

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS 1984 – 2025

The NWRA Lifetime Achievement Award is given to an individual whose primary identification is with wildlife rehabilitation and who has contributed to our profession on a national level in a major way for many years.

2025

Marjorie Gibson (WI) – for unparalleled dedication, leadership, and lifelong commitment to the welfare of wildlife. With an unwavering dedication spanning decades, Marge has played an instrumental role in shaping modern wildlife care, advancing professional standards, and mentoring countless rehabilitators across the globe. Her work and teaching emphasizes the necessity of understanding an animal’s natural history to provide effective rehabilitation. Her contributions to the field are immeasurable, and her passion continues to inspire future generations. Her impact on the field is indelible, and her work stands as a testament to the power of compassion, perseverance, and knowledge in protecting our natural world.

2024

Diane Nickerson (NJ) – for dedicating 30 years of her life to wildlife rehabilitation locally, at the state and regional levels, and nationally, and helping improve and enrich our profession through her example and extensive contributions. She served on state advisory committees and conference planning committees, spoke at multiple state conferences, helped plan the last ten national symposium programs across the country, and authored and edited papers and books in our field. Her efforts have led to significant accomplishments, contributions, and advancements in the profession of wildlife rehabilitation. Her remarkable commitment to achieving excellence and promoting high standards for patient handling, captive care, facility development, rehabilitator training, and public education have been exemplary. Her positive influence is far-reaching.

2023

Erica Miller, DVM (DE) - for more than three decades of exemplary dedication and contributions to wildlife rehabilitation and medicine. She is widely regarded as one of the world leaders in our field. Her expertise is expansive, and her commitment to sharing her knowledge and ideas is superb. She has taught thousands of aspiring and experienced wildlife rehabilitators and veterinary students at numerous state, national, and international wildlife conferences. She is a leader in partnerships and collaboration and is editor of the groundbreaking *Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation*. Dr. Miller has pushed the art, science, and

profession of wildlife rehabilitation forward, and her work will continue to influence rehabilitators to do their best for many years to come.

2022

Sallie Welte, VMD (DE) - for 40 years in the field of wildlife rehabilitation and for making it possible for others to contribute to the field of wildlife medicine and rehabilitation. As the Clinic Director and Senior Veterinarian at Tri-State Bird Rescue for 30 years, Sallie trained and mentored dozens of staff and thousands of volunteers, created medical protocols used at Tri-State and shared with many rehabilitators across the country, and repeatedly went out of her way to provide information and other resources and support to the many rehabilitators who contacted Tri-State for assistance... All this while providing veterinary care for over 80,000 birds presented to Tri-State, and many, many more through her support of the staff and volunteers.

2021

Lloyd Brown (FL) - for more than 25 years of dedicated service to wildlife rehabilitation, his community, and animals in need. His ready response to rescue calls, even in the middle of the night, has saved many lives, and his relentless attention to public and professional education helps people understand wildlife needs and challenges. When responding to disaster areas nationally and internationally, he taught, trained, and mentored people he worked with to increase their safety, understanding, and effectiveness in animal care and welfare. He learned new skills, adapted to changing conditions, and developed courses to teach others. He has contributed much to the improvement of wildlife rescue and rehabilitation.

2020

Laura Simon (CT) – for dedicating her life to preserving our wildlife. Laura is a passionate, tireless, and effective speaker, teacher, and wildlife advocate. She makes a difference through presenting at various state and national conferences; mentoring rehabilitators; educating the public, government agencies, hunters, anglers, and rehabilitators; providing species specific behavioral information to positively affect the outcome of a debate or crisis; creating training specifically on rabies vector species (RVS) that has been implemented in many states to enable wildlife rehabilitators to legally and safely handle wildlife considered RVS; developing hotline and nuisance wildlife resolution information widely used in our field; and teaching and promoting reuniting and renesting techniques for better wildlife orphan outcomes.

John Huckabee, DVM (WA) – for working diligently since the 1990s to improve wildlife medical care on national and international levels. John has significantly contributed to our

larger community's mutual interest through authoring and contributing to many esteemed publications; serving as first editor for NWRA's Wildlife Medicine Course manual and as a course instructor; presenting at a variety of professional conferences; providing testimony for wildlife hearings and legislative efforts; mentoring many wildlife rehabilitators, veterinary externs and interns, and practicing wildlife veterinarians; serving on the NWRA Board of Directors; working as Director and Staff Veterinarian at a wildlife facility; and serving on numerous boards, task forces, committees, and working groups, all directly aimed at improving wildlife rehabilitation and wildlife medicine.

