National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association
2008 Member Survey Report
Parts 1 through 4

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NWRA 2008 Member Survey Report: Part 1, Wildlife Care and Demographics Overview


Background and Purpose of the Survey
The NWRA Board of Directors has conducted a survey of members every five years since 1993. Member responses have been read, tabulated, and analyzed. The resulting report is used by board and staff members to make informed decisions to prioritize NWRA efforts and expenditures. The survey questionnaires are designed to obtain member feedback in a confidential and unbiased manner. The questionnaire was mailed to all NWRA members during March 2008 requesting information on their 2007 activities.

Of 1,610 questionnaires mailed, 461 (29%) were returned. Because respondents are geographically representative of all NWRA members, and because the overall response rate is acceptable for a mail survey (29%), it is reasonable to assume that data collected can be reliably projected to all NWRA members.

Demographic Characteristics of Members
The average age of respondents is 51, with more than half of respondents indicating their age as over 50. Respondents are 88% female and 12% male. Household income ranges from less than $10,000/year to more than $90,000/year, with a fairly even distribution above $30,000.

Most respondents are well educated, with 61% holding at least a four-year college degree and 33% of those further educated. Less than 10% have not taken any college classes. 57% have some background in animal health care (including 6% veterinarians, 3% veterinary students, and 21% veterinary and animal health technicians); 8% have a background in human medicine.

92% are at least partially self-educated (reading books, etc.) in the field of wildlife rehabilitation. Many receive training through rehabilitation centers (57%), NWRA Symposia (62%), and state, provincial, and regional rehabilitation conferences (59%). Other educational venues include International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (IWRC) skills seminars (37%), IWRC conferences (30%), school courses (22%), internships (20%), and online courses or ‘webinars’ (14%). Conferences, seminars, and webinars have played an increasingly important role over the past 15 years. In 2007, respondents spent a total of $221,642 on education (average $573, median $300, which is fairly consistent with past years).

Centers. Some respondents are directors of facilities who answer for the entire facility. An effort was made to avoid including duplicate numbers in the data. 82 respondents listed facility names and the scope of activity ranged from 1 mammal to 8,484 combined birds, mammals, and herps. There is no grouping that is considered representative of a typical facility.

Elaine Thrune is a retired wildlife rehabilitator and biologist who now devotes her time to NWRA. As a member of the board of directors, she assists with NWRA business operations, publications, and finances. She has been involved with all four member surveys dating back to 1993.
Wildlife Rehabilitation Activities
Respondents have been involved in wildlife rehabilitation for an average of 13.3 years (range 1 to 55); the percentage with more than 20 years experience increased from 6% in 1998 to 20% in 2008. Collectively 449 respondents have contributed roughly 5,978 years to the field of wildlife rehabilitation. 44% hold federal rehabilitation permits and 63% hold state or provincial permits issued in their name. A great majority does wildlife rehabilitation on a volunteer basis. 64% characterize themselves as ‘individual or independent, on a volunteer basis,’ 20% do volunteer work under someone else, 16% are paid staff (full- or part-time), and others are board members, founders, directors, cooperating veterinarians, educators, administrators, and retirees. Many respondents work in more than one capacity, for example, hold a part-time paid position and also a volunteer position.

Wildlife Care. Respondents are heavily involved in animal care, with 91% providing care for wildlife. The most common location for wildlife rehabilitation is ‘my home’ (78%), followed by a rehabilitation center (38%), and a veterinary practice or animal hospital (19%). Other locations include nature center, animal shelter, university, zoo, and other person’s home. 74% of respondents provided animal care numbers; 343 respondents provided care for a total of 114,890 wild animals in 2007. 246 (53% of all survey respondents) report providing care for 63,979 birds (range 1 to 3,894, average 260, median 70), 261 (57%) report providing care for 39,163 mammals (range 1 to 4,718, average 150, median 50), and 119 (26%) report providing care for 2,345 herptiles (range 1 to 300, average 20, median 5). Collectively, 33% of birds, 24% of mammals, and 40% of herptiles (29% of total animals) were seen by a veterinarian. Responses also indicate that 54% were orphaned only, 34% were injured, 5% were diseased only, 4% were relocated only, and 2% were oiled/poisoned only.

