

All Creatures GREAT & SMALL

LOCAL EXPERTS TELL US WHICH MINNESOTA NONPROFITS ARE DOING A GREAT JOB PROTECTING THE FEATHERED, FURRED AND FINNED RESIDENTS OF OUR STATE.

By JULIE KENDRICK

THE EMOTIONAL APPEAL OF ANIMALS IS OBVIOUS, BUT ANIMAL WELFARE IS ABOUT MORE THAN CUTE KITTENS: IT'S ABOUT ENSURING OUR STATE REMAINS A HEALTHY HOME FOR MINNESOTANS OF ALL SPECIES — AND EXAMINING HOW WE CAN PROTECT AND LEARN FROM OUR STATE'S ANIMALS.

Thankfully, there are many local nonprofits dedicated to animal welfare, appreciation and education. These organizations do everything from finding new homes for abandoned pets to caring for injured raptors to training hard-working service dogs.

Not surprisingly, these nonprofits often stir up deep emotions from Minnesotans who feel a close connection to animals and want to find effective ways to help them. (Animal-related giving is consistently a popular fundraising area during Give to the Max Day.) So Minnesota Philanthropy Partners teamed up with philanthropic research company Philanthropedia to ask local experts which Minnesota nonprofits are having a high impact on animal welfare. Whether you're looking to give time or money, here are some nonprofits to consider:



If You Want to Support ... **Service Animals** **Consider: Can Do Canines**

Even after graduating more than 450 service dogs in the past 25 years, this nonprofit says demand for its services is still greater than supply, with the longest waiting lists for autism and diabetes assistance dogs. That's a challenging (and motivating) situation for a nonprofit that envisions a world where everyone who needs an assistance dog can have one. Focusing on mutually beneficial partnerships between dogs and clients, Can Do Canines also provides mobility, hearing and seizure assistance dogs to clients in Minnesota, Wisconsin, North and South Dakota, and Iowa. A number of different breeds are used for service, with 30 percent of canine graduates coming from shelters. In addition to home-based Puppy Raisers, the group works with four area prisons, which allow inmates to train puppies for future service work and experience the joys of canine interaction.

How You Can Help: Be a Puppy Raiser and help a future assistance dog adjust to family life before it finds its long-term home.

If You Want to Support ... **Animal Welfare** **Consider: Animal Humane Society**

Often the first choice for residents who want to adopt a rescue pet, the Animal Humane Society, with five locations in the Twin Cities, has many other offerings to help at every stage of an animal's life: training classes, pet boarding, a pet behavior helpline, end-of-life services, even a pet loss support group. It also offers a low-cost spay and neuter service, run in partnership with Kindest Cut, that has performed 28,000 surgeries since opening in 2011. The Humane Society also looks at the bigger picture of animal welfare in Minnesota, with its network of Animal Advocates supporting animal-friendly legislation and its professional Humane Investigations team responding to concerns of animal cruelty.

How You Can Help: Become one of the 1,700 Minnesotans who volunteer each year to help with dog walking, in-home foster care, adoption support and wildlife support. (Yes, wildlife — it's the only humane society in Minnesota to hold a permit with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.)

"SOME OF OUR GREATEST HISTORICAL AND ARTISTIC TREASURES WE PLACE IN MUSEUMS; OTHERS, WE TAKE FOR WALKS."

—ROGER CARAS, ANIMAL ADVOCATE AND WRITER

ANIMAL KINDNESS

A few more creative ways to promote animal welfare in your community:

FOSTER AN ANIMAL:

Many organizations are in need of foster volunteers who can offer a loving home to a pet in transition.

DONATE PET FOOD:

Area food shelves and shelters will accept donations of pet food, and The Pet Project (thepetprojectmn.org) collects unopened bags of food and gently used supplies at drop-off points throughout Minnesota.

PITCH IN AND PICK UP:

Pick up trash and waste at your local dog park or drop off used tennis balls and other toys.

GROW FOR GOODNESS:

Include native plants like milkweed, butterfly weed and bee balm in your garden for wild animals' food and shelter.



If You Want to Support ...
Habitat Protection Statewide
Consider: The Nature Conservancy

Since it started working here in 1958, The Nature Conservancy has helped maintain the habitat of native species by protecting more than 675,000 acres of land in Minnesota, more than twice the land in our state parks. It recently completed the Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge, the country's largest-ever prairie and wetland restoration project, which protects wildlife habitat for species such as the sandhill crane and the iconic prairie chicken. The Nature Conservancy helped create the Forest Legacy Partnership, which has protected more than 51,000 acres of Minnesota industrial forest, keeping North Woods land safe for moose, black bears, Canada lynx and songbirds. The nonprofit also owns and manages 50-plus preserves in Minnesota, which are ideal settings for bird watching, hiking and wildlife observation (bring a field guide and camera!).

How You Can Help: Become a member and start to receive the quarterly Nature Conservancy magazine, which helps you stay up-to-date on relevant issues and initiatives.

EXPERT ADVICE

Marilou Chanrasmi, *co-founder of Leech Lake Legacy and co-founder/president of Minnesota Partnership for Animal Welfare*



HOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE: If we're going to make an impact on animal welfare in the state of Minnesota, all our organizations need to work together: rescue groups, the Animal Humane Society, everyone. In the end, we all want to reduce suffering, so we need to focus on relationships, listening and believing in the good of others.

