



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

## SKY HUNTERS

### Raptor Education and Rehabilitation

## NOTES FROM THE NEST

SPRING 2015

Greetings!! Spring has sprung!

Finally we are getting in some babies—we've had great-horned owls, barn owls, and a mule deer fawn!

The fawn is with San Diego Fawn Rescue, who is operating under Sky Hunters' permit for wildlife rehabilitation from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

With the ongoing drought, I think the numbers of babies we get in will be down again this year, but we will have to wait and see.

As reported in our last holiday newsletter, we released about 90% of the approximately 150 raptors we took in in 2014! So even with drought, we remain very busy caring for these amazing birds.

Recently, we have been really busy with education programs and more programs are right around the corner! See our calendar of events on page 3 and be sure to visit us if you're out and about!



By the time you receive this newsletter, we will have again hosted a tour for the three day Alpine Sage and Songbird Festival! Sky Hunters is a big hit with festival visitors! If you didn't get to the festival, then make plans for 2016—it's usually held the first weekend in May.

We're also busy planning for some major repairs! Fifteen years of sun and wind have deteriorated our raptors' enclosures. New netting is on order! When it arrives, we will be needing volunteers up on ladders to help John with this big installation!

Blessings,  
Nancy and John Conney

## Sky Hunters Depends on You! Be a SUPPORTER!

*Your generosity keeps 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 become a member or sponsor a raptor at the support level that's right for you!

***DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE!***

## Get to Know Sky Hunters Education Raptors

### White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*)

With its gray back and wings, white face and red eyes, the white-tailed kite is an elegant raptor. Kites are medium-sized with long, pointed wings, long white tail, and black “shoulders”. Young kites are similar in appearance to adults, but with buffy streaks on breast and head, and yellow eyes. Found over grasslands, savanna, open woodlands, marshes, desert grassland, partially cleared lands, and cultivated and grazed fields, kites regularly hover up to 80 feet off the ground and then drop straight down on to prey items. Their ability to hold a stationary position in midair without flapping is done by facing into the wind, and is called “kiting”. White-tailed kites prey on small mammals, primarily voles, as well as some birds, lizards, and insects. One study showed that more than 95% of prey were small mammals.



White-tailed Kite photos courtesy of Stan Keiser, Natureandlens

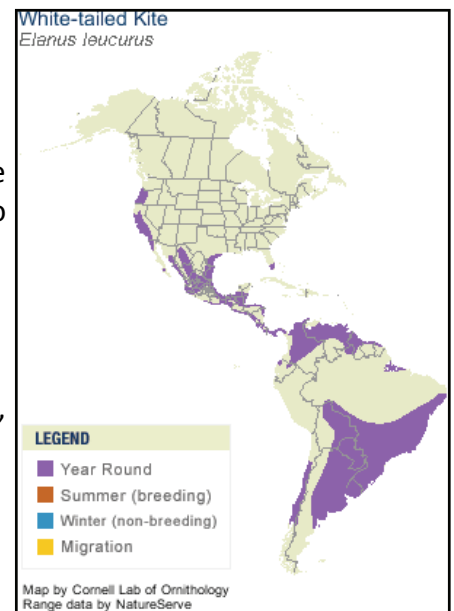
The nest is a shallow bowl made mostly of small twigs and lined with grass, hay, or leaves in the upper third of trees that may be 10–160 feet tall. Both sexes help choose the nest site; the female may build the nest herself or both sexes may participate. While hunting, the kites also have a ritualized courtship displays in which a male offers prey to a female prior to egg laying. The female flies up to meet the male, turns upside-down, and grasps the prey, in a very spectacular aerial display!



In the early 20th century, kites, like many hawks, were subject to shooting and egg collecting. Land development destroys nest trees, and modern farming techniques can eliminate vegetation that its prey use for cover. The

ICUN puts the species on the “Least Concern” list due to its very large range and apparent population increase. In northern California, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife set aside grazed pastures and

allowed them to return to grassland; these lands now support about 10 times the number of raptors including white-tailed kites!



Thanks to Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology for species information — [www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/White-tailed\\_Kite/id](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/White-tailed_Kite/id) and the IUCN for status information — <http://www.iucnredlist.org/>

# SKY HUNTERS EVENTS CALENDAR — SEE YOU THERE!

## DATE and TIME

May 16 — Noon—2pm  
May 23 — 5pm  
May 30 — 3pm  
June 13 — 3pm  
June 20 — 3pm  
June 20 — 5pm  
July 11 — 3pm  
July 18 — 3pm  
July 25 — 5pm  
August 8— 3pm  
August 15 — 3pm  
August 15 — 5pm  
September 19 — 5pm  
September 26 — 1pm  
October 10 — 1pm-3pm

## LOCATION

Mission Trails (with volunteer Lara Webster!)  
William Heise County Park  
Green Valley Falls Campground  
Green Valley Falls Campground  
Lake Morena County Park  
William Heise County Park  
Green Valley Falls Campground  
Lake Morena County Park  
William Heise County Park  
Lake Morena County Park  
Green Valley Falls Campground  
William Heise County Park  
William Heise County Park  
Elfin Forest  
Tecolote Canyon Natural Park

## EVENT ADDRESSES

Elfin Forest—8833 Harmony Grove Road, Escondido, CA 92029

Lake Morena—2550 Lake Morena Drive, Campo, CA 91906

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

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

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

Tecolote Canyon Natural Park and Nature Center—5180 Tecolote Road, San Diego, CA 92110

## **TREE TRIMMING? NOT NOW!!**

If you see tree trimmer getting ready to start work and you know there is a nest with eggs or babies, let the tree trimmers know. If they still want to continue, write down the company's name and the vehicle's license number. 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!

**TO OUR DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS—We cannot thank you enough for your weekly work to keep us spruced up!! THANKS TO Cathy Harrell, Travis and Whitney Gray, Terry Lockwood, and Shawnie Williams.**



## **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.**

## **Found a baby songbird?**

- **If it doesn't need medical attention, put it back!**
- **If the nest is too high, cut a cardboard milk carton open, line it with paper towels and nail it as high as you can on the side of the nest tree.**
- **Put the baby bird into your nest and its parents will return to care for this young one!**

**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



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