2018

Florina Tseng, DVM, (MA) – for her devotion to wildlife medicine and rehabilitation. Dr. Tseng is an Associate Professor and Associate Chair at Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University, and the Director of The Tufts Wildlife Clinic. Flo has been a leader in developing protocols in wildlife medicine and surgery, seabird biology, and oil spill response. Since 1990 she has been a lecturer and workshop instructor at NWRA symposia and many state wildlife and veterinary conferences. She has authored numerous articles for both NWRA and IWRC, and has mentored several winners of the NWRA veterinary student paper competition. Flo has literally mentored thousands of veterinarians and rehabilitators over the past 30 years. She has helped "bridge the gap" between veterinarians and wildlife rehabilitators, and her dedication has helped raise wildlife rehabilitation to the level of a recognized profession.

2017

Anne Miller, (AL) – for dedicating most of her adult life to making the world a better place for wildlife and for influencing the wildlife rehabilitation profession in pivotal ways. Anne believes wildlife rehabilitators have a responsibility to raise public awareness about the plight of native wildlife and she advocates for effective public education methods. She brought the practice of reuniting young wildlife with their parent(s) to the forefront of our profession, establishing solid and successful protocols, and teaching at NWRA national symposia. Her book *Calls of the Wild* with wildlife recordings is widely used in North America.

2015

Stuart L. Porter, VMD, (VA) – for teaching thousands of veterinarians, veterinary students, technicians, and rehabilitators about wildlife rehabilitation by lecturing at more than 20 NWRA Symposia as well as veterinary and rehabilitation conferences in more than 25 states and at least three countries. Dr. Porter pioneered research for the benefit of native wildlife, helped develop and teach the NWRA Wildlife Medicine Course, served on the NWRA board of directors, and produced the first tutorial and reference CD available through NWRA, "Wildlife Under the Microscope."

2014

Carol Blacketer, (IN) – for seeing a true need for wildlife rehabilitation and education in her area and founding the Wildcat Creek Wildlife Center in 1995. Now, almost 20 years and 25,000 wildlife patients later, the center is still going strong. She has overcome several obstacles in her career and has become much respected in her community and among her peers. Carol still works tirelessly for humane treatment of wildlife. This past year the center opened its on-site educational structure and nature center to the general public.

2013

Jim Fitzpatrick, (MN) – for being active in the field of wildlife rehabilitation for over 30 years and for being a spokesperson for wildlife nationally. He has advocated for habitat preservation and wildlife rehabilitation throughout the country. Jim is an amazing educator and very well respected not only in rehabilitation but also the entire wildlife field. He is one of the founding board members of NWRA.

2012

Carol Akerlof, Bird Center of Washtenaw County, Inc. (MI) -- for more than 20 years dedicated to songbird rehabilitation and sharing her knowledge and experience to teach and mentor others. She demonstrates a desire and passion to continue learning as much as possible to be an excellent rehabilitator and a resource for colleagues in our field, especially pertaining to songbirds.

2011

Louise Shimmel, Cascades Raptor Center (OR) – for 25 years of treating injured raptors, designing and delivering educational programs, training volunteers, and providing invaluable consultation and expertise to wildlife professionals across the US. She makes a difference for wildlife on a daily basis and has made major contributions to the profession throughout her career.

2010

Curtiss J. Clumpner (OR) – for 28 years of dedication to wildlife and wildlife rehabilitation during which he has exemplified the ideals of our profession. He founded a wildlife rehabilitation center, worked with oiled wildlife response teams across six continents, helped plan the biennial international Effects of Oil on Wildlife Conferences since 1993, served on the Board of Directors of both the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association and International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council, and worked to educate different groups about wildlife rehabilitation.

2009

Diana Shaffer, Wildlife Resque Haus, Inc (IN) – for her dedication and work for the last 45 years for the benefit of wildlife and public education, educating thousands of children and adults, and being a tireless advocate for professional networking.

2008

Diana Conger, Last Chance Wildlife Center (MD) – for dedicating her life to raising both the standards of care for wildlife and the respect for wildlife rehabilitation as a profession, working persistently to promote cohesiveness and cooperation among rehabilitators, striving for excellence, and generously sharing her wealth of knowledge with all who ask.

2007

Susan Kelly, Peninsula Humane Society (CA) – for dedicating her life to creating a better understanding between humans and wildlife in order to prevent needless admission of wildlife, helping California wildlife rehabilitators gain credibility and knowledge through training and science, and sharing her knowledge to inspire and motivate young volunteers and veterinarians.

2005

Bea Orendorff, Wild Bird Rescue, Inc. (KY) – for more than a decade of contributing to the wealth of current, accurate, and reliable literature in the field of wildlife rehabilitation through not only writing papers and presenting at various conferences, but especially through serving as editor for many issues of NWRA publications, including the NWRA Newslines, NWRA Quarterly Journal, and Wildlife Rehabilitation

2004

Sigrid Ueblacker, Birds of Prey Foundation (CO) – for her lifelong commitment to wildlife, founding a premier raptor rehabilitation facility, maintaining high standards of wildlife care, and for sharing her passion, knowledge, and high standards through educational programs, films and documentaries, professional conferences, and publications.

