

American Heritage Wildlife Foundation wildlife internship general information

Past intern commented that challenging deciding which bird it is and which food it needs and where food kept. I knew long days going in and many challenges. It's a very think on your feet type of job. Must prepare for the unexpected. Work is not glamorous and ultimately very rewarding when released. Based on common sense guidelines of animal care for most tasks.

Thank you for your interest. I would first like to start by describing the need. We are a small nonprofit in a rural area – meaning we have no internet and very limited cell service. Idaho was rated 50<sup>th</sup> in the nation relating to internet speeds. We operate by volunteers. Each year over 3,000 hours are given. May through August last year we recorded 1,600 hours – and it was a mild year. We usually receive at least 100 individual wild animals from more than 35 different species – a few years ago we accepted over 80 cases from more than 40 different species. During the time of rehab, even though we may do everything right, the animals still die. We may do things incorrectly due to ignorance, the animal dies. The volunteers involved must be able to find a sense of reward from within and focus on the positive instead of remaining in a place of negativity. We are fortunate to experience about a 50 to 60% release rate on average.

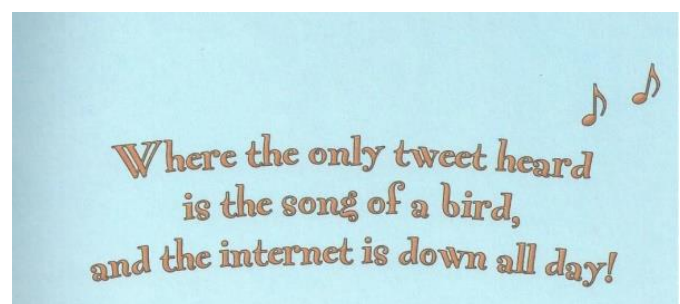
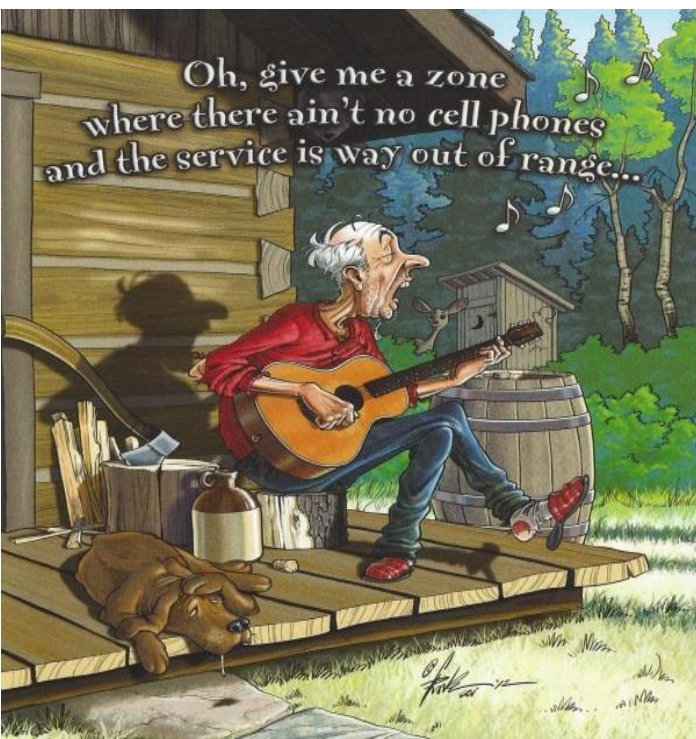
We have federal and state permits to allow care of nongame mammals, most all bird species, reptiles and amphibians. We are the only organization in the panhandle working with all these animals. Daily records are kept recording the types, frequency, and amounts of food offered. Also recorded are behaviors. The caregiver must not be overwhelmed by the mundane chores required. They must still be able to identify nuances in behavior and pay close attention to detail. A wild animal that exhibits weakness becomes a predator's meal so the discrepancies are very subtle. Interns will also be asked to assist with educating our neighbors through direct conversations, public awareness booths and guiding patrons on the Nature Walk guided path.

