

# THE EDGE WILDLIFE RESCUE, INC. OF NEW MEXICO

**BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS:**

Denise Coil  
Chris Chadwick  
Judy Durzo  
Elizabeth Penn Elliston  
Janelle Harden  
Carol Leland  
Peggy McCormick  
Marilyn Morain  
Mike Richard  
Tom Silva  
Claudette Sandoval-Green  
*[in absentia]*  
Brett Snyder  
*[Emeritus]*

**TREASURER:**

Stephanie Mitchell

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## A Brief History of WRI

Today, when rescuers bring birds, reptiles, or mammals to Wildlife Rescue, Inc. of New Mexico (WRI), they walk into a freestanding building at the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park and give the details of the rescue to a volunteer. The volunteer then takes the animal into a separate room where it can be examined and treated by another volunteer. But the process hasn't always worked like this... before there was a method, there was near madness. One constant factor throughout WRI's history: A small



team of dedicated and knowledgeable people who wanted to rehabilitate sick and injured wildlife and release intakes back into the wild.

Wildlife Rescue was able to open their new clinic on May 1, 2003—just in time for the baby bird season.

### The Early Days

Penny Elliston was one of the 20 or so people who took a class with Helen Mill, a wildlife rehabilitator from California, and learned how to care for baby birds. Wildlife Rescue, Inc. of New Mexico (WRI), a 501(c)(3) organization, grew out of this group. WRI applied for a permit with the State of New Mexico Department of Game and Fish and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and then for designation as a nonprofit organization, around 1980. Penny says that in those early days, they spread the word about WRI by telling zoo staff, Game and Fish, and many other people about WRI's mission (Raise, Rehabilitate, Release, and Educate) through the telephone answering system. "Slowly, people found us," she says. "We were doing the rehabbing in our own homes. We did that for a long time—it went on until six years ago."

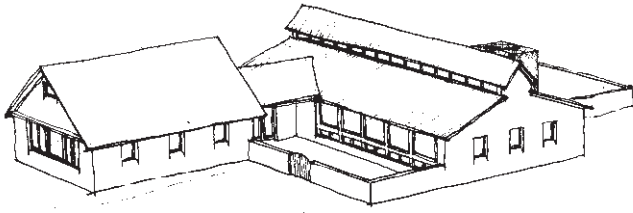
### Temporary Housing

For years, WRI was a nomadic organization. It had a central location with a phone line in places like the Rio Grande Nature Center and the VetCo on Menaul near Juan Tabo (where Clark's Pets now stands) for many years. They had to move when their "landlords" needed the space. "Then, during the baby seasons (May through August), we had space at the fairgrounds in the Natural Resources Building, the State Police Building, and the Cattlemen's Building, until one year when it rained and the ceiling fell down on our heads," Penny says. "Game and Fish was kind enough to let us use its materials storage room for the rest of the summer after that crisis."

The 10,000 phone calls WRI was receiving every year were overwhelming without a foolproof process in place. "The telephone job was the most stressful job in the organization," Penny says. "We'd tell people to bring animals to Game and Fish, the state agency charged with

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wildlife management. WRI volunteers would pick the animals up at the end of the day and take them back to their own homes." Although the reception staff at Game and Fish was very kind and supportive, this practice nearly drove them crazy because people brought in all kinds of animals in all kinds of conditions.



### A Permanent Home

Eventually, Senator Dede Feldman and other friends persuaded the legislature to get enough money appropriated to plan a building for wildlife rehabilitation at the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park. The enabling legislation stated that the building would be used for rehabilitation and other Nature Center activities. Today, WRI leases its location from the Nature Center for \$1 a year and pays all the building's utilities. After moving into this facility six years ago, it became easier to coordinate phone calls, receive animals, and arrange to have special-case intakes picked up by rehabilitators. The WRI building has several clinic rooms—one can be used for baby birds and one for adult birds. The addition of outdoor flights made it

possible for much rehabilitation to take place on-site. Mammals and animals needing specialized care are still removed to the homes of permitted specialists.

Over the years, the WRI mission has stayed the same, but the educational programs have expanded. Birds whose injuries are severe enough to deem them unreleasable may become "education birds." Education birds take on a new career, helping WRI volunteers educate the public about wildlife. WRI's educational programs take birds and volunteers to schools, the Nature Center's Junior Ranger Programs, Boy Scout groups, birthday parties, nature festivals, the New Mexico State Fair, the [Bosque del Apache] Festival of the Cranes, and other programs as distant from Albuquerque as Gallup and Carlsbad.

