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## NWRI Adds New Location

Nebraska Wildlife Rehab is excited to announce that, through our partnership with the Turkey Creek Preserve, we have added a new site for wildlife rehabilitation in Washington County. The site is on private property, and although it will not be open for public drop-offs, it is going to make a world of difference for the wildlife we care for. The new site will:

- Add another critical care ward and additional indoor wildlife rehabilitation space.
- Provide staff and intern housing (which means the animals on-site will have 24-hour a day care).
- Allow for the expansion of our internship program with the addition of 3 advanced (Level 2) resident intern positions.
- House our staff offices, freeing up additional space for rehabilitation at our Wildlife Center in Louisville.
- Back up our Wildlife Center's hotline, expanding the hours we are able to respond to public calls.

### And perhaps most importantly,

- Facilitate the addition of approximately 16 new outdoor wilding cages, including a 50' x 20' x 16' flight cage for birds in rehabilitation. This additional caging will GREATLY increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our wildlife rehabilitation efforts and ensure that they have the best chance at survival after release

We are moving into the new site and setting up our medical ward and nurseries now, and will continue to work on the expansion through the winter so that we will be ready for baby season in the spring.

**Turn to page 6 for more about our plans for wildlife caging** and our new internship positions, and for how you can help make this expansion a success!



# Partners

Collective for Youth  
 Creighton University  
 International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council  
 Joslyn Art Museum  
 Nebraska Game & Parks Commission  
 Nebraska Humane Society  
 Nebraska Master Naturalist Program  
 University of Nebraska - Lincoln  
 University of Nebraska - Omaha

## A Letter From Our Director

Each year, Nebraska Wildlife Rehab grows. The number of animals we rescue grows. The number of calls and e-mails we receive grows. The number of school and community programs our educators present grows, and the number of people we reach grows.

As the director of NWRI, I have mixed feelings about this growth. I wish that there weren't so many wild animals out there needing our help. More than 90% of the animals we received this year were orphaned or injured due to human action, and I wish that our negative impact on wildlife wasn't so great. On the other hand, what an amazing community of people we have, people like you, who show compassion for wildlife and ensure that they get to us for care.

I love the fact that growth for NWRI means we are reaching more people through phone calls, e-mails, our web site, and most of all, our educational programming. Through education, we truly can help to create a world where wildlife is respected and treated with compassion. I hope too that we can help people see wildlife the way we see it - with awe and awesome respect.

Growth is going to be the hallmark of 2018. Our new site and ambitious caging project will mean that we can handle every animal brought to us next year. (In 2017, we are on track to receive more than 6,000 animals - 50% more than average, and 10% more than our previous record year.) We are committed to this growth for the animals and for our community, and we are only able to grow because of you. Thank you for your support!

Best wishes in 2018!

*Laura Stastny*

Laura Stastny, Executive Director

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And the other numerous people who support us with donations throughout the year!



# NWRI Helps Dogs Find Bats



Zoey signals a find.



Lily sits when she finds her target.

In November, we had the extreme privilege to work with an organization from Montana called Working Dogs for Conservation. This unique and valuable group of dogs and handlers have a myriad of skills, and they put them to good use preserving native plants, animals, and ecosystems around the globe. Their dogs are trained to locate plants and animals by scent to further research and conservation efforts. In this case, they asked for our help in training two of their dogs, Lily and Zoey, to find bats in a natural setting, so that they could locate natural crevice roosts of the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*). This species is listed as threatened and is susceptible to White-Nose Syndrome. Over the course of two days, the dogs practiced scenting bats and then locating them on our property. It amazingly took them little time to learn this new scent, and they are now using their skills to determine where these bats are roosting in Iowa (which will help determine development plans in their habitat).

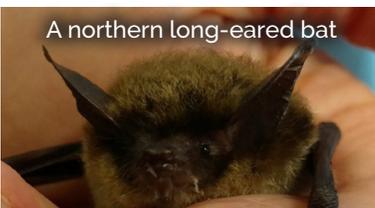


Lily working a preliminary course to help her recognize bat scent.

