



# WILDWOODS

501(c)(3)

## The Northland's regional wildlife rehabilitation facility

### Dear Wildwoods Supporters,

Summer is in full swing! At the time of this writing, Wildwoods is housing 19 different species of animals. We have a variety of songbirds, waterfowl, Lagomorpha, and Rodentia. **Since we reopened on May 13, almost 600 animals have come through our doors.** As appropriate, they were: admitted into our nursery, raised, and released; given emergency care and stabilization; or provided safe and secure transport to other facilities. In addition, **we have offered a wide range of telephone support to over 750 callers.** This support has included referrals, helping to re-nest animals, educating on which animals are fine and should be left alone, and providing information on how to protect certain animals from domestic pets. Phew!

#### ◆ Changes at Wildwoods ◆

We've had a challenging 10 months, and **we cannot thank you enough for your encouragement and your steadfastness.** After a productive winter of hiring and training staff, updating our internal medical procedures, waterproofing our basement, cleaning our facilities from top to bottom, making infrastructure repairs, and creating a cohesive team, we are once again serving the community.

Due to permit changes with the MN Department of Natural Resources, we are not able to rehabilitate injured and sick animals as we were in the past (but we can and do continue to raise orphaned Lagomorpha, Rodentia, and migratory birds). However, we can continue to accept those animals and will provide emergency support and safe and secure transportation to an appropriate facility. **We are also no longer able to accept animals from Wisconsin,** but if you call us, we can talk you through a situation and provide you with a referral to rehabilitators in your state.

#### ◆ Volunteering with Wildwoods ◆

The pandemic is impacting Wildwoods just as it is people, organizations, and businesses all over the world. Because of this, we have only 3 DNR-approved volunteers on-site at this time. Our facilities make social distancing very challenging, and the health and safety of our staff and volunteers are of paramount importance to us. We have had many requests to volunteer, and that means the world to us. As soon as the situation is safe enough to bring people together, we are excited to take many more volunteers on-site. **Until then, we do need transport volunteers!** Please call us if you can help in this way.

#### ◆ Standing with our Community ◆

As the community has stood beside Wildwoods during this past year, it is important that Wildwoods stand with the community during its struggles. **We support social justice and racial equality, and the movement for Black lives.** Even though we are an organization that focuses on animals, we are an organization made up of people. As people who comprise this field of wildlife rehabilitation, we refuse to stand on the sidelines. People of all races, ethnicities, and backgrounds show their love for wildlife by bringing injured and orphaned animals to our doors. However, we don't reflect this diverse community in our staff and volunteer base. Wildwoods will work to create an environment that welcomes people of all backgrounds and will strive to ensure that our staff and volunteers reflect our entire northland community. We will do so by expanding our educational programming to be more inclusive, increasing recruitment efforts for staff and volunteers in marginalized communities, supporting Black-led, Indigenous-led, and other initiatives in the Duluth area, and creating an environment where people feel like they can join us and succeed.

#### ◆ Your Support ◆

We could not have come this far without your support. We are humbled and honored that our community stayed with us through our permit issues, celebrated with us at our first ever open house, and supported our delayed opening due to COVID-19. We still need your support to keep moving forward. As with most non-profits, we have taken a financial hit due to COVID-19. **Our goal is to raise \$10,000 with this newsletter by the end of August. Please do what you can; any amount helps!** These funds are vital for us to continue to provide our current level of service to the northland's wildlife and to the community.

**Thank you for all you do to make this happen!**

Kind regards,

Jessica LaBumbard  
Executive Director



# KEEPING WILDLIFE *WILD*

We spend a lot of time at Wildwoods taking care of the animals that come through our door, but we also spend a significant amount of time providing support to callers from around the state (and out of state too!). We always want to make sure that people don't bring in animals that are fine, and need to stay in the wild. There are numerous cases of unintended "kidnappings" when fledglings, nestlings, baby squirrels, baby rabbits, and fawns are taken from their parents because of a lack of understanding of how these animals are raised.

We also encounter cases where good-hearted people take in distressed or orphaned animals and try to raise them on their own. **Please do not do this.** More often than not, they call us for support after a couple of weeks and we are handed an animal that is dehydrated, under-fed, inappropriately fed, and malnourished. In some cases, we can save the animal, but in most cases, the animal is at the point where the only thing we can do is humanely euthanize it. Wild animals require specialized support and care, and this care can only be provided by a licensed rehabber (it is also illegal in the state of Minnesota to keep a wild animal).

Let's do what we can to keep our wildlife wild and properly cared for. **The first step in that process is to reach out to us at 218-491-3604 if you are concerned about an animal in possible distress.** We want to work with you to ensure that we all do what is best for the animal. Thank you for doing your part!

