With your continued support as a general member, you receive

- Our newsletter with all the latest news on the wildlife front,
- Announcements of NWRI seminars being offered in your area,
- And access to our **hotline 341-8619** where you will receive that extra help needed when caring for sick and/or injured wildlife

Even though membership requires little on your part, it means a lot to us. With your support as a member, our wild friends are provided with food and medical treatment as they recover and are readied for release.

Please use the form below indicating your level of participation for the year 2007 and submit it along with your membership renewal as soon as possible. By rejoining, you continue as part of a special group of people all over the country whose care and concern for wildlife is enriched by belonging to NWRI.

It is good to know that you, along with a loyal group of animal lovers from all around the Great Plains area, actively support the NWRI. Thank you for your past and ongoing support!

Sincerely,

Laura Stastny

Laura Stastny
Board Member/Animal Operations



Friends Who Were
In Need

Name _____
 Street Address _____
 City _____ State _____
 Zip _____
 Telephone _____
 Email _____

m Enclosed is a check to cover my annual membership fee.

m \$25 general m \$50 patron m \$100 benefactor

If you would like to make a donation as well, space for your personal information is provided on the last page of this newsletter. Please mail to the address provided

NEBRASKA WILDLIFE REHAB, INC.

P. O. Box 24122
Omaha, NE 68124-0122

Tiny lives leaving paw prints on our hearts.

We're on the web! See us at <http://www.nebraskawildliferehab.org>

NWRI ... Nebraska Wildlife Rehab, Inc. ... is a 25+ year old, not-for-profit (501c3) 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.*

✂

Become a NWRI donor!
Please help give our wild friends a second chance.
All contributions are tax deductible.

Yes, I want to help. Enclosed is my check for:

m \$25 m \$50 m \$100 m Other _____

Name

Street Address

_____ _____ _____
City State Zip

Telephone

Email

✂