



Land of Enchantment Wildlife Foundation

SPRING 2016

PO Box 957
Santa Cruz, NM 87567

Welcome, and thank you for taking the time to read the spring edition of Land of Enchantment Wildlife Foundation's quarterly newsletter.

LEWF had an amazing 2015! Our activities were incredibly diverse and we'll tell you about them after we share the following stories about two remarkable animals and the rehabilitators who saved them. These stories illustrate the coordination of care that takes place among wildlife rehabilitators and the exceptional level of veterinary skill we have in the state.

Wait, what bird is that?

At the beginning of 2015, Desert Willow Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Carlsbad, NM, received word of an injured Red-tailed Hawk that needed attention. However, once the raptor was received, it was obviously not a hawk. The injured animal was a Bald Eagle. Realizing more resources were needed, Desert Willow transferred the eagle to Cottonwood Rehab in Chamita, NM.

After diagnosing the eagle with lead poisoning, Cottonwood Rehab worked to cure the bird of the poisoning and increase its strength. After a few short weeks, the eagle showed no signs of poisoning. In order to continue its healing, Cottonwood Rehab then transferred the eagle to Santa Fe Raptor Center, which had a cage large enough to allow the eagle to return to its normal strength.



Again, after a few short weeks, the eagle received a clean bill of health and was ready to be released. LEWF then transported the eagle back down to Desert Willow, and on a beautiful morning he was released at Brantley Lake. Over 130 people witnessed the wonderful sight of seeing this magnificent animal rise into the air and disappear in the clouds.

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There be a bear in that crate!

Although 2015 was a wonderful year for bears, one poor cub needed assistance.

The cub came to Cottonwood Rehab only weighing 4 pounds. He was found in a dog crate outside a feed store in Tijeras, NM. We can only speculate that he was taken from his mother's den.



Luckily for the cub, Dr. Kathleen Ramsay has considerable skill in making small skinny bears fatten up. To help pay for the food that he would require, Dr. Ramsay allowed LEWF to fundraise for this poor cub. LEWF raffled off tickets at the Earth Day event at the Pajarito Environmental Education Center in Los Alamos. For each ticket, the person could enter the name they would like to give to the bear. In the end, Layton was chosen.

With gracious donations, Cottonwood Rehab was able to take this small cub and turn him into fat Layton. At the time of his release, Layton had grown to over 150 pounds. Although he initially struggled getting out of the container, Layton found the largest tree around and climbed it in no time. It is reasonable to assume that was the first time Layton had ever climbed a tree. Onlookers witnessed the amazing power of instinct first hand.



The Bald Eagle and Layton the Bear are just two stories of the amazing work that wildlife rehabbers do every day. It would be impossible for many of these wonderful people to do their work without donations from concerned citizens like you.

LEWF in 2015 regularly helped these and other rehabilitation efforts with cleaning and repairing cages, providing funds to buy much needed food, feeding the animals, and serving as a transportation service for many animals that needed special care.

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Through donations, LEWF helped pay for two new flight cages at Cottonwood Rehab and partnered with Desert Willow to construct its first official flight cage. LEWF conducted over 68 educational classes with Santa Fe Raptor and Cottonwood Rehab. All in all, it was a very successful year.

The next pages describe the many strange mammals you can see in New Mexico!

Thank you for caring for New Mexico's wildlife! Please continue to check our website and Facebook page for amazing animal videos from across the world and stories of local wildlife in need!

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What are these strange mammals that I am seeing in New Mexico?

The following **ungulates** (hoofed, herbivore, quadruped mammal) are found in New Mexico.



Elk “wapiti” *Cervus elaphus*

Elk used to occupy all of the major montane (moist, cool upland slopes that are dominated by coniferous trees and below timberline) areas in New Mexico. The southern elk appear to have become extinct around 1900. The species was *Cervus merriami*. In 1911 an attempt to reintroduce elk to New Mexico started. 12 elk were released in northeastern New Mexico and 60 elk were released into the Pecos and San Miguel county. We currently can find elk in all the major montane areas in the state. This can be said to be a phenomenal reintroduction and success.

Bighorn Sheep “Mountain Sheep” *Ovis Canadensis*

New Mexico has two races of Bighorn Sheep. We are proud to have both Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep, and Desert Bighorn Sheep. Bighorn Sheep are named for their large curved horns seen in the Rams (males). Ewes (females) have shorter horns and only a small amount of curvature. Bighorn Sheep are considered good indicators of land health because the species is sensitive to many human-induced environmental problems. Thanks to NM Game & Fish our populations of both sheep are stable.



