AnimalHelpNow®

COLORADO, TEXAS AND BEYOND

Using an App to Help Injured, Orphaned and Distressed Wildlife

IWRC 2013 Victoria British Columbia

Symposium 2013

Overview

- Explanation of Animal Help Now Program
- Demonstration of Program
- Discussion: Data (Survey)
- Discussion: Options for U.S. and Other Expansion

Program Mission

Animal Help Now serves the public and helps animals by leveraging digital technologies to immediately connect people involved with animal emergencies with the most appropriate time- and location-specific resources and services.

Product

A website and free phone app (iPhone and Android) designed to help in any animal emergency.

History – Timeline

October 2009	Organization formed, aiming to create Colorado animal knowledgebase
January 2011	Focus shifted to Colorado animal emergencies
September 2011	First edition of website launched
March 2012	iPhone app launched
May 2012	Android app and desktop-optimized website launched
March 2013	Program expanded to Texas

History – Advisors

Colorado Coalition of Wildlife Rehabilitators
Colorado Veterinary Medical Association
American Veterinary Medical Association
Colorado Association of Animal Control Operators
Denver Metro Area Shelter Alliance

Need

Each year in the United States:

- Millions of dogs, cats and other animals lost and millions found
- Hundreds of millions of animals struck by motor vehicles
- Millions of animals victims of accidental poisonings
- Countless animals neglected or abused
- Countless wild animals orphaned
- Countless animals impacted by disasters
- Millions otherwise endangered – dogs through ice, cats on utility poles, ducklings on road, etc.

Need

Even with all the many veterinarians, wildlife rehabilitators, animal shelters, etc. who do amazing work every day, quickly finding the right help can be hard, especially in a stressful situation.

There simply has been no established, reliable service a person can use to find immediate and appropriate assistance for the full range of animal-related emergencies.

Costs and Consequences

The uncertainty of knowing where to go for help carries many costs, including:

- Putting animal lives at risk. In emergency situations, minutes can mean the difference between life and death, as can knowing whom to call.
- Causing additional stress to a person already in a stressful situation. Stress is bad in and of itself, but it also can lead to poor decision making, which can endanger not only the animal, but the person, too.

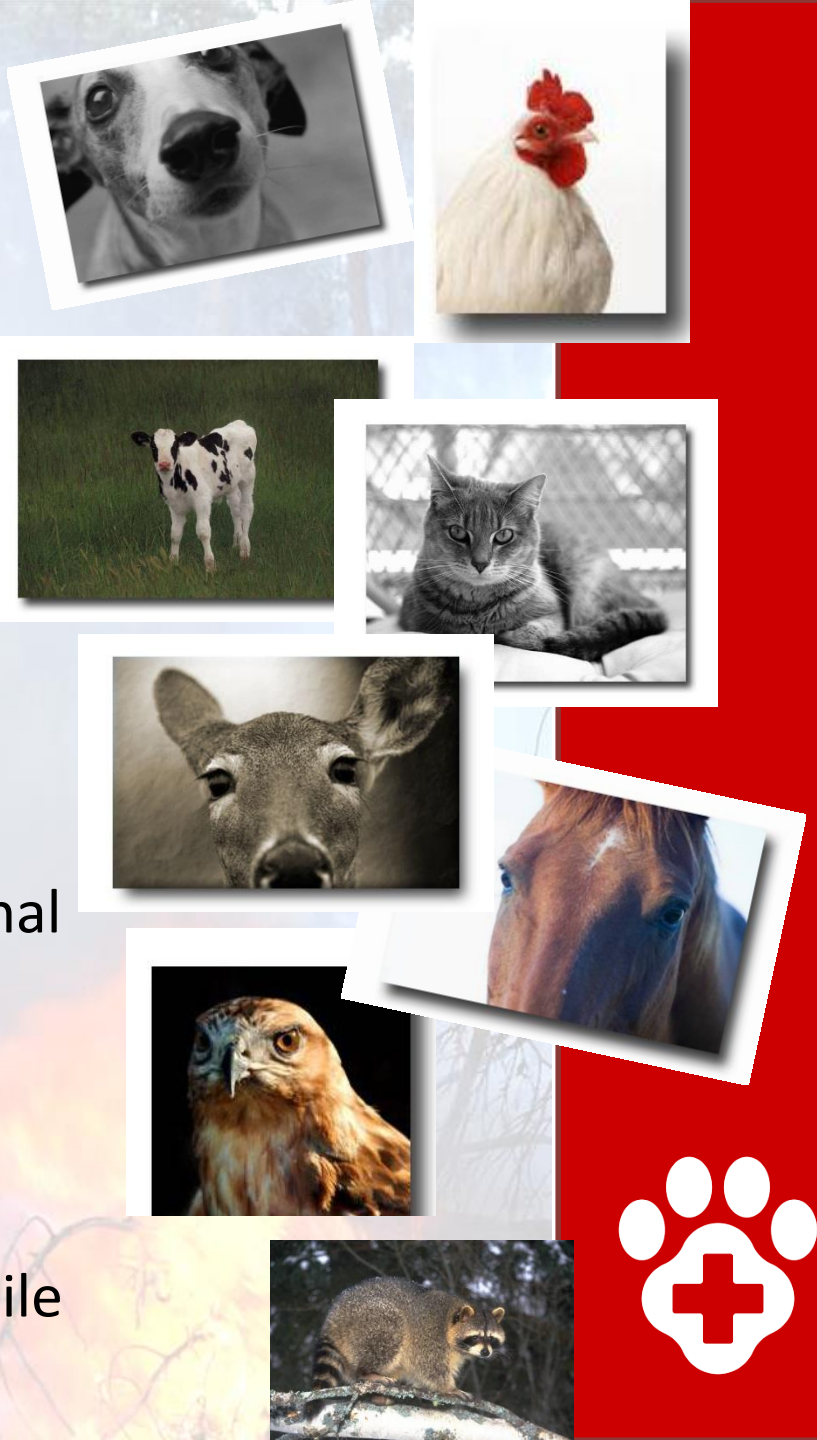
Costs and Consequences

- Creating an undue burden on helpers – including veterinarians, wildlife rehabilitators, 911 operators, etc. – all of whom spend a significant amount of time referring callers to more appropriate helpers.
- Leaving people less likely to help animals in need.