**Here are some of the animals that we helped to stay wild!**



We received a call regarding this fawn. The caller was concerned because of the fawn's position and its location on a well-traveled sidewalk, and moved it to the grass and called us. As our staff were talking to the caller, the mother appeared, and fawn and doe left

together. We're very thankful that this person contacted us before doing anything so that we were able to walk them through the situation. This was a happy ending for the fawn, the doe, the concerned caller, and us!



Heidi from Iowa called after she found this great horned owl that fell out of its nest right near the fairway on her golf course and was grounded for 36 hours! She called her local DNR and rehab facilities, but everyone was closed due to COVID-19. She was given our number by a friend who lives in Duluth and we were able to talk her through getting the owl back into the tree and advised her on keeping people away from this area. Finally, we referred her to The Raptor Center for further advice due to the nest's location in a high traffic area.



Each year, we receive countless baby rabbits that have been attacked by cats, dogs, and lawn mowers. We can minimize these harmful interactions by watching our animals, and prepping the lawn before mowing. If in spite of your efforts pets or mowers dig up rabbit nests, you can still keep the rabbits wild by following these steps.

If the baby rabbits are not injured, put them back in their nest and place a tomato cage over the nest to keep pets and kids away, while allowing space for the mother to wiggle in.



You can also place a laundry basket over the nest during the day to keep pets out, but be sure to remove it at dawn and dusk so that the mother has access to them for their twice daily feedings. If you are worried that the mother may not return, you can place string in a tic-tac-toe fashion on top of the nest and check on it the next day. If the string has been disturbed, likely the mother has returned. If the string is still in place the next day, then call Wildwoods.



# The American Robin

Robins are so common in our backyards we probably don't give them much thought. They're an adaptable bird able to live in urban areas, woodlands, logged or burned areas, mountains, and tundra. Their North American population is estimated at 310 million individuals and their range extends from Mexico across the lower 48 states and all the way to northern Canada and Alaska. They're members of the Thrush family *Turdidae* which includes other local birds such as the eastern bluebird, hermit, and wood thrushes. There is a European robin, but it's more closely related to old world flycatchers and doesn't look much at all like our robin.

"The first robin of spring" may not have had to fly very far to return to your backyard. Although considered migratory, some robins are residents year-round in the Duluth area. In the fall and winter robins become more nomadic, gathering in flocks with other robins and searching out food. At that time of year, they most commonly forage in the treetops instead of on the ground. Although we commonly picture robins pulling a worm out of the ground, most of their year-round diet is actually fruits, such as crabapples, chokecherries, honeysuckle, dogwood, and sumac. Insects, worms, and other invertebrates make up the bulk of the adults' diet in the spring and early summer; however, robins can be attracted to backyard feeders with mealworms and slices of apple.

Adult male robins can be distinguished from females by their darker heads and more brightly colored breasts which contrast easily with their grey backs. They typically arrive on their nesting grounds before the females do to establish territories. Robins are one of the first birds to build nests and lay eggs in the spring. The female has primary nest building duties which she accomplishes by working plant fibers and mud into a small cup shaped bowl using the wrist of her wing. She'll generally lay from 3-5 eggs at a time. Once she starts incubating, the eggs will hatch in 12-14 days. Both parents stay busy bringing a diet of worms, insects, spiders, and slugs to their fast-growing nestlings. On average, baby robins are only in the nest for about 2 weeks before they fledge and leave the nest. However, even after they leave the nest, they spend a couple of weeks working on their flying skills and following their parents around to beg food from them. In a good summer with plenty of food, a pair of robins might raise three different broods of chicks. Like a lot of wild animals, the survival rate of young robins is low. Bird banders have found that only 25 percent of robins survive their first year. However, once they survive to adulthood, robins may live for 6 or more years and one record exists of a 14-year-old American robin.

Because they're so common in our area, Wildwoods gets a lot of phone calls about robins in the spring and summer. Most of the time the solutions are fairly simple. If the babies are young enough and the nest can be located, we advise people to put the babies back in the nest and the parents will still come and care for it. Even nests that have been blown down can be put back up in the same or a nearby location and the parents will often return to care for their babies. Fledgling birds that can't quite fly yet are best left alone or placed nearby on the ground in some cover. The parents will find and care for them if kids and pets can be kept away. When possible, the best choice is always to keep wild babies wild, and let their parents do the job of raising them.