The overall release rates are 60% for birds (a 5% improvement over past years), 72% for mammals (about the same as past years), and 69% for herps (variable in past years). Overall combined release rate is 67%.

Time Spent. Respondents spend an average of 37 hrs/wk on wildlife-related activities during the spring, 40 hrs/wk in the summer, 26 hrs/wk in the fall, and 18 hrs/wk in the winter (including animal care, phone calls, administration, record keeping, education, etc.). Many reported being ‘on duty 24/7,’ especially during the spring and summer.

Money Spent. The amount spent on rehabilitation is higher than in previous surveys, mainly because a few respondents answered on behalf of large facilities. The total of $5,440,870 averages to $16,003 per respondent (range 0 to $1,300,000). The median of $1,000 more closely represents a typical response.

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NWRA 2008 Member Survey Report: Part 2, Educational Outreach Services


Background and Purpose of the Survey

The NWRA Board of Directors has conducted a survey of members every five years since 1993. Member responses have been read, tabulated, and analyzed. Board and staff members use the resulting report to make informed decisions to prioritize NWRA efforts and expenditures.

The survey questionnaire is designed to obtain member feedback in a confidential and unbiased manner. A survey questionnaire was mailed to all NWRA members during March 2008 requesting information on their 2007 activities. Of 1,610 questionnaires mailed, 461 (29%) were returned.

It is important to note that respondents in this survey, as well as NWRA members as a whole, are a diverse group, ranging from individual rehabilitators to directors of large facilities who oversee all aspects of the facility. This range results in a large variance in the data collected from certain questions. In many cases, the median number, rather than the average number, most closely represents a typical response. Some respondents did not answer every question; however, the combined responses give a reasonably accurate picture of the scope of work done by NWRA members.

Educational Outreach Services

A series of survey questions requesting information on outreach conducted by members includes not only educational programs, but also telephone and email communications. It is common for rehabilitators to field calls from the community about wildlife, and although some calls are about injured wild animals, callers often seek other information and advice.

Telephone Calls. 360 respondents answered 252,157 wildlife–related phone calls (range 1 to 24,000, average 700, median 100) in 2007. The average number of calls handled is increasing steadily since the average of 554 calls reported in the 1993 survey. About half the calls did not result in animal admission; callers received information and/or instructions and/or referrals, or the caller was another rehabilitator or a consulting veterinarian.

Email Communications. A new question on the 2008 survey requested information on wildlife–related email correspondence. 277 respondents handled 62,647 emails (range 0 to 12,000, average 226, median 20). Similar to phone calls, about half of the emails did not result in animal admission.

Educational Programs. 178 (39%) respondents offered at least one wildlife educational program during 2007. Together respondents offered 7,813 programs (range 1 to 1,591) reaching a total of 838,618 people. The average respondent reached 4,992 people with programming (range 1 to 300,000, median 283).

When asked to list what types of live wildlife they use in educational programs, 24% list ‘none.’ 34% use migratory birds, 16% use non–migratory birds, 23% use mammals, 19% use reptiles, 1% use amphibians, 4% use invertebrates, and 6% list ‘other’ (responses included raptors and birds of prey).

A new question in the 2008 survey requested members to list the non–living aids and props used in educational programs. 55% of respondents use displays (photos, posters, charts, x–rays, hazards to wildlife); 44% use audiovisual aids (PowerPoint, slides, CDs, DVDs, videos); 40% use animal specimens and/or parts (taxidermied mounts, study skins, furs, feet, wings, skulls, skeletons, bones, feathers, snake sheds, turtle shells); 34% use printed materials (handouts, brochures, books, newsletters, articles); 24% use wildlife habitat items (nests, eggs, scat, owl pellets, footprint casts); 22% use activities (games, puppets, bird calls, music, stories, nature trail, role playing, crafts, coloring books); and 9% use rehabilitation supplies and equipment (formulas, syringes, gloves, nets, medical tools, caging). Many respondents list items in several categories and several noted that programs are tailored to each audience.

Websites. A question on how members use the Internet elicited a surprising number of responses indicating that 26% of respondents host their own websites. Although survey responses do not specify website content, a visit to several sites shows that members are accomplishing educational outreach and providing wildlife information for the public through websites.

