



The Raptor Chapter

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A Publication of Three Rivers Avian Center

Watch a Female peregrine

Fly to Freedom February 24

The flight barn has done it's magic and now we have a young, first year female peregrine ready to fly free as it's first graduate!

The young peregrine was found with a broken wrist in Randolph county on September 30th and turned over to WV Department of Natural Resources' Craig Stihler. He quickly got her to us, and the long convalescence began. By the middle of January the bones were healed enough and staff veterinarian Dr Streit gave the go-ahead to put her into the newly completed large room in the flight barn.

Perches were hastily installed and on January 16th she took her first full flight since her September injury. She was obviously out of shape! Over the next weeks though, she began using the 40 foot long by 15 foot high by 15 foot wide room to it's full potential. The translucent panels of the roof encouraged her to fly up to the ceiling, the meshed part of the roof gave her exposure to the rain and snow as well as a clear view of the sky, the plywood walls provided safe and secure boundaries, encouraging her to turn and fly back the other way.

She sure is a strong flier now! Her wing holds the air normally, rising and falling equally with the other wing. Her feathers glisten with health, her attitude is back to the normal wild peregrine intensity, and she is anxious to get out in time for Spring.

We are planning a send off ceremony on Saturday, February 24th at noon. Those who wish to attend the release, please meet us in the parking lot at the New River Gorge Canyon Rim Visitor's Center at noon. The Visitor's Center is located at the New River Gorge Bridge near Fayetteville. At 5 minutes after noon, we will pile into our cars and drive the short distance up Lansing Road to Beauty Mountain Road. The release site will be a Gorge overlook on Beauty Mountain Road.

And yes, the female will be released with a brand new US Fish and Wildlife Service band that we will color code so we can identify her if she stays in the Gorge. Join the fun and see her fly free!

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Fear of Tooth and Claw

(Bump in the Night Department)

 Ron Perrone, TRAC Education Director

So coyotes are here on Brooks Mountain. At TRAC, the concern is for the safety of the birds. But after a few years now, it has become apparent that our caging is a successful deterrent. Truth be told, we never have seen even an attempted break in by coyotes. But we human occupants of the hill have nevertheless been engaged in a dialogue concerning what we should do about our new neighbors and I have decided to do something alright. When they start their yapping I intend to pull on my slippers, throw on a bathrobe, grab the rifle and go out on the porch and make some noise and then go back to bed. That's it. *Their* hollering keeps me honest about my place in the world and *my* blasting away into the dirt keeps them honest about whose little piece of turf they are traveling through. If you are uncomfortable with predation you can always live in a city. There, the only predators you'll find are the 2 legged variety. How safe does that make you feel?

Here at our place we have animals that need protecting from predators. To accomplish this we think ahead. Caging is predator proof. The cat comes in at night because coyotes eat cats (as do owls). But since we all have a right to be here, it behooves us to know the laws and abide by them.

Law #1: Predation is **normal**. Its not easy and someone has to do it, end of argument. If you don't want yourself or someone you love to be eaten, abide by law #2.

Law #2: Avoiding predation is **normal**. Prey animals have defenses. Zebras have very big ears. We humans have very big brains. Use them, but don't violate rule #1 and paint the predator as some kind of bad guy. If you can sympathize with

the sheep nightmare of the wolf, you should be able to sympathize with the wolf's nightmare about getting kicked in the face by a moose just to get a meal. Does anyone you know have that kind of courage? Nobody has it any easier out there than anyone else. When the hunt is done, the zebras all get back to munching away at grass mere yards from lions who are munching on someone they all knew. It's a job.