## White-Nose Syndrome an Imminent Danger to Bats

White-nose syndrome (WNS) is a disease of hibernating bats, caused by a fungus, that has spread from the northeastern to the central United States at an alarming rate. Since the winter of 2007-2008, millions of insect-eating bats in 31 states and five Canadian provinces have died from this devastating disease, including hundreds right here in eastern Nebraska. Bat population declines are expected to have substantial impacts on the environment and agriculture, as bats eat insects that damage crops and spread disease. Consumption of insects by bats saves U.S. farmers billions of dollars in crop damage annually. WNS is known to affect many species of crevice-dwelling bats, but at this time scientists are most concerned about the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), which is listed as threatened by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

At NWRI, we have begun to screen all crevice-dwelling bats for white-nose syndrome in the fall and winter months by physical inspection and the use of a black light to visualize the fungus. These methods are estimated to identify about 80% of WNS cases. The best method to test the bats is to send a swab to a lab for testing; however, because we receive more than 400 bats each year, this is cost prohibitive at \$18 per test. If we suspect a bat has the fungus, we will conduct laboratory testing on a case-by-case basis.



A northern long-eared bat



The coyote was rescued after hanging from this privacy fence for several hours.

## Second Chance for Coyote Stuck in Fence

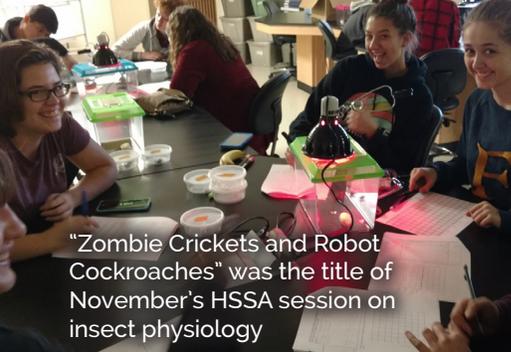
This coyote became a city-wide celebrity in March when he was found hanging from a fence in west Omaha. Law enforcement cut him down and he was brought to NWRI for care. He had deep lacerations on both of his front legs and a hairline fracture to his right ulna. He was a naughty patient, and refused to leave his stitches in, so he ended up having to wear a "cone of shame" and submit to weekly bandage changes for the next few months. He eventually made a full recovery, and was released in July.



Here the coyote is sedated for a bandage change.



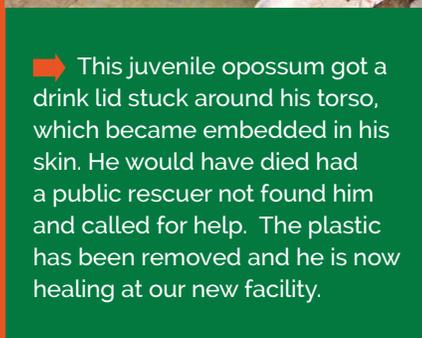
Fully recovered, the coyote on release day.



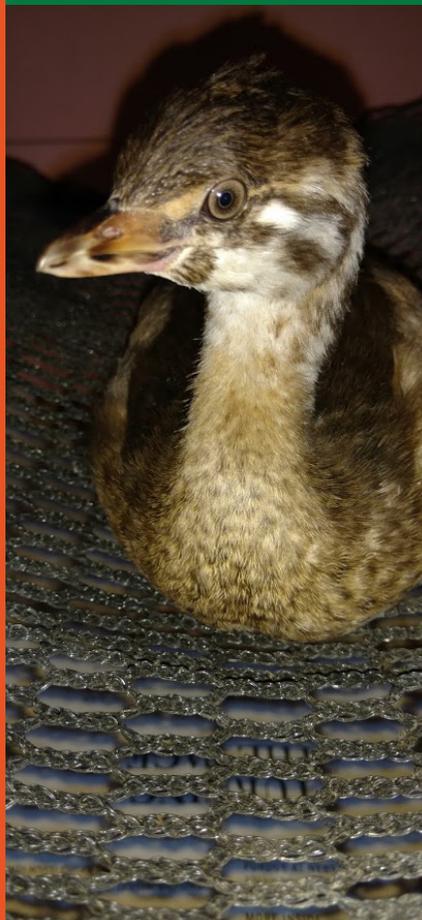
"Zombie Crickets and Robot Cockroaches" was the title of November's HSSA session on insect physiology



