



# Twin Harbors Newsletter

## *Call of the Wild*

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Published and distributed by the Twin Harbors Wildlife Center (THWC). We rehabilitate injured, orphaned, sick, and displaced wildlife to give them a second chance at life by returning them "Back to the wild".

Each issue details up-coming events, wildlife/habitat information, as well as ways to help us meet our mission.

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### **Volunteer Orientation & Training Dates**

All orientations and trainings take place Saturdays on the following dates:

May 13, June 24, July 22,  
 August 19, and Sept. 16.

Orientation at 11:00 am

Training at 1:00 pm

### **Ribbon Cutting Ceremony in May!**

**By Dr. Corrie Hines**



We will be officially "opening" our flight pen with a ribbon cutting ceremony on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 2pm at the wildlife center! We are inviting the donors, Fish and Wildlife representatives, Chambers of Commerce, media, and of course, all of you, the volunteers who make our rehabilitation possible!



If you have not received either an email or a text with an invitation to the ribbon cutting (so that you can RSVP), please let Dr. Corrie know!

## The Poor Baby Needs Help...Or Not

By Karen Huff

Humans have big hearts. Hearing an infant in distress tears at us, even if the baby isn't our own species. Spring abounds with new life, more than any other season. We may save a tiny life, or cause harm and decrease an animal's chances of survival. We need to know when our help is truly needed.

"It was crying for its mommy," a mournful human will say, as they deliver the adorable, big-eyed harbor seal pup to a rescue or rehab center, wrapped in a blanket or a towel, or stuffed into a dog carrier. Harbor seals are especially vulnerable to misguided attempts to help. As pinnipeds go, they are small, only weighing 20-24 lbs at birth. You can pick them up. Their natural call sounds very like a plaintive, "Maaa, maaa". People are crushed to hear, "We know you meant well, but next time, call us. You just orphaned this pup."

Lactation takes energy, and the female harbor seal needs to leave her pup to go catch some fish and feed herself. The pups can swim shortly after birth, but spend a lot of time just resting on the beach. Most of the time that cute little critter is just fine. It will nurse for 4-6 weeks, gain a lot of weight, then fend for itself. Premature ones will have a soft, white coat, but unless there are other signs of distress, they are probably okay.

Sea lions also leave their pups to go forage. Most are born in June. Sea lion pups stay with their moms for nine months to over a year. They learn survival skills and are, like humans, somewhat more dependent. When they are small, the mother will alternate spending a day or two with them and going off for two to five days to feed herself. They reunite by calling and confirm by scent, each female and pup having unique voices and smells.

Elephant seals stay with their young 4-6 weeks and usually do not go off far away; after that the little one is totally on its own. They pup further south, so we are unlikely to encounter newborns here.

All the pinnipeds are protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Keep your distance, do not ever attempt to approach, pet one, get a selfie, or allow dogs near. Even if you avoid physical harm, causing familiarity or traumatizing the animal can cause serious danger to it. If you think a marine mammal may be injured, starving or sick, call for help.

Signs that the animal may need assistance are being underweight (it's wrinkly or you can see its ribs), obvious injury, entanglement, visible tumors, seizures. Heavy nasal discharge (a very snotty nose) is a sign of illness in harbor seals and sea lions, but a sign of a healthy elephant seal. Do NOT attempt to capture or transport marine mammals.

Contact the West Coast Marine Mammal Stranding Network at 866-767-8114

For entangled whales, call NOAA entanglement line at 877-767-9425

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Spring brings baby birds as well. It is not true that parents will abandon a nestling if you have touched it. If you do not have reason to believe the parent birds are dead or permanently absent and you find a nestling, gently return it to the nest. If you can, observe from a distance, see if the parents return. If they do not call a local wildlife rehab center.

For birds that are fledged (have their feathers) spending time on the ground before being fully flight ready is often a normal part of their development. If your feathered friend is not obviously injured or sick, let it be. They are more vulnerable to predators at this stage, but it is a natural part of growing up.

If you see a bird that you feel may need help, stay quiet and observe from 20-30 feet away for a while. Look for signs of injury or severe distress. If you approach slowly and quietly and it tries to fly or hops away, and does not appear injured, it's fine.

If the bird is injured or obviously needs help, call your local wildlife rehab center or PAWS to see if they can send someone. If not, they will help with instructions on how to safely capture and transport the specific species of bird.

