

Focus on Animals

THE FOUNDATION FOR ANIMALS ANNUAL REPORT NEWSLETTER 🐾 2015 EDITION



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RECORD NUMBER OF ORPHANED BEAR CUBS AT WILDLIFE REHABILITATION CENTER

Due to a shortage of berries and other drought-related conditions, the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks wildlife rehabilitation facility in Helena cared for over 35 orphaned bear cubs this winter. “We received some really thin, hungry cubs,” said Lisa Rhodin, Wildlife Center manager.

The bears’ traditional food base was cut short by an unusually warm spring, followed by a hot, dry summer. That led to bears coming into western Montana’s valleys looking for something to eat. Several orphaned cubs were picked up after the mother had been hit by a car. Some were abandoned due to lack of food.

When game wardens are alerted to a cub that is in trouble and can reach it, they often transport it to the Wildlife Center. Rhodin and her volunteers assess the cub’s condition and age and immediately begin to fatten it up. They want to be sure that every cub has enough stored fat before it is released back to the wild.

While at the Wildlife Center, the less human contact a cub has, the better its chance for a successful return to the wild. To prevent habituation to humans, center workers avoid direct contact with cubs and the wildlife rehabilitation facility is not open to the public.

Fortunately for visitors, cubs can be seen when they are in their outdoor enclosures via closed-



Photos courtesy of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Orphaned Black Bear cubs enjoy daily exercise, building muscle and climbing skills in the wildlife center’s outdoor enclosures. When cubs reach a healthy weight, they are released back to their original habitat in the wild.

circuit viewing available nearby at Montana WILD’s visitor and education center, and from the hiking trail at Spring Meadow State Park as they frolic on jungle gyms provided for their development.

If you would like to donate to care of the cubs, the Wildlife Center accepts gift cards for supplies from local ranch and hardware stores. The Wildlife Center also uses donated plastic igloo-style doghouses in the medium and large sizes to provide shelter for the cubs. Please confirm specific needs by calling 444-9942. 🐾

WILDLIFE EDUCATES VISITORS

The ultimate goal of the wildlife rehabilitation facility is to return all recovered orphaned and injured wildlife back to the wild. Occasionally, however, a healthy animal cannot be returned to the wild. When that occurs, the staff and volunteers at the center make every effort to find the best type of wildlife placement for that animal.

This was the case for “Ninguis” a beautiful Snowy Owl (photo on page 2) that arrived at the center with a badly damaged wingtip. When it was determined he could not be released, he was placed in a zoo in upstate New York that had considerable experience with his species and provided a temperature-controlled habitat. A center volunteer recently visited the facility and reported that Ninguis is thriving.

Another way an exceptional but non-releasable animal may participate in conservation education is to become an ambassador or education animal. Because ambassador animals have more exposure to the public, a special permit must be acquired, and specific federal and state regulations followed.

Wildlife, continued on page 2

Wildlife, continued from page 1

Currently, the Wildlife Center has an ambassador Golden Eagle named "Rubicon." Rubicon came to the center after being shot from the sky. She lived, but the resulting injuries ended her high-flying days. Because of her commanding presence and remarkable composure around humans, a special permit was applied for and received. These days, as an ambassador animal, Rubicon amazes staff and visitors alike when introduced at Montana WILD.

In 2015, Montana WILD received 20,525 visitors. Many attended educational programs and learned about Golden Eagles such as Rubicon. 

Photos courtesy of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks



"Ninguis," a Snowy Owl, came to the Wildlife Center after colliding with a wire fence. When he could not be returned to the wild, the rehabilitation center located a special wildlife placement that met all his needs.

"Rubicon," a Golden Eagle, met all requirements set for an ambassador, or education animal for programs at Montana WILD. "Rubi" is an instant hit with visitors of all ages as they learn about Montana's raptors.

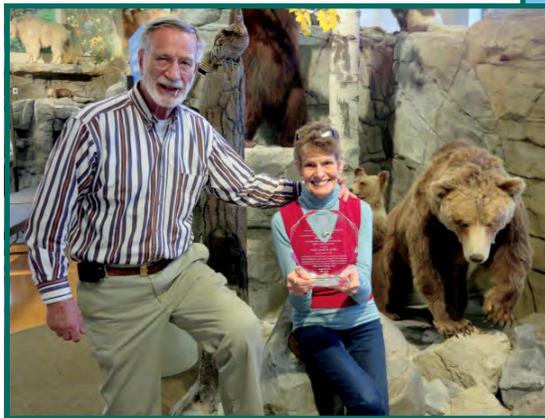
VOLUNTEERS MAKE IT POSSIBLE

Montana WILD recently recognized the many dedicated volunteers who serve at the wildlife rehabilitation center and at the education and visitor center. Volunteers are vital to both facilities. In 2015, education and visitor center volunteers contributed 780 hours. Wildlife center volunteers gave over 4500 hours. Depending on individual skills and interests, volunteers perform duties as diverse as presenting educational programs, cleaning wildlife enclosures and prepping food for the animals.

For information on volunteering at the Wildlife Center, call Lisa at 444-9942. For volunteering at the education and visitor center, call Laurie at 444-9945.

The Wildlife Center is also proud to host two interns each semester through Carroll College's Anthrozoology program. 

Photos courtesy of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, photographer Dianne Nickman



Volunteers Mary and Gerry Ryan received special recognition for outstanding commitment to wildlife and education during their 15 years of continuous service.