The veterinary clinic is 28 miles away and frequently they have patients needing picked up. The chosen intern is responsible for the daily care of the animals in need as well as responding to the daily phone calls. The average annual number of calls is over 300. Volunteers may be contacted to assist as needed. Every effort will be made to try and make this an enjoyable experience but it must be understood that lives are in your hands if you are chosen as the caregiver. It is not uncommon to start work very early and continue through the evening hours. Occasionally it may be necessary to work through the night. When working with wild animals there is always the potential for Zoonotic diseases so strict protocols must be followed.

Wildlife rehab is a 'service' career not a 'salary' profession. Wildlife Rehab is physically, mentally, emotionally, financially difficult. Being a wildlife rehabilitator also has moments of great joy which erase all the sorrow and struggle. We are 100% community supported. We operate on a small budget of around \$10,000. We must use what we have and be creative. Have you seen any wildlife rehabilitation television shows? It is similar to what is seen. We must remain professional and distant from the wild animals in order for them to survive on their own. A wild animal that has been imprinted on or habituated to humans will not exhibit normal behaviors and will not survive in the wild. We cannot keep the patients as 'pets'. Idaho law states we must release all the patients we take in or their suffering must end. Sadly death is part of being a wildlife rehabilitator. The intern must be emotionally able to deal with this reality. At a recent professional rehabilitators symposium the statement was made that if you have over a 30% release rate you are doing well. Applicants must be self-motivated (independent), courteous, patient, trustworthy (reliable & dependable), be able to communicate well with the general public, and remain calm in stressful situations. The wildlife caregivers must be clear headed at all times. Prior to hiring you may be asked to take a drug test & have a background check.

The animal infirmary room does not have running water. The laundry mat is in town -10 minutes away. As former interns have stated the day has a way of getting away from you; the amount of things to do is endless. Protocols and powerpoints have been created to ease the learning curve however this is a 'think on your feet' position doing nonglamorous work using common sense animal husbandry abilities. There is too much to learn and show during training. There are journals and books to refer to when needed. Phone calls can be made to professional rehabilitators to gain assistance. The lead caregiver (volunteer) works a paying job 4 days a week. There will be a morning rounds before she leaves for work and you may call her if need be but it is the intern that is responsible for maintaining operations and making daily observations. The days can be very long with many challenges. The level of work expected does not match the benefits. Your days off will not be sequential. Family or friends will not be able to connect with you multiple times daily as you are perhaps familiar with. Along with animal care, community outreach will also be expected at various prearranged public events. You will be accepting the position very much as a medical student does during his or her internship/residency. You will basically be on call during your time here unless there are volunteers to take over responsibilities. The motto is expect the unexpected as one former intern liked to say.

Housing is provided on site in a small (approximately 15 foot) self-contained RV, additionally you may share the evening meal with the founder, if you wish. The RV has propane cook top stove/oven, furnace, and small water heater. There is no air conditioning. Electric operates the refrigerator, lights and a few outlets. The septic tank is dumped once each week. No satellite television nor wi-fi signal. The local public library is 5 miles away with dvd's to check out and wi-fi signal is readily available. Cell phone coverage is spotty at best (in town) even with frontier, who is the main carrier with towers in our area. Landline telephone service may be used after normal business hours provided the charges are not billed to the nonprofit. Sadly one of our former interns made many long distance and long winded calls without paying the bill – this cannot happen again. To connect with family and friends you may have them call AHWF but please make it clear to your support network that they cannot call during business hours. A recent intern was so distracted by the perpetual phone calls from family and friends that she was not able to focus on the animals in her care – some did not survive. Some interns have been able to connect briefly in between tasks but most going in to town at night or once weekly on their day off.



Are you able to enjoy and appreciate solitude? welcome to rural north idaho

## Intern physical and mental requirements

### Education:

A preferred candidate has some type of degree in animal sciences. Knowledge of or interest in learning biology, physiology, and behaviors of native wildlife.