← This Canada goose, dubbed "Pebbles" by the NHS officer who rescued her, was brought to NWRI in November with a fishing-line injury that nearly severed her foot. The injury was so bad that her foot could not be saved. An injury such as this one normally means that a bird would not be releasable again; however, Pebbles sustained this injury early in life and has adapted to both walking and swimming despite the injury. She is in recovery now and will be released in the spring. Here Dr. Halsey performs surgery on her foot.



➡ This juvenile opossum got a drink lid stuck around his torso, which became embedded in his skin. He would have died had a public rescuer not found him and called for help. The plastic has been removed and he is now healing at our new facility.



← In late June, this juvenile pied-billed grebe was rescued in the field by NWRI staff with a laceration so deep that his trachea and esophagus were exposed. We rushed him into surgery to have the wound closed. With such severe trauma, his prognosis was guarded; however, he showed how truly resilient wildlife, especially young wildlife, can be. After lots of fish and TLC, he was returned to the wild 8 weeks later!

## Education Updates

Although this edition of the Critter Chronicle focuses largely on the animal-side of our work, it is important to remember that **education** is a critical part of NWRI's mission. We recently hired two new part-time educators to help with our programs in 8 area middle schools through Collective for Youth, and want to welcome both Angelina McIntosh and Laura Connelly to our staff! This year, our four middle school educators will have the privilege of working with more than 600 middle school students as they learn about Nebraska's native wildlife and the importance of conservation.

NWRI is also thrilled to be in our third year of our High School Science Academy (HSSA)! This fall, our 40 students have already explored topics in Ornithology and Insect Physiology. Later this year, they will work with professors on topics such as mammalogy, herpetology, microbiology and more, as well as get the opportunity to participate in a 5-day fieldwork session at Cedar Point Biological Station.

For more information on any of our education programs, visit the Education tab on our Web site.

↓ When it comes to birds, there is no end to the variety of species we receive each year. This woodcock was injured after colliding with a building. After recuperating at our Center, he was released back into the wild this fall.





↔ Each year, we receive more and more turtles that are hit by cars and have severe shell damage. These injuries can often be fixed, but may take months or years to heal. Right now, we have 4 painted turtles and 2 snapping turtles at the Wildlife Center that are recovering from this type of injury, including these two.



↓ We received hundreds of young songbirds, like this rose-breasted grosbeak, for care in 2017. Dubbed "Birdie Sanders" by our interns, this little one was released back into the wild in July.



↑ Special thanks to volunteer Chet for building new bottle racks for our baby raccoons. These racks allow us to feed up to 4 baby raccoons at one time, which is a huge help when we get over 200 baby raccoons each year!

➡ This orphaned fox kit was suffering from mange and begging for food on the Elmwood Park Golf Course when she was brought to our attention this summer. Even though she was thin, she was smart, and eluded capture for several weeks until she was finally caught in a trap with the help of a public volunteer. She remains in care at NWRI as she grows and recovers!



## Tips for Living Alongside Urban Coyotes

As the incidence of coyotes living alongside people in urban areas has increased in the past several years, so has public concern about how we can live in harmony with these animals that provoke fear in so many people. NWRI had the privilege this fall to meet with our partners at the Nebraska Humane Society, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and local law enforcement, to talk about the myths and realities of living in proximity to coyotes. NWRI also developed a simple handout that all of the agencies will use to help address public questions about coyotes. You can find that handout on our Web site or Facebook page, or send us an e-mail at [info@nebraskawildliferehab.org](mailto:info@nebraskawildliferehab.org) and we'd be happy to e-mail it to you. We hope that with some good information and a little understanding, people will enjoy the privilege of seeing these beautiful animals in the wild!