NWRA Resource Books for Educators.

NWRA sells two books (both published in 2004) to assist rehabilitators in being effective educators and in providing long–term care for wildlife used in educational programming. 71% of respondents who rated
Introduction to Wildlife Education Programming: Tips and Techniques for Better Presentations are ‘satisfied’ or ‘extremely satisfied.’ Wildlife in Education: A Guide for the Care and Use of Program Animals is rated highly by 75%.

**Data Projections**

Because respondents to this survey are geographically representative of all NWRA members, and because the overall response rate is acceptable for a mail survey, it is reasonable to assume that data collected can be reliably projected to all NWRA members.

**Telephone Calls.** Using the response rate for this survey to project data to the total number of NWRA members at the time the survey was mailed, reveals that members collectively may have handled as many as 1,127,000 wildlife–related telephone calls during 2007.

**Email Communications.** Email is becoming an increasingly important communication tool, not only among rehabilitators, but also between rehabilitators and the public. Projecting the survey data to the total number of NWRA members at the time the survey was mailed suggests that members may have handled as many as 363,860 wildlife–related emails during 2007.

**People Reached with Wildlife Educational Programs.** Not all rehabilitators offer educational programs; some individuals offer a few programs and larger centers may offer hundreds of programs per year. However, combining this wide range of member activity shows that NWRA members reached more than three million people during 2007 with wildlife educational programming. This is considerably fewer than projected in the 2003 and 1998 surveys; in 2003 at least one wildlife rehabilitation center was regularly featured on Animal Planet television programming, thus reaching many millions of viewers.

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NWRA 2008 Member Survey Report: Part 3, Member Benefits and Services


Background and Purpose of the Survey
The NWRA Board of Directors has conducted a survey of members every five years since 1993. The survey questionnaire is designed to obtain member feedback in a confidential and unbiased manner. A questionnaire was mailed to all NWRA members during March 2008 requesting information on their 2007 activities. Of 1,610 questionnaires mailed, 461 (29%) were returned. Because the respondents in this survey are geographically representative of all NWRA members, and because the overall response rate is acceptable for a mail survey (29%), it is reasonable to assume that the data collected can be projected reliably to all NWRA members. Member responses have been read, tabulated, and analyzed. Board and staff members are using the resulting report to make informed decisions to prioritize NWRA efforts and expenditures.

Membership
Reasons for Membership. Reasons for belonging to NWRA have remained fairly consistent over the last ten years. The top four reasons always have been to obtain information (77%), learn new methods and skills (75%), keep current in the rehabilitation field (74%), and be a better rehabilitator (69%). Over two-thirds of the 2008 respondents belong to NWRA for each of these reasons. Other reasons are to receive publications (40%), network (46%), attend the symposium (20%), and to qualify for a state rehabilitation permit (5%). It is likely that they are receiving satisfactory support from the organization in these areas, or they would not be continuing their membership.

The percentage of members who belong to NWRA for two of these reasons seems to be changing. Over the past ten years, learning new methods and skills appears to have become a more common reason for membership (69% of members in 1998, 75% in 2008), while receiving publications has become a less common reason (50% in 1998, 40% in 2008).

Membership Longevity and Satisfaction. The average length of NWRA membership has increased significantly over the last 15 years, with the greatest increase during the last five years. The average length of membership is now 7.9 years, and 39% of the members have been with NWRA for ten or more years. The fact that so many people are continuing their membership is one indication of member satisfaction.

78% of members report that NWRA is meeting their needs on an overall basis, which is up from 70% in 2003. The percentage of respondents who believe they are getting a good value for their dues was 74% in 1993, 77% to 78% over the next ten years, and is currently 81%.

When asked how NWRA can better meet their needs as members, only about one-third of all respondents answered, and they gave a wide variety of suggestions. Of the 183 respondents who answered this question, 25 (14%) say they have no complaints, leaving 158 (34% of total respondents) who give an actual suggestion regarding how NWRA can better meet their needs. As in past years, the two most common suggestions are to publish more information (25%) and have more events in closer proximity to members (17%). Other suggestions given by respondents include website changes and email (13%), symposium content and timing (12%), training/certification (4%), make symposia and publications more affordable (4%), and miscellaneous responses (29%) listed by only a few people. All verbatim (written) responses to this question have been provided to the NWRA Board of Directors, providing insight into the specific type of published information members are looking for, where exactly they would like NWRA events to be held, and more detail on other suggestions.