Use Cases

Examples of when emergency assistance is needed:

- Injured squirrel
- Orphaned robin
- Stranded marine mammal
- Cows or ducklings in the road
- Lost cat, lost dog
- Dog fallen through ice or into canal
- Person abusing an animal
- Animal left in hot car
- Animals impacted by wildfires, floods, etc.
- Companion animal needs vet while traveling or in new area



Use Case Variables

- Wildlife or Domestic
- Transportable
- Confined
- Injured, Sick, Distressed

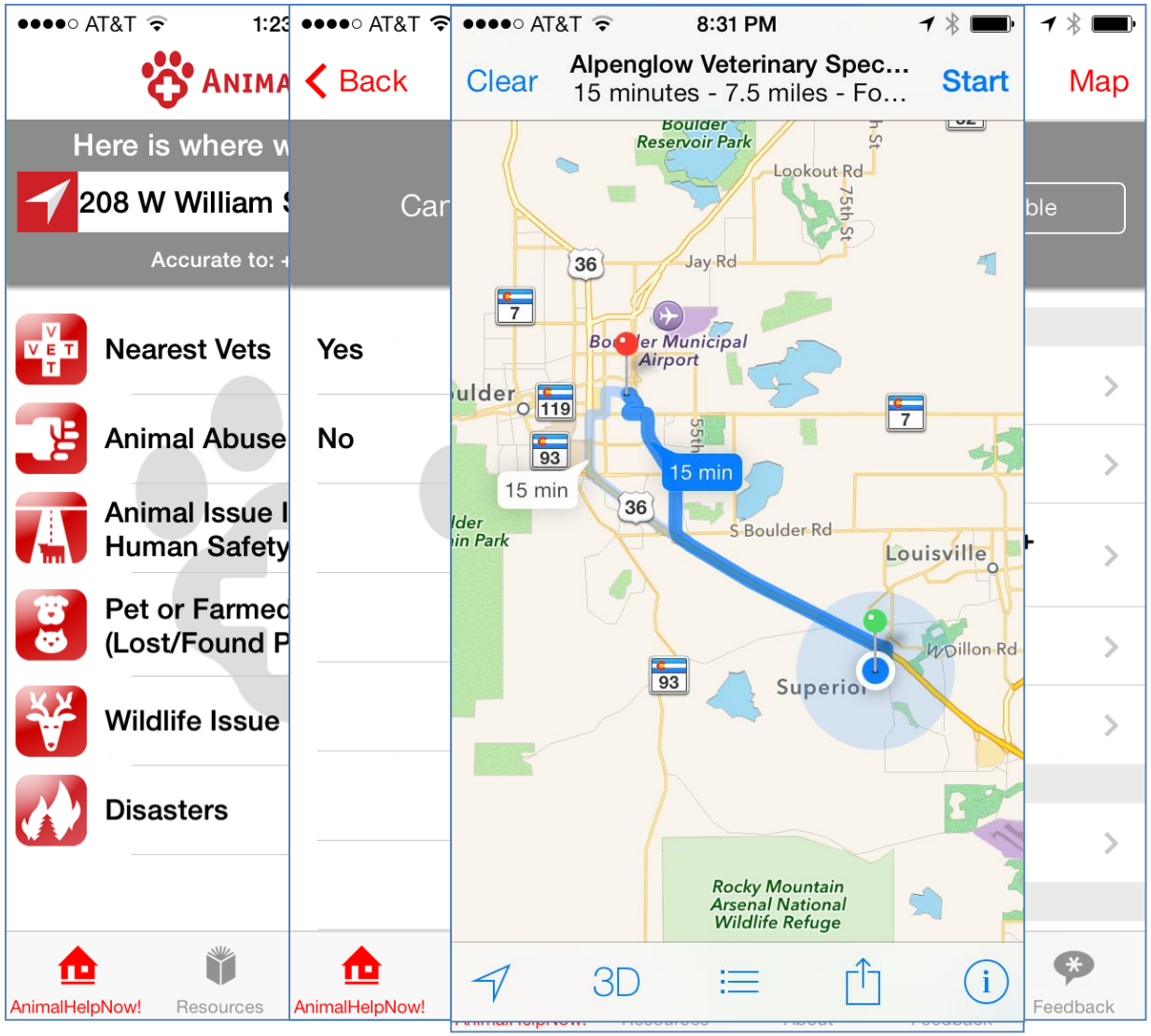
Helpers

- Veterinarians
- Mobile Veterinarians
- Veterinarians Who Treat Wildlife
- Mobile Veterinarians Who Treat Wildlife
- 911
- Advocates
- Animal Control Agencies
- Animal Shelters
- State Abuse Investigators
- State Neglect Investigators
- Crime Stoppers
- State Wildlife Agencies
- Wildlife Rehabilitators and Rescuers
- State Patrols

Basics

- A website and free phone app (iPhone and Android) designed to help in any animal emergency.
- Location and time automatically determined. Phone apps can be used (through GPS) even without cell or internet access, and in fact they can work even without GPS.
- User answers one to four questions, a list of helpers appears.

