40 Year History: The 1980s

**'82**
- First national conference in North America dedicated to wildlife rehabilitation and related education and medicine. Organized by Willowbrook Wildlife Haven and Friends of the Furred and Feathered in Illinois, 262 wildlife rehabilitators, veterinarians, enthusiasts, and activists assembled together for the benefit of wildlife and to formalize a new organization for a new profession.
- Group of interested individuals met to discuss and plan a new organization. 19 of them officially met as the first Board of Directors. Articles of Incorporation were filed later in the year.

**'83**
- Board of Directors drafted and approved the NWRA’s first bylaws.

**'84**
- Presented the first Significant Achievement Award to Betsy Jones for her work with the State of New Jersey benefitting wildlife rehabilitation.
- Awarded its first grant of $1,000 to Carpenter St. Croix Valley Nature Center for a radio tracking study of rehabilitated bald eagles. NWRA later published the results.

**'85**
- Douglas Wood wrote *Wild Again* song for NWRA and performed it at the symposium.
- *Introduction to Wildlife Rehabilitation* was published and served as the manual for the NWRA Beginner/Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation course taught at each symposium.

**'86**
- NWRA and the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (IWRC) collaborated to publish a Wildlife Rehabilitation Minimum Standards and Accreditation Program provisional document. Both Boards of Directors approved the document and sent it to every member of both organizations for comment. The Wildlife Rehabilitators Code of Ethics first appeared in this provisional document.
- *Training Opportunities in Wildlife Rehabilitation* was published and listed internship and volunteer opportunities across the nation.

**'87**
- New book, *Manual of Wildlife Medicine*, edited by Basil Tangredi, DVM, was published as a compilation by several authors, with papers on normal physiological values, drug use, and treatments for many North American species.
- NWRA distributed first published Membership Directory to all members.

**'88**
- *Wildlife Rehabilitation Minimum Standards and Accreditation Program* was revised according to member comments and published as the official first edition. It was written by wildlife rehabilitators for wildlife rehabilitators to improve the care and treatment of wildlife in temporary captivity and immediately recognized as an important self-regulating tool.
- NWRA expanded its newsletter into *NWRA Newsline* to include more organization business and member opportunities, and published four times per year. Lou Strohbar was acting editor.

**'89**
- Presented the first Lifetime Achievement Award to Katherine McKeever from The Owl Foundation (Ontario, Canada) for her unique and insightful work in the rehabilitation and captive breeding of owls.
- Presented the first Significant Achievement Award to Douglas Wood for his work with *Wild Again*.
- NWRA distributed their first Membership Directory to all members.
40 Year History: The 1990s

1990
- NWRA established first Central Office with first full-time paid staff person, gathering together in one place membership renewals and records, book sales, member newsletter and directory distribution, bookkeeping functions, and communications.
- New book, NWRA Quick Reference, Ginny Pierce, VMD, and Linda A. Wolf, DVM, editors, was published and extremely popular.
- NWRA released Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation, 2nd edition, which was improved and expanded by additional contributors.
- Dr. Linda Wolf, DVM, funded the James J. Wolf CARE for Wildlife Education Scholarships, in memory of her father. These scholarships helped cover symposium costs for two people and were the first scholarships ever given through NWRA.
- NWRA conducted its first comprehensive Member Survey to assess satisfaction with membership benefits, challenges in the field, general demographics, and the scope of wildlife rehabilitation and education activities.

1992
- Louisiana Nature and Science Center hosted NWRA’s 10th Anniversary Symposium in New Orleans, LA.

1993
- NWRA appointed Barbara Suto as the first volunteer NWRA Symposium Coordinator, centralizing all aspects of symposium administration and delivery. Program was expanded to four concurrent sessions.
- Daniel R. Ludwig, PhD, became Wildlife Rehabilitation (symposium proceedings) editor.
- NWRA established first Central Office with first full-time paid staff person, gathering together in one place membership renewals and records, book sales, member newsletter and directory distribution, bookkeeping functions, and communications.
- New book, NWRA Quick Reference, Ginny Pierce, VMD, and Linda A. Wolf, DVM, editors, was published and extremely popular.
- NWRA released Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation, 2nd edition, which was improved and expanded by additional contributors.
- Dr. Linda Wolf, DVM, funded the James J. Wolf CARE for Wildlife Education Scholarships, in memory of her father. These scholarships helped cover symposium costs for two people and were the first scholarships ever given through NWRA.
- NWRA conducted its first comprehensive Member Survey to assess satisfaction with membership benefits, challenges in the field, general demographics, and the scope of wildlife rehabilitation and education activities.