But being a human makes you **both** predator and prey. And that too is **normal**. Despite the fact that we slaughter animals by the millions for food, there is buried deep in our genes the innate fear of tooth and claw. That's because our forebears without this innate fear were all weeded out of the gene pool by leopards and crocodiles long, long ago. But it is time to get over it. We humans (well, most of us anyway) have been eating high on the food chain for way too long to be hypocrites about this. But lurking in the back of our heads is the fear. When we hear the snapped twig in the night or the sudden hush of the frogs at the pond when something unseen comes in for a drink . . . uh oh teeth and claws. Why don't we feel this way at the sight of an automobile? Heck, they kill thousands of us every year.

Just as there can be no doubt that our collective behavior toward wild things has been guided through past history by fear for our survival, we must now acknowledge that the evolutionary shoe is on the other foot. Our old fears and the attendant social attitudes of dominance over nature are completely counter to our survival. Nature's clock is counting down.

So if the coyotes bust out laughing at your house in the night, consider laughing along with them first, and then assert your own rights afterward. Remember, they are here amidst us because they are learning and changing. The question is: Will we?



Species Spotlight: **Broad-winged Hawk**

Scientific Name: *Buteo platypterus*

Appearance: Occur in both light and dark morphs. The more common light morph adult is characterized by brown head, back, and wings, with dark pointed wing tips and one single white tail band.

Size: The Broad-winged hawk is the smallest of the North American Buteos, averaging a length of 15 in. and wingspan of 34 in. The wings are very wide in proportion to the body, giving this hawk its name of Broad-wing. The wide and powerful wings enable the bird to soar gracefully through the sky

Range: Most commonly found throughout the woodlands of eastern North America, the Broad-wing's range also extends westward through the Canadian provinces of Alberta and British Columbia. It is here that the rare dark morph can be seen most often.

Food Preferences: Common prey includes birds, reptiles, amphibians, small rodents, large insects, and crustaceans. During migration a broad-winged hawk may fast for several days.

Hunting Technique: The Broad-wing is a perch hunter, meaning that it sits on a limb and watches for its next meal. As with many in the Buteo family of hawks, the Broad-wing is opportunistic, catching nestlings or wounded prey, but is rarely agile enough to prey upon adult birds.

Breeding & Habitat: The female breeds once a year. Mating pairs bond for approximately one year but do not mate for life. Summer habitat in North America includes dense mixed deciduous forest, though they are occasionally found in open woodland and often near water. Populations are most successful in moderately sized blocks of forest of around 100 acres. Broad-wings winter in the north eastern portion of South America after migrating south along the ridges of Appalachia. Although they are typically solitary birds, they form large groups

called kettles as they migrate, creating an amazing and inspiring spectacle. The term "kettle" refers to the way the birds glide in upward spirals along rising warm air called a thermal. This spiraling motion may remind a watcher of the way that vegetables in a pot of boiling water bubble up and around.

Nesting: Nesting occurs in the summer habitat between late April and mid-May and is completed by late July. The female builds a loosely-constructed nest characterized by small sticks, twigs, and dead leaves. The nest is lined with bark strips, lichen, evergreen sprigs, and green leaves providing the young chicks a soft insulated haven. Typically a new nest is built every year but occasionally the hawk will rebuild an old squirrel or hawk nest. The outer dimension of the nest is approximately 16 inches in diameter with an inside diameter of only 6-7 inches.

Eggs: The female lays one clutch of eggs each year consisting of 1-4 eggs, although the average is between 2 - 3 eggs. The eggs are small and white to bluish/white with brown spots that often appear in a wreath-like pattern around one end of the egg. The female incubates the eggs for about 30 days before they hatch.

Chicks: Once hatched, the chicks are known as a brood. The chicks are semialtricial; hatched out with down feathers, immobile, eyes open, and need to be fed completely by the parents.

Status: Currently the population of Broad-winged hawks appears to be stable; however urbanization and forest fragmentation are causing problems for this species throughout their range. They are considered to be a Neotropical Migratory Bird, which is a species that migrates within the Western Hemisphere. Neotropical birds come into the US in the early to mid Spring to nest and raise their young and leave in the Autumn for warmer climates. In West Virginia, the peak of the Broad-wing migration is around September 20th. See the Migration Celebration 2007 flier for a picture of Chip, TRAC's Broad-wing Hawk.

