



Raptor Chapter Express *December 20, 2005*

Greetings! We hope this missive finds you and yours well, happy and enjoying the holiday season. There's not been a lot of time to get a newsletter out before the end of the year, but we thought you'd like a quick update on the happenings here at Three Rivers Avian Center.

We are working on healing up another gunshot bald eagle. This one was turned in from Pendleton county and he had a very bad several days before being found. First he was gunshot in the right wing, shattering the lower part of his wing. Once on the ground, he was able to survive for a day or two, then a dog or coyote bit him high up on the back of his thigh, severely limiting his ability to walk on one leg. THEN, that evening he was spotted sitting on the side of Thorn Creek near Franklin by DNR Conservation Officer Dwayne Duffield. Rather than be picked up by a human, this eagle decided to jump into the deepest water in the creek. Dwayne had to call over to US Fish and Wildlife Service Law Enforcement Agent Mike Weaver (who lives nearby) for help. Mike brought a pair of waders and was able to rescue the soaked bird. He took it home and got it warmed up then transferred it to us the next morning. We named the adult male eagle Seneca, after the Native American tribes who used the area where he was found.

The only thing we could do for the wing was to amputate, making this eagle unreleaseable. We are in the process of getting the paperwork together to apply to keep him here as an education bird. As of today, the bite wounds are about 95% healed and he is using the right foot and leg normally. The amputated right wing is healing up nicely as well. We have been working on getting him used to being around humans and activity, and today we'll get him started with jesses. He's been pretty

respectful so far - we'll see what he thinks of jesses. We believe that he's at least 7 - 10 years old, maybe a bit older, but when he's wet there are still signs of dark flecks on his head in the under feathers. When dry he has a pure white head and tail. He's also smaller than Comanche, the Bald Eagle we were able to set free in May.

The evening of the day we took in Seneca, Ron suddenly became extremely ill and we ended up in the Emergency Room. After blood tests, x rays and a CAT scan, they diagnosed that he had a severely inflamed gall bladder packed with gall stones and needed to have it removed immediately. He was literally at death's door. Four days in the hospital and a laproscopic surgery later, Ron finally was released just in time for Thanksgiving Dinner. Good friends pitched in and there was a wonderful feast and great company ready and waiting when Ron and I walked through our door. A Thanksgiving to be remembered! He is pretty much back to normal now. He's pain-free for the first time with a lot more energy than he's had in years.

Other patients have been coming in since the Thanksgiving week craziness. The cold temperatures have been making life a bit difficult for some species it seems. Screech owls, first year coopers hawks and young red tailed hawks are leading the list. With the ice layer on the ground topped by snow, hunting is harder than usual because they can no longer dig rodents out of their tunnels and the various prey species are more careful when they are out and about.

In our last newsletter we talked about building a new four cage flight conditioning barn. Basically it's a 64 foot by 52 foot oval pole barn. It contains a 12 foot wide "racetrack" cage with 3 other, smaller cages in the center. In December we received the first "in hand" financial help with the project with a \$7,500 grant from the Schoenbaum Family Foundation. We are currently working on other support sources and will begin construction at the end of May. Anyone wishing to donate to the effort or to give a hand with the site clearing and/or construction please contact us! This building is very badly needed and time is of the essence.

Education programs are being booked well in advance for 2006. Check our web page for a full listing of upcoming events. Of special note is the annual Wildlife Day at the Capitol Rotunda on February 28. We will be there with Spirit our Golden Eagle and maybe by then we'll have permission to bring Seneca as our latest addition to our Ambassador stables. Also mark your calendars for our Migration Celebration festival to be held at Little Beaver State Park on May 13. It'll be bigger and better than ever!

We hope to see you soon. As always, we appreciate your help and support this year. Best wishes from all of us for a happy, healthy and fun New Year!

Sincerely,

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