



# WILDWOODS 501(c)(3)

The Northland's regional wildlife rehabilitation facility

## Dear Wildwoods Friends and Supporters,

I am excited to share this newsletter with you and tell some tales about what Wildwoods has seen this summer! But first, I wanted to let you know that this is a very special year for us. **Wildwoods was incorporated as a non-profit 10 years ago, but the work started in 2006, 15 years ago!** However you slice it, 2021 is a big year for Wildwoods! As much as it pains us, we won't be having a celebration this year due to the impact of the pandemic on our community, but we look forward to celebrating our anniversary with you in 2022.

From the halls of a basement to the halls of our nursery, we have experienced a lot of growth in the past 15 years. **Thank you to our community, staff, and volunteers who are the formula to our success.** We invite you to read on and see what we've accomplished together this year!

### What a year we've had!

This is our first full summer back, and it has been a busy one. As of the beginning of August, we already admitted **838 animals to Wildwoods and provided services to 1,527 people** (animal admits, educational programming, referrals, and phone support). By the time you receive this newsletter, we will have surpassed **1,000 animals and 1,700 people**. These numbers demonstrate just how important our work is to the Northland.

### What we do... And how to help the animals

Wildwoods is here to provide support to all wildlife that are injured, sick, or orphaned. We do this by caring for the animals we can, providing emergency support and safe and secure transport of animals to another facility for more advanced care when necessary, and sharing referrals to other wildlife rehabilitators if we are unable to provide the requested support.

However, the biggest impact we would like to make on our community is by increasing efforts to ensure that animals do not need to come to Wildwoods in the first place. **We currently offer our *Keeping Wildlife Wild* educational program from October through April**, and we plan to expand our programming this fall to include other ways to **protect wildlife through safer driving habits, habitat protection, and advocating for wildlife tunnels and bridges so that animals can safely cross highways**. The majority of animals that come to Wildwoods do so because of a negative interaction with a human. Since we are the

primary (unintended) cause of animal injury and orphaned babies, we should work together to do everything we can to prevent the damage we inadvertently inflict. Education is an important step in this process.

**What else can we do?** By now, we have all heard of the latest report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. At this point, there is no going back. Rather, we have to be resolute in our efforts to mitigate the damage we have caused, but even more importantly, to change our behaviors and reimagine what our society can be. This is important not only for humanity, but for the flora and fauna that face extinction *because* of our actions. The argument we usually hear is that extinction of a species, whether it be plant or animal or insect, has a negative impact on humans. A less human-centric approach, however, implies that we should care about their paths to extinction not because of their relationship to humans, but because of the intrinsic value that their life has on its own, separate and apart from humans.

We as a world have some tough times ahead, but we have faced tough times before. We will have, each of us, to make sacrifices. But if we hold onto the majesty of nature, revel in the exact perfection of the baby squirrel, be lifted by the call of the loon, and carried away by the bumble bee, we will have the strength to move forward. The innocents of the forests are relying on us.

### Our Plans for 2021 and Beyond

We are entering into a strategic planning phase, plotting our next three years of operation (2022-2024). Participants in this process include our Board of Directors and staff, several volunteers, other wildlife rehabilitators, and a couple of our funders. We are embarking on this process to ensure that we are here to respond to the needs of our Northland community, and because we are part of a larger whole in this state. Our location in Duluth allows us to serve as a hub for the North, and a crucial line of transit to larger facilities in the Twin Cities. Engaging other stakeholders in this process will only help to make us an even stronger organization. We are excited to share our plan with you in early 2022!

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## Dear Wildwoods Supporters *continued from previous page*

### Your Support

Wildwoods is a community-centered organization and you have been with us every step of the way. Many of you became supporters because of Farzad's and Peggy's tireless work on behalf of our animal neighbors, and others joined in after you had your own interaction with an animal. Whatever your reason, we are proud to have you as part of the Wildwoods family.

**We need you now more than ever as we build on the 15th anniversary of our work.** We are hoping to raise \$10,000 with this newsletter to help us through September.

Your donation is crucial to providing the animals in our care with a species-appropriate diet and the best housing possible, and making sure that our dedicated staff and volunteers have a safe and healthy working environment.