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The Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep inhabit alpine meadows, grassy mountain slopes and foothill country near rugged, rocky cliffs and bluffs. These animals can be found from British Columbia to Arizona. Desert Bighorn Sheep are similar to their northern cousin but have adapted to the lack of water in the desert. They may go weeks or months without visiting water, sustaining their body moisture from food and from rainwater collected in temporary rock pools. Their range is from Arizona and New Mexico south to Sonora and Chihuahua, Mexico. The populations of Desert Bighorn Sheep declined drastically in the Southwest beginning in the 16th century. In 1939 thanks to the lobbying of Fredrick Burnham, the Arizona Boy Scouts, and President Franklin D Roosevelt these populations were preserved.



ibex “wild goat” *Capra ibex*

These goats were introduced into the Florida Mountains in Southwestern New Mexico for sports hunting. The population appears to be stable. They are animals of mountain habitats. They are very agile and hardy, able to climb on bare rock and survive on sparse vegetation.

Barbary Sheep “aoudad, waddan, arui and arruis” *Ammotragus lervia*

Barbary Sheep are found in arid mountainous areas where they graze and browse grasses, bushes, and lichens. They obtain all their moisture from the food but will drink after rainfall. They stay in rough, steep country because they are more suited to the terrain than any of their predators. They are originally from North Africa and were introduced near Picacho, NM. They have expanded their range over a wide area of the Southeastern part of New Mexico.



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Oryx “gemsbok oryx” *Oryx gazelle*

All Oryx species prefer near-desert conditions and can survive without water for long periods. They live in herds of up to 600 animals. The horns are lethal. They have been known to kill mountain lions with them and thus are some times called the saber antelope. Between 1969 and 1977 New Mexico Game & Fish intentionally released 93 gemsbok antelope onto the White Sands Missile Range. The population has grown to an estimated 5,000 animals. The reason for their success is that they can go for long periods of time without drinking and readily adapt to eating the desert grasses, yucca, buffalo gourds, mesquite bean pods and tumbleweeds. Since they are doing so well they now are considered a pest species off of the Missile Range.



Pronghorn “American Antelope” *Antilocapra America*

Pronghorns are inhabitants of open grasslands. They are the fastest land mammal in the Western Hemisphere, being built for maximum predator evasion through running. Pronghorn are known to be able to run at speeds of 55 mph for up to ½ mile. Many people call these animals antelope. They resemble true antelopes that are in the old world. Their closest relative are the giraffes and okapi. Pronghorns eat a wide variety of plant foods including some plants that are unpalatable or toxic to domestic livestock. However, they do

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Mule Deer “Black-tailed deer” *Odocoileus hemmionus*

Mule deer can be found throughout New Mexico. During the hottest parts of the summer they move to higher elevations. They are easy to identify by their mule-like ears. Their tails are white with a black tip. Antlers have two equal forks with the tines coming off each fork. The male or buck loses (sheds) his antlers after mating and grows a new larger set the following year. Mule deer can eat a variety of vegetation.



White-tailed Deer *Odocoileus virginianus*

The white-tailed deer is distinguished by the white underside of the tail. It is held erect and sometimes over the back when the animal is alarmed or running. Their antlers differ from the Mule Deer in that they curve forward with the tines branching from the main beam. They occur in rough, brushy country in the mountains of southwestern New Mexico. In eastern New Mexico they are most commonly found in riparian habitat.

Collared Peccary “Javelina” *Tayasu tajacu*

The peccary is pig-like but is not a true pig. They can be found in southwestern New Mexico. Peccaries travel in bands or herds near a permanent source of water. These bands tend to be family units of up to 60 animals. They cannot cool their bodies by evaporation so they must bed in the shade during the hottest part of the day. Peccaries are primarily herbivores and have a complex stomach to aid in digesting coarsely chewed food such as agaves and prickly pears. They have a very large range and can be found all the way into northern Argentina.



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Moose *Alces alces*

The moose is the largest cervid (animals in the family of cervidae, which includes deer, elk and moose) in the world. Like most of the animals in this family, the antlers are shed once a year and then regrown for the next breeding season. Moose are accidental visitors to northern New Mexico. They were reintroduced into Colorado and periodically move down river systems to our state.

They are Algonquin (twig eaters). The major diet consists of leaves, twigs, buds and shrubs as well as aquatic plants.

American Bison "Buffalo" *Bos bison*

The Buffalo is the largest terrestrial (lives entirely on land) animal of North America.



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