Satisfaction with Membership Benefits
Members were asked to rate each of NWRA’s membership benefits (included with dues) for their individual satisfaction. In addition, separate questions asked members to rate the usefulness of two specific publications, the journal and the newsletter, and to list suggestions for improvement.

Wildlife Rehabilitation Bulletin. This journal, published twice a year to disseminate the latest and most accurate information useful to rehabilitation, is rated highly by 88% of respondents (up from 82% five years ago). Satisfaction has been increasing steadily
over the last ten years, although perceived usefulness of individual sections varies.

**Usefulness**—81% of respondents rate “Practitioner’s Forum” (rehabilitation and medicine papers) as very or extremely useful. In comparison, 67% rate “Field Notes” (book reviews, abstracts, notices) and 69% rate “Foundations” (papers written in the scientific style) as being useful, and 58% indicate that “Viewpoint” (editorial or opinion) is useful. Perceived usefulness of the “Foundations” section increased significantly over the last five years (up from 52%), while perceived usefulness of the “Field Notes” section dropped significantly (down from 77%). “Practitioner’s Forum” continues to be the most useful section and “Viewpoint” continues to be the least useful section.

**Suggestions for Improvement**—Only 127 survey respondents give suggestions for improving the *Wildlife Rehabilitation Bulletin*, typically requesting more rehabilitation and medical information. 20 say it is fine the way it is and 21 either had not yet received their first copy (new member) or could not think of an improvement. Almost one-third (30%) of respondents are willing to submit items for publication in the *Wildlife Rehabilitation Bulletin*. The main barriers for those who are not sure (46%) or not willing (24%) to make a submission are lack of self-confidence, lack of time, and lack of experience, although some fear having their work criticized or judged during the editing process. Some simply did not know they could.

**The Wildlife Rehabilitator**. This newsletter, published twice a year to inform members of association matters and to share announcements and resources, is rated very or extremely satisfactory by 79% (up from 77% five years ago) of respondents and a large portion of it is typically read by members.

**Usefulness**—67% of respondents rate *The Wildlife Rehabilitator* as very or extremely useful (no change from five years ago). 94% indicate that they typically read the short articles. A majority of members also read the following sections on a regular basis: new publications and resources available through NWRA (74%), upcoming events and conferences (61%), symposium information (61%), and vendor advertisements (55%). Less than half read three sections: reports on NWRA activities and accomplishments (39%), scholarship and grant opportunities (23%), and NWRA organizational items (21%).

**Suggestions for Improvement**—Relatively few members give an answer when asked how *The Wildlife Rehabilitator* could be improved, and a wide variety of responses are given. Of the 75 respondents who answered this question, 15 indicate they have no complaints, leaving only 60 respondents who give a specific suggestion for improvement. The most common suggestions are to include more animal related articles (17% of those answering) and to include more medical and disease information (11% of those answering), however there are many additional suggestions included in the “miscellaneous” category. Two examples of miscellaneous suggestions are to provide *The Wildlife Rehabilitator* electronically (website or email), and to focus on information about specific regions. A complete list of verbatim (written) responses has been provided to the NWRA Board of Directors and to the publications editor.

**NWRA Membership Directory**. This annually updated tool is designed to encourage communication and networking. 87% of respondents (same as five years ago) are satisfied with the current format and content. In each Directory, NWRA asks for suggestions, therefore the survey did not include additional questions about this benefit.

**Scholarships, Grants, and Achievement Awards**. Satisfaction with scholarships increased slightly from 57% to 60% over the last five years, while satisfaction with achievement awards fell from 66% to 61%. Satisfaction with NWRA research and study grants fell slightly over the last five years (56% to 54%) but is still significantly higher than it was ten years ago. Familiarity with these benefits appears to be increasing based on the percentage of survey responses.

**Central Office and Staff**. 83% of members are satisfied and the satisfaction level has been increasing in small increments over the last ten years. Survey responses indicate that more members are familiar with the office and staff.