Example Scenario - iPhone



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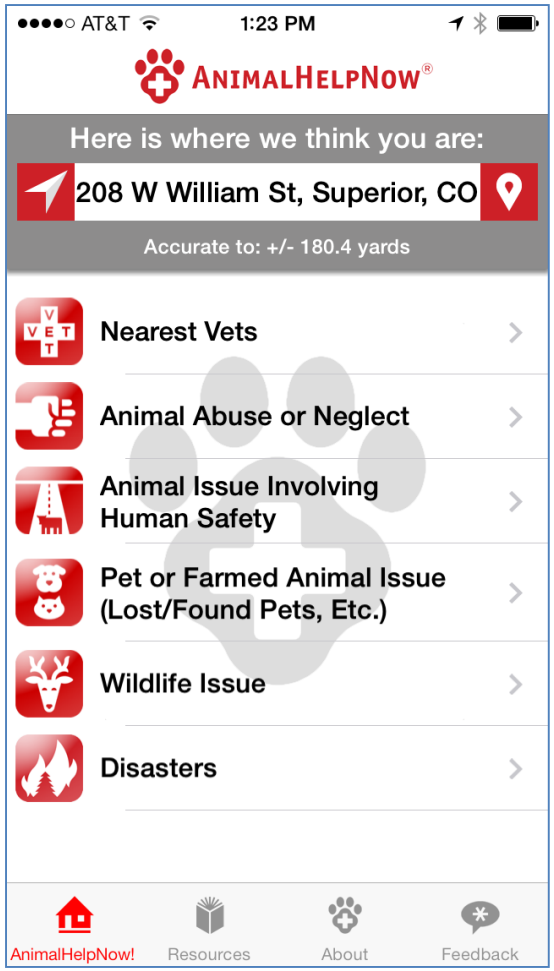
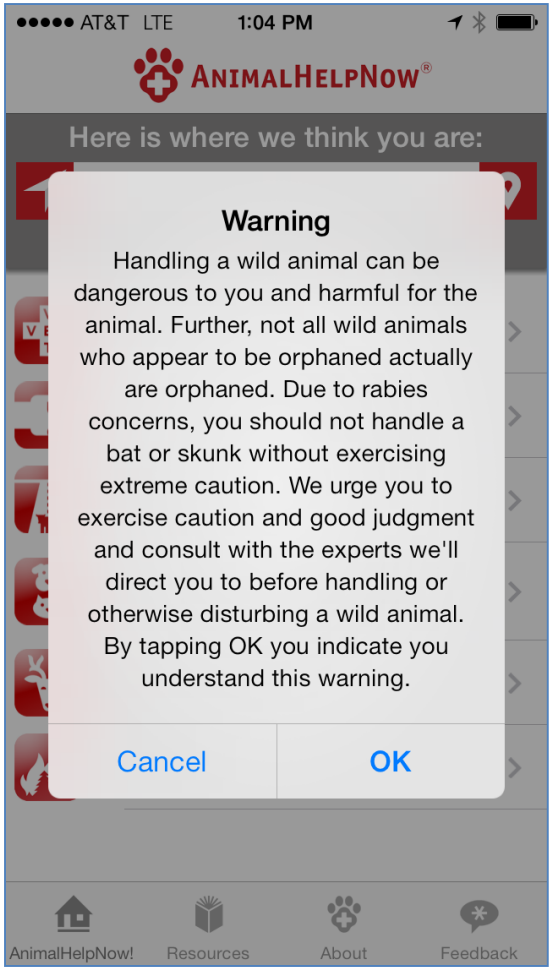


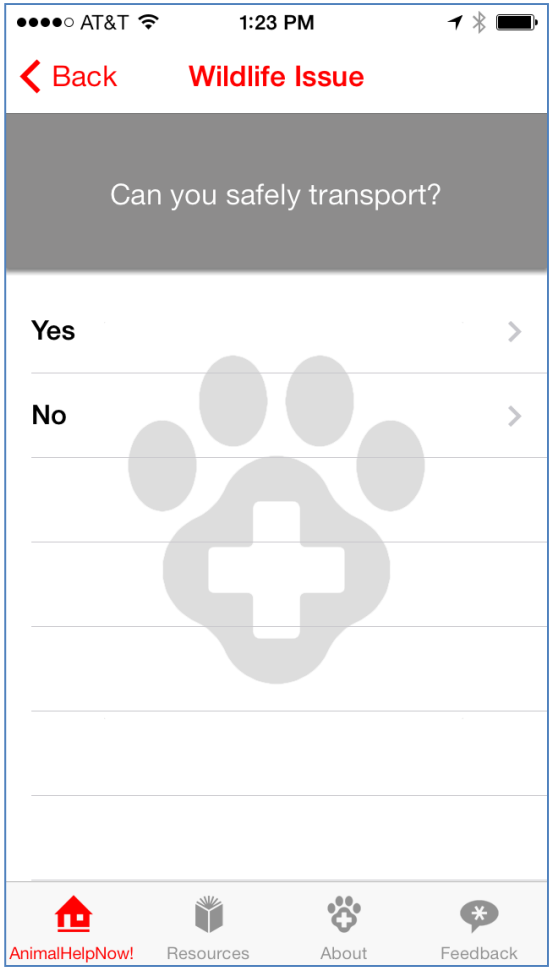
Let's say a person finds an injured robin. She opens the app and taps Wildlife Issue.