Who We Are @ TRAC



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2007 Staff



Executive Director - Wendy Perrone

Education Director - Ron Perrone

Staff Veterinarian - Dr. Bill Streit, DVM, MS

On-Site Volunteers - Caleb Keneipp
Brooke Lucas

Satellite Intake Volunteers - Holly & Allen Canfield



TRAC Hospice Vets

These vets have agreed to donate their talents and medications to TRAC patients. We couldn't do without them. Please let them know you value their assistance too the next time you are in their facilities!

Staff Veterinarian: (Dr. Bill Streit)

All Creatures Animal Hospital 304-425-9944
Stafford Drive Plaza, Princeton

Animal Care Associates 304-344-2244
840 Oakwood Rd., Charleston

Animal Emergency Clinic 304-768-2911
5304 McCorkle Ave. SW, South Charleston

Beckley Veterinary Hospital 304-255-4159
215 Dry Hill Rd. Beckley

Cross Lanes Veterinary Hospital 304-776-4501
524 Old Geoff Mtn. Rd., Cross Lanes

Ceredo-Kenova Animal Clinic 304-453-6384
750 "C" Street, Ceredo

Country Roads Veterinary Clinic 304-586-0700
3420 Winfield Rd, Winfield

Cross Lanes Veterinary Hospital 304-776-4501
524 Old Goff Mtn Rd, Cross Lanes

Elk Valley Veterinary Hospital 304-965-7675
113 Frame Rd. , Elkview

Good Shepherd Veterinary Hospital 304-925-7387
3703 MacCorkle Ave, SE, Charleston

Greenbrier Veterinary Hospital 304-645-1476
Rt.. 219 North, Lewisburg

Hurricane Animal Hospital 304-562-3321
#1 Davis Court, Hurricane

Lewisburg Veterinary Hospital 304-645-1434
US Rt.. 60, Lewisburg

Oak Hill Animal Hospital 304- 465-8267
Summerlee Rd., Oak Hill

Raleigh County Animal Hospital 304-253-4787
198 Ragland Road, Beckley

Stonecrest Animal Hospital 304-525-1800
#1 Stonecrest Drive, Huntington

Valley West Veterinary Hospital 304-343-6783
201 Virginia St. West, Charleston

Three Rivers Avian Center ("TRAC") is a private 501(c)3 nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide veterinary and rehabilitative care to WV non-game birds & to educate and involve the public in ecosystem stewardship. The Raptor Chapter is a quarterly publication of TRAC, usually published in February, May, August & November. Members of TRAC receive the Raptor Chapter free of charge - other copies are distributed as funds permit. Public education programs featuring live raptors are available. Call (304) 466 - 4683 or visit our Web page for more info:

www.tracwv.org

Migration Celebration 2007

A festival of West Virginia, our birds & our natural heritage

Saturday, May 12, 2007

Little Beaver State Park

9 am - 5 pm

Featuring:

Live Birds of Prey

Nature & Birding Walks

Photography Workshop

WV Wildlife Diversity Exhibits

National Park Service Exhibits

WV Dept. of Agriculture Exhibits

Informative & fun seminars

Kids activities all day

Door prizes and much more!