### Experience:

Hands on work in a wild animal facility is preferred but domestic animal husbandry may provide beneficial points of reference. Knowledge of or interest in learning wildlife restraint techniques. Experience with diet preparations is a plus.

### Skills:

Must be cognizant of time and able to maintain strict schedule. Must have knowledge and skills with educating general public. Must be patient, courteous, and remain calm in stressful situations. Possess a helpful and friendly spirit. Ability to work independently is a plus. Should have the ability or able to learn to answer phones and correspond to emails in a professional manner as well as document status of this nonprofit on various social media platforms.

### Equipment to be used:

shovel, rake, disinfectants & cleaning supplies, microscope, syringes, feeding tubes, nets, live-traps, latex (or hypoallergenic) gloves, telephone, computer, printer, power point projector

### Physical demands:

Occasionally lifting 50 pounds. Sitting or standing for potentially long periods of time. Must be able to bend over repetitively. Must have full range of motion in shoulders and arms and ability to reach over head. Should be stable footed. Ability to drive a car in an urban setting. Ability to manipulate small items. Sufficient vision to see ectoparasites on birds and bacteria under microscope as well as recognize wildlife species from distance of up to 30 feet.

### Mental demands:

Must be able to do mathematic calculations. Must have the ability to keep mental focus despite long hours. Emotionally stable and able to accept death of wildlife patients. Acceptance of working with bodily fluids of wildlife patients. Must have ability to observe wild behaviors and retain that information until able to document on the daily reports. Must have high level of reading comprehension.

### Working Conditions:

Early morning and/or late night working conditions are required as needed. Occasionally round the clock care also. Both inside and outside work environment regardless of temperature or precipitation. Conditions may be dusty or have strong odors.

Photographs will not be taken without permission. Photographs, like intake examinations and daily observations shall be brief and as least intrusive as possible. Stress kills - excessive handling, noise, and visual stimulation will not be allowed.

Purpose/objective: to provide rehabilitative care for the injured or orphaned wildlife of North Idaho and if needed assist with community education and outreach.

Location: AHWF facility 59895 Hwy 200 Clark Fork Idaho 83811

Key responsibilities: Wildlife caregiving - including but not limited to providing appropriate nutrition and medical attention for injured or orphaned wildlife. Ensuring the enclosures the animals are being kept in are clean and secure. Assisting the public by responding at all times in a professional and knowledgeable way. Working with volunteers, in a friendly manner, to ensure safety and enjoyment as well as task completion.

Primary risks: working alone and unsupervised, providing care for species that may be carriers of potentially zoonotic diseases.

Qualifications: must be over 18 years of age, preferred but not required a degree in wildlife, and experience working with wildlife in a rehabilitation facility. Vaccinations such as tetanus or rabies are a choice of personal preference and not required.

Time Commitment: the internship shall last no longer than 16 weeks. Every effort shall be made to ensure a stable schedule however the nature of wild animal care is ever changing. It shall be known that some species require feeding every 15 minutes for 16 hours each day seven days each week, other species require round the clock care. Volunteers may be contacted to assist with the work load but the primary care shall be provided by the intern.

Training/support provided: Training shall be provided by the lead wildlife volunteer. Training topics will cover wildlife feeding, cleaning, restraint, confinement, and personal safety. Reference manuals will be readily available for use as needed. Office procedures and telephone protocols shall be detailed. Social Media and Outreach programs will be discussed.

Reporting relationship: daily care of wildlife shall be documented on the daily reports. Any other activities shall be reported to the founder Kathleen St. Clair—McGee.

Benefits: The intern stipend shall be limited to \$50 per week with a maximum duration of 16 weeks. Fuel reimbursement, for completing AHWF services, at a rate of 25 cents per mile, shall be provided once the mileage reimbursement form is submitted and board of director approval. A self contained RV shall be provided for living arrangements.