1994
- NWRA Newsline expanded into The NWRA Quarterly, a new journal with peer-reviewed and edited papers. Bea Orendorff was its acting editor and published 4 issues per year.

1995
- The Board of Directors approved a new circular logo which was designed to represent the community of members all learning together and from each other.

1997
- Introduction to Wildlife Rehabilitation (1985) expanded into Principles of Wildlife Rehabilitation: Essential Guide for Novice and Experienced Rehabilitators, 1st edition. Adele Moore and Sally Joosten were the editors and Sue Coulson was the project manager.

1999
- John Huckabee, DVM, et al. produced Wild Again Video (VHS tape), set to Wild Again song. NWRA produced this video for members to use in public education programs to give visual definition to what we do as wildlife rehabilitators.
- Bayer Corporation gifted NWRA its first significant grant in the amount of $19,870 to fund the Wildlife Medicine Course curriculum development and its first sessions.

History is maintained by NWRA Historian and Founding Board Member, Elaine Thrune. Learn how to join the story at www.nwrawildlife.org
Celebrated its Silver (25th) Anniversary with a Symposium held near the site of the first Symposium in Illinois, hosted by Willowbrook Wildlife Center. The theme was “Celebrating Wildlife Rehabilitation.” NWRA observed its highest symposium attendance ever of 561 participants.

Douglas Wood wrote and performed a new song, In Our Hands, with his Wild Spirit Band at the Symposium concert.

NWRA published Topics in Wildlife Medicine, Emergency and Critical Care, Vol. 2, Florina S. Tseng, DVM, and Mark A. Mitchell, DVM, MS, PhD, editors.

Topic in Wildlife Medicine, Infectious Diseases, Vol. 3, Karen Shenoy, DVM, editor.

The newsletter and journal split and redesigned into The Wildlife Rehabilitator newsletter (Lisa Borgia, editor) and The Wildlife Rehabilitation Bulletin journal (Bria Orendorff and Sue Coulson, editors).

NWRA created and published the Wildlife Educator’s Code of Ethics.

New brochure by the Education Committee: Classroom Wildlife, Guidelines for Educators, about (not) using wild animals in classrooms.

The Board of Directors appointed a Business Manager to oversee office and executive staff operations.

Hired the first paid editor of the Wildlife Rehabilitation Bulletin. Lynnette Scott also served as editor of The Wildlife Rehabilitator (newsletter) and Wildlife Rehabilitation (symposium proceedings).

The fourth comprehensive Member Survey collected and presented data to show trends since 1993, as well as reveal current statistics for wildlife rehabilitation and education activities.

The first Wildlife Medicine Courses educated veterinary students in PA, MN, WI, and MI. NWRA published the course materials as Wildlife Medicine, A Manual for the NWRA Wildlife Medicine Course, John R. Huckabee, DVM, editor.

NWRA hired Lisa Borgia as the first Executive Director.

Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation, 3rd edition, was published with Erica A. Miller, DVM as its editor.

World Bird Sanctuary hosted 20th anniversary symposium in St. Louis, MO, themed “Our 20 Year Journey Through Rehabilitation, Education and Professionalism.”

NWRA presented The Profession of Wildlife Rehabilitation Symposium during the 63rd Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference in Des Moines, Iowa, to inform agency and private professionals in a formal setting that the true nature and scope of wildlife rehabilitation surpassed the backyard hobbyist approach. These presentations were later published in Wildlife Rehabilitation, Vol. 20:

The First 20 years of Wildlife Rehabilitation, Marlene Ehresman and Elaine Thune:

Emerging Infectious Diseases in Wildlife, Erica A. Miller, DVM, and Florina S. Tseng, DVM

Assessing the Effectiveness of Using Live Animals in Environmental Education Programs, Joe N. Caudell and Alexis B. Caudell

Characteristics and Attitudes of Wildlife Managers, Wildlife Rehabilitators, and Other Stakeholders Over the Past Decade, Lisa Borgia

Human Dimensions of Wildlife Rehabilitation, Edward E. Clark, Jr.

Topics in Wildlife Medicine, Clinical Pathology, Vol. 1, was published and edited by Florina S. Tseng, DVM, and Mark A. Mitchell, DVM, MS, PhD.

The Minnesota Wildlife Assistance Cooperative received the first Marlys J. Bulander Working Together for Wildlife Award for creating and maintaining a task force to write new regulations pertaining to wildlife rehabilitation in Minnesota.

Topics in Wildlife Medicine, Clinical Pathology, Vol. 2, was published and edited by Florina S. Tseng, DVM, and Mark A. Mitchell, DVM, MS, PhD.

The fourth comprehensive Member Survey collected and presented data to show trends since 1993, as well as reveal current statistics for wildlife rehabilitation and education activities.

