

# Summer 2020



Number of Wildlife Patients  
Treated since 2009: > 26,100

## What A YEAR!



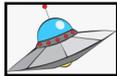
Normally we save “What A Year!” for the end of the season, but who would have known that 2020 was holding a “COVID Flush”!?! We have all been dealt a hand we would never have imagined and now it’s up to each and everyone of us to do our part to get through this.



“...responsible stewardship of wildlife and habitat.”

**WRCNU HAS BEEN OPEN** through it all, but it has not been without a lot of pain and serious discussion. You might ask, why did we stay open and risk our organization even when most of the state was shutdown?

Not everyone understands the real reason or need for wildlife rehabilitation, but this pandemic presents a perfect example to answer that question (see the “COVID-19 Considerations for Wildlife Rehabilitation” article on the back page for the answers).



## **2020 Patient Numbers Are OUT OF THE STRATOSPHERE!**



Our average patient numbers at the end of June should be ~1,440. June 2020 has officially ended with over 2,000 animals—But WHY!?!

Due to the statewide COVID-19 Shutdown, most everyone was or still is home during the height of the wildlife BABY SEASON and we have always known that our patient numbers were just the “TIP OF THE ICEBERG.”

With everyone home it means MORE animals will be found and normally you would think finding more injured animals to be a good thing, right? Well ... with the “good” also comes the “bad and the sad”. 😞

More animals that need help have been located and brought in to the Center, but also, more animals (literally hundreds) that **DO NOT** need help are being picked up and removed from the care of their parents and turned into ORPHANS by unknowing but caring people.

This is the “Baby Season” and as baby animals begin to venture out of their homes to investigate the world around them people have been grabbing them up and taking them to WRCNU before finding out if what they are doing is the correct response.

The fact is, **MOST BABY ANIMALS NEED TO BE LEFT ALONE!** Most are not injured and are just learning how to run, climb, fly, and search for food. All of this is under the watchful eyes of their parents, who are still feeding their babies while teaching them the dangers of the new world around them.

You may not SEE 👁️👁️ the parents, but almost certainly, they are there; finding food for their young and watching over them in the process. Unless you actually SEE an injury (bleeding OR in your pet’s mouth OR it hit a window, etc.) **PLEASE Leave Them Alone.** Young birds will be on the ground for 2-4 days as they strengthen their new wings for flight, so what we ask is this:

- **PLEASE Don’t touch them** unless you see an injury
- **PLEASE CALL a licensed rehabber** if you are not sure.
- **PLEASE Keep children and pets away** from them at this most vulnerable time. Cats and dogs take far too many wild babies—this is not “Nature taking its course”, this is a negative Human impact caused by our pets and feral domesticated animals.
- **PLEASE Do not keep approaching to check on the baby**, this makes the parents stay away too long—if you must watch, the best place is from inside looking out a nearby window. If you are lucky you might see the parents coming back to feed their babies.

In addition, we feel this next item is very important for the public to understand: Rehabbers are NOT here to protect wildlife from things that “might happen”. We get calls all the time to remove wild animals from their territory to “Save them from the outdoor cats” or to “Save them from a hunting hawk” or other predator. This idea is just unrealistic. We ALL must do our part to take preventative measures and keep our domestic animals (mostly cats and dogs) from harming our wildlife. To remove literally hundreds of thousands of wild animals to “keep them safe” is like putting people in prison because their house may collapse in an earthquake—it is the wrong response to a symptom and not directed at the root cause of the problem.

Of course, if a baby bird is in the middle of the street, it **IS OK** to move them back to the side of the road and even place them in or under a bush for protection. Just do not move them so far away that the parents cannot find their baby when they return.



Two Nestling Scrub Jay  
Orphans at WRCNU



## A WRCNU Shout Out to our Face Mask Donors!



In the early days of March, back when masks were hard to come by, we were blessed to have several individuals and organizations offer to make masks for the WRCNU Staff and Volunteers. We wish to acknowledge their help and support here, with great gratitude to each of them for donating their materials, services and even shipping costs to ensure our people were as safe as possible and helping to ensure we could continue our important work.