Example Scenario - iPhone



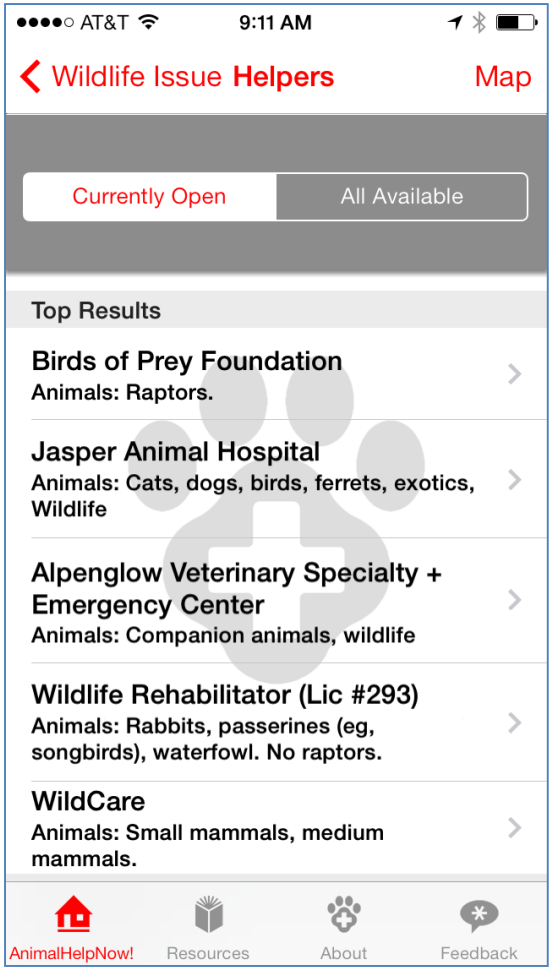
She is given a warning about handling wildlife.

Example Scenario - iPhone



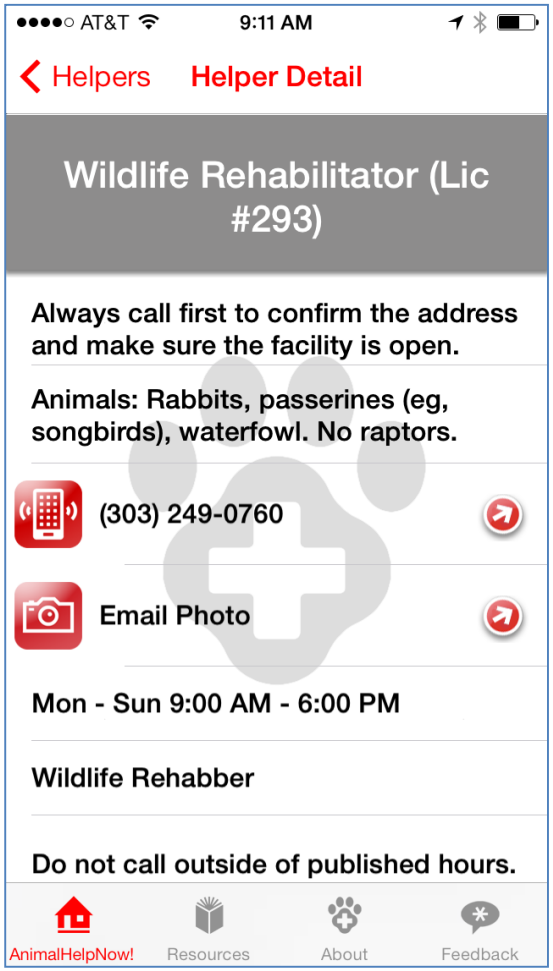
She is asked whether she can safely transport the bird.
She taps Yes.

Example Scenario - iPhone



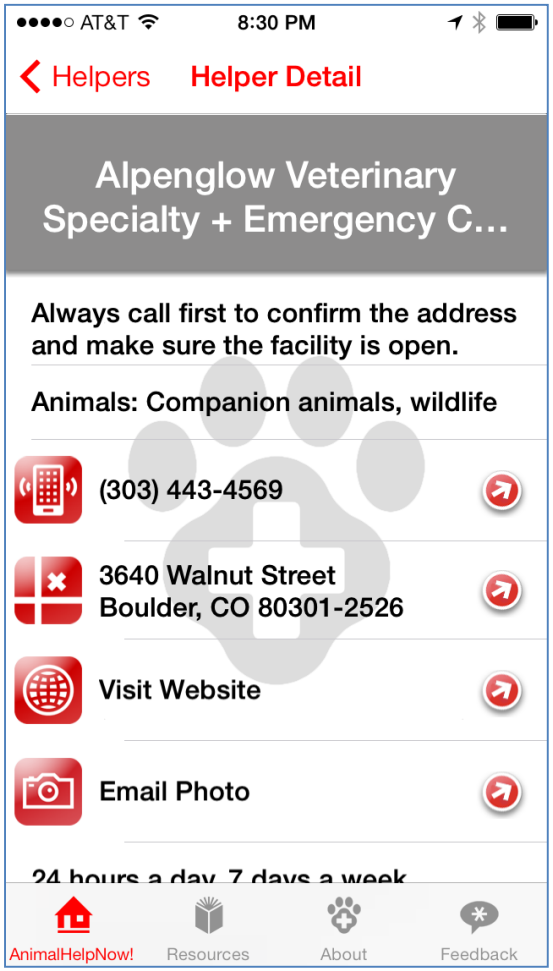
She is given a list of the closest, most appropriate helpers currently open. She reviews the Animals information and taps the fourth entry.

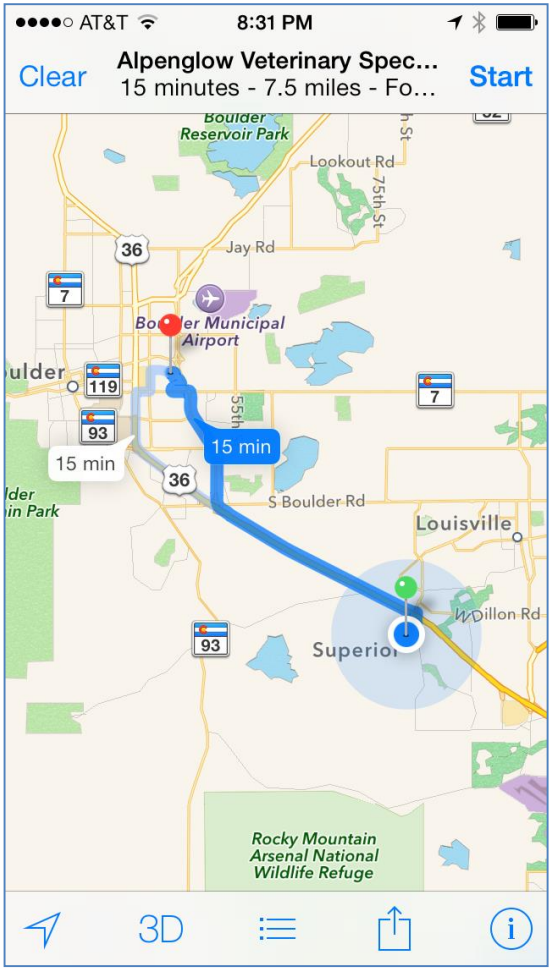
Example Scenario - iPhone



The rehabber's information is displayed. She taps the phone number to contact the rehabber.