*photo courtesy of Steve Rotsch
www.stevenrotsch.com*



Three Rivers Avian Center

Brooks Mountain Road, HC 74 Box 279, Brooks, WV 25951

(304)466 - 4683

www.tracwv.org

Three Rivers Avian Center & Friends present: Migration Celebration 2007

Little Beaver State Park
Beaver, WV

Saturday May 12, 2007
9 am - 5 pm

*This is a Preliminary Schedule!
Check our website for final schedule
after April 15, 2007: www.tracwv.org*

<u>Family Events</u>	<u>Kids Area</u>
<p>9:15 am: Birding Walk with birder Bev Delidow, meet at Information Booth downstairs in the main building.</p>	<p>9:00 am: WV Dept of Natural Resources open their interactive displays downstairs in the main building. Outside: painting animal silhouettes, and more. 9:30 am: Geology Rocks! Hard, soft, grainy, smooth, solid, colors, every rock has it's story. Ever had a rock garden of your very own? This fun filled, highly interactive workshop is led by Jaime Ford. Meet at the Kids Pavilion near the playground.</p>
<p>10:30 am: Nature Walk with New River Gorge National Park Ranger Jodi French, meet at Information Booth, downstairs in the main building.</p>	<p>10:30 - 11:00 am: Crafts time with Granny Sue. Meet at the Kids Pavilion near the playground.</p>
<p>11:30 am: Birding Walk with birder Bev Delidow, meet at Information Booth, downstairs in the main building.</p>	<p>11:00 am: Bug Hunt with WV Dept. of Agriculture Entomologist Terry Carrington. Meet at the Information Booth downstairs in the main building. Fun for all ages!!</p>
<p>12:30 pm: Lunch! Displays & exhibits remain open.</p>	<p>12:30 pm: Lunch! Displays & exhibits remain open.</p>
<p>1:00 pm: Photography skills workshop with West Virginia State photographer Steven Rotsch. Meet in the upstairs pavilion at the Main Building. (part 1 of 2)</p>	<p>1:00 pm: Boy Scout Merit Badge Bird Study tutorial with Margaret Dilley. Meet at the wooded picnic area near the playground. 1:00 pm: Storytelling with Granny Sue of the WV Storytelling Guild. Meet at the Kids Pavilion near the playground.</p>
<p>2:00 pm: Outdoor raptor photo shoot with WV State photographer Steven Rotsch. Meet at Three Rivers Avian Center's display booth. (Part 2 of 2)</p>	<p>2:00 pm: Crafts with Granny Sue. Meet at the Kids Pavilion near the playground.</p>
<p>3:30 pm: New River Gorge Peregrine Restoration Project presentation with award winning National Park Service Wildlife Biologist Matt Varner. This important collaborative project will hopefully bring peregrines back to our skies in the New River Gorge.</p>	<p>3:00 pm: Stream Stomp with WV Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Biologist Mark Scott. Learn ways to determine the health of streams and what cool critters lurk in the depths....</p>
<p>4:15 pm: An owl can hear a mouse move beneath snow a foot thick or more. Can you? Find out this and more with TRAC Education Director Ron Perrone. Fun for all ages! Meet in front of Three Rivers Avian Center's outdoor display.</p>	<p>4:45 pm: Kids Area closes</p>

HURT HAWKS

A musing by Alisha Morey
On a poem by Robinson Jeffers

A husky scream rises then drops in pitch, rings out over this brisk afternoon here on Brooks Mountain. It's the day after Thanksgiving and I am volunteering at the Three Rivers Avian Center ("TRAC") working off spare turkey and stuffing. Today I'm helping build a new flight barn. Sitting on the roof beams, Ron Perrone and I pause our hammers as the Red-tail calls again. This time the call is louder as the large bird slowly arcs directly above. Another call emits, though this time from Nick, one of TRAC's residential educational birds who is unable to fly due to a gunshot that wrecked her right wing. She is answering the wild red-tail's call from her outer room.

Nick's call is the loudest of all, stripped of the distance that muffles her wild counterpart's call, hers is clear. As the distance is gone so is the illusion of noble grandeur. This call is wild in its very essence, a guttural almost growl-like soul piercing shriek that when caught off guard can strike terror to my very toes. Catching each other with the same thoughts as we perch on the rafters, Ron and I smile then lift the hammers again.

