

WINC'S MISSION: ANIMAL CARE

From Darkness to Daylight: A House Finch's Recovery

This female House Finch was admitted with conjunctivitis, resulting in her eyes being completely crusted shut. Our staff very carefully cleaned up her eyes so she could open them again. Since she was unable to see, she was unable to forage for food and was thin when she arrived. She also had a brain injury, causing neurologic symptoms, including impaired balance and coordination.

Conjunctivitis is a bacterial eye infection that affects the tissue surrounding the eyes causing it to become red, swollen, irritated, and even crusted or swollen shut. In most cases, the swelling and discharge become so severe that birds can no longer open their eyes. This loss of their eyesight can quickly lead to starvation and increase their vulnerability to predators. Conjunctivitis can affect many songbird species but is most commonly seen in finches.

The bacteria is often spread at bird feeders, which is why it is very important to regularly disinfect your feeders. We recommend cleaning your bird feeders with a mixture of soap and water to remove any debris and feces, then use a diluted bleach solution to disinfect, and finish by rinsing and drying before refilling. We recommend doing this on a regular basis, approximately once every other week, or allowing your feeders to empty and disinfect them before refilling. By doing this, you can help prevent the spread of this disease and ultimately save lives!

After a few weeks of treatment with antibiotics, and anti-inflammatories, as she healed, her infection and swelling in her eyes have resolved, and her balance and coordination have improved. She is now in an outdoor aviary reconditioning before she is released.

Story by Cherish Hutchinson Streit



2025 Issue 2: Inside This Edition

ANIMAL CARE

*From Darkness to Daylight:
A House Finch's Recovery*

Page 1

VOLUNTEERS

Fabulous Baby Bird Feeders!

Page 2

EDUCATION

Leslie Kiehl: A Legacy of Learning

Page 3

ANIMAL CARE

*A Resilient Blanding's
Amazing Healing Journey*

Page 4

FROM THE DIRECTOR

A Season of Gratitude and Growth

Page 5

CHASE'S CORNER

Page 6

VOLUNTEERS

Special Group Projects

Page 7

CALENDAR

Page 8

Mission Statement

To provide wildlife rehabilitation to Wisconsin wildlife with the intent to release back to the native habitat, conduct research designed to further the positive impact of rehabilitation, and provide quality community education programs and service.

Wildlife In Need Center Board of Directors

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WINC'S TEAM: VOLUNTEERS *Fabulous Baby Bird Feeders!*

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Lynn Rice	Volunteer Coordinator
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Lou Banach

Every summer we welcome seasonal volunteers who help us with Baby Bird Feeding. These volunteers are a crucial part of the success of our Baby Bird Feeding program. Baby bird patients were fed from ~8am until sunset every day for almost 100 days. There were 21 volunteer shifts/week (3 per day, 7 days/week) plus staff and intern oversight every day of the season.

~60 Baby Bird Feeding volunteers helped us this year. These volunteers were typically 15 years and older, however some 12-14 year olds were allowed to volunteer with a guardian who also volunteered together with them. So, our youngest Baby Bird Feeder was 12 years old and our most mature person was 80! This season our Baby Bird Feeding teams have included so many amazing people. We were excited that many of these individuals were returning, experienced Baby Bird Feeders who helped mentor our new volunteers.

These dedicated volunteers helped prepare a variety of food, and then weigh, feed, clean and do general care for baby birds. They cleaned enclosures, lined areas with appropriate bedding, nests, and natural materials such as branches and leaves. They also

straightened up our Avian Nursery and outdoor fledgling enclosures. Baby Bird Feeders were kept quite busy.

This year our Baby Bird program admitted ~315 orphaned native songbirds. This includes:

- 29 Hatchlings (8 species)
- 170 Nestlings (21 species)
- 75 Fledglings (17 species)
- 41 Juveniles (15 species)

We are still admitting a few late season babies... This mostly consists of Cedar Waxwings, Mourning Doves, and American Goldfinches.

One Baby Bird Feeding Volunteer recently told me she really enjoyed this experience, learned a lot, as she expected, but was surprised with the added benefit of making new friends. There are so many advantages to this wonderful opportunity.