**Thank you for all you do, and let's hear it for serving our community for another 15 years!**



Jessica LaBumbard  
Executive Director

## The Porcupine

Porcupines are said to characterize North America as much as our bison and the wild turkey do. While there are three other species of porcupines in Mexico and South America, as well as porcupine species in Europe, Asia, and Africa, none of them are closely related to our own porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*). All of them, however, are members of the mammalian order Rodentia. Our porcupine is found from southwest Texas to Alaska, across almost all of Canada, and from Washington to Maine. Only the lower Midwest and southeastern states are lacking any porcupines.

Most rodents have short lifespans and produce lots of young. Porcupines, though, have adopted a different life history strategy. The average lifespan of a wild porcupine is around 10 years old and there are reliable reports of porcupines older than 20 as well. They breed for the first time at about two years of age and produce only one offspring a year. Breeding season is mid-September to mid-October and vicious fights at that time between males are common. If you see two adult porcupines sitting in a tree together in the fall, the lower animal is usually the male guarding her from other potential suitors. He increases the romance factor by periodically shooting drops of urine at her. It's not clear why he does that, but in other rodents, male urine accelerates estrus in the female. I know you want to ask the question

but are probably too embarrassed...

it happens on the ground where she presses

her quills down, elevates her hindquarters, and arches her tail up over her back. It's much

safer for him that way. A single pup is born in late April or early May, and they arrive with their eyes open and fully quilled. Although they may nurse for the next four months, newborn porcupines gain a measure of independence rapidly and can climb and start foraging on leaves at two weeks of age.

Porcupines are noted for their diet of bark, and much of their winter diet consists of the inner bark of conifer trees (especially white pine) but also aspen, sugar maple, birch, and oak. Porcupines have powerful thigh muscles that allow them to clench small trunks or branches

leaving their front paws free for food handling. In spite of their tree climbing abilities, falls are apparently frequent. One study found over 30 percent of porcupines

had healed fractures. In the summer, their diet consists of a wide variety of woody and herbaceous

vegetation and I've personally witnessed them eating clover and raspberry plants. They're even capable enough swimmers to eat water lilies and other aquatic plants. In winter, porcupines are less active and usually den on their own in hollow trees, under decaying stumps, in culvert pipes, or in holes in the ground. Most of the old wolf dens

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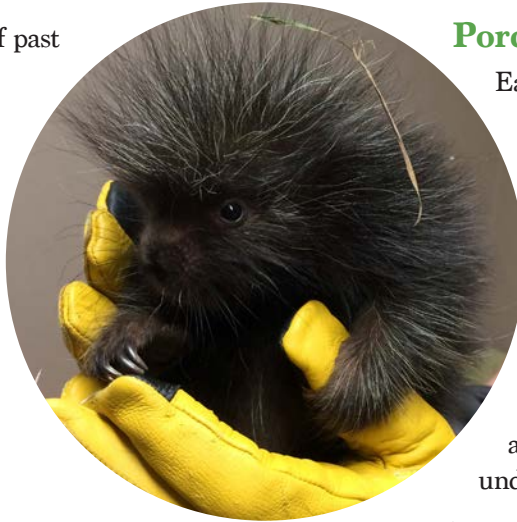




# The Porcupine *continued from previous page*

I've investigated show evidence of past or current porcupine occupancy. Some early studies of porcupine home ranges on the Cloquet Forestry Center indicate they use an area of 30-35 acres.

Porcupines are the only North American mammal with hair modified as quills. From 1-5 inches in length, the ends are barbed with tiny overlapping scales and capable of working their way all the way through the body of any animal unlucky enough to contact them. Often delivered by a tail slap, simple contact with a quill works to dislodge them too. In addition, the quills when raised release a pungent odor to warn away potential predators. In spite of this, a number of animals will kill and eat porcupines when they can. Fisher (a big member of the weasel family) are the most capable predator, but wolves, coyotes, bobcat, golden eagles, and great horned owls can take them too. In western states, cougar can be significant predators as well. In addition to their natural predators, porcupines are often killed crossing highways or shot by people unhappy with the real or perceived damage they can do chewing on trees or other things of value such as wooden handled tools, plywood, canoe paddles, sap lines, car tires, and even electrical cables.



## Porcupines at Wildwoods

Each year, we provide support to porcupines who have been injured, most having been hit by a car, and every now and then we receive an orphan. Taking care of a porcupine is not unlike caring for other rodents, with some exceptions. Porcupine quills present our staff with a challenge when handling; they don't want to get quilled, and losing quills can be painful for the porcupine and it takes time to replace them. To keep staff and the porcupine as comfortable as possible, the porcupine is scooped up from the underside when it needs to be weighed or examined.