Example Scenario - iPhone





Note: If Animal Help Now has been given permission to list a facility's address, a map from the user to the facility also is available.

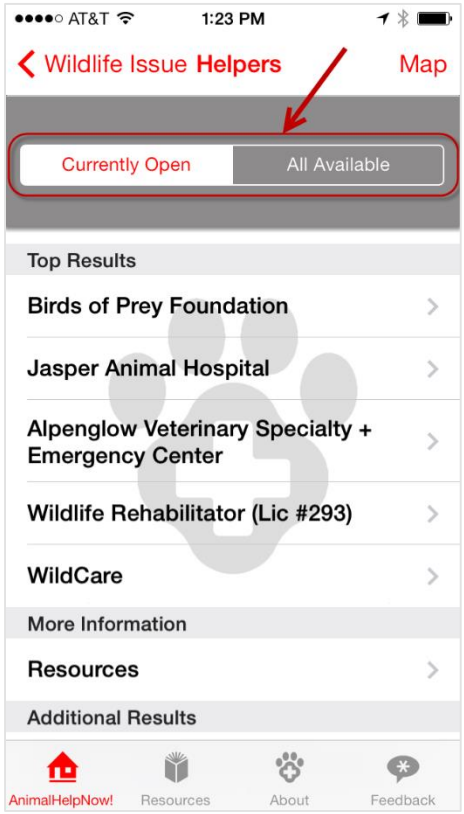
Rehabber and Rescuer Friendly

Rehabbers like Animal Help Now because we:

- expedite the process of getting animals the help they need;
- respect rehabbers' privacy by publishing only the contact information they want published;
- make it clear when rehabbers are and are not open;
- regularly update our data;
- help educate the public about wildlife emergencies;
- provide photo capability to help locate animals and better understand the nature of the emergency;
- decrease the amount of time rehabbers spend doing referrals; and
- share the same goal – reducing suffering and saving lives!

Privacy

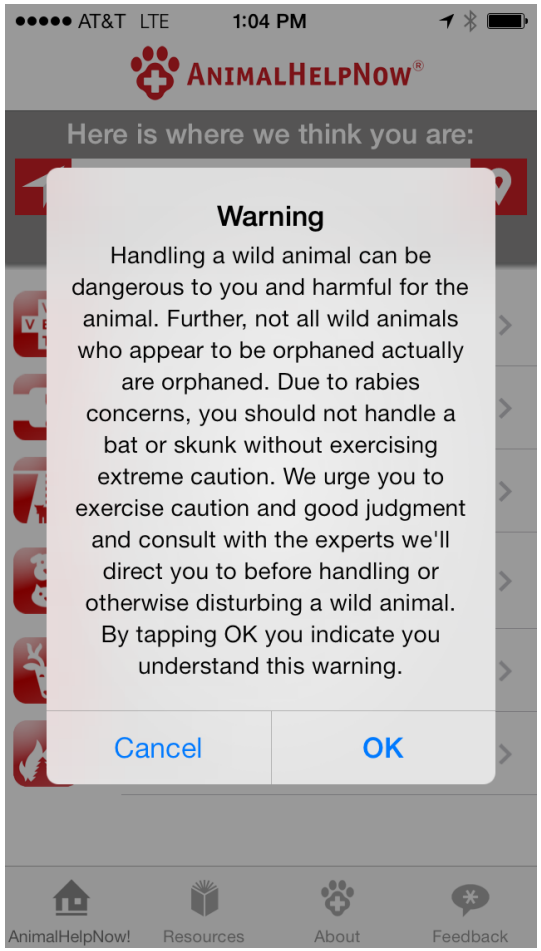
- Listing appears only when rehabber is “open”.
- Option to conceal address.
- Option to temporarily conceal listing (under development).



Data Updating

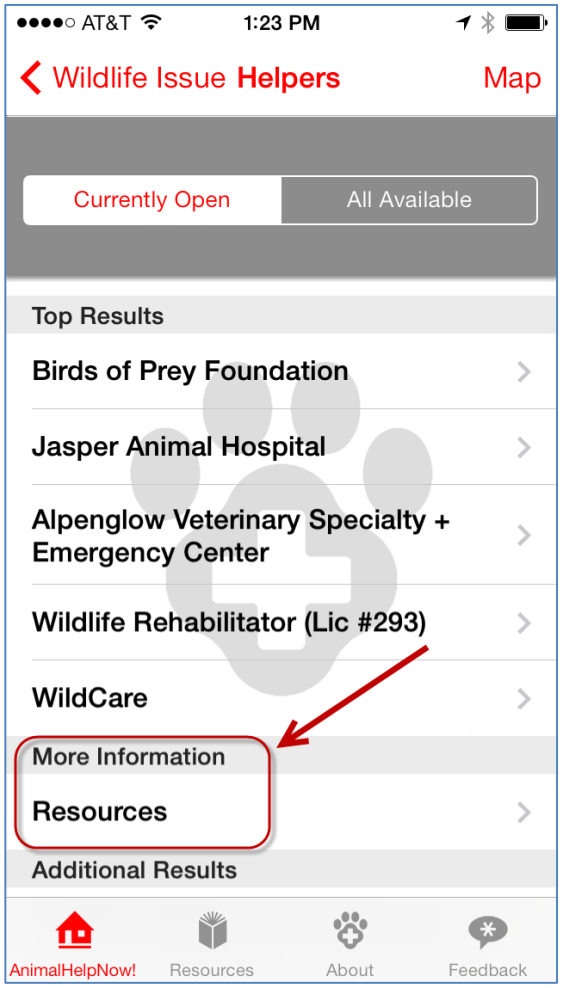
- Periodic updating from licensing agency lists.
- Periodic surveying.
- Portal for rehabbers to update their own data (under development).