In general, wear gloves if you can. Observe first. Only if you are certain the bird needs assistance, approach slowly. Have a cardboard box or other container close at hand, lined with paper towels or soft linen dish towels-don't use anything with terry cloth because it snags easily. Claws or beaks can get caught, further stressing the bird. Keep pets and small children quiet and away - birds go into shock quite easily. Be sure there is enough ventilation for the bird to breathe, keep it warm, quiet and dark and transport it to the nearest facility. Do not attempt to feed it or give it water and wash your hands thoroughly even if you had gloves on.



<https://www.nwf.org/Magazines/National-Wildlife/2019/April-May/Animals/Baby-Animals>

Mammals vary too much by species to cover all the contingencies. Some are born blind and completely helpless, while others can walk on the first day. Still, some general rules apply. Most young are better off with their parent. You should intervene if the animal is visibly injured, seriously malnourished, or if you know for sure the mother is injured or dead (common in squirrel nests from fallen trees, road kill, etc.). Remember that adults nursing young have to feed themselves, so do not assume the little ones have been abandoned unless you can confirm an extended absence. Also be

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aware that a returning mother may be very upset by your presence, with painful consequences.. Always keep pets, especially dogs, away from wildlife. If you are unsure what to do, ask for advice from your local wildlife center, PAWS or the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Err on the side of caution, and if you must intervene, wear gloves if you can. Remember that any animal bite, even if it seems minor, should be checked by a doctor and keep your tetanus shots up to date.

The more you educate yourself about the wildlife in your area, the better able you will be to know when and how to help, or when not to.



### From Dr. Corrie Hines: Other Resources for Injured Animals

Often when you find an animal that may be injured and need help, you may not be able to reach someone at the center, or it's a species we cannot rehabilitate on our own. Maybe it's the weekend, and our center is closed. Or perhaps you have a friend in this situation that does not live near us, but the animal they found needs help. You can send them (or use for yourself) the following link that will help you find the rehabilitator closest to you!

<https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/living/injured-wildlife/rehabilitation/find>

### Transport team help

If you are interested in helping with the transport team, **please let Dr. Corrie know!** You will need to have a car that can hold the carrier sizes needed for the animal being transported, so choose your assignments wisely!

Things you need to know to provide transport for wildlife:

- The carrier should be covered with a dark sheet or light weight blanket at all times.
- Do NOT play the radio or any music or podcasts. Keep noise to a minimum (no talking).
- Do NOT peek at the animal, nor should you allow others to look at the animal.
- Make sure you have copies of the animal's paperwork, and have a laminated copy of our license so that you are legally allowed to have the animal in your possession.

## Owls of Grays Harbor

By Deb Campbell



Photo courtesy of Gregg Thompson

Let's take a stroll into the depths of Grays Harbors temperate forest. Today we are looking for the elusive Northern Pygmy Owl. These tiny owls are just shy of 7 inches tall

with a 12 inch wingspan. To find them, follow a noisy commotions of other birds. You are likely to find some predator near by, maybe it'll be the Pygmy Owl.

Pygmy Owls are fierce hunters. They can take prey three times their size which consist of birds, rodents, insects and lizards. They are diurnal, (active and hunts during the day). When the food is abundant, they have been known to cache their food by storing it in tree cavities or hanging it on large thorns. They swallow their food whole or in large chunks. The undigestible material will be formed into a cast which is regurgitated. If you are lucky enough to find an owl cast, check it out! You may be able to see what was for dinner.

They live throughout the western United States as far North as Southeast Alaska and into Mexico. Pygmy Owls mate for the breeding season, sharing in the raising of the owlets. Can you imagine what a baby Pygmy Owl must look like!!!

Image from: [https://www.birdweb.org/birdweb/bird/northern\\_pygmy-owl](https://www.birdweb.org/birdweb/bird/northern_pygmy-owl)

## Avian Influenza

By Raeann Edwards

Avian influenza, often referred to as bird flu, is still prevalent throughout Washington. This disease, caused by avian influenza Type A viruses, is currently in the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) category. This form is highly contagious and extremely deadly to domestic poultry flocks. In Washington alone, 41 backyard flocks and one commercial flock have been affected during the 2022/2023 outbreak (USDA).

HPAI is most often spread by wild migratory birds which are natural carriers, through saliva, nasal secretions, feces, and contaminated ground and water. Wild aquatic birds may show little sign of the infection,



<https://www.istockphoto.com/vector/hen-gm1398790179-452824823>

but when transmitted to domestic poultry, especially chickens, it can cause death to nearly all of the flock within 48 hours (WDFW). Bird flu viruses generally only infect waterfowl and poultry species, but can cross to other bird and animal species. In Washington during the 2022/2023 outbreak there have been 185 confirmed cases in wild bird populations (USDA APAI). Two of these cases were in Grays Harbor County, involving Cackling Geese and Sanderlings (WDFW). Two cases have been confirmed in Pacific County, involving a Bald Eagle, and a Canada Goose. To date, four mammals

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have tested positive for Avian flu in Washington State (WDFW). Only very occasionally does it infect humans, with only one being reported in the United States.