2003

Elaine Thrune (MN) – For her 15 years of service as president of the NWRA Board of Directors, leading with patience, kindness, diplomacy, and fairness; recruiting and mentoring new board members; and traveling across the country to promote NWRA and wildlife

rehabilitation at state and regional wildlife rehabilitation and conservation meetings. Without her leadership, wildlife rehabilitation and the NWRA organization may not have reached the professionalism and recognition each enjoys today.

2002

Richard Evans, DVM, PhD (CA) – for his lifelong work in wildlife medicine and pathology, founding one of the earliest wildlife clinics, and his leadership and vision in helping to create the NWRA, serving as its first president, and integrating wildlife medicine with wildlife rehabilitation through organizing the veterinary portions of NWRA symposium programs 1982–1986.

2001

Barbara Suto, Suncoast Seabird Sanctuary (FL) – For her dedicated work in wildlife rehabilitation, her quest for continued improvement, alerting state and federal agencies to environmental pollutants and toxins, and especially for producing NWRA annual symposia with the best information in the field, which has directly and positively affected thousands of attendees over the past ten years.

2000

Linda Wolf, DVM, CARE for Wildlife (MN) – for her 30 years of dedication to wildlife and wildlife rehabilitators, and her service as a wildlife veterinarian and an extraordinary educator always willing to teach and coach beginners as well as those with more experience.

1999

Lenie't Hart, Seal Rehabilitation and Research Center (Netherlands) – for her over 15 years of seal and sea lion rehabilitation that has contributed greatly to the welfare of marine mammals, the public's attitude toward these species, and toward advancing the field of wildlife rehabilitation.

1998

Sally Joosten (IL) and Adele Moore, TreeHouse Wildlife Center (IL) – for their dedicated work to prepare and present the Beginner's Workshop for wildlife rehabilitators for more than ten years and to compile and edit the first comprehensive text in the field, *Principles of Wildlife Rehabilitation: the essential guide for novice and experienced rehabilitators*. Together they introduce beginners to the many facets and levels of wildlife rehabilitation, advocate on behalf of in-home rehabilitators, and encourage rehabilitators to be the best they can be.

1997

Marlys Bulander, United States Fish and Wildlife Service Region 3 Permit Officer (MN) – for her dedicated and persistent work over 19 years in building partnerships between government agencies and wildlife rehabilitators for the animals’ best interests.

1996

Jay Holcomb, International Bird Rescue Research Center (CA) – for his work over 20 years in wildlife rehabilitation, helping found Marin Wildlife Center, serving as president of the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council, serving as director of IBRRC, providing leadership in the field of oiled wildlife rescue and rehabilitation, and for generously sharing his expertise.

1995

Juanita Heinemann, Wild Wings Enterprise (CA) – for developing effective methods for the rehabilitation of hummingbirds and small insectivorous birds, developing and marketing diets, and enthusiastically sharing information.

1994

Mark Pokras, DVM, and Martha Pokras, Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine (MA) – for over 20 years of work in wildlife rehabilitation, founding the Avian Rehabilitation Center in New Jersey, developing the Wildlife Clinic at Tufts University, generously sharing their expertise, and for their lifelong commitment to wildlife rehabilitation.

1993

Walter C. Crawford, Jr., World Bird Sanctuary (MO) – for his superb work not only in wildlife rehabilitation, but also work in international conservation of wildlife.

1992

Lynne Frink, Tri-State Bird Rescue and Research (DE) – for her many years of passionate work in advancing wildlife rehabilitation, particularly in the development of oil spill response programs.

1991

Charles Sedgwick, DVM, Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine (MA) – for his work advancing knowledge in the biomedicine of native and exotic wildlife and educating wildlife rehabilitators and wildlife veterinarians.

1990

Murray Fowler, DVM, University of California, Davis, Veterinary School (CA) – for his work and publications dealing with the treatment, care, and housing of wildlife, founding the Wildlife Medicine Program at UC–Davis, educating veterinarians in wildlife medicine, and his lifetime of teaching and research.

1988

Gary Duke, PhD, University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine (MN) – for his pioneering work in raptor rehabilitation and for sharing knowledge, giving guidance, and lending support to individuals and organizations dedicated to wildlife rehabilitation.

1987

George and Rosemary Collett, Felicidades Wildlife Foundation (NC) – for over 20 years of contributing to the field of wildlife rehabilitation through their efforts all across the nation to “teach others to care”.

1986

Leonard J. Soucy, Jr., The Raptor Trust (NJ) – for his work with the rehabilitation of birds, especially raptors.

1985

Jessie R. White, Miami Sea Aquarium (FL) – for his work with the rehabilitation of Florida manatees.

1984

Katherine McKeever, The Owl Foundation (Ontario, Canada) – for her unique and insightful work in the rehabilitation and captive breeding of owls.