Educating the Public



Animal Help Now's warning messages and additional information help the public effectively assist with animal emergencies.

Educating the Public



How do I tell if a wild animal is orphaned or if the parents are simply out of sight?

Always remember that baby wild animals left alone for long periods of time (up to 14 hours), may not have been abandoned. Do not interfere unless you are certain the animal has been abandoned or separated from her mother. Rabbits have very large digestive organs that store enough milk that the mother returns just twice each day to feed the infant. Deer and other animals may exhibit similar behavior. For more advice, see the Greenwood Wildlife and Rehabilitation Center web site.

Should I try to rehabilitate a wild animal?

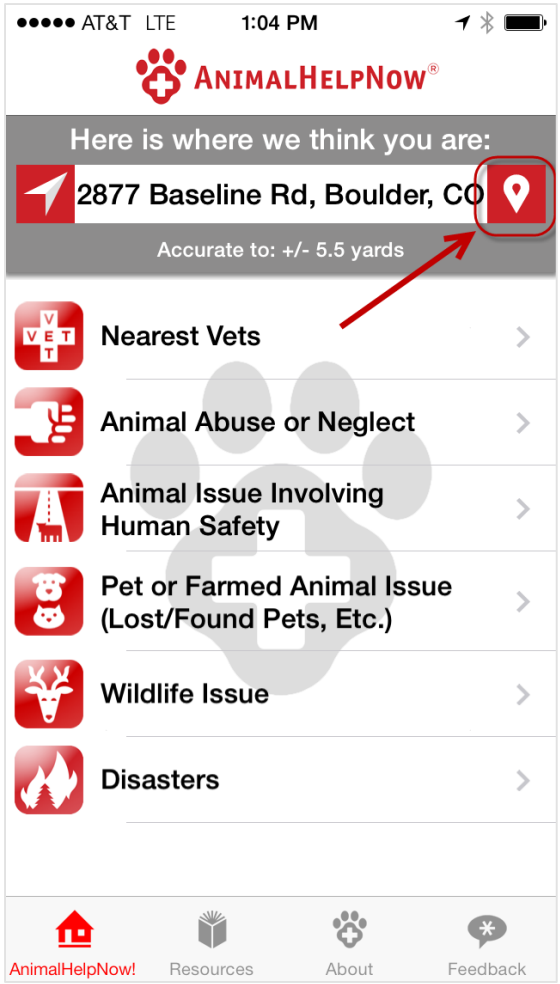
Never attempt to rehabilitate wildlife by yourself. As a rule, you must have a license to treat wildlife. Rehabilitating wildlife without a license often places undue risk upon the animal. Animals have very specific needs that often only the experts know and can accommodate.

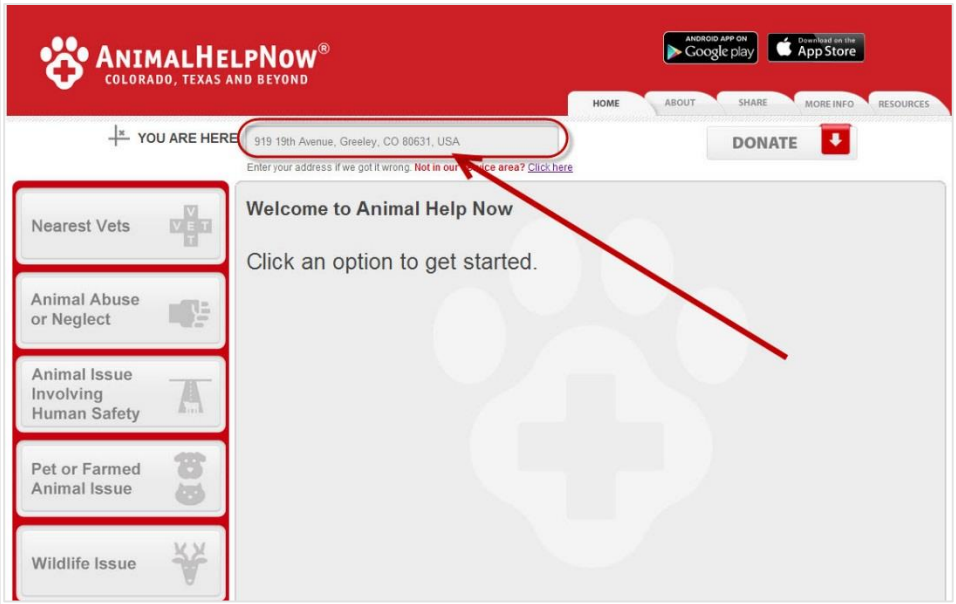
Still, a situation may require that you provide short-term, temporary care for an animal in need. For specific instructions based on the type of animal, please see

Educating Decisionmakers

Animal Help Now shares knowledge acquired. In Boulder Colorado 2013 flooding, if the gate had been on the lowest lying land, the flooding would not have destroyed the prairie dog colony.