We work diligently to help our baby birds grow well, be healthy and strong, so they can be released out in the wild, join their wild counter parts, and be ready for migration. Baby Bird Feeding Volunteers help make a difference with everything they do!

Story by Lynn Rice



WINC's MISSION: EDUCATION

Leslie Kiehl: A Legacy of Learning

Ten years ago, the Wildlife In Need Center created the Leslie Kiehl Education Program Fund in memory of a beloved educator whose passion for wildlife continues to inspire learning today.

In 2003, Leslie Kiehl became the first person hired specifically for WINC's Education Department. During her twelve years at the Center, she taught more than 100,000 people, sharing her love for Wisconsin's wildlife and helping others see animals in a new light. Leslie believed that understanding leads to compassion, and that even one meaningful encounter with an animal could change how someone views the natural world forever.

Established in 2015, the fund helps carry that belief forward. Each year, it provides partial or full coverage of program costs for schools, scout troops, nonprofit organizations, and community groups who might not otherwise be able to participate. From classrooms learning about animal

adaptations to scouts earning environmental badges, the fund helps make wildlife education accessible to everyone.

Over the past decade, the Leslie Kiehl Fund has supported programs that reached thousands of learners across southeastern Wisconsin, removing financial barriers while keeping Leslie's spirit of teaching alive in every presentation. Many of these groups include rural schools and community organizations that might otherwise miss out on in-person programs, proving just how lasting Leslie's vision continues to be.

As we celebrate this milestone, we're proud to continue Leslie's legacy, helping the next generation discover, respect, and protect Wisconsin's wildlife through education. With every curious question and spark of wonder, her legacy of learning continues to grow.

Learn more or apply at:
helpingwildlife.org/educate/leslie-kiehl-program-fund



Next Application Deadlines:

- February 15th, 2026
- May 15th, 2026
- September 15th, 2026

Story by Lauryn Banach

Want to do even more to support the Wildlife In Need Center?

Explore our Amazon Wishlist to see how you can directly help us care for our wild neighbors.

Simply scan the QR code below to view the list and make a difference today!



 SCAN ME

WINC'S MISSION: ANIMAL CARE

A Resilient Blanding's Amazing Healing Journey

In June we admitted a Blanding's Turtle with a severely injured shell after being struck by a vehicle, likely during her journey to lay her eggs. Blanding's turtles are considered a "species of special concern" in Wisconsin. They are vulnerable due to habitat loss, fragmentation, road mortality, and nest predation.

This beautiful girl suffered multiple fractures to her top shell (carapace) and was also missing a large area of her carapace. This opening made her extremely vulnerable to infection and internal damage due to the hole in her coelomic wall. The coelomic wall is a very thin, delicate layer of tissue under the shell that encloses the coelomic cavity (the body cavity that contains the internal organs and fluids).

She required very careful, specialized wound care and fracture stabilization. Our veterinarian, Dr. Bloss, sutured part of the coelomic wall in order to help seal this hole up more quickly. During a large portion of this healing process, she had to be "dry docked", meaning kept out of water, in order to avoid contamination until the coelomic wall was sealed up enough to keep water out of the body cavity. This can be a very challenging time for turtles. We supported her the best we could through this hard time by offering opportunities to drink water, supplemental injectable fluids, and providing outdoor exercise time to help her mentally.



In addition to all that she was already struggling with, she was also fighting a respiratory infection, causing nasal discharge and labored breathing. In order to help treat this infection, we gave antibiotic medication and nebulized her multiple times a day. This is a process where a machine converts liquid medication into a vapor for inhalation. We were so happy to see that her respiratory infection resolved with this special treatment.

Over the course of four months healing in our care, her fractures stabilized and her wound granulated in with new healthy tissue that continued to keratinize to a thicker, harder protective layer. We are amazed at how well she healed and how resilient this sweet Blanding's truly was. She was released just in time before the temperatures began to drop so that she could return to her wild home to brumate (essentially a state of hibernation for reptiles) for the winter. We wish her the best of luck and are so glad we were able to give her a second chance at life.