Robinson Jeffers once wrote about a Red-tail as having "terrible eyes" in the poem *Hurt Hawks*. I don't agree with Jeffers' assessment of a Red-tail Hawk on all levels, such as this one. All the eyes of Red-tails' that I have seen have been an amber-brown, rich and beautiful. Of all the birds eyes I know of the only one close to being terrible is that of an accipiter, such as a Cooper's Hawk or a Sharp-Shinned. Their eyes can be red, and the placement and proportions strongly resemble an ancient reptile's eyes, almost as if looking into the eyes of a miniature velociraptor. Jeffers also described the Red-tail as having an "implacable arrogance", another point I don't fully agree with.

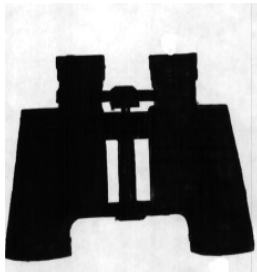
Implacable maybe, but only as the word means relentless and harsh as all wild creatures are and not as it can mean cruel. The arrogance Jeffers mentions doesn't sit well either, it could only truthfully be a reference to being unable to reach the hawk's mind-set, the impossibility of really understanding. Animals are not cruel or arrogant, they just are, there is no right or wrong in the wild, there is only survival. Humans impose these characteristics and feeling on everything, giving the gift of personification when it suits, but only at our convenience.

Sitting on a roof beam as the wild hawk glides behind the tree line and flightless Nick's last call trembles back into silence, I have two prominent thoughts. One being far less serious and not at all meaningful is that I am not a very good construction worker for all the daydreaming I do (as the reader might have assessed already). The second thought being that if I could bottle this feeling, this seemingly secret insight, where for just one moment everything is clear and so profoundly meaningful my breath catches in my chest, if I could somehow catch it and put it in my pocket, the world would never trouble me with insignificance again. Or the more righteous action, if I could catch this feeling, make it tangible, I would then somehow find a way to spread it across the globe. Maybe drop it from a crop duster over all the crowded places in the world. It would fall as lit golden speckles, and everyone who saw would feel the meaning and know for that one moment one of nature's secrets. That despite all our categorizing, failed descriptions and personifying, not to mention the outright harm we commit to it everyday, the world is and will always be this unattainable force of something uninhibitedly wild.

Alisha was our intern here at TRAC in the Summer of 2006 and continues to volunteer as time permits. She is now attending WVU in Morgantown, majoring in Wildlife.

Wild Birds Unlimited Helps TRAC With Research & Monitoring

With nesting season already started, TRAC is gearing up for another season of bird watching and data collection. Last year we found that our 20 - 60 power scope and Monarch 10x42 binoculars that were fine for general birding were insufficient for trying to keep track of bands on fast moving young peregrines during the summer.



Randy and Gloria Urian, owners of the Wild Birds Unlimited store in the Barboursville Mall heard of our difficulties. After discussing the types of binoculars available, we received a surprise offer: 2 new pairs of binoculars, in two different sizes that are bigger and brighter than the ones we are currently using! We would need to cover shipping and handling charges, but hundreds of dollars worth of binoculars would be in use at TRAC this Spring.

“Three Rivers Avian Center is a valuable resource in West Virginia,” said Randy Urian. “We believe in their mission and are so pleased to assist them with the purchase of new binoculars. It is our hope that the binoculars can be used by TRAC to help with their important research for many years.”

Many of our members know that we were caring for a lead poisoned, first year male golden eagle at the end of the year. I am very sad to report that we lost him on New Year's Eve at 3 pm. The lead that he ingested (he'd eaten something that had been shot, most likely a deer or squirrel) had already gotten too far into his system by the time he was found. It was one of the hardest rehabs we've done, on many levels. The loss is deeply felt. - wp

2006 Year End Review:

The year ended with a total intake of 178 patients consisting of 42 species and one “whatsit”, which is a chick of some small, usually songbird species that did not survive to fledge so we don't know what species it was. Species again ranged from hummingbirds to a golden eagle who came in at the end of the year. We were able to release 49% of the patients we took in, with 5 individuals still pending. One of these is a young female American kestrel that has had a hard life before we got her. We have been working with her for 6 months now, and she is doing much better - although she will never be releaseable. Volunteer Brooke Lucas has named her Ayla (pronounced “A - la”), and we expect to add her to our educational stables permits very soon.

