

# Welcome to INSTINCTS

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Vol 5:1

*"The newsletter helping you follow your Wild Instincts."*

## **WELCOME INTERNS**

We were fortunate enough this year to have enough funds in the budget to start our two spring interns about a month earlier than normal. With the past two winters finding us caring for more patients over the winter than normal, this change has allowed us to catch up on things that have been falling behind. Anyone familiar with Wild Instincts knows that the animals come first and other things get pushed down the list. Tawny and Kim are allowing us to get that list whittled down to what it should look like at this time of year.



Tawny and Kim getting front desk training.

Tawny may look familiar to you. She was a fall intern last year. She's returned to see what a true busy season is like. She will be with us for the spring and summer sessions. Kim comes to us from New Mexico. She had a taste of wildlife rehab at another facility for a few months and wanted to explore it further. She will be here for spring, summer and fall to get the full experience.

[www.wildinstinctsrehab.com](http://www.wildinstinctsrehab.com)

They start their internships finding us caring for seven eagles, three of which are actively being treated for lead poisoning. There are also bats, turtles, snakes, a turkey vulture, a barred owl, a Cooper's hawk, a raccoon, a squirrel, assorted songbirds and our normal residents.

## **OLDEST BAT**

Last newsletter we discussed how happy we were to be able to rehab bats again after short ban on any bat rehab.

In February, this discovery was made and we thought it was well worth sharing. The following is reprinted from WDNR Natural Heritage Conservation News:



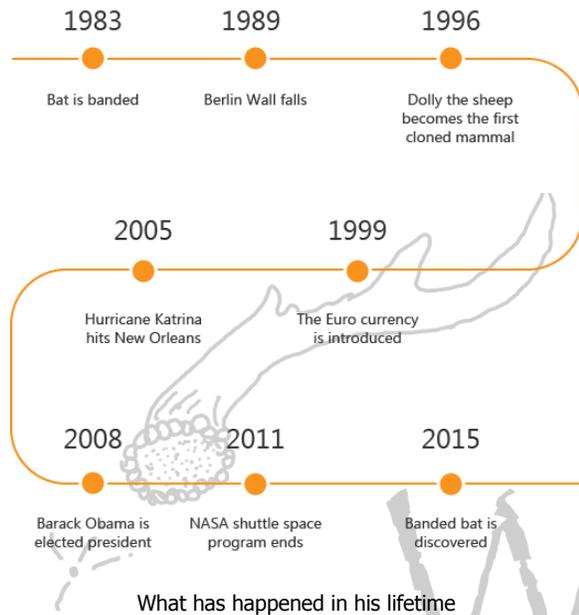
Natural Heritage photo

This male little brown bat was banded in April 1983 making it at least 32 years old in February 2015 when it was last recovered. There is no way to age bats after they reach adulthood (several months after birth), so this bat could have been a yearling born in the summer of 1982, or already several years old in 1983. The bat was banded by Gerda Nordquist and Elmer

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Birney of the Minnesota DNR in the same site as it was recovered.



One of the oldest little brown bats ever recorded hanging with friends. Do you see the silver band?

The record for the oldest little brown bat in the wild is 35 years in Alberta Canada. The bat was banded in 1975 and was recovered as recently as 2009. Little information exists on lifespans of bats in Wisconsin. Other resources indicate most common ages for little brown bats are between six and ten years. Other species in Wisconsin such as the northern long-eared bat have slightly shorter lifespans and the oldest recorded northern long-eared bat was 18 years old. Of note, the oldest bat on record is a Brandt's myotis who was last recovered in Siberia at the age of 41.

Bats have some of the longest life spans when compared to other mammals their size. It is not uncommon for little brown bats to live over 25 years. Other species of bat live up to 20 years. The little brown bat is about the size of a house mouse, which in comparison lives only one to two years on average. Mice also give birth to large litters of four to fourteen young, whereas bats usually give birth to only a single young a year, called a pup.

Banding is a safe, permanent method of marking individual bats in the wild. Marking individuals allows researchers to gather valuable information about movement and migration, fidelity to sites (returning to the same site year after year), and longevity as in the case of this bat. Much remains to be learned about bats, and following individuals allows us to create a complete picture of bat ecology.

13,977,600

Over the years, he has eaten a lot of insects

Assuming this bat has eaten its weight (6 grams) in insects every night for the past 32 years, we estimate it has consumed roughly 13,977,600 mosquito-sized insects.

## **IN HONOR OF/IN MEMORY OF**

Donations have been received

- ~In Honor of "Captain" Golding, a great canine companion
- ~In Memory of Dick Brusoe
- ~In Memory of Dennis Gerrits
- ~In Memory of Sylvia Gartmann
- ~In Memory of Al Itzin
- ~In Memory of James Alderton

You DO NOT have to be member of Facebook to follow us on Facebook. You can follow all our stories, photos and videos without joining Facebook. You simply can't comment on them unless you are a member of Facebook.