LOCAL NONPROFIT EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW: Red Lake Rosie's Rescue. They work to reduce overpopulation, homelessness, disease and malnutrition for companion animals on the Red Lake Reservation.

Joe Deden, *executive director of Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center*



ONE WAY TO HELP: Agriculture takes up 50 percent of the world's arable land, so we all need to be more conscious of what we eat and where our food comes from. The larger the agriculture industry becomes, the less personal attention there is to the land and the animals. Know your growers, look them in the eye and understand their practices.

LOCAL NONPROFIT EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW: The Lake Superior Zoo is a great organization, based in Duluth, which provides affordable and relevant educational opportunities for the northern part of the state.

Julia Ponder, *executive director of the Raptor Center at the University of Minnesota*



A NEW WAY TO INTERACT WITH THE RAPTOR CENTER: The Douglas Dayton Education Wing for outdoor education and bird housing will open in fall 2014.

HOW TO HELP: Build or purchase birdhouses. Cavity-nesting species like American kestrels will thank you for it! If you have bird feeders, be sure to frequently disinfect and clean out old seed to prevent the spread of disease. Put fresh water in birdbaths every day.

LOCAL NONPROFIT EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW: The Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Minnesota, one of the largest in the country. They understand the bigger picture of wildlife welfare as a way to promote a more sustainable world.

If You Want to Support ...
Endangered Species

Consider:
Como Park Zoo and Conservatory

A Saint Paul landmark for more than a century, Como Zoo is committed to helping animal populations survive and thrive. Some of its most beloved animals are the three members of its seal and sea lion colony, rescued after injuries in the wild, who serve as zoo ambassadors for ocean conservation. Como is also an active participant in the Wyoming Toad conservation project, in which the endangered toads are bred in a bio-secure room in Saint Paul, then sent to Wyoming via FedEx (bundled in bags of water and oxygen) and visited later in the season by a Como zookeeper for population surveys. The zoo is also the International Orangutan Studbook keeper, helping to make "love matches" so the endangered species can thrive in the wild. Be sure to check out 6-year-old orangutan Jaya on your next visit.

How You Can Help: The production of palm oil contributes to the destruction of orangutan habitats, so take a positive step by avoiding products made with this ingredient. Check worldwildlife.org to learn more.

If You Want to Support ...
Wildlife Education and Stewardship
Consider: Audubon Center of the North Woods

This residential environmental learning center, located on the eastern shore of Grindstone Lake, is only about 90 miles from the Twin Cities. But walking through its pine forest, wetland and reclaimed prairie, you'll feel a million miles away from urban life. You will encounter an astonishing amount of wildlife here, including some resident animals that are unable to return to the wild, such as raptors, owls, a bald eagle, an American kestrel falcon and even a porcupine. The 600-acre facility offers abundant learning opportunities: school field trips, wildlife classes, family camps, college programs, conference and retreat spaces, team-building events and more, all aimed at helping visitors learn and connect with nature.

How You Can Help: Go online and "friend" one of the resident animals to help with its care, food and veterinary checkups or visit the center for hands-on work like cleaning the wildlife barn, preparing animal food or transporting injured raptors to the Raptor Center.

The Philanthropedia Survey

Philanthropedia is a California-based nonprofit philanthropic-research company owned by GuideStar. For this project, Philanthropedia surveyed 83 local experts from 61 organizations, asking them to recommend animal-related nonprofits that have had high impact in Minnesota over the past few years. See more data at myphilanthropedia.org.

17 HIGH-IMPACT NONPROFITS

The Minnesota nonprofits that were most frequently cited by experts in the Philanthropedia survey as having high impact on animal welfare:

- 1. Animal Humane Society**, animalhumanesociety.org*
- 2. Minnesota Spay Neuter Assistance Program (MN SNAP)**, mnsnap.org
- 3. Como Park Zoo and Conservatory**, comozooconservatory.org
- 4. Wildcat Sanctuary**, wildcatsanctuary.org
- 5. Minnesota Zoo**, mnzoo.org
- 6. Nature Conservancy**, nature.org
- 7. University of Minnesota**, umn.edu
- 8. Pheasants Forever**, pheasantsforever.org
- 9. Minnesota Hooved Animal Rescue Foundation**, mnhoovedanimalrescue.org
- 10. Can Do Canines**, can-do-canines.org*
- 11. Audubon Center of the North Woods**, audubon-center.org
- 12. Humane Society of the United States**, humanesociety.org
- 13. Wildlife Science Center**, wildlifesciencecenter.org
- 14. Land Stewardship Project**, landstewardshipproject.org
- 15. (tie) Red Lake Rosie's Rescue**, redlakerosie.org
- 15. (tie) Secondhand Hounds**, secondhandhounds.org
- 16. Minnesota Horse Welfare Coalition**, minnesotahorsewelfare.org

*These nonprofits have been reviewed by the Charities Review Council (smartgivers.org) and meet the organization's Accountability Standards. To learn more about any of these nonprofits, visit GuideStar or Charity Navigator.