This does not constitute the entire work detail. Every attempt to make the tasks safe and enjoyable will be made by the AHWF lead volunteer wildlife caregiver & founder. If improvements are noted they should be brought to the attention of the board of directors.

If you have any reservations about your abilities to live in this type of setting I will understand if you would like to withdraw your name at this time.

If you still feel you are capable of being able to be accepting the challenge – we must have a cover letter, resume, application (complete with date of start and finish), and supplemental questionnaire. We anticipate telephone interview to take place mid-February. We will send an email with confirmation time to expect the call.

Applicants must be self-motivated, courteous, patient, trustworthy (reliable & dependable), able to communicate well with the general public, and remain calm in stressful situations.

*Make sure you read the intern duties and responsibilities closely.  
Please send the completed application (& additional information) to [ahwf@sandpoint.net](mailto:ahwf@sandpoint.net) or  
American Heritage Wildlife Foundation, 59895 Hwy 200 Clark Fork, ID 83811*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Are you over 18 years of age? \_\_\_\_\_

*On a separate sheet of paper (or on the back of this sheet) please answer these questions:*

Please describe your education, including training related to wildlife or rehabilitation activities (you may attach resume instead): high school attended, last year of school completed, areas of study - degrees earned etc. Other education or special training especially in the area of animal care and management, husbandry, biological sciences.

Please list your current and former employers, giving names, address, contact information along with the name and contact information of the immediate supervisor. (you may attach resume instead)

Please describe your experience in working with wildlife and other animals, and list any applicable licenses you may have.

Please describe your interest in becoming a wildlife rehabilitation intern. What experience do you hope to gain from this work? What do you expect? What are your career goals and how would this internship help you reach your goals?

From what date to what date are you available to work?

Please describe past employment situations where you successfully worked independently without supervision, including any experience where you have given above and beyond what was expected.

Why are you the best candidate for this position? How do you respond to stress?

Do you have dependable transport (current driver's license & car insurance)? Driving your personal vehicle will be required as part of this internship.

When was your last tetanus injection? Please list allergies or sensitivities.

There is a release waiver & agreement which will be signed prior to starting work.

Please attach a list of 3 references (with full contact information) or letters of recommendation.

Please return your responses to the following scenarios & questions:

1. If a long lost rich relative were to give you a bright red sports car A) would you keep it and drive it everywhere. B) return it and ask for a different color. C) smile and take the keys then sell it
2. You are at the grocery store. A clerk is stocking the aisles, do you A) wait patiently for them to finish to continue shopping B) change routes and go into a different aisle C) try and squeeze by

3. You are at a beauty school getting your hair cut. The student is very pregnant and cannot stop talking about her condition and misery. She spins you around to show you she has completed what you asked. The work done is not what you asked for. Do you A) smile and say thank you B) tell her that she needs to fix it the way you asked C) get up and find her teacher to complain
4. Yes or No: in the following situation do you agree with the employee. "Recently I was late to work because I slept in and my boss was upset about it. But the thing is, it really is none of his business. I don't ask him what he does when he isn't at work. This has happened a few times and it might present a problem but it is not his place to tell me what to do outside of work. I need the extra sleep in the mornings because I like to stay up late at night, which is my right as an American. I need extra sleep in order to perform my job at a higher level so isn't it better for the company that I sleep in?"
5. Do you like solving mysteries or puzzles (ie hidden images or find how the two are different)?
6. Milk in the bowl first or cereal in the bowl first?
7. Are you familiar with homeopathic and or herbal remedies? Do you believe in the efficacy of non-pharmaceuticals in minor triage situations?
8. Experience living in rural areas? Able to live without urban socializing? Able to go without your cell phone or internet? – try it for one day to make sure.

