

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

# SKY HUNTERS

## Raptor Education and Rehabilitation

### NOTES FROM THE NEST

SPRING 2014



Spring has sprung and where are the birds? It's April and we haven't taken in any baby raptors. They may all fly in at once!

I think the drought here in California has something to do with it. The birds are much smarter than we are, no food, no kids!

But not all birds will forego nesting so let's remember that spring is NOT the best time to trim trees! Did you know that tree trimmers are not allowed to disrupt a tree that has an active nest?

If you see tree trimmer getting ready to start work and you know there are eggs or babies, let the tree trimmers know. If they still want to continue, write down the company's name and their vehicle's license number and tell them you are going to make a call to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife at 858-467-4201. That will stop them, as they know it's illegal to disturb the nest!



Despite no baby raptors to care for right now, we are busy with school programs and community events, and of course the up-keep at our facility is on going.

We were sorry to see the close of the Ramona Hawk Watch. Each year, hundreds of bird lovers attended to learn about and see raptors up close. We are hopeful that another birding group will appreciate the importance of raptor outreach and continue this work at the Ramona Grasslands.

Blessings,  
Nancy and John Conney

### Raptor Rescue Information

**What would you do if you came across an injured hawk or owl?** Most people don't know the proper care and handling, and can end up hurting themselves or the bird accidentally.

- **Protect yourself by wearing gloves and covering the bird with a towel or blanket. Remember these birds are wild and will talon and bite - they don't know you are trying to help.**
- **A cardboard box with air holes can be used as a temporary container to move the bird to safety. Once contained, move it somewhere warm, dark, and quiet. Don't try to pet it or feed it.**
- **Call a licensed rehabilitation group immediately. Sky Hunters can be reached at (619) 445-6565.**

### Peregrine Falcon is on the mend !

*We are caring for a Peregrine Falcon that was electrocuted, leaving only half of the feathers on both wings. Lucky for him the electricity didn't penetrate the body. We are waiting for him to go through a molt. Birds molt twice a year so he will be releasable once some brand new wing feathers come in!*



Sky Hunter Education Program's Peregrine Falcon

# Get to Know Sky Hunters Education Raptors

## TURKEY VULTURE

The word vulture likely comes from the Latin *vellere*, which means to pluck or tear. The Turkey Vulture's scientific name, *Cathartes aura*, is far more pleasant. It means either "golden purifier" or "purifying breeze." In cowboy movies the bad guy usually threatens to leave the hero in the desert for the buzzards, meaning the vultures. Buzzard is a colloquial term for vulture in the U.S., the same word applies to several hawks in Europe. Vultures in the Americas look a lot like the vultures in Europe, Asia, and

Africa, with broad wings, bare heads, and the habit of eating dead meat. But they're in different taxonomic families, meaning they're not particularly closely related.



Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*)



The Turkey Vulture maintains stability and lift when flying at low altitudes by holding its wings up in a slight dihedral (V-shape) and teetering from side to side while flying. They may soar in small groups and roost in larger numbers. You may also see them on the ground in small groups, huddled around roadkill. The term *kettle* refers to a group of vultures in flight, while *committee*, *volt*, and *venue* refer to vultures resting in trees. *Wake* is the term for a group of vultures that are feeding. Turkey Vultures are common around open areas such as roadsides, suburbs, farm fields, countryside, and food sources such as landfills, trash heaps, and construction sites, making birds vulnerable to accidental trapping, collisions, electrocution, shooting, and the ingestion of lead from animals that have been shot. Its former persecution as a potential vector of

livestock disease or as a predator of young animals has largely ceased, since these contentions have proved false. However, the Turkey Vulture is the main avian species causing damage and fatalities in military aircraft collisions in the United States.