**Member Emails**. 80% of respondents are satisfied with the periodic emails they receive from NWRA. This new member benefit since the 2003 survey is designed to disseminate information and opportunities in a timely manner.

**Website**. The website at <www.nwrawildlife.org> represents NWRA and wildlife rehabilitation to the world by providing current and accurate information, referrals, and other resources. Member satisfaction has grown from 67% in 2003 to 74% in 2008. Familiarity increased from 63% to 79% over the last five years, which is consistent with data showing that more members are using the Internet.
Annual Symposium. Satisfaction increased from 76% to 80% in the last five years. Satisfaction has been increasing steadily over the last ten years with a significant increase between 1998 (67%) and 2003 (76%). Familiarity increased from 58% to 70%. NWRA’s efforts to increase publicity for each symposium through the website, member emails, and targeted announcements appear to be successful.

Discounted Prices. Members pay lower prices for NWRA produced publications, clothing, and gift items. 70% of respondents are satisfied with this benefit. Although it has been in place for decades, satisfaction was not measured in past surveys.

Satisfaction with NWRA Books and Manuals
NWRA publishes one-of-a-kind volumes to foster self-education and skill development in wildlife rehabilitation, medicine, and education. Satisfaction with most books and manuals remains fairly high. The percentage of respondents who are familiar enough to give a satisfaction rating increased noticeably over the past five years.

Satisfaction ratings by NWRA members are as follows:

• *Wildlife Rehabilitation*. Each annual volume has selected symposium papers published for dissemination to a broader audience. 73% are satisfied (down from 79% five years ago).

• *Principles of Wildlife Rehabilitation: The Essential Guide for Novice and Experienced Rehabilitators* dropped slightly from 87% to 85% over the last five years, after a noticeable increase between 1998 (80%) and 2003 (87%).

• *NWRA Quick Reference* dropped from 89% to 85% over the last five years, ending up where it was ten years ago.

• *Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation*. Satisfaction (83%) is roughly the same as five years ago (82%), but is still up significantly from ten years ago (73%).

• *Individual NWRA Articles* (reprints of papers from the *Wildlife Rehabilitation Bulletin* and out-of-print *Wildlife Rehabilitation* volumes). Satisfaction with individual articles fell slightly over the last five years (81% to 79%) but has remained close to the 80% level for the last ten years.

NWRA has several newer books that have not been included in prior member survey ratings. Members who were familiar enough with these publications to respond rated them as follows:

• *Topics in Wildlife Medicine*, 80% satisfaction rating.

• *Introduction to Wildlife Education Programming: Tips and Techniques for Better Presentations*, 71% satisfaction rating.

• *Wildlife in Education: A Guide for the Care and Use of Program Animals*, 75% satisfaction rating.

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NWRA 2008 Member Survey Report: Part 4, Future Direction of NWRA


Background and Purpose of the Survey

The NWRA Board of Directors has conducted a survey of members every five years since 1993. The survey questionnaire is designed to obtain member feedback in a confidential and unbiased manner. A questionnaire was mailed to all NWRA members during March 2008 requesting information on their 2007 activities. Of 1,610 questionnaires mailed, 461 (29%) were returned. Because the respondents in this survey are geographically representative of all NWRA members, and because the overall response rate is acceptable for a mail survey (29%), it is reasonable to assume that the data collected can be reliably projected to all NWRA members.

It is important to remember that survey respondents and NWRA members are a diverse group, ranging from individual rehabilitators who care for a small number of animals to directors of large facilities who oversee all animal care in the facility. This range results in a large variance in the data collected from certain questions, especially in the animal care and education sections. It also results in a wide range of member expectations from NWRA. Member responses have been read, tabulated, and analyzed. Board and staff members use the resulting report to make informed decisions to prioritize NWRA efforts and expenditures.

Note: This section of the survey allowed multiple responses; therefore, percentage totals may not equal 100 percent.

Biggest Problems Facing Members

Members responding to the 1998, 2003, and 2008 NWRA member surveys listed the three biggest problems they face in doing wildlife rehabilitation. Compiled data from all three surveys revealed the four same primary problems. Lack of funding continues to be the problem listed most frequently followed by lack of time, lack of volunteers, and public misconceptions.

