



Text Version of Audio Story: Critter rescue

Dateline: Duluth — Always wanted to say that. I've never actually been to Duluth, but a fun story came to us this week from a listener in Minnesota. It's the story of a 911 call.

It seems a group of people there in Duluth were on a fishing pier. At the time of this writing, it's spring, just a few days before Easter, and there is ice breaking up on Lake Superior. And the people on the pier noticed a little black bunny rabbit floating on a piece of ice about eight feet off the shore, just slightly out of reach of where they could help it. Well, with great concern for the welfare of the little black bunny, someone used their handy-dandy little cell phone and called 911. They reported the obvious dilemma of the little black bunny, and unsure of just who to refer the matter to, the 911 operator thought it would be best to contact the Coast Guard.

We interviewed good-hearted Officer Tracy Pogue, who told us he's the one who got the call from the 911 center. He and several of his Coast Guard-men donned their wet suits and, with net in hand, made their way to the scene. But now, the little black bunny had drifted out to about 25 feet offshore, quite a dilemma. And just when all seemed lost, the little black bunny jumped off of the ice, as if it knew they were trying to help it, and swam toward them. It struggled in the frigid water but got to a place where rescuers could scoop it up in the net. They got it to the shore where someone bundled it up in a fleece sweater. They took it to a wildlife rehab center where the little black bunny was treated for a broken leg, which is probably why it couldn't get off the ice in the first place. The last report was the little black bunny is doing well.

Another great story of animal rescue also made the papers this week. A family right here in my home state of Pennsylvania took a nice vacation to Disney World, way down in Florida. On their way back, an egret — a big bird — ran out on the road in front of their mini-van, and they hit it. Much to the dismay of everyone in the van, they saw feathers on the road behind them and realized there was no hope for the egret.

The family continued their long journey north and stayed in Virginia that night. They would eventually arrive home and place the mini-van in their garage. It was there that a visiting relative heard a noise coming out from under the van. It sounded like a cat. They got down and looked in under, and, lo and behold, they couldn't believe what they were seeing. The egret they had hit on the road was wedged up behind the bumper, hundreds and hundreds of miles from where the unfortunate accident occurred and — six days later — the egret was still alive.

The family immediately worked at getting some water and bread into where the bird could get it with its beak. They took the van to a local body shop where mechanics removed pieces and parts. With press photographers on hand, the workers eventually got the big 21-inch-tall bird out. And, believe it or not, he's going to be all right. He has a few injuries, including a broken leg, and wildlife rehabilitators here in Pennsylvania are working with him. As soon as he's ready to fly, no pun intended, wildlife rehabilitators in Florida are going to send the plane for him and take him back to where he will eventually be reintroduced to the wilds of the Everglades. Wildlife rehabilitators in Florida tell me they, of course, often deal with injured birds and have become so advanced in their rehabilitative techniques that they can even rebuild the broken beaks of their feathery friends injured in such accidents.

From somewhere behind the radio with the music of Johnny X, I'm the American Storyteller.