In an effort to help me choose you over your competitor I would like to ask a few brief questions by giving you a few scenarios of a typical day: (yes these are based on real situations and occurrences)

1. Based on the strengths of your character how would you respond to the following situation. 7AM the lead wildlife volunteer has walked through the animal infirmary room with you so you are aware of the routine for the day. You are comfortable with preparing the diets required and also with the time schedule required to feed each patient. The lead volunteer then goes to her paying job. The responsibility is all yours for the next several hours. You do have a listing of a dozen volunteers that may be available to assist you. 10AM it is time to feed one of the patients but the phone is ringing. Do you a) answer the call and let the animal wait b) let the answering machine pick up then return the call once the animal is fed c) don't do anything because you really need to take a nap.
2. Based on your work ethic: You have been working at the facility for several weeks. You feel confident in the animals you are caring for and are beginning to anticipate what the incoming animals need simply by listening to the rescuer description on the phone. The schedule has been working nicely with beginning work well before 8AM and lights out/final feeding by 8PM. You have been responsible for all the care of the animals for the past several days because no volunteers were able. You are really looking forward to your weekend! The phone rings with a rescuer bringing in a batch of raccoon babies that still have eyes closed. (they will need to be bottle fed every few hours on a 24 hour schedule). The lead volunteer returns from her paying job that evening about the same time the raccoons are brought in. Between the two of you a night time schedule is worked out for feedings. In the middle of the night the lead volunteer gets a call from her family and there is an emergency that pulls her away. Do you a) start calling volunteers asking for their help b) just take over the feeding and cancel your weekend plans c) demand you get a full weekend.
3. It is mid-summer, the vet clinic calls and needs someone to pick up a bird that seems to be ok but is weak and undernourished. The animals at the facility have already had their morning diets and do not need attention for several hours – plenty of time to get to town and back with the new patient. On your way back from town, you get a call from a

friend that is in town and wants you to stop in for lunch. Do you a) tell your friend that you need to postpone the lunch. b) tell your friend you can certainly stop by because the bird has water so it will be fine in the car for another hour. c) stop by your friend's house and pick them up and return to the facility to tend to the bird then go to lunch.

4. It is amazing how quickly the dirty dishes and laundry piles up during the week. How would you respond to this situation: Yesterday you folded three clothes baskets of towels and spent an hour washing dishes. Today the volunteer helpers did not wash the dishes as you asked them and they did not wipe down the counters from morning food prep before they left. You wanted to make some phone calls to arrange for helpers tomorrow. You have spent the day feeding tree swallows – fed at 15 minute intervals for 16 hours each day. It is only 5 PM, 5 more hours of care required for the nestlings – including recording quantities offered and behavioral observations in the daily log book. There are 3 phone messages to return that were missed while you were busy. How would you prioritize the dirty dishes, dirty countertop, dirty laundry, evening food prep, baby swallow feeding, feeding of yourself, calling to locate more volunteer help?

5. How dependent are you on your cell phone and the need to stay connected using social media? (We are a rural location – we use a landline for telephone calls and there is NO cell service or internet). Personal communications with family or friends will be accomplished only during your down time.

6. Do you enjoy working alone or do you prefer to have other people around?

7. Would you be opposed to taking a drug test or having a background check?

8. Would you prefer a 'daily chores list' or do you possess initiative to identify miscellaneous tasks that arise throughout the day? (these tasks are additional to the animal care such as washing dirty dishes, washing – drying – folding laundry, keeping your work area clean, etc.)

9. There have been instances where the intern chosen could not remain the entire time. Would you like to be contacted as a potential replacement?

10. Would your schedule accommodate a short 8 week internship or would you prefer to remain the full 12 to 16 weeks?

11. Do you have the ability to whistle?

12. How do you respond to stress? How do you respond when others around you are under stress.

Again **thank you for your interest**. These questions are not meant to intimidate but rather clarify what it means to be the chosen wildlife care intern. Keep in mind, nothing will be asked of you that has not already been or is being accomplished by other AHWF volunteers, the difference is that you would be receiving a weekly stipend and given other benefits.

**Thank you for your time and patience. I appreciate you understanding that all these steps ensure neither party is disappointed.**