In the 2008 survey, members were asked how they think NWRA can help address these top four problems. Members were not given lists but were asked to write their ideas in blank spaces provided for each problem. Every individual response was recorded and included in a comprehensive report to the NWRA Board of Directors.

Lack of Funding. In response to the problem of lack of funding, members suggested that NWRA should provide assistance with grants and scholarships, public relations, education for rehabilitators, and fundraising. Less common suggestions include providing more resources and public education. Specific suggestions within each of the categories were many and varied. A few examples are shown below, along with percentage of respondents in each category:

- Grants and scholarships (26%): continue to give grants and scholarships to members; help members find and apply for other grants; provide grant-writing workshops; generate grants and/or solicit foundations to support members
- Public relations (25%): lobby for state and national funding; promote the importance of wildlife and the need for wildlife on a national level
- Education (19%): publish papers and articles about fundraising; have brainstorming and round-table sessions about fundraising at symposia
- Fundraising (17%): provide hints, ideas, advice, and classes on fundraising; help members share best practices and successful fundraising strategies

Lack of Time. NWRA members had relatively few suggestions regarding how to address the lack of time problem. Only 128 respondents answered this question and many of their answers were general in nature. Below are examples of some suggestions that relate most closely to the issue of lack of time:

- Education and publications (38%): provide training on time management and setting realistic goals; share time-saving tips; train members to set limits and delegate
- Helpful suggestions for other rehabilitators (22%): don’t take in too many animals; don’t take on more than you can handle—know your limits; delegate
- Public relations (20%): establish national advertising for recruitment; initiate national promotion of wildlife rehabilitation
- Miscellaneous (16%): continue to share information, hints, and success stories; help with volunteers—this would also help with time shortage

Lack of Volunteers. Only 154 respondents answered this question, but many gave suggestions that NWRA should help within the three categories...
of public relations, education, and recruiting/retaining. Examples of some specific suggestions within each category follow.

- Public relations (34%): initiate national advertising and publicity to increase visibility to the general public; assist with local and regional publicity
- Education and publications (29%): publish articles dealing specifically with volunteer training and retention; conduct workshops on volunteer management
- Recruiting/retaining (26%): recruit in high schools and colleges; provide ways for volunteers to sign up online; act as a middleman to connect volunteers to rehabilitators who need help
- Miscellaneous (21%): tap the retired and student populations; partner with other groups—zoos, humane societies, bird clubs, and universities

Misconceptions of Public. NWRA members feel strongly that the general public must be educated. The 204 respondents who answered this question primarily gave suggestions related to public relations and educating the public. Examples of suggestions in each of these categories include the following:

- Public relations (56%): conduct national advertising; develop PSAs; initiate national news exposure; find a national spokesperson
- Education and publications (40%): create articles geared to the public; produce brochures and handouts for the public; provide educational posters for members to put in public areas

Importance of Future Activities
Activities and issues being considered by the NWRA Board of Directors to continue building wildlife rehabilitation into a recognized profession were listed and members were asked to rate the importance of each.

Develop More Training Opportunities and Materials for Rehabilitators and Those Considering this Career. 88% of respondents indicated it is important for NWRA to develop more training classes and materials, 81% to offer classes and seminars online, 74% to develop a college curriculum and degrees in wildlife rehabilitation, and 74% to offer traveling classes to be taught at member sites.

Build Recognition and Respect for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Practitioners. Respondents believe it is extremely important to build recognition and respect among the general public (92%), governmental wildlife agencies (91%), county and municipal agencies/authorities (91%), veterinarians (90%), and scientists and biologists (86%).

Develop Outreach Educational Materials and Programs. All three options in the outreach category are believed to be extremely important: educate the public on how to co-exist with wildlife (94%); educate animal control and conservation officers (94%); and educate pest control and chimney sweep companies (90%).

Improve the Science of Wildlife Rehabilitation and Position NWRA as a Primary Resource. 89% of respondents believe it is important to improve the science of wildlife rehabilitation with post-release studies, disease surveillance, and research. 76% feel it is important to position NWRA as the primary resource regarding wildlife rehabilitation (including wildlife care, medicine, referrals, research, etc.).