The newsletter and journal split and redesigned into The Wildlife Rehabilitator newsletter (Lisa Borgia, editor) and The Wildlife Rehabilitation Bulletin journal (Bria Orendorff and Sue Coulson, editors).

NWRA first offered for sale Wildlife Under the Microscope CD by Stuart Porter, VMD.

NWRA created and published the Wildlife Educator’s Code of Ethics.

Published three separate texts pertaining to Wildlife Education:

Introduction to Wildlife Education Programming: Tips and Techniques for Better Presentations, Jeanie Lord, Diane Nickerson, and Elaine Thune, editors.

Wildlife in Education: A Guide for the Care and Use of Wildlife in Programs, Gall Buhl and Lisa Borgia, editors.

New brochure by the Education Committee: Classroom Wildlife, Guidelines for Educators, about (not) using wild animals in classrooms.

The Board of Directors appointed a Business Manager to oversee office and executive staff operations.

Hired the first paid editor of the Wildlife Rehabilitation Bulletin. Lynnette Scott also served as editor of The Wildlife Rehabilitator (newsletter) and Wildlife Rehabilitation (symposium proceedings).

The fourth comprehensive Member Survey collected and presented data to show trends since 1993, as well as reveal current statistics for wildlife rehabilitation and education activities.

The first Wildlife Medicine Courses educated veterinary students in PA, MN, WI, and MI. NWRA published the course materials as Wildlife Medicine, A Manual for the NWRA Wildlife Medicine Course, John R. Huckabee, DVM, editor.

NWRA hired Lisa Borgia as the first Executive Director.

Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation, 3rd edition, was published with Erica A. Miller, DVM as its editor.

World Bird Sanctuary hosted 20th anniversary symposium in St. Louis, MO, themed “Our 20 Year Journey Through Rehabilitation, Education and Professionalism.”

NWRA presented The Profession of Wildlife Rehabilitation Symposium during the 63rd Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference in Des Moines, Iowa, to inform agency and private professionals in a formal setting that the true nature and scope of wildlife rehabilitation surpassed the backyard hobbyist approach. These presentations were later published in Wildlife Rehabilitation, Vol. 20:

The First 20 years of Wildlife Rehabilitation, Marlene Ehresman and Elaine Thune:

Emerging Infectious Diseases in Wildlife, Erica A. Miller, DVM, and Florina S. Tseng, DVM

Assessing the Effectiveness of Using Live Animals in Environmental Education Programs, Joe N. Caudell and Alexis B. Caudell

Characteristics and Attitudes of Wildlife Managers, Wildlife Rehabilitators, and Other Stakeholders Over the Past Decade, Lisa Borgia

Human Dimensions of Wildlife Rehabilitation, Edward E. Clark, Jr.

Topics in Wildlife Medicine, Clinical Pathology, Vol. 1, was published and edited by Florina S. Tseng, DVM, and Mark A. Mitchell, DVM, MS, PhD.

The Minnesota Wildlife Assistance Cooperative received the first Marlys J. Bulander Working Together for Wildlife Award for creating and maintaining a task force to write new regulations pertaining to wildlife rehabilitation in Minnesota.

Topics in Wildlife Medicine, Clinical Pathology, Vol. 2, was published and edited by Florina S. Tseng, DVM, and Mark A. Mitchell, DVM, MS, PhD.

The fourth comprehensive Member Survey collected and presented data to show trends since 1993, as well as reveal current statistics for wildlife rehabilitation and education activities.

The newsletter and journal split and redesigned into The Wildlife Rehabilitator newsletter (Lisa Borgia, editor) and The Wildlife Rehabilitation Bulletin journal (Bria Orendorff and Sue Coulson, editors).

NWRA created and published the Wildlife Educator’s Code of Ethics.

Published three separate texts pertaining to Wildlife Education:

Introduction to Wildlife Education Programming: Tips and Techniques for Better Presentations, Jeanie Lord, Diane Nickerson, and Elaine Thune, editors.

Wildlife in Education: A Guide for the Care and Use of Wildlife in Programs, Gall Buhl and Lisa Borgia, editors.

New brochure by the Education Committee: Classroom Wildlife, Guidelines for Educators, about (not) using wild animals in classrooms.

The Board of Directors appointed a Business Manager to oversee office and executive staff operations.

Hired the first paid editor of the Wildlife Rehabilitation Bulletin. Lynnette Scott also served as editor of The Wildlife Rehabilitator (newsletter) and Wildlife Rehabilitation (symposium proceedings).