Click on the box to see for yourself.

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## **WISH LIST and AMAZON**

We are continually amazed and blessed by all those generous folks out there who take the time to check our list and go shopping. We'd like to say a big THANK YOU for helping us help them, no matter who you are out there.

Some even see a need and just respond without giving us a chance to list it on our wish list. Every time we receive an item to help our mission it gives us a great feeling. We cannot do this without you and your help.

Some select items from our wish list:

- ~FISH, fresh or frozen, whole or fillets
- ~Venison
- ~Treated 2x6's (8' & 10' lengths)
- ~Paper Towels
- ~Liquid Hand Soap
- ~Dish Soap
- ~8' Utility Trailer

Here's a link to our [Amazon Wish List](#) if you'd like to go wild shopping ☺

## **LEAD, LEAD, AND MORE LEAD**

Five out of the last seven bald eagles we admitted had lead levels requiring treatment.

That's 71.43%!!!! Let that number sink in a little.

This scenario is repeated at facilities like ours all across the United States.

Let THAT thought sink in even more.

It's true that most of our admissions are from human causes- window strikes, hit by car, etc. While we can put decals on our windows to help prevent window strikes, and we can drive with the utmost of care, accidents will still happen.

The frustrating part of lead poisoning in our wildlife is that it is 100% preventable. Stop using lead fishing tackle and ammunition. Period.

It is no accident.

There are some that argue there is a greater cost to non-lead alternatives. That is true, but the cost is minimal. It does, however, make a great "hot button" topic for sportsmen that have been duped by special interests, into quoting that worn out canned statement over and over.

One need only go to Cabela's website. There you can buy a 190 piece lead-free sinker set of assorted sizes for \$9.99. That equates to \$0.05/piece.

There is an assorted set of 420 pieces containing lead listed for \$14.99. That equates to \$0.04/piece.

Just one cent difference could save a life!

Oh, and if you live in New York state, never mind. New York has banned lead less than 1/2 ounce, so Cabela's can't sell or ship it to New York. Way to go New York!

When researching for this article, we found it interesting that you could buy 190 piece lead-free sinker set for less than it costs us to just TEST a bird for lead, not even thinking about how much it costs to treat a bird for lead poisoning.

The USA Ice Team, a world class ice fishing organization who is participating in the

World Ice Fishing Championship in Finland this month, uses only lead alternatives. If professional anglers can make the transition from lead to alternatives, why can't the rest of us?

Likewise, checking Gander Mountain, one can purchase a box of Winchester .30-06 lead-free shells for \$34.99 compared to a box containing lead for \$21.99. Based on generally 20 shells/box, the lead-free costs \$1.75 each while the toxin containing lead shells equate to \$1.10 each, a mere \$0.65! The \$13 difference/box is about the cost to just TEST one bird for lead levels; treatment costs can reach into the thousands. A box of shells should last a hunter more than one outing.

Think of buying lead-free alternative fishing and hunting equipment as doing your part for the valued natural resources sportsmen and women like yourselves love.

Spread the word. Get the lead out!



December 26, 2014 admission waiting blood draw.



December 29, 2014 after starting chelation therapy



March 15, 2015 Intern Kim getting ready to release her first eagle. The bird had been ready to be released for quite a while, but the weather would not cooperate.



Finally Free Again!

## **TIME FOR YOUR SPRING CLEANING!**

As the snow melts and the warmer temps are bringing us outside, it's the perfect time to clean your bird feeders and feeding stations. The sudden warm up we had may make this an ideal year for Salmonella outbreaks.

Bring all your feeders in for cleaning. A dirty birdfeeder can harbor bacteria, mold and other disease agents that can infect backyard birds and spread illness to other backyards and migrating populations.

If you'd like to leave a couple out while you clean a couple so there is always something out for the birds, that's fine.

Clean your feeders, taking apart all that can come apart such as removable ports, lids, perches, platforms, reservoirs and trays, etc. Use rubber gloves and stiff brushes. Scrub well with soap and water until they look spotless. This is also a great time to inspect everything for cracks or breaks that may trap a foot of a bird or squirrel.

After everything is spotless, then soak everything in a 10% bleach solution (one part bleach to nine parts water) for 10 minutes.

Rinse everything thoroughly in clean, clear water for at least 10 seconds to be sure all chemical residues are removed.

Dry the feeder(s) completely before refilling. Any remaining moisture could lead to mold and mildew that can cause illness as well as rotten, unhealthy seed. That will undo all the hard work you just did!

Refill, rehang and enjoy.

Don't be tempted to take shortcuts and just think bleach water is enough.