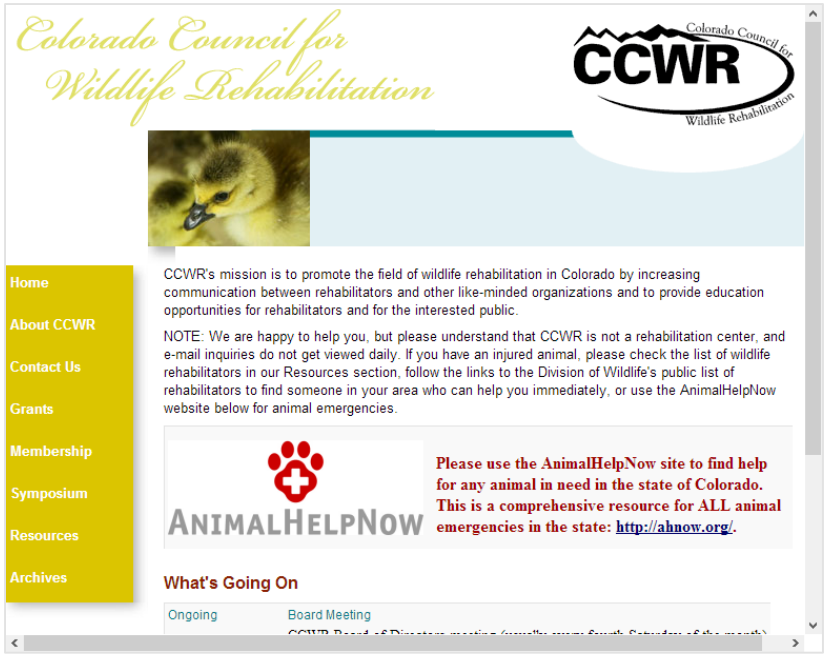
Referral Functionality





By manually changing the address, you can use the program in "referral mode," assisting users remotely.

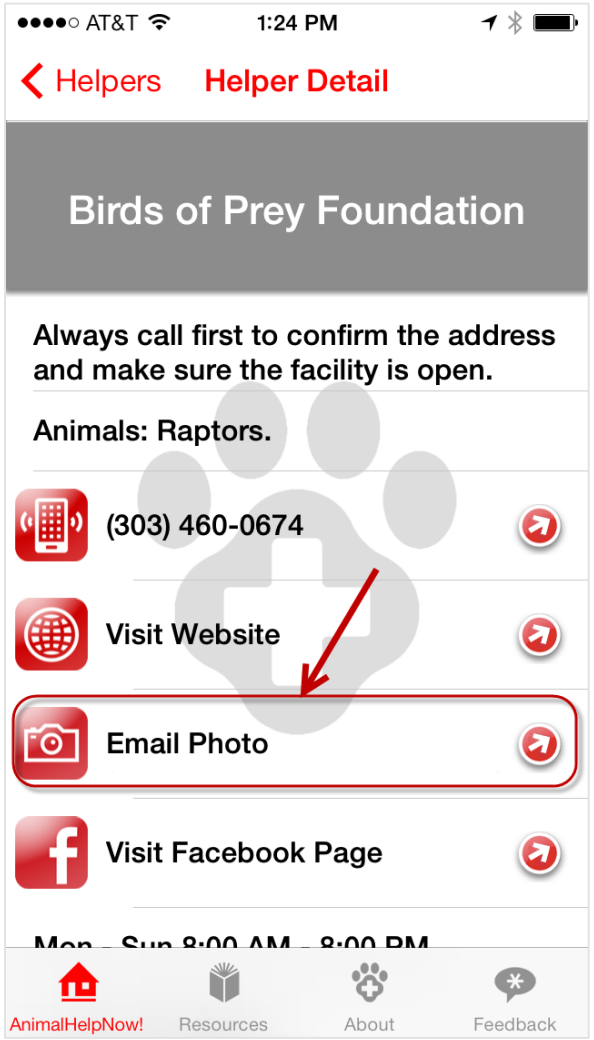
Referral Functionality



At Greenwood Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, we use Animal Help Now's website referral tool often throughout the busy summer months. Even though we primarily serve the greater Boulder County area, we get calls about wildlife in distress from all across the State of Colorado. Being able to refer these callers to AHNow empowers us to help, whereas before we'd feel helpless.

- Jenny Bryant, Volunteer & Outreach Manager

Photo Capability (Geo Tagging)



