



## NOTES FROM THE NEST



*Of all the birds, our Creator chose  
the Eagle to be the leader.*

Greetings to all my fellow bird lovers!

The season has finally started to slow down now and the juveniles are starting to show up. The first year birds don't always do well, ending up in peoples back yards. When they show up, they are usually starving, haven't been hunting well and miles away from the nest and their parents.

Some show up with injuries. If we are notified in a timely manner, they can be taken to our vets for surgery. Birds have hollow bones and start knitting together very quickly, unlike ours.

We are blessed to have the avian vets that work with us. Without them we couldn't do what we do to send them back into the wild where they belong!

The average clutch may have four chicks; the female lays an egg every couple of days ending up with brand new babies, babies half grown and babies almost grown. The largest baby gets most of the food brought in and is usually the strongest. Only twenty five percent of all raptors born make it to the first year. The odds for survival are low.

That doesn't apply to our busy barn owls. That species is hearty, can have three families a year, depending on the food source available. They can have many babies. Here in San Diego the average is four and they all seem to survive to fledge the nest.

I have had plenty of babies that have fallen out of barn owl boxes and palm trees. I think we have taken in about 50 barn owlets this season and all but four, that are still too young, have been released. They are starting to come in again. They are busy in those boxes and trees. If there is food they have another family.

We do get in some barn owls that have had accidents. Some of the boxes put up are on poles, leaving no where for the young to learn to fly. A tree is a much better place, a canopy for shade and branches to land on. I also recommend putting WD 40 on the inside roof so the bees don't take over the box, a hinge on the bottom so it can be cleaned every couple of years and some holes drilled around the outside top for ventilation.

Most of the birds that have come in are our local birds. The owls nest first, great horned owl babies, then the barn owls. Red Tail Hawks, Red

Shoulders, Coopers, and Kestrels are next. The Kestrel is our smallest Falcon in North America and can be seen in our own back yards. Sometimes, very hard to notice as they are small, about the size of a mocking bird or scrub jay, and up in a tree with all the foliage, pretty hard to spot.

We are still keeping busy with education programs at camp grounds during the summer and also at some day camps that have been scheduled for foster kids. They are so excited to see the birds up close and to learn about their life spans, diets and that they mate for life. No divorce in our bird world. Maybe, because once they raise a family they go on vacation the rest of the year. Too bad we humans can't follow that program.

The kids are amazed, as are most people that our raptors only live about three years in the wild. Due to poisons, bb guns, loss of habitat and electrocution.

San Diego gas & Electric does has an avian protection program. They are putting up plastic devices on lines that can help prevent electrocution if a bird's wings touch both lines at once. They can't do all of San Diego over night but are concentrating on corridors where birds frequently roost or nest areas where they return year after year.

We took in a new bird, a very unusual bird. A Crested Caracara (Caracara cheriway) aka Mexican Eagle. The bird came to us from a rescue group, the Ojai raptor Center. It was first found in Texas with a wing injury that is not repairable. Transferred to Ojai, in hopes, to be used for education. The bird is an adult and doesn't seem to want anything to do with people, let alone to go out and do education programs. It will be a display bird here at Sky Hunters for people to learn about.

The Caracara is a member of the falcon family despite its quite non falcon-like behavior and appearance. They can be seen in Florida, Texas, Arizona and southward into the tropical areas of Central and South America. It often feeds on snakes, lizards and other live prey, and will readily feed on carrion. The species has often been referred to as the Mexican Eagle and is, in fact, thought to be the bird depicted on the original national emblem and flag of Mexico. (The modern Mexican emblem and flag now show a golden eagle.) It is housed with our Turkey Vulture as they both have the same diets and seem to get along just fine.

It has been announced that the directors of the Fund for Animals, Chuck and Cindy Traisi are finally going to retire. They have been taking care of animals for 25 years and we are going to miss them more than I can imagine. They have always been there 24/7 and operated a Five Star facility, networking with all rehabilitation groups in California and across the United States. Chuck is past president of the California Council for Wildlife Rehabilitators. Cindy is the author of two books, *Because They Matter* and *Because They Matter Too*. If you haven't read them you are really missing out. The books are about some of the special animals they have rescued, loved and returned back into the wild. We wish them, their two already retired dogs and a few kitties', very happy trails.

Many Blessings and God Bless,  
John and Nancy Conney





CRESTED CARACARA

**THANK YOU**

Time again to thank all of our education and display bird sponsors, members and faithful volunteers.

Cathy Harrell  
Lara & Robin Webster  
Eve & Ron Babcock  
Jim Chapin  
Mike Yellan

Without all of you, we couldn't do what we do.

**GIFTS & OWL BOXES**

We still have barn owl boxes, tee shirts and greeting cards with our own bird's pictures for sale. They make great gifts and help support our rescue efforts.

## Sky Hunters

## Application

RAPTOR EDUCATION & REHABILITATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ Apt # \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ **Sponsor**

\$250...Bald or Golden Eagle

email \_\_\_\_\_

\$100...Red Tailed, Harris' Hawk

**Enclosed is my tax deductible gift**

\$15...Student/Senior

or Peregrine Falcon

\$25...Individual

\$100...Barred, Great Horned or Barn Owl

\$75...Family

\$ 75...Kite, American Kestrel, Burrowing, Screech or Pygmy Owl

(Please circle your choice of raptor in the category)



NANCY CONNEY, Director

619-445-6565

[www.SkyHunters.org](http://www.SkyHunters.org)

email: [skyhunters@juno.com](mailto:skyhunters@juno.com)

501 (c) 3 #1904917

Newsletter assembled by

Jack Shoultz

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August 14--6:00pm--William Heize Park

September 18--1:00-3:00pm--Hoedown In Alpine

September 25--10:00-6:00pm--Monarch Mania  
Sage & Songbird--Viejas

October 9--1:00-4:00pm--Baskets & Botany  
Tecolote Canyon Preserve

October 19-21--10:30-12:30--California Counsel for  
Wildlife Rehabilitation Symposium  
Temaya Lodge--Yosemite

November 6--5:00pm--Wildlife Art--La Mesa



SKY HUNTERS  
RAPTOR REHABILITATION  
AND EDUCATION  
P.O. Box 1275  
Lakeside Ca 92040