# Summer Internship Program Expanding

Since 2012, NWRI has offered a 12-week summer internship to college students to fulfill internship credit in certain fields, or for students wanting to gain hands-on experience in the fields of Wildlife Management, Veterinary Medicine, and Animal Science. This year, we are excited to announce the addition of an advanced (Level 2) internship at our new site. That means we will be offering twelve Level 1 internships at our Wildlife Center in Louisville, and an additional three Level 2 (resident) internships at our new site in Fort Calhoun.

If you know a college student who might be interested in completing an internship with NWRI in 2018, please have them visit our Web site at [www.nebraskawildliferehab.org](http://www.nebraskawildliferehab.org) to learn more and to apply. Our "Internships for University Students" page is under the Education tab.



The trailer in the parking lot of NHS was filled more than 4 times with donations from our wishlist from generous people from all over the metro!

## Public Helps Out When Air Conditioner Breaks

This summer, the air conditioner at our Wildlife Center in Louisville called it quits, leaving us without air during a major heatwave in July. Our landlord, Ash Grove, did everything they could to help, including providing smaller units and fans, but unfortunately, replacing a large unit like ours in a very old building was not an easy or quick fix.

After weighing all of our options, including temporary relocation, we decided we could make due if we moved a large number of animals into outdoor enclosures; however, to do that quickly, we knew we would need some serious help.

**You** answered our call for help! In less than a week, more than four trailer-loads of building and caging supplies were dropped off at the Nebraska Humane Society, and thousands of dollars were donated to ensure that we could care for all of our animals, in spite of the heat. Community members stopped by to volunteer to pick-up donations and to see how else they could help. Volunteers stepped up and erected new caging for our wildlife, allowing us to move more than 100 animals outside! Staff, interns, and volunteers worked extra hours in the heat themselves to ensure that the animals in our care weathered the crisis with no ill-effects. We were moved by the compassionate, rapid response of the community to our calls for assistance. THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED!

## New Caging Plans A Game Changer for NWRI

Wildlife rehabilitation can be challenging. Not only do we have to rescue an animal and see to all of its medical, nutritional, and behavioral needs, we also need to do everything in our power to prepare each animal for a successful life in the wild, while remaining as hands-off as possible. Sometimes that can be truly daunting, especially when the animals are coming into care faster than they are going out.

A key component to any animal's successful release is the amount of time they can spend outside, learning skills and being exposed to new experiences, within the safety of a large wilding cage. Wilding cages also ensure that wild animals have the space to build up muscle tone and get enough of the right kind of exercise to ensure that they are physically fit for release.

Because we don't own our own land, we have long relied on a patchwork of wilding cages on volunteers' properties in 4 counties for this part of the rehabilitation process. That has presented a major challenge for us in terms of oversight and cage maintenance.

Because of the challenges, and the importance of good wilding cages, we are thrilled to now have a larger presence on our new leased site, that will allow us to build up to sixteen more wilding cages for our animals, including a much-needed flight cage for birds. (We already have 13 cages on site.) With staff and interns living on-site, the care and oversight of the animals in the wilding cages will be guaranteed.



Some of the new cages that were built for raccoons this summer, during the building process.

In order to build these new cages, and make some more permanent adjustments to the caging already on-site, we need your help! The cost of these crucial upgrades and structures will be approximately \$16,000. Please considering donating today to our caging fund so that we can build and be ready for next summer!



Juvenile raccoons enjoying their new cages that were built this summer during the air conditioning crisis.