Patients came from 30 different counties plus Virginia. The top 5 intake counties were (in order) Kanawha (26) Summers (22) Raleigh (21) Fayette (17) and Mercer (15). The top causes of injury were: Collisions (91 in all, of which 44 were collisions with vehicles), nest destroyed and being bitten by a cat were tied at 10 each, and sadly there were 4 gunshot patients as well.

On the education aspect, we completed a total of 75 events in 27 counties reaching 10,245 individuals. Much of the decrease in program numbers and attendance is because we had to focus on the construction of the much-needed Flight Barn in the Fall.

TRAC currently maintains an educational bird stables of 13 raptors, which may be expanded soon to 14 to include the female kestrel. The TRAC website (www.tracwv.org) receives an average of over 500 hits daily, and webmaster Ron Perrone has spent a lot of time in January and February upgrading the site to make it easier for viewers to find the information they seek. If you have a moment and internet access, check it out and drop Ron an e-mail with your thoughts! The upcoming events calendar is filling up, including many new venues....

Become a new member or renew your membership and you'll help TRAC continue to care for West Virginia's wild birds. Feathered Friend Sponsors are members who also receive a certificate of sponsorship with a photograph of their chosen raptor from our educational raptor stables. Those who are members at the \$150 or higher level have the option of being listed on the back of the newsletter. All donations and memberships are tax-deductible under IRS code 501(c)3.

For those who wish to purchase t-shirts, polo shirts, caps, stickers, patches, posters or CD's, we encourage you to please visit our website: www.tracwv.org/generalstore. There you will find full color pictures of all the above and the opportunity to purchase them using Paypal or your credit card.

Membership and Feathered Friend Sponsorships can also be purchased directly from the TRAC website if you would prefer to pay using a credit card or Paypal account.

****My very humble apologies to those mindful individuals who checked their labels for their expiration date only to find it partially cut off at the end of the label. I've fixed the alignment problem, and my thanks go to everyone who brought the issue to my attention! Macultra! -wp*

Memberships:

	Eagle	\$1,000.00+
	Falcon	\$500.00+
	Owl	\$250.00+
	Sponsor	\$150.00+
	Patron	\$100.00+
	Benfactor	\$75.00+
	Supporting	\$50.00+
	Family	\$25.00+
	Individual	\$10.00+
	Feathered Friend	See below

Feathered Friend Sponsorships:

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	Chip	Broad Winged Hawk	\$30.00
	Nick	Red Tailed Hawk	\$30.00
	Harlan	Red Tailed Hawk - dark morph	\$30.00
	Kendra	Red Shouldered Hawk	\$30.00
	Twister	Bam Owl	\$30.00
	Ginger	Long Eared Owl	\$30.00
	Perry	Peregrine Falcon	\$30.00
	Hoolie	Great Horned Owl	\$30.00

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Remember to check your newsletter mailing label for your membership level and expiration date! (Really!)

Many thanks to our Sponsors!

Your name, a loved one's name or your group or company's name can be listed here for an annual donation of \$150 or more.
Your donation is fully tax-deductible & will help advance the work of Three Rivers Avian Center.

All Creatures Veterinary Clinic	Phillip Cray	Chris Jensen & Family	Steve Rotsch
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Brooks Bird Club - Handlan Chap.	Good Shepherd Veterinary Hospital	Dean & Gail Osgood	
Joyce Broyles	Dwight & Jane Griffith	David & Sherry Patick	<i>(your name could be here too!)</i>
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