Turkey Vultures appear black from a distance but up close are very dark brown with a featherless red head and pale bill. The undersides of the flight feathers are paler, giving a two-toned appearance. The part of its brain responsible for processing smells is particularly large, compared to other birds. Its heightened ability to



detect odors—it can detect just a few parts per trillion—allows it to find dead animals below a forest canopy. Vultures have been known to detect leaks in gas pipelines! Not everyone sees vultures as a creepy harbinger of death—many see them as sacred for their cleanup role. Tibetan Buddhists practice "sky burials," where animals, usually vultures, consume their dead. Turkey vulture's populations are considered stable, with a status of "least vulnerable". Thanks to Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology for species information—<http://www.allaboutbirds.org> and the IUCN for status information— <http://cms.iucn.org/>

All Turkey Vulture photos courtesy of Stan Keiser, NatureLens

## SKY HUNTERS EVENTS CALENDAR — SEE YOU THERE!

### DATE and TIME

MAY 2, 3, 4 — 10am-4 pm

This special weekend in Alpine celebrates wildlife-friendly gardens. Five beautiful home gardens, filled with sensational succulents, natives and other drought-tolerant botanical treats--and host to local birds & butterflies--will be featured on this year's tour, plus, a Place-of-Worship habitat, and, by popular demand, a special bonus site--Sky Hunter's Raptor Rehabilitation Facility. Buy a ticket and get to see all 7 locations! Come to the festival site too at Alpine Creek Center. For more information and to purchase tickets in advance: [http://chirp.org/s&s\\_festival&garden\\_tour.html](http://chirp.org/s&s_festival&garden_tour.html)

May 17 — 1pm—3pm

June 7 — 1pm—2pm

June 21 — 3pm

June 21 — 6pm

July 12 — 3pm

July 12 — 6pm

August 9 — 3pm

August 9 — 6pm

### LOCATION

ALPINE'S SAGE AND SONGBIRDS FESTIVAL

Mission Trails Regional Park

San Dieguito Lagoon "Birdwing" Open Air Classroom

Green Valley Fall Campground

William Heise County Park

Green Valley Campground

William Heise County Park

Green Valley Campground

William Heise County Park

### EVENT ADDRESSES

Alpine Creek Center—1347 Tavern Road, Alpine, CA 91901

Mission Trails Regional Park—1 Father Junipero Serra Trail just off Mission Gorge Road, San Diego

San Dieguito Lagoon—Birdwing Open Air Classroom just off San Andres Dr., Del Mar

Green Valley Campground—off Highway 79, about 6.5 miles north of Interstate 8

William Heise Park — 4945 Heise Park Drive, Julian, CA 92036

## Your Help Counts! Sky Hunters Depends on You!

*Donations keep Sky Hunters going in our mission to rescue and educate about raptors. Here's how you can help:*

**Purchase:** We have screech owl and barn owl boxes, tee shirts, and greeting cards with our birds' pictures for sale. They make great gifts! Give us a call at 619-445-6565.

**Donate:** Use Pay Pal by going to our website at: <http://skyhunters.org/funding.html>

Click on the funding link and scroll down to the

**Make a Donation** button.

**Sponsor:** Fill out the application on this newsletter to join or sponsor at the support level that's right for you!

**DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE!**

**Thank you so very much to our  
dedicated volunteers.**

**We couldn't do it  
without you!**



Cathy Harrell

Travis and Whitney Gray

Shawnee Williams

Terry Lockwood

Lara Webster

**Sky Hunters** RAPTOR EDUCATION & REHABILITATION

*Member and Sponsor Application*

RETURN TO SKY HUNTERS

c/o Nancy Conney  
PO Box 1275  
Lakeside, CA 92040

Visit our website @  
[www.skyhunters.org](http://www.skyhunters.org)  
**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_ Apt # \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

***Enclosed is my tax deductible gift!***

**Member**

- \_\_\_\_\_ \$15      Student/Senior
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$25      Individual
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$75      Family

**Sponsor**

**CHECK ONE RAPTOR OF YOUR CHOICE IN THE CATEGORY**

- \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 75      \_\_\_\_\_ Kite    \_\_\_\_\_ American Kestrel    \_\_\_\_\_ Burrowing Owl    \_\_\_\_\_ Screech Owl    \_\_\_\_\_ Pygmy Owl
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$100      \_\_\_\_\_ Red-tailed Hawk    \_\_\_\_\_ Harris' Hawk    \_\_\_\_\_ Peregrine Falcon
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$100      \_\_\_\_\_ Great Horned Owl    \_\_\_\_\_ Barn Owl
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$250      \_\_\_\_\_ Bald Eagle    \_\_\_\_\_ Golden Eagle



**SKY HUNTERS**  
c/o Nancy Conney  
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