The fourth comprehensive Member Survey collected and presented data to show trends since 1993, as well as reveal current statistics for wildlife rehabilitation and education activities.
Julia Whittington, DVM, accepted the 24th Significant Achievement Award for envisioning the creation of an online course to provide students in grades K-12 with a fundamental understanding of wildlife ecology, conservation, and medicine.

Board Member Kathey Stelford created a new set of 4 full-color educational posters with messages to help the general public understand more about wildlife.

Number of Lifetime Members surpassed 50.

Published Wildlife in Education: A Guide for the Care and Use of Program Animals, 2nd ed. Gail Buhl, Jenny Schlieps and Lisa Smith, editors

Wildlife Rehabilitation Resources: Pharmacology, Lessie A. Davis, editor. It is a collection of papers to assist rehabilitators with medical treatments.

Wings of Hope Wildlife Sanctuary hosted 30th anniversary Symposium in Baton Rouge, LA, themed “Saving Wildlife and Wild Places”.

Published Wildlife Rehabilitation Resources: Squirrels, Lessie A. Davis, editor. It is a collection of papers focused on rehabilitating tree squirrels.


Launched a newly redesigned website where members can self-determine directory listings and specialties, as well as login to purchase books and other items at a member discount price.

Wildlife Center of Virginia hosted the 35th anniversary Symposium in Williamsburg, Virginia, themed “Watershed Moments for Wildlife”.

Published NWRA Formulary, 4th edition (updated and expanded Willowbrook Pharmaceutical Index) compiled and edited by Erica A. Miller, DVM; Michele Goodman, VMD; and Sherri Cox, DVM.

Published Topics in Wildlife Medicine, Vol. 4, Orthopedics, edited by Rebecca S. Duerr, DVM, and Guthrum J. Purdin, DVM.

NWRA surpassed a huge milestone of more than $100,000 in small grants being awarded to wildlife rehabilitators, veterinarians, and educators to improve wildlife care and share findings with members and others in our field.

New educational opportunity — professional recordings of selected Symposium 2018 and 2019 presentations become available, free to members, through AnimalProfessional.com

Another milestone was surpassed. More than $100,000 in scholarships have been awarded to attend the Symposium, purchase books, and repair or build wildlife housing meeting the Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation.

St. Cloud, Minnesota, Central Office closed at year end and staff transitioned to working remotely; sales inventory moved to e-fulfillment center to streamline online orders, payment, and shipping.

Board Member Kathey Stelford created a new set of 4 full-color educational posters with messages to help the general public understand more about wildlife.

Number of Lifetime Members surpassed 50.

Published Wildlife-in-Education: A Guide for the Care and Use of Program Animals, 2nd ed. Gail Buhl, Jenny Schlieps and Lisa Smith, editors

History is maintained by NWRA Historian and Founding Board Member, Elaine Thrune. Learn how to join the story at www.nwrawildlife.org
NWRA offered an entirely virtual 2021 Symposium, themed “Separate But Together.” Programming embraced both live and recorded presentations, panel discussions, and demonstrations—including creative ways of connecting and networking through the Whova app and Zoom.

Molly Gezelia-Baranczyk transitioned from Operations Manager to Executive Director for NWRA.

NWRA published Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation. Erica Miller, DVM and Jenny Schlieps, editors. It is a completely revised and expanded version of the Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation. Many authors, reviewers, and subject matter experts throughout North America added species, information, detail, charts, diagrams, color photographs, and recommended practices. It remained a joint project between NWRA and IWRC.

Wildlife Rehabilitation Bulletin transitioned from a print-only, member benefit to an online-only, open-access journal, with select member-only content. It is the first peer-reviewed open-access journal dedicated to wildlife rehabilitation.

NWRA redesigned and expanded its website platform to offer members and users a more enriched experience with the organization.

Main website completely redesigned with new content to help meet the needs of members, rehabilitators, and the public.

Symposium microsite developed to guide users through the full Symposium offerings.

Dedicated website developed for the Wildlife Rehabilitation Bulletin with full archive of all previous issues and open-access content.

40 Year History: The 2020s

NWRA redefined and restructured staff positions to Director of Operations and Programs, Program Coordinator, and Administrative Assistant with contracted services including accounting.

New logo was developed to be more suitable for social media and online use.

Member newsletter discontinued in favor of expanding monthly member communications.

NWRA presented 34th and 35th Lifetime Achievement Awards to Laura Simon for dedicating her life to preserving our wildlife and to John Huckabee, DVM, for working diligently since the 1990s to improve wildlife medical care on national and international levels.

Covid-19 virus pandemic began, resulting in closures and limitations, which prompted NWRA to redesign the 2021 annual national symposium.

We invite you to join NWRA moving into the future!