Bleach is a disinfectant, but only in the absence of any organic material. If you don't clean your feeders before soaking in the bleach water solution, they will not be disinfected.

It's also essential to clean under and around your feeders as well. All that spent seed from the winter now on the ground is getting wet in the melting runoff making it prime areas for mold and mildew. Not only

that, but it will start to smell and bring it non-feathered friends, such as bears, mice, raccoons, skunks and even insects.

Remove the old, damp seed from all feeders, refresh mulch or gravel beneath the feeders or spray to remove the droppings.

Speaking of bears, remember to take those feeders down and inside at night as bears emerge from winter sleep looking for food.

In some areas, after things green up and there is food other than feeders, bears will leave feeders alone. In other areas, taking feeders in is a nightly ritual until the fall when they go back into their dens.

Now is also a time to bring out the bird baths, but watch for freezing temperatures still at night. Make sure there is no exposed metal to prevent frostbite or birds feet from being frozen to a metal object after visiting your birdbath.

Cleaning out and inspecting nesting boxes to prepare for breeding season should be on your to-do list as well.

There are several websites that track different bird migrations so you can see what's happening across the country and be prepared when the migrants pass through your area. Click [HERE](#) for one general link that will inform you on what to expect in your specific region of the U.S.

Birds aren't the only ones starting to feel spring in the air, so are squirrels among others.

If you're planning to do any tree trimming, remember squirrels are already giving birth in some areas. Plan any trimming carefully, being mindful that you are potentially cutting into someone's nest. Many of our orphan squirrels and songbirds are from people unknowingly cutting down a nest tree.

It's been another long winter here in the Northwoods. Get out and enjoy spring while being considerate of our wild friends.

### **SHOWER WITH A FRIEND**

On Feb 5<sup>th</sup>, we received a call from another rehabber. She had been preparing to take a shower. When she pulled back the curtain to get in the tub, she found it already occupied – by a nearly three foot Western Fox Snake!

She knew she would have to transfer it to us because her husband fits into the Does-Not-Like-Snakes category. In fact, to keep him away from this one, she sent him to the basement for a specific container she knew would be perfect for housing and transporting her new friend. Husband dutifully went to basement. As he retrieved the specific container, he discovered another smaller Western Fox Snake (aka Pine Snake) under the container! "Snakes in winter?" people are asking - especially those who are not overly fond of them.



The tail of the larger snake.

Snakes, like most cold-blooded exotherms, will go into brumation, the equivalent of hibernation.

In all likelihood, these snakes found a way into the basement last fall, looking for a good place to sleep the winter.

The larger snake probably slithered up the stairs as temps started getting warmer. Both snakes are doing well and shed their skin shortly after they arrived.

Husband, however, wanted to burn down the house or at the very least move to one less inviting to snakes.



Both snakes shed their skins not long after admission.

### **TURTLE TIDBITS**

We are over-wintering two painted turtles and two snapping turtles. The painted turtles were illegally taken from the wild as "pets" during the summer and then as winter approached the people realized they couldn't properly care for them and brought them in. They suffered some shell damage from improper husbandry, but will fully recover.



Some of the shell damage on one of the painted turtles.

One snapping turtle was brought in as a hatching egg, the other was found recently hatched and not doing well so someone brought it in.

All of them were overwintered and will be released when the weather allows.

In the wild, they would all brumate, like the snakes in the previous article. Here, we keep them active and growing all winter. And grow they do!



You can see how far snappers can extend their necks. That's one of the reasons it's not a good idea to pick one up by the tail. It can still reach around and bite you!

Species 1/1-3/5/15	
American Crow	1
American Goldfinch	1
Bald Eagle	7
Barred Owl	1
Big Brown Bat	6
Black-capped Chickadee	1
Cooper's Hawk	1
Eastern Cottontail	1
Eastern Gray Squirrel	2
Mourning Dove	1
Muskrat	1
Pileated Woodpecker	1
Pine Siskin	1
Raccoon	3
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1
Snapping Turtle	2
Turkey Vulture	1
Western Fox Snake	2
Western Painted Turtle	2
White-tailed Deer	1
Total	37

Rummage Sale, June 5, 6 and 7th at Wild Instincts from 8-4 each day. Dog crates, bird cages, full aquarium set-ups and more!

9<sup>th</sup> Annual Lupine Junefest at Carow Park, Mercer, WI, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m



Intern Tawny releases a barred owl



Barred owl healed from injuries from being hit by a car is free once more.

### Events Calendar

Midwest Sandhill Crane Count is April 18<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 a.m -7:30 a.m.

See [savingcranes.org](http://savingcranes.org) for more details and how to find your County Coordinator and join in.

**Thank You for Helping  
Us Help Them!**