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## Robin quick facts:

- They're members of the Thrush family *Turdidae*
- Some robins migrate, some stay in the area
- Females lay 3-5 eggs at a time
- Baby robins are in the nest for 2 weeks before they leave
- Robins are very common in this area
- Wildwoods gets a lot of calls regarding robins each spring & summer



### *The American Robin continued*

If a baby robin or another baby songbird does need to be brought to Wildwoods, it first gets a quick exam to assess for any injuries. Then it goes onto a heating pad in a quiet, dark space for a short time until it's calm enough for a more thorough exam. A solution of sodium chloride, sodium lactate, potassium chloride, and calcium carbonate in water is given orally with a syringe to help rehydrate them. Then they are admitted to our nursery where they are medicated for possible parasites. If they're too young to regulate their own body temperature, they go into our incubator. In the nursery, baby robins get fed a diet of primarily mealworms every 15-20 minutes all day long. Once they grow feathers and can regulate their own body temperature and hop around a bit, they get moved to a larger soft sided enclosure where they're encouraged to start to learn to forage on their own. Mealworms, larger leafworms, and chopped fruit and dogfood are left in shallow trays of dirt for them to find. Some feeding by hand is usually still necessary and feeding continues at 30-minute intervals all day long.

When they're old enough, robins and other songbirds are moved to our indoor flight enclosures where they can fly a little. Wildwoods staff and volunteers continue to work with them to get them to forage for their own food. In addition, they're misted with a water bottle to encourage them to preen and waterproof their feathers. Once a baby robin can feed itself, it's moved to one of our outdoor enclosures where it can fly a little more and become acclimated to life outside. Once staff feels a bird is ready and can fly and forage for itself, they're released into nearby locations of suitable habitat.

Mike Schrage  
Wildlife Biologist  
Wildwoods Board Chair



#### **Helpful hint:**

Wildwoods staff can often assess what to do about baby robins or other songbirds if they can estimate how old they are. Take a picture of the bird if you can and be ready to send it to Wildwoods if you call us for help.

### **Your support makes our work possible!**

Donate online at [www.wildwoodsrehab.org/donate](http://www.wildwoodsrehab.org/donate) or use the enclosed envelope.

Thank you!



Wildwoods is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization located in Duluth, MN, that accepts orphaned, injured, and sick wildlife.

*We rehabilitate orphaned wildlife and return them to the wild while providing emergency stabilization and transfer of injured and sick wildlife to other rehabilitation centers in the state.*

Open 365 days a year  
9 am - 6 pm  
(By scheduled drop off only)

[www.wildwoodsrehab.org](http://www.wildwoodsrehab.org)

4009 W. Arrowhead Rd  
Duluth, MN 55811  
218-491-3604





## Thank you to our staff, volunteers, and donors!

Wildwoods staff spend their days caring for animals in our nursery, providing emergency support for those that need it, and working with our volunteers to provide safe and secure transport to other facilities, when necessary.



We can't have anywhere near the number of volunteers that we need, but we do have a few! Thank you to our dedicated volunteers who transport animals several times a week, feed our nestlings, mow the lawn, build cages, and take on the onerous tasks of doing our laundry and cleaning up after the animals!



THANK YOU

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*Subaru Share the Love*



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Minnesota Power Foundation

Four Cedars Environmental Fund of the  
Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation

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*...And a heartfelt thanks to the more than 500  
individuals who have donated to us this year!*



Wildwoods  
4009 W. Arrowhead Rd  
Duluth, MN 55811

## Events

### Wildwoods Open House

We had our first Open House on March 8! More than 75 people attended, and we spent an inspiring afternoon with animal themed snacks, giving tours of our facility, and talking about our animal patients. We set up cages and kennels with stuffed animals to demonstrate how the animals are cared for and rehabilitated. It was a wonderful meeting of our staff, board, donors, and community members. For many of us, this open house holds a special significance as it was the last public event for each of us as the impact of COVID-19 became apparent the following week.



### In the Community

Wildwoods staff, board, and volunteers helped Ecolibirum3 to assemble face shields for health care workers and the community; we assembled 7,000 that evening! Wildwoods also participated in several events including: Boo in the Zoo; Fond du Lac Resources Management's Ganawenjigewin Maawanjidiwin: Taking Care of Things Gathering & Gitigaan Fall Feast; the 2020 Gichi Manidoo Giizis Traditional Pow Wow; and the Twin Ports MLK Rally.



## How can you help?

There are several things you can do to support our work!

- **Make a donation** using the enclosed envelope! Your funds go a long way to helping us provide this care and support to our local wildlife.
- **Use Amazon Smile** for your online purchases, and name Wildwoods as your charity of choice for donations!
- **Order some Wildwoods swag here:**  
<https://wildwoods.itemorder.com/sale>. A portion of the proceeds goes to us.
- **Save those aluminum cans!** You can drop them off at Wildwoods, B&B Market in Cloquet, or Cloquet Riverside Recycling. Proceeds from these cans benefit Wildwoods!
- **Check out our baby shower and wish list:**  
<https://wildwoodsrehab.org/support-wildwoods/donate-items/>
- **We are always looking for transport volunteers.** Let us know if you can give a lift to a sick or injured animal that needs to go to another rehabber.