Avian flu symptoms in poultry include: decreased energy or appetite, discharge from eyes or nasal openings, swollen or bluish comb or wattle, decreased egg production, lack of coordination, and sudden death. If your flock becomes infected there is no cure and most will die within a few days. The entire flock should be humanely euthanized to prevent further spread to outside flocks. If you have unexplained sick or dying poultry it is important that you report it to the WSDA Avian Health Program by calling 1-800-606-3056 or through online reporting at [report sick domestic birds online](#). Sick or dead wild birds or wildlife should be reported to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife using the following: [WDFW's online reporting tool](#).

Practicing good biosecurity is the best way to prevent an infection in your flock. Keep your poultry away from wild waterfowl and areas that they are in. Keep shoes and clothing to use only around your flocks or disinfect your clothes and especially your shoes before entering poultry pens. Wash your hands well before and after visiting your birds. If you visit other homes or businesses that have poultry or where other poultry owners may frequent, such as a feed store, disinfect your clothes, shoes, and vehicles. Quarantine any new birds for at least thirty days before introducing them to your flock.

For more information on Avian flu in Washington state visit <https://agr.wa.gov/birdflu>.

<https://twinharborswildlife.org/>

## Meet the Assistant Rehabilitators!

By Dr. Corrie Hines

Many of you will remember these two lovely ladies as interns from the past two years or so. We decided to interview them (and our new intern) so that you can get to know them!



**Amy Bledsoe**

Amy has been with the wildlife center since its inception in 2019. Her love of animals of all species is what drew her to volunteer; she knew she would be rehabilitating wild animals, but being able as an intern (and now an assistant rehabilitator)

to work with the raptors has been a dream come true!

Amy's favorite parts of being an assistant rehabilitator are working with the vets, learning new things, and working with volunteers. Seeing the faces of the volunteers light up the first time they feed a wild baby, as they realize they really are helping wildlife. Her least favorite part of wildlife rehabilitation is the death of an animal in care, especially when the animal has fought so strongly for survival; but when this happens, the health issue or injury the animal has is just not compatible with survival.

When asked to choose a favorite animal, Amy says that "hands down, opossums are my all

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time favorite! They have such a bad rap with people, so my goal is to educate people how beneficial opossums are in the wild." Her ultimate goal in working with wildlife is to become a permitted rehabilitator for Washington state and to continue working with the wildlife at Twin Harbors Wildlife Center.

We asked Amy for advice that she would give anyone who may wish to follow the same path. She said: "There are good times and bad times with plenty of cheers and plenty of tears when it comes to rehabilitating wildlife, but know that you are an important part of the successful rehabilitation of wildlife. There's a lot of learning to be done, but it is well worth it."

### **Karla Kershaw**

Karla has been part of the wildlife center for about 2 years. Her best friend, Amy Bledsoe, is who introduced her to volunteering at the wildlife center.

Karla's favorite part of being an assistant rehabilitator is being able to make a difference with helping the animals heal. She also loves performing the intake exam on the animals as they arrive. Her favorite animal is the Red-tailed Hawk.

The long-term goal for Karla is to become permitted as a wildlife rehabilitator in Washington state and work at THWC under Drs. Sonnya and Corrie. Her advice to others who may be interested in working with wildlife is "it takes a lot of time, and if you want to make a difference in wildlife, it is well worth it."

Amy and Karla will be popping in to help with training and filling in for shifts that are a bit short-handed. Be sure to say hi to them!

## **Meet the Intern!**

**By Dr. Corrie Hines**



Brandon Mezell was just officially made an intern for THWC! We wanted to introduce him to you all!

Brandon has been a volunteer for the wildlife center for about 2 years. His excitement for learning new ways to care for and treat wildlife is what drew him to volunteering with

us. His favorite part of wildlife rehabilitation is working with the raptors. (As an intern, he was just recently trained to do just that!) He does not have a least favorite part, because "I enjoy carrying out the THWC mission."

The Bald Eagle is Brandon's favorite animal. "In the sky they don't seem as big until I am actually caring for them." His long-term goal would be opening up his own rehabilitation center. That would be great, Brandon! We could share the work load!