Penny believes that educational outreach is making an impact, at least among children and youth. "Tiny children know more [nature and wildlife] terms than they used to," she says. "The kids are getting it, and from many sources. They know a lot. I'm very impressed by them."

For the most part, WRI's work consists of the day-to-day care of injured and sick wildlife, preparing them for successful release. As people's wildlife savvy and concern over the fate of nature increases, so does the value of organizations like WRI. "More and more, the public is demanding that society cares for displaced animals," Penny says. ■

## From the new Clinic Director, Kristin Madden

As I write this, we are heading into the "home stretch," nearing the end of our busiest season of the year. Our sixth year in the WRI clinic has been a typical season of ups and downs, challenges, heartbreaks, and incredible successes. We have struggled through a year of nationwide mealworm shortages and rampant trichomonas infections. But our fabulous group of 12 managers and 70 volunteers—at the clinic alone—have developed an impressive team. We have been overjoyed to see many releases, including one that really pulled a hopeful clinic together:

A mother quail was brought in after being dog-caught. Only hours before she died, she laid one egg at the clinic. That egg hatched from our incubator and the chick was eventually released into the wild.

We still have more than a month to go before the end of the summer season, but thanks to our

volunteers, we are in excellent shape to get through migration and into the winter with a minimum of burnout and a whole lot of fun.

I would like to thank every person who has supported Wildlife Rescue over the years and all the people who have made my first busy season as Clinic Director a relatively painless, and often wonderful, experience. In addition to our amazing managers and other rehabilitators, we have the invaluable assistance of clinic and phone volunteers, transport people, veterinarians, plumbers, electricians, and more. And of course, we also have the greater Albuquerque community—those who bring us injured and orphaned wildlife. You have been faithful to provide donations of materials, food, and other items, as well as the financial support so vital to nonprofit organizations. We could not do this without each and every one of you, and I want you to know just how appreciative we are. ■

## A Day in the Life...

On June 11, a young roadrunner arrived at the clinic with a fracture right by its ankle. Coincidentally, a photographer from the *Albuquerque Journal* showed up the same day and took a photo of this bird during its initial exam. Leg injuries are tricky in any case, and particularly with roadrunners. A fracture near a joint is even more difficult, but we gave it our best attempt and the rehabilitation process for this bird was a true team effort. The leg was splinted and wrapped. The bird was kept in a small, quiet space until the day came to unwrap and test the leg. What a surprise and relief to find that it had healed well. The bird spent some time strengthening and testing in an outdoor enclosure and was released on July 5. Cases like these make it all worthwhile and remind us why we do this job.

## A Big Thank-You to Our Helpers

We'd like to thank these folks who have helped WRI out, "above and beyond" so far this year:

Bernie Boward  
Nova Reaves  
Sherri Roberts  
Clark's Pet Stores  
Cold Blooded Addictions  
Dr. Jim Cole  
Teresa Connell  
Dr. Elise Elliott  
Mark Hoisington, Royal Plumbing  
Dr. Ray Hudgell, Petroglyph Veterinary Clinic  
Dr. Mike Melloy, El Rincon Pet Hospital  
State of New Mexico Department of Game and Fish  
Juan Carlos Phillipedes  
Rio Grande Nature Center  
Wild Bird Center at Alameda and Corrales Road  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Victor's Landscape



### *And a very special thank-you...*

Wildlife Rescue would like to thank **Laura McCann-Simmons** for all she has done for the organization. In particular, Laura provided exceptional care for our educational Harris's Hawk for approximately three years. Laura nursed him back to health when he had some physical challenges and she kept him happy, healthy, and socialized for that entire time. We

are very appreciative of the love and care that Laura offered to this special and beautiful bird, which was used in 48 hours of education presentations during 2007. ■

[Photo obtained at <http://www.pbases.com/merigan/harrieshawk>]



## Upcoming IWRC Class

An International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (IWRC) Basic Rehabilitation class will be held October 25-26 at Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge near Socorro, New Mexico.

Class information (from the IWRC website):

**Fee:** Member \$120  
Nonmember \$140

This is an introductory course for beginning wildlife rehabilitators, or novice and experienced rehabilitators seeking formal education. Lecture topics include: introduction to wildlife rehabilitation, basic anatomy and physiology, calculating drug dosages, handling and physical restraint, stress, basic shock cycle, thermoregulation, initial care and physical examination, nutrition and associated diseases, standards for housing, zoonoses, and criteria for both euthanasia and successful release.