Baby porcupines are dependent on formula but also able to eat solid foods. When they are 0-4 weeks old, they are housed in an indoor enclosure where they cannot hurt their quills, and where they can practice their movement without injuring themselves.

At about 4-5 weeks old, they are moved to an outdoor enclosure where they can climb taller logs and move around much more freely. At this point, they would be almost fully weaned from formula and spend their time foraging for food that is hidden in the enclosure daily. While in captivity, it is important to prevent porcupines from becoming habituated to humans. This can be difficult, so we limit staff interactions with them to cleaning the enclosure and providing food.

As with all of our animals, our intent is to successfully raise and release them to the wild outdoors.

Mike Schrage  
Wildlife Biologist  
Wildwoods Board Chair





# Chimney Swifts

After a storm rolls through the area, Wildwoods typically sees young birds that have been blown from their nest. When that happened in July, we received a nest of birds that we don't often see: chimney swifts. Like their name suggests, they roost and nest in chimneys. The adults use their sticky saliva to adhere their stick nests to the inside walls of chimneys. When Wildwoods get calls about young birds, we guide callers to renest the animals to allow their parents to continue to care for them. Unfortunately,



As Nestlings

when this chimney swift nest was blown down by the storm, renesting wasn't possible and we asked the finder to bring the group of baby chimney swifts to us.

When they arrived, they were covered in pin feathers and very vocal (loud) as they were hungry. Feeding and housing chimney swifts can be challenging as their needs in some ways are the opposite of other songbirds. Instead of lying flat in a nest, at a certain age they will need to cling vertically as they would in a chimney. Instead of the parents feeding them from above, the parents will feed them from below and the babies will turn their heads down to beg for food. To adjust for their needs, we kept the babies in a container with a towel they could cling to. To cue them during feeding time, we would lightly blow on their heads to simulate the air from their parents flying into the chimney to feed them. It took a few days for the young swifts to adjust to being fed by humans, but with the staff's determination, they adjusted well and have continued to grow and develop. They are now fully feathered in a simulated chimney inside an indoor flight cage and are able to fly and develop their flight muscles prior to release. For them to be successful upon release, they will be released with a chimney swift colony prior to migration.



As fledglings in their chimney

THANK  
YOU  
DONORS



The wonderful staff at Altec Industries

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Four Cedars Environmental Fund  
of the Duluth Superior Area  
Community Foundation

Hegardt Family Foundation

Minnesota Power Foundation

Partners for Wildlife

*...and the more than 400 individuals  
who have donated to us this year!*



# Wildwoods Animals

We've had several species of animals come to Wildwoods this summer who are either new to us or difficult to raise in captivity. Our staff met the challenge with aplomb, and we are excited to share the before and after photos of these animals as they reached maturity and were successfully released!

## Black-capped Chickadee



Black-capped Chickadee  
June 2021



Black-capped Chickadee  
July 2021

## Common Merganser



Common Mergansers  
June 2021



Common Mergansers  
August 2021



Common Merganser in Diving Pool  
August 2021

## Hooded Merganser



Hooded Merganser  
June 2021

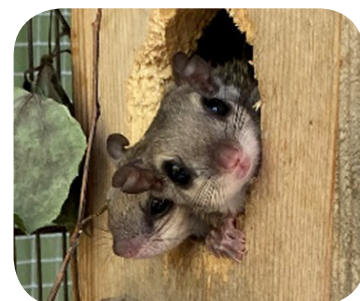


Hooded Mergansers  
July 2021

## Flying Squirrel



Flying Squirrel  
June 2021



Flying Squirrel  
July 2021

## Hooded Merganser-Wood Duck Hybrid

Imagine our surprise when we received this hooded merganser-wood duck hybrid! As a duckling, it was very difficult to tell its species, but the older it got, the easier it became.



Hooded Merganser-Wood Duck  
June 2021



Hooded Merganser-Wood Duck  
August 2021

## 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 (please do not crush them)! You can drop them off at Wildwoods, B&B Market in Cloquet, or Cloquet Riverside Recycling. Proceeds from these cans are donated to Wildwoods!
- Check out our baby shower and wish list: <https://wildwoodsrehab.org/supportwildwoods/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.



Wildwoods  
4009 W. Arrowhead Rd  
Duluth, MN 55811

## **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