Thank you to:



**Jan Adams**—Mother and supporter of one of our WRCNU Staff members

**Claudia Henricks**—WRCNU Volunteer and Board Member

**Relief Crafters of America**—“RCoA is a volunteer-run group that serves to identify groups of humans or animals in need and then direct our handcrafted fiber products to these groups to provide support.”

**State of Utah**—“All masks provided by the state through the ‘A Mask for Every Utahn’ campaign are made by Utah companies at their internal production facilities.”

## WRCNU’s 2020 Fall Speaker Series Announcement



Due to rising COVID-19 numbers here in Utah, the uncertain future, and other restrictions, we are sad to announce that we **must POSTPONE our Speaker Dinner** with Jeff Foster, Marine Mammal Biologist and Rehabilitator.

WRCNU is very hopeful that as a community we will see some great ideas on how to navigate COVID-19 in public venues over the coming months which will allow us to provide a safe environment during future education programs. We will plan to re-start our Fall Speaker Series in 2021 and as it stands right now Mr Foster is open to coming out in November of 2021. Keep an eye on our Website’s “Events” page and our FB page as 2021 shows us what to expect and how we must approach this new challenge.

## **Volunteer Recognition**

We highlight three more of our amazing, dedicated volunteers that have helped us treat, feed, clean and care for thousands of injured wildlife patients over the last year. As our volunteer program is currently on hold, these three have really stepped up to the challenge of caring for record numbers of animals this Spring and Summer.

**Richard Drake** has been with us since August 2018 and has volunteered over 314 hours of service to WRCNU. Richard is one of our “Weekend Warriors.” He has also participated on our Fundraising Committee and started handling some of our Raptor Ambassadors. Thank you, Richard!



**Stephanie Kinghorn** has been with us since March 2019 and has helped us with over 385 hours of service to WRCNU. She has recently started volunteering two days a week and we couldn’t be more grateful. You can often find her happily taking care of our Corvid and Waterfowl friends. Thank you for making a difference Stephanie!

**Rhett Skinner** has been with us since May 2019 and has given us over 404 hours of his time. Rhett has been able to flex and manage his schedule at WRCNU to help us meet the times of highest demand. With many new patients each day, we appreciate you, Rhett!



 Find us on **Facebook** @ **Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Northern Utah**

## Letter from WRCNU's Chair and Finance Officer

Hello WRCNU supporters!

*This year proves to be one for the history books and I'm certain we can all agree, it will be nice to have this in our past rather than as we currently sit, with it directly in our laps.*

*As COVID-19 swept through our local economy, the financial future was uncertain for many businesses and households. The nonprofit sector took a huge hit as people hunkered down to wait out the uncertain future—there is some brighter light ahead!*

*I was not happy when the last tax code changed (2018 Returns) and took away incentives from households who do not itemize. This change in the tax law reduced the likelihood of lower income individuals donating to non-profits and when they did donate, these important "life sustaining gifts" tended to be smaller.*

*The CARES Act, brought on by the COVID Pandemic has a bright spot in it for nonprofits, at least in the short-term. Congress hopes to incentivize the public to spend more and give more as a way to help bring back our economy to pre-COVID days; everyone will benefit this year when they file their 2020 IRS Tax return if they give cash contributions to qualified nonprofits like WRCNU!*

*In a nutshell, here is how it works:*

**New Deduction Available:** The bill makes a new deduction available for up to \$300 per taxpayer (\$600 for a married couple) in annual charitable contributions. This is particularly beneficial to people who take the standard deduction when filing their taxes (in other words for taxpayers who do not itemize their deductions). It is calculated by subtracting the amount of the donation from your gross income. It is an "above the line" adjustment to income that will reduce your AGI (adjusted gross income), and thereby reduce your taxable income.

To qualify, you would have to give a donation to a qualified charity. If you have already made your donation since Jan. 1, that contribution counts toward the \$300 cap. A donation to a donor-advised fund (DAF) does not qualify for this new deduction.