Brandon's advice to those who would like to become an intern or work with wildlife: "Learn from the others around you." We agree, Brandon! Wildlife rehabilitation is a profession in which you never stop learning.

Be sure you say "Hi" to Brandon when you see him! He will be helping out the new volunteers, and filling in for shifts that have gaps in care.

## Backyard Enhancement to Benefit Pollinators

By Raeann Edwards



Spring is here, so it is time to prepare your backyard for pollinators. Pollinators, both birds and insects are essential for the health of gardens, orchards and crops. Enhancing your backyard to support pollinators will benefit you as well as your neighboring gardens and farms. Making a few small changes or additions in your backyard spaces is all that needs to be done to provide a healthy ecosystem for pollinators.

<http://clipart-library.com/pollinator-cliparts.html>

Providing habitat in the way of native plants is the best way to support pollinators. A good variation of flowering plants that bloom at different times, spring through fall is best. Variety in flower color, size, and shape, in addition to blooming time will attract a variety of pollinator species of both insects and birds. Good native spring blooming species include common yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Oregon grape (*Berberis aquifolium*), and Red-flowering Currant (*Ribes sanguineum*). Summer species include Showy Milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*) Oregon sunshine (*Eriophyllum lanatum*), and Mountain Monardella (*Monardella odoratissima*). Plants that can take you into the fall include Western Coneflower (*Rudbeckia occidentalis*), West Coast goldenrod (*Solidago elongata*) and Douglas aster plants (*Symphotrichum subspicatum*). For more species ideas try these sites: <https://www.wnps.org/native-plant-directory>, <https://www.backyardgardenlover.com/washington-native-plants-list/>, <https://www.gardenia.net/native-plants/washington>.

Woody plants such as trees and shrubs also help pollinators by providing nesting and larval host areas. Pollinators rely on more than flowers to support their life cycles, so other plant species are essential. Again, these should be native varieties. Additional nesting or shelter sites can include dead trees, branches and brush piles. These can be enhanced by drilling holes in them to provide nooks and crannies for egg depositing and shelter. Areas of bare ground give opportunities to ground nesting species, so providing small bare spaces can expand your pollinator reach. Leaving areas of unmowed grass around your lawn will also attract and support pollinators.

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Pollinators will benefit from damp areas or containers of shallow water. Mixing sea salt or wood ashes provides needed micronutrients. Other substances that can both attract and benefit pollinators are pieces of over ripe fruit. Also, bug and bird houses and feeders can be useful when you have limited space for vegetation. The following sites provide great DIY critter house ideas: <https://littlebinsforlittlehands.com/insect-hotel/>, <https://www.gardeningetc.com/design/bug-hotel-ideas>, <https://balconygardenweb.com/diy-bug-hotels-building-an-insect/>, <https://www.redtedart.com/simple-bug-hotel-for-kids/>.

Finally, limit your use of herbicides and insecticides. Use methods to control unwanted pests that will not also kill the pollinators you want to support. Learn how to identify the beneficial and the destructive insects and only use products that won't remove both. Hand weeding and precision treatment of areas can help. Time any chemical applications to times when pollinators are not active.

Simple changes or additions to your outdoor space will go a long way to attracting and providing support of pollinator species. Including native plant varieties in your yard and garden is most effective, but there are many other ways to benefit pollinators. Adding brush and debris, or simply not removing grasses, providing damp areas, and bare ground, and limiting the use of chemicals are all easy pollinator support elements.

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## As we get closer to the start of the new baby season ...

We have started to gather the supplies that we will need to help the wildlife. If you have been looking for a way to help the wildlife and weren't sure how to help, we have updated our Amazon wish list to reflect what we are looking for. Use this QR code or click on this link to take you directly to our Amazon site.



[https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3VIPMHCSFBWSW?ref\\_=wl\\_share&fbclid=IwAR0buJERaONKsRISApMYI3hwdJtKGrM2EOwr\\_gCU6IJwR0JDkHpVs goDqUM](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3VIPMHCSFBWSW?ref_=wl_share&fbclid=IwAR0buJERaONKsRISApMYI3hwdJtKGrM2EOwr_gCU6IJwR0JDkHpVs goDqUM)

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### Board Members:

Dr. Sonnya Wilkins, President  
 Dr. Corrie Hines, Vice President  
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 Jeff Lewis, Treasurer  
 Talia Bailey  
 Debbie Campbell

### Assistant Wildlife Rehabilitators:

Amy Bledsoe and Karla Kershaw

**Intern:** Brandon Mezell

### Contact Information

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