# How You Can Help

nebraskawildliferehab.org/  
how-to-help/

## Enrichment Items

If you want “enrich” the lives of our wildlife, please consider donating some of the items listed below:

Hollowed-out logs  
Landscaping rocks  
Hay or Straw  
Mulberries or other berries still on the branches  
Apples, pears, and other locally grown fruit  
Vegetables from your garden (particularly spinach kale, spring mix, corn and zucchini)  
Hand mirrors  
Fisher Price Toys (think old-style xylophone, piano, and other large, bright, toddler toys)  
Small tire swings  
Toilet paper/paper towel rolls  
Sisal rope  
Rubber mats  
Ice cube trays  
Tennis balls  
Bike reflectors  
Barrels & buckets  
Antlers  
Corn stalks  
Pine cones, moss, shells  
Duck weed and willow  
Incubators  
Electronic gram scales  
Towels & Blankets  
Newspaper  
Reptile lights

## Items still needed for the New Rehabilitation Site for intern housing:

Two full-sized beds (frame, mattress, box spring)  
Two dressers  
Two nightstands  
An armoire or clothing rack  
Appliances in good condition: refrigerator, microwave, toaster, coffee pot  
Kitchen items, including pots, pans, dishes, utensils  
Target or Big Lots gift cards to purchase the above

## For caging:

Cash donations to help build the new wilding cages  
Lowe's, Home Depot, Menard's  
Gift Cards to purchase supplies & Enrichment items listed above.



## Find the Perfect Gift for the Wildlife Lover on Your List

This spring, NWRI launched our very own online store, and it is filled with fabulous gifts for the wildlife lover in your life (and for yourself!), including scarves, bags, pins, patches, books, greeting cards, baby gear, and t-shirts! Go to our web site and click on the “NWRI’s Online Store” link from our home page or under the “How You Can Help” tab to check it out!

## Donate

NWRI depends on donations from people like you to rescue, rehabilitate and release thousands of wild animals and migratory songbirds each year, and to implement hands-on environmental learning programs for students in our schools. We do not receive any state or government funding. We appreciate your support!

### One-Time Donations

Please return the enclosed envelope with your gift or go to our website at [www.nebraskawildliferehab.org](http://www.nebraskawildliferehab.org) and click on the “Donate Now” link.

### Monthly Giving

**YOUR MONTHLY GIFT IS A FOUNDATION THE ANIMALS CAN COUNT ON**  
Our monthly donors are a “species” of their own – our most dedicated and forward-thinking supporters. Your automatic monthly gift can help provide a foundation for the care of the thousands of wild animals we receive each year and is the easiest and most efficient way to support Nebraska Wildlife Rehab. You can easily start, change or stop your gift at any time, and most importantly, you can be proud of the fact that your ongoing support means that we can continue our important work in wildlife rehabilitation and education without interruption! Start your monthly gift today!

### Our Amazon Wishlist

We keep a running list of the items most in need at the Wildlife Center on Amazon. To view our list, and purchase a gift for wildlife, just search for our wish list under Nebraska Wildlife Rehab, or go to this link: <http://amzn.com/w/1HU9HHCG8IDSR>

### Amazon Smile

Designate Nebraska Wildlife Rehab, Inc. as your charity of choice at smile.amazon.com and then make your Amazon purchases through Amazon Smile whenever you shop. Amazon will then donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible Amazon Smile purchases to NWRI.

### Volunteer

Volunteers are the backbone of NWRI, and we are always looking for dedicated, responsible people to join the team. Our volunteers train for the following positions:  
Wildlife Center Volunteer  
Rescue & Reunification Team  
Humane Society Transporter  
Animal Care Provider  
Cage Building & Repair  
Supply and Donation Pick-Up

## VCA Donates for Wildlife

This summer, VCA Midwest Veterinary Referral and Emergency Center, made an incredible donation of Shoreline veterinary caging, refrigerators, furniture, exam tables, a walk-on scale, clothes washer and dryer, and sinks to NWRI. Coordinated by VCA’s David Cook and NWRI volunteer, Chet Bressman, these truckloads of donations have already made a huge impact on NWRI and are going to be even more important as we outfit the medical wards at our new site this winter. Huge thanks to VCA and to the Bressmans for their hard work and generosity!



VCA’s David Cook, and NWRI volunteers Scott Hansen and Chet & Louise Bressman, on just one of the donation moving days



PO Box 24122  
Omaha, NE 68124

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US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
FIRESRING

This beautiful red fox is one of six foxes, and one of more than 6,000 wild animals, NWRI cared for this year. Your donation ensures animals like these the chance for a life in the wild!