Lab topics include gavage (tube-feeding), physical restraint, intramuscular and subcutaneous injections, physical exams, weighing, and limb immobilization. All lab procedures are performed on cadavers.

For more information, visit <http://www.iwrc-online.org/training/calendar.cfm>.

Kristin Madden will coordinate carpooling. Anyone who is planning to go and is interested in giving—or getting—a ride, please contact Kristin at 505-833-3631 or [kdkmadden@msn.com](mailto:kdkmadden@msn.com). ■

# Thank you... to and from

## To Debra Gray & Wagner Power Systems:

We would like to thank everyone at Wagner Power Systems for donations of binders, dividers, and plastic sleeves/pockets to Wildlife Rescue Inc., of New Mexico (WRI). As a 501(c)3 non-profit organization—and one that relies, in part, on in-kind donations for our operations—we are always grateful for gifts of materials and supplies.

Here's what we've done with their donated materials: WRI has a 25+ year dataset, and we have been working for the last five years to organize our old progress notes (documents that log the detailed day-to-day care and condition of our animal patients). Thanks to the numerous binders we've received from Wagner, we've been able to develop a user-friendly—and complete—system for storing our old files. We use our data for scientific research, education, and for informing our rehabilitation decisions... and our recordset is invaluable because

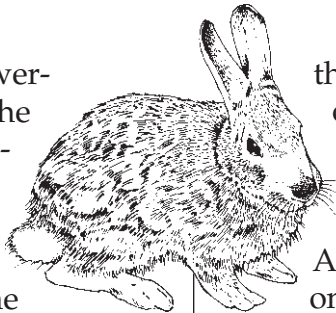
it is one of a very few multi-decade wildlife rehabilitation datasets in existence.

Because WRI cares for thousands of animals each year, our recordset grows enormously on an annual basis. In the past we have always had to scrounge every which way we could to find binders to hold our old, current, and future documents. Because of Wagner's donations, we've been able to complete our archiving project much sooner, and much easier than expected. As the Data Manager for WRI, Anne Russell spearheaded this massive undertaking. Anne affirmed that WRI is always grateful to people (and businesses) who support **our** support efforts. Anne also explained that record-keeping may not be as "cool" as raising baby ravens, for instance, but it is an integral part of what we do. So again, thank you Wagner Power Systems for your donation—we really appreciate it!!! ■

## To Wildlife Rescue:

I want to thank your staff for answering my questions and checking out the tiny bunny I brought in this past Saturday. Her right foot is still large, but otherwise she seems to be doing well.

When I got home on Saturday, I released her carefully from the box. She was understandably frightened. She began to run away from our shop in the backyard, under which she had made her home. My husband and I carefully blocked her from running to the front yard and closer to the street. We were able to steer her back toward the shop. She quickly ducked underneath. She ran very well for having a hurt leg. We watched her carefully for the rest of the day. I



thought she might be too frightened to come out but after about 30 min she was back out eating the grass again. She has a water bowl near the shop's front door that we've seen her drinking from regularly. A few times I've even caught her lounging on her side in the sun. I think she feels safe and comfortable here.

We haven't been brave enough to ask the question of what to do if her back leg does not heal. For now we are offering her a safe place to live and heal and plenty of cool soft grass to munch on. Thanks again for all your help and information. You do a great service for our precious wildlife. ■

—Allyson Hills, Albuquerque

## To Wildlife Rescue Editors, old and new:

*The Fledgling* has a new editor! Michelle McRuiz has been a WRI volunteer since 2006. She works as a communications specialist for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico and as a freelance writer for the UNM Foundation. She offered these skills to Wildlife Rescue—not only does she produce the Clinic-Volunteer newsletter, but she has now become *The Fledgling* editor as well. Wildlife Rescue is grateful to Michelle for her enthusiastic expertise. We are also grateful to Mikal Deese, who began the

digital Clinic newsletter in early 2006 and maintains our extensive volunteer contact list. Janelle Harden began the editing, writing, and design of *The Fledgling* in 1990, shortly after she became a rehabilitator with WRI, and will continue to design it. We thank Janelle—and *she* thanks Michelle and Mikal, and treasurer Stephanie Mitchell who provides contact info on all new WRI members—for their considerable assistance in getting organizational news to our many friends and volunteers. ■

# Data Summary for 2007 Acquisitions

The following is excerpted from Wildlife Rescue's recent report to the Share with Wildlife program (N.M. Department of Game and Fish) which provides funding for our permitted activities.