Story by Sara Imperl

Become a Hero for Our Wild Neighbors

*Join our Wildlife Animal Champions —
a special community of monthly donors
who help save wild lives all year long.*

*Your commitment keeps our wild neighbors
safe, healthy, and free.*

Learn more at www.helpingwildlife.org/monthly-donor-wildlife-animal-champions-member

or scan the QR code below.



SCAN ME

FROM THE DIRECTOR *A Season of Gratitude and Growth*

As autumn paints our Wisconsin landscape in brilliant hues, I find myself reflecting on the remarkable journey we've shared this year at the Wildlife In Need Center. Each season brings its own challenges and triumphs, and this fall has been no exception. From late-season orphans and gunshot injuries to majestic raptors in need of rehabilitation, our dedicated team has worked tirelessly to provide compassionate care to hundreds of wild patients.

This season, we are especially grateful for the incredible support from our community. Whether you're a volunteer sharing your time and talents, a donor making our mission possible, or an attendee at one of our educational programs who leaves inspired to help wildlife, your involvement fuels our work and reminds us that we are not alone in this mission.



AC Staff Sara & Katie with a Short-eared Owl recovering from fractured ulna from a gunshot



Dr. Jennifer Bloss, DVM, has performed our first surgeries at WINC!



Virginia Opossum recovering from a severe neck wound caused from a Conibear trap

We're thrilled to share a milestone: Dr. Jennifer Bloss, DVM, has performed our first surgeries at WINC! One recent patient, an opossum (photo above) suffering from a severe neck wound caused by a trap, is now on the path to recovery thanks to our teams expert care.

Looking ahead, we're excited to continue expanding our outreach and improving our facilities to better serve both wildlife and the people who care about them. Thanks to generous funding from Partners 4 Wildlife, we're adding a new enclosure for opossums or songbirds and making important upgrades to existing habitats.

Thank you for being part of our journey. Whether you've donated, volunteered, or simply shared our story, you are an essential part of the Wildlife In Need Center family. Together, we're making a difference, one animal, one person, one story at a time.

Story by Kim Banach



Dakota
SOCIETY

The Dakota Society is made up of generous individuals who have chosen to include WINC in their estate plans, ensuring their legacy helps protect our wild neighbors well into the future. For more information, contact Kim at kbanach@helpingwildlife.org.

A heartfelt message from one of our treasured Dakota Society members: "I've seen firsthand the incredible difference WINC makes. Including them in my legacy ensures my love for wildlife lives on through their lifesaving work."

**32nd Annual
Spring Banquet**

*Friday, April 17th, 2026
from 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM*

The Legend at Brandybrook



CHASE'S CORNER

I was hanging out with Lisa in the office. Lisa was explaining that wildlife rehabilitation has become much more complicated than in the early days of WINC. Wildlife rehabilitators have always been required to have licenses. There are laws and regulations

rehabilitators need to follow. But various wildlife diseases have led to complications in recent years.

First was Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in White-tailed Deer in 2002. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) placed restrictions on the rehab and movement of deer. There are no longer any rehabbers licensed for deer in WINC's region of Wisconsin. Then White-nose Syndrome (WNS), a fungal disease affecting cave bats, was found in New York in 2007 and began to move west. WNS was confirmed in Wisconsin in 2014. The DNR placed restrictions on bat rehabilitation and there is only one licensed bat rehabilitation center in Milwaukee and one in Madison in WINC's area of the state. Next came Covid in 2020 and Wisconsin DNR restrictions on bat, bobcat, weasel, mink, fisher, otter, red fox, and white-tailed deer rehabilitation.

All these restrictions are to help prevent these diseases from spreading in the wild. But it results in some wildlife rehabilitators not being able to provide care for these species. That is frustrating for the people who find these animals who need help and are unfortunate for the poor animals. We are also increasingly seeing diseases and parasites not "normally" seen in Wisconsin.

WINC has provided samples for several tick studies to survey the tick species, the species of wildlife the tick is found on, where the animal was found, and what diseases the tick may be carrying. As the world becomes more globally connected and as weather patterns change, wildlife diseases are spreading to other areas. WINC staff needs to be aware and prepared.

Don't Forget Our Wild Neighbors

Water is scarce in winter. Consider setting out a heated birdbath or shallow dish of water on warmer days to help birds and small mammals stay healthy and hydrated.