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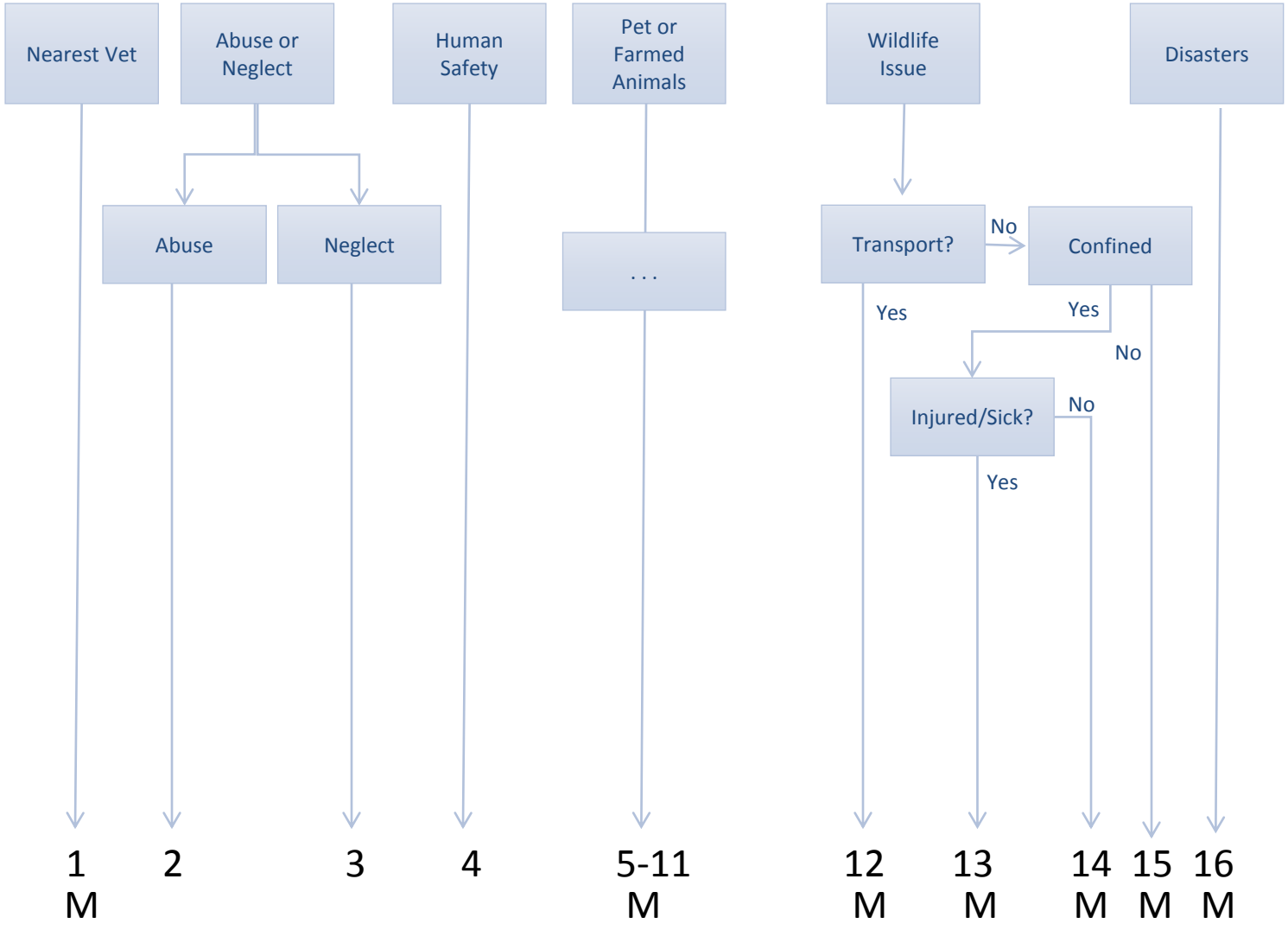
Demonstration

- Standard scenarios
- Coastal scenario

Caseflow



M – Helpers are displayed on a map

Caseflow Results (Wildlife)

Path 12

Top Results

- Rehabbers
- Rescues
- Vets Who Treat Wildlife

Additional Results

- Rehabbers
- Vets Who Treat Wildlife

Use case: Transportable injured bird, transportable orphaned wildlife.

Path 13

Top Results

- Rehabbers Who May Transport
- Rescues
- Mobile Vets Who Treat Wildlife
- Animal Control (Includes Sheriffs)
- State Patrol
- Wildlife Agency

Additional Results

- Rehabbers
- Mobile Vets Who Treat Wildlife

Use case: Untransportable injured deer, untransportable injured bat.

Path 14

Top Results

- Rehabbers Who May Transport
- Rescues
- Animal Control (Includes Sheriffs)
- State Patrol
- Wildlife Agency

Additional Results

- Rehabbers

Use case: Untransportable orphaned squirrels.

Path 15

Top Results

- Rehabbers Who May Transport
- Rescues
- Animal Control (Includes Sheriffs)
- State Patrol
- Wildlife Agency

Additional Results

- Rehabbers

Use case: Injured raccoon in back alley.

Discuss: Rehabber Data (Survey)

- Does it make sense? Do you understand why we ask for hours? Why we ask if rehabbers may help transport animals?
- Any thoughts on the animal classification?
- Are we missing anything?

Expansion

- Current focus is on United States
- Collecting data on rehabbers, rescuers and humane animal control companies/orgs
- Considering collecting data on wildlife agencies, law enforcement, others
- The simpler the application, the easier to deploy elsewhere

Discuss: Features – What's Essential?

- Helpers? Include law enforcement? Vets who treat wildlife? Advocates?
- Paths? Is Wildlife Issues path sufficient?
- Time-Specificity?
- Willingness of rehabbers to travel?

Get people to appropriate assistance as soon as possible (directly and through referrals)

Educate people about how to reduce threats to animals

Results Metrics Outcomes

Help create a culture of active animal helpers who intelligently and effectively assist animals in need

By tracking usage, identify under-served needs (e.g., need for backcountry search and rescue in Colorado)

Some of Those Helped

Squirrel found in distress, blood but no obvious wound

Turtle in road, Highway 93 south of Boulder

Baby rabbit seems abandoned

Rabbit in gutter, back legs compromised

Dog injured pigeon.

Goose with eggs nesting in inhospitable location

Lost coyote trapped in someone's garden

Skunks under porch

Injured dove

Pigeon with broken wing by Interstate 70

Injured raccoon

Baby robin with broken wing

Baby fawn seems abandoned

Baby rabbit seems abandoned

Injured baby robin

Young bear without mother eating food out of gas station dumpster

Sick deer

Dead wild animal on road

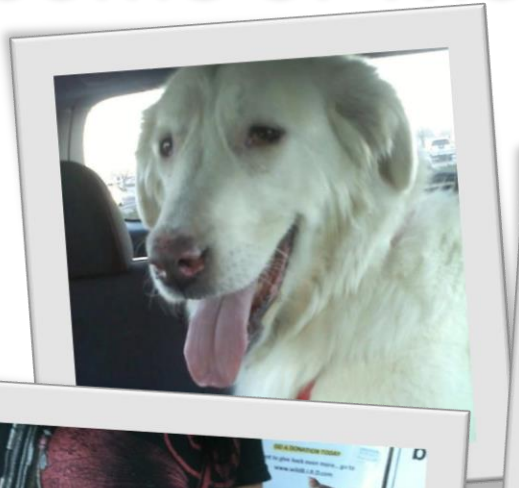
Distressed bat

Distressed duck

Injured fox

Baby mouse found in house, evening

Some of Those Helped



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Thank You!