Member Suggestions. When asked to give additional ideas on future activities for NWRA, more than 100 members wrote suggestions. The main suggestion was to develop public awareness and public education (23%). Other suggestions included publishing more information, fundraising, working with governments, offering more classes including basic skills training locally, and helping rehabilitators who work alone. A wide variety of miscellaneous suggestions were given and the full list has been shared with the Board of Directors.

Willingness to Pay Higher Dues. Most NWRA members are more willing to pay additional membership dues to fund new activities in this survey than they were five years ago. 73% of respondents indicated they would pay an additional $10 per year to fund activities they feel are important, compared to just 60% who were willing to do so five years ago. Unsolicited comments on the idea of paying additional membership dues illustrated the wide range of feelings about funding and budgets. All comments are included in the survey report to the Board of Directors.

Importance of Electronic Delivery of Member Benefits
To ascertain how members feel about having certain features and member benefits delivered electronically or on the NWRA website, they were asked for information on how they access and use the Internet and to rate 11 different items. A statement clarified that benefits paid by membership dues would be accessible in a members-only section of the website.
Accessing the Internet. Internet access and usage continues to grow among NWRA members. Only 4% of current respondents reported that they never use the Internet, compared to 11% that did not use it five years ago, and 32% who did not use it ten years ago. Of the 18 respondents (4%) who never use or do not have access to the Internet, only one plans to get connected in the next one to two years. The others either are not sure about getting connected or know they will not get connected in the next one to two years.

Frequency of Using the Internet. Almost two-thirds of NWRA members use the Internet daily. The survey questionnaire terms regularly and occasionally were defined for the first time in 2008, making it possible to distinguish between daily users (64%), those who use the Internet at least once a week (20%), and those who use it at least once a month (11%). Respondents who regularly (daily or weekly) accessed the Internet increased from 40% in 1998 to 63% in 2003 to 84% in 2008.

How Members Use the Internet. The Internet is being used for a variety of things over and above email. 94% of respondents with an Internet connection visit websites, 78% use the Internet to make purchases and/or payments, 75% to find wildlife information, and 54% to find wildlife regulation materials. 26% host their own websites and 25% purchase downloadable documents. The percentage of respondents visiting websites increased from 88% to 94% since 2003, and the percentage of respondents doing online purchasing and payment increased from 55% to 78% during the same time period.

Type of Internet Connection. The methods NWRA members use to connect to the Internet changed significantly in the past five years. In 2008, 17% were using a dialup modem, down from 68% in 2003. In 2008, 77% have a cable, broadband, or DSL connection, up from 24% in 2003. A few (4%) have a satellite connection.

Interest in Receiving Electronic Copy of the Journal. Although there is some interest in receiving an electronic copy of the Wildlife Rehabilitation Bulletin (journal) in place of a paper copy, a majority of NWRA members are not willing to give up their paper copy. 33% of respondents indicated an interest in receiving an electronic copy instead of a paper copy, while 54% are not interested in replacing their paper copy with an electronic copy. The rest (13%) are not sure. Although respondents were not asked to explain their answers, a number gave unsolicited comments. Some of those who prefer receiving a paper copy indicated that paper is easier to file away for future reference, others believe that paper is more ‘mobile’ because it can be carried along when traveling, and a few have a dial-up Internet connection that is so slow they avoid downloading large documents. Several members wanted to receive both electronic and paper copies.

Importance of Website Features. When asked to rate the importance of NWRA website features, respondents gave moderate to high ratings to all of the features listed. Even the least popular feature, “member feedback on specific issues,” was thought to be important by 63% of respondents. Website features are listed in order of importance to respondents:

- Links to wildlife information sites (92%)
- Downloadable brochures, papers, handouts (89%)
- Notices and announcements from NWRA (83%)
- Calendar of conferences, events, meetings (80%)
- Online symposium registration and payment (75%)
- Membership Directory (74%)
- Downloadable books and manuals (73%)
- Online membership renewals (73%)
- Career and job opportunities searchable database (70%)
- The Wildlife Rehabilitator (newsletter) (64%)
- Member feedback on specific issues (63%)

Closing Comments
This article concludes the four-part series summarizing the NWRA 2008 Member Survey Report. Data collected represent the true scope of wildlife rehabilitation and education, as well as trends over the last 20 years. The NWRA Board of Directors is sincerely grateful to members who responded to the survey and shared their activities, priorities, and ideas.