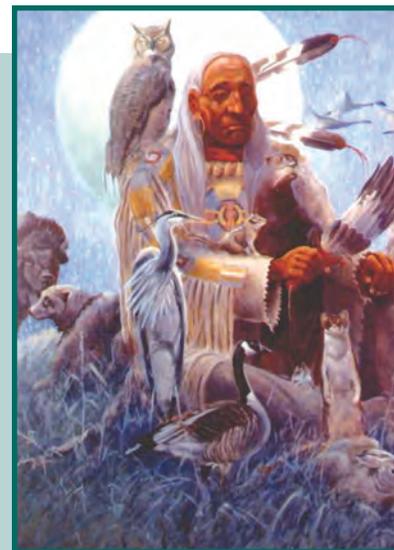
In 2015 alone, volunteers Don and Donna Eisenmenger presented 71 wildlife conservation programs to visitors both onsite and through the Adopt-A-Species elementary school program. Shown here with "Luna" a Great Horned Owl.



Wildlife rehabilitation center coordinator Lisa Rhodin enters the 103-foot flight pen that is nearing completion at Montana WILD.

REMEMBERING BOB MORGAN

Robert F. Morgan (1929-2015) was an artist, an animal lover and a friend to the Foundation. A great supporter of all good causes, Bob gifted his painting "And We Are All Friends," to FFA as a fundraiser for the Montana Wildlife Center. Prints are available for purchase through FFA's web page at www.foundationforanimals.org. 



HELPING PETS AND PEOPLE SPAY/NEUTER AND EMERGENCY FUNDS PROGRAMS

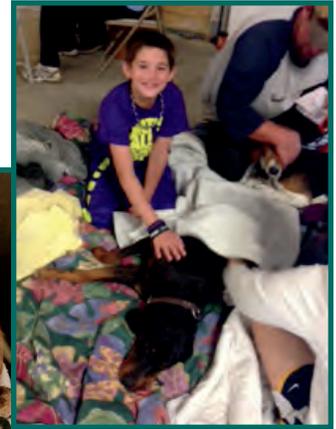
Spay/Neuter. In 2015, FFA contributed \$6895 to spay/neuter efforts in Montana, including \$195 through FFA's individual vouchers, \$5700 to fund low-cost public clinics, and \$1,000 to other spay/neuter efforts. FFA has dedicated \$117,095 to this program since its inception in 1992.

Emergency Funds. This program was designed to help animals and people, primarily low or fixed-income pet owners who must meet emergency veterinary expenses. In 2015, FFA provided over \$3700 in assistance. Since inception of the program in 1992, FFA has dedicated \$81,400 to helping animals in critical need.

Braveheart Update: Our previous newsletter highlighted the many donations that made possible the veterinary care needed by "Braveheart," a miniature therapy horse. Braveheart's owner is grateful for the generous outpouring of support and reports that the little horse is doing well. 



"Weezer" sustained injuries in a vehicle accident that resulted in the death of his beloved owner. FFA had already received donations in Weezer's name when we learned that Highwoods Veterinary Services in Fort Benton provided veterinary care without charge due to the tragic circumstances. To honor the clinic's extraordinary compassion and generosity, and the wishes of FFA supporters who had given in Weezer's name, the funds were sent to Highwoods for any after care or therapy that Weezer may need.



Ryan comforts a dog in the post-surgical recovery area of the 2015 SPAY Montana clinic in Helena that was funded by FFA. The Foundation will also support SPAY Montana's 2016 clinic in Helena.

FFA SMALL GRANT AWARDS

- SPAY Montana received \$5700 to fund a free spay/neuter clinic in Helena in summer 2015. The clinic was offered to pet owners who most needed assistance. A total of 192 dogs and cats were altered (70 dogs, 122 cats).
- A grant of \$2000 contributed to new ground cover of decomposed granite needed at Helena's Paws Park for dogs. In addition, FFA funded Mutt Mitt supplies in summer 2015. Designated donations will allow FFA to again fund Mutt Mitts in 2016.
- A grant of \$1200 was dedicated to the purchase of grain to feed waterfowl at the Lewis and Clark County Fairgrounds.
- Wild About Cats Refuge & Sanctuary was awarded \$1000 toward spay/neuter of feral and abandoned cats. 



Domestic ducks and geese abandoned at the Lewis & Clark Fairgrounds often need supplemental feed to help them through winter. The birds at the pond have a true friend in Mikal Kellner who has distributed feed for them for many years.



Lucky kitty 'Gram' is ready to be adopted after being spayed through Wild About Cats Rescue & Sanctuary (WACRS). The all-volunteer group, headed by Bobbie Pomroy (holding Gram), traps, alters and adopts out cats through PetSmart's adoption center. For more information, visit WACRS on Facebook.

Visit our website:
www.foundationforanimals.org



Focus on Animals

The Foundation For Animals
P.O. Box 389
Helena, MT 59624-0389
Telephone: (406) 443-6532
e-mail: mkfa@mt.net

Newsletter Co-Editors

Marilyn Evans
Dianne Nickman

Program Committees

Adopt-a-Species Program
Carla Wambach

Dog Park Committee
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Emergency Funds Program
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Special thanks to the staff
and volunteers at the
Montana Wildlife Center.



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Otter



Mother and Baby Porcupine



Barn Owl

ADOPT-A-SPECIES PROGRAM SHARING SPACE WITH WILDLIFE

The 2015-2016 school year theme for the Adopt-A-Species program was "Living with Wildlife, Sharing Space." Helena area elementary schools each chose a Montana wildlife species to study for the school year. Students wrote essays and created artwork about their school's species and habitat.

Students learned that humans need to share habitat in order for wildlife to survive near human populations, especially in

Montana. What can we do to help wildlife and people share space? See how students expressed their views in the April 2016 Helena Independent Record Earth Week supplement (also posted on the FFA web site).

The Adopt-A-Species program is sponsored by the Helena Forest Service, MT Discovery Foundation, The Foundation For Animals and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. 🐾