**New Charitable Deduction Limits:** Also part of the bill, individuals and corporations that itemize can deduct much greater amounts of their contributions: 1) Individuals can elect to deduct cash contributions, up to 100% of their 2020 AGI, on itemized 2020 tax returns. This is up from the previous limit of 60%. 2) Corporations may deduct up to 25% of taxable income, up from the previous limit of 10%.

The new deduction is only for cash gifts that go to a public charity. If you give cash to, say, your private foundation, the old deduction rules apply. And while the organizations that manage DAF's are public charities, you do not get the higher deduction for donating cash to your DAF. These new limits also do not apply to gifts of appreciated stock.

If your assets are substantial enough that you can give more than your income this year, you won't lose the deduction for the excess amount. You can use it next year, as has always been the case.

*My hope is that the CARES Act will help shore up nonprofits like ours through more charitable giving the remainder of 2020.*

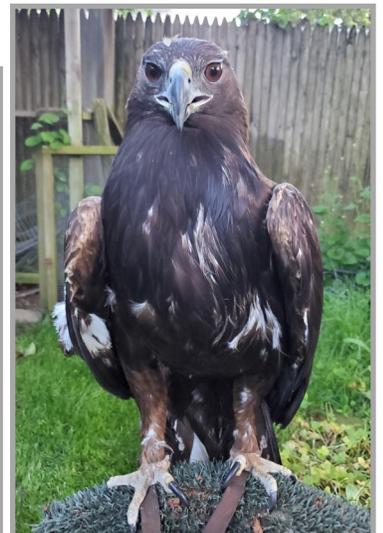
*If you have questions about the CARES Act charitable giving laws and how they will directly affect you this year, please speak directly with your personal tax advisor.*

**Thank you all** for your amazing help, lifesaving donations and moral support. You have taken Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Northern Utah from almost nothing back in 2009 and have made it strong enough to have helped over 26,000 human impacted patients!

*Please stay safe, be respectful of others, and be well.*

**Buz Marthaler**

WRCNU Co-founder / Chair / Finance



Left to right: Cottontail bunny, 2 Barn Owl nestlings, Red-tailed Hawk nestling and "Utah" a Golden Eagle sent to NY as an Ambassador!

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Life During a Pandemic: WRCNU Remains Open, but Cautious



**IWRC & NWRA “COVID-19 Considerations for Wildlife Rehabilitation”**

WRCNU is a member of both the *International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council* (IWRC) and the *National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association* (NWRA). The IWRC and NWRA drafted a joint statement on June 8<sup>th</sup>.

We share some of their thoughts here; incite which we, here at WRCNU, have always known and continue to pass on to educate our community.

“The International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council and National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association recognize concerns that have been raised ...”

“Wildlife agencies and the public rely on the services of wildlife rehabilitators. Rehabilitators provide public education on handling conflicts with wildlife; mitigate the potential for unnecessary human/wildlife interaction; care for sick, injured, or orphaned wild animals found by members of the public; and preserve public health and safety. Ensuring wildlife is cared for by professional rehabilitators is the best way to keep the public and wildlife safe. Wildlife rehabilitators must work with veterinary supervision, follow husbandry and safety standards, and have facilities that ensure appropriate biosecurity standards are met. When wildlife

rehabilitation services are unavailable, the public will resort to taking possession of wildlife inappropriately. Members of the public are not skilled in safe handling of wildlife, biosecurity measures, or zoonotic disease prevention and are at high risk of physical injury or zoonotic disease transmission (e.g., rabies). Taking animals needing rehabilitation into private homes may result in a wild animal interacting with a greater number of individuals, including children and domestic species, than it would in a professional rehabilitation setting. Public possession of many wildlife species is illegal; well-intentioned members of the public that take in wildlife may be reticent to disclose possession of wildlife, making it more difficult to trace the potential spread of disease.”

“Unskilled wildlife care is detrimental to animal welfare. Wild animals kept in unsuitable conditions in domestic settings will be highly stressed and likely experiencing pain and suffering from medical issues that have not been evaluated and treated. Stress compromises immune system function and reduces their ability to recover from illness/injury, leaving them more susceptible to infections. When combined with a lack of biosecurity measures, these circumstances have the potential to increase the risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission between humans and wild animals.”