## Total Acquisitions

From January 1 through December 31 of 2007, WRI had a total of 2,362 acquisitions (including clinic acquisitions and direct-to-rehabber acquisitions\*). **Table 1** defines these intakes by status and family. In 2007, total acquisitions increased over 2006 by approximately 6%. Protected bird and mammal acquisitions increased from 2006 to 2007, while all other species categories decreased. **Table 2** below provides details for the years 2001 through 2007; the data from Table 2 are presented as a line graph in **Chart 1**.

TABLE 1. 2007 Total Acquisitions by Group

Protected Bird .....	1398
Non-protected Bird .....	499
Mammal .....	358
Domestic Bird .....	56
Reptile & Amphibian .....	45
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>2362</b>

\*Note that members of the public sometimes take injured and orphaned wildlife directly to our rehabilitators' homes; these acquisitions are also included in Table 1.

TABLE 2. Total Acquisitions 2001-2007.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Protected Birds	978	1061	1192	1292	1232	1364	1398
Non-Protected Birds	352	381	441	503	510	530	499
Mammals	153	156	286	262	278	279	358
Reptiles & Amphibians	34	24	24	42	26	59	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>1517</b>	<b>1622</b>	<b>1943</b>	<b>2099</b>	<b>2046</b>	<b>2232</b>	<b>2356</b>
<b>Total Annual Increase</b>		<b>7%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>-3%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>6%</b>

## Annual Trends

Wildlife Rescue has always been aware that obtaining accurate acquisition data allows us to track trends over many years. The table and chart at left are examples of how we can use these data for various analyses if the wildlife we receive for rehabilitation. At the macro level, we can explore changes in population trends and species' abundance. At the micro level, determining peak acquisition weeks, e.g., the high number of nestling Black-chinned Hummingbirds we tend to receive the third week in June, allows us to be prepared with appropriate diets and captive management facilities and techniques.

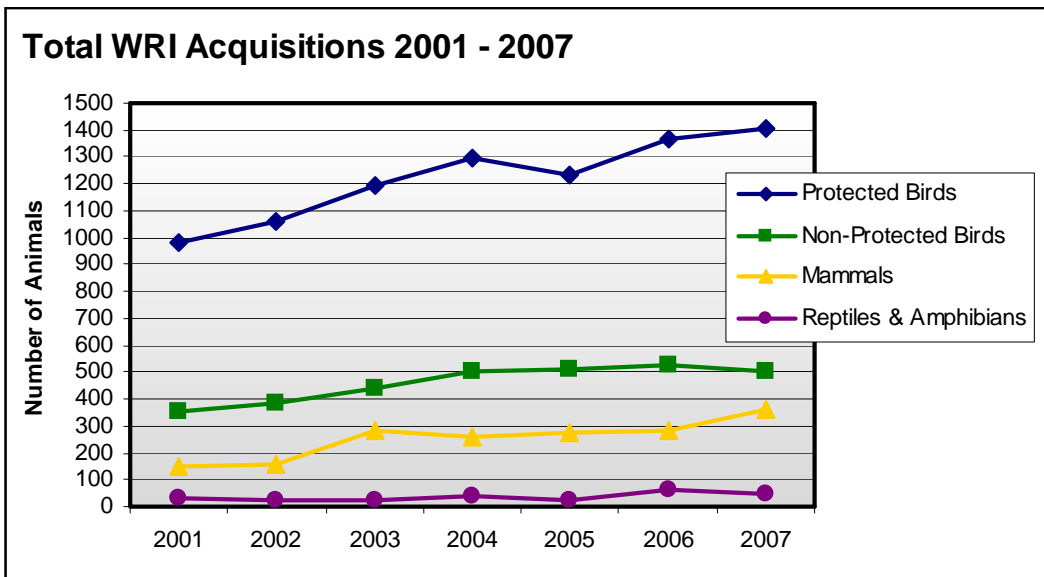


CHART 1. Total Acquisitions 2001-2007 by Species Category.

**How useful are these type of data? Please see the Share with Wildlife article on page 6.**