Become a Wildlife Animal Champion

Join our special group of monthly donors – **Wildlife Animal Champions** – and help us save wild lives all year long.

Support WINC While You Shop

- **Good Harvest Market (Pewaukee):** Bring a reusable bag and receive an EcoToken to donate to local nonprofits. For every token given to WINC, we receive 10¢.
- **Albrecht's Sentry (Delafield) & Piggly Wiggly (Hartland & Oconomowoc):** Bring us your grocery

receipts, and we'll turn them in for a percentage of the totals.

- **Kwik Trip Rewards:** Choose WINC to receive your rebate, and Kwik Trip will donate an additional 1% too!

Double Your Impact

Ask your employer if they offer a matching gift program for charitable donations.

Become a Wildlife Release Site

All adult patients return to the location where they were rescued, but young animals need a safe place to call home. If you or someone you know can provide suitable property, visit our website to learn more and fill out a release site form: www.helpingwildlife.org/rehabilitate/wildlife-release-program

What's the BUZZ? – Remembering Special People

This year, WINC has been touched by a heartfelt wave of gifts made in honor or memory of loved ones. These thoughtful tributes celebrate the lives and legacies of those who hold a special place in the hearts of our donors.

Simply scan the QR code to the right with your smartphone camera to visit our Remembering Special People webpage.



WINC'S TEAM: VOLUNTEERS

Special Group Projects

WINC is so fortunate to exist in a caring community! On occasion different groups reach out and offer their help with special projects. This summer and fall we welcomed 4 volunteer groups.

- Students from Carroll University in Waukesha helped clean and reorganize our garage and 2 storage sheds.
- First Congregational United Church of Christ in Oconomowoc sent volunteers who helped deep clean and disinfect two outdoor enclosures and also our ICU.
- As part of the Freshman Day of Service in Oconomowoc Area School District, high school students helped us clean and rearrange our outdoor storage shelves that hold a variety of containers, carriers and cages of different types and sizes. They also helped put shelves in a shed and arranged items inside it.
- In November we will be welcoming students in the Science National Honor Society from Oconomowoc Schools. They plan on cleaning and organizing our education areas: closets, library, Gathering Room, bathrooms, and some ambassador areas.

With every project, some of our amazing staff and volunteers put in extra time to help supervise and guide the work being done.

There is always something to do at the Wildlife In Need Center! We have a few individuals currently helping with special projects such as building a new double enclosure, replacing roofs over animal enclosures that were damaged in a hailstorm, and refurbishing 2 outdoor enclosures for wildlife patients. These wonderful people would greatly appreciate more assistance with these very needed projects!

Thank you so much to all who have helped with special projects at the Wildlife In Need Center! Your help is very valued and appreciated!

If you would like to help with a special project, please contact Lynn at volunteer@helpingwildlife.org

Story by Lynn Rice



What's the Hoot?



Keep an eye on your inbox for our monthly *What's the Hoot!* Newsletter – featuring inspiring wildlife patient stories, upcoming events, and important updates.

Not on the mailing list yet? Email Development@helpingwildlife.org to start receiving *What's the Hoot!* straight to your inbox.



Wildlife In Need Center

Stay Connected & Mark Your Calendar



contact@helpingwildlife.org



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www.helpingwildlife.org



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2025

December 2025

Giving Tuesday

Tuesday, December 2nd, 2025
All Day
Wildlife In Need Center

Holiday Meet & Greet

Saturday, December 6th, 2025
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Wildlife In Need Center

Website



VISIT OUR WEBSITE

Discover the latest news and upcoming events at WINC!
Just scan the QR code above to visit our website

Social Media



Stay connected with WINC!
Scan the QR code above to follow us on all our social media

2026

April 2026

32nd Annual Banquet

Friday, April 17th, 2026
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM
The Legend at Brandybrook, Wales, WI

October 2026

14th Annual Fine Wine & Dine

Saturday, October 17th, 2026
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Westmoor Country Club, Brookfield, WI

December 2026

Giving Tuesday

Tuesday, December 1st, 2026
All Day
Wildlife In Need Center

Design by:

