



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

SKY HUNTERS

Raptor Education and Rehabilitation

NOTES FROM THE NEST

SPRING 2016

Greetings Fellow Bird Lovers!

Spring has sprung and here come the babies! We have six Great Horned owlets already plus eleven baby Barn Owls. It should be a good season for the birds, with the rain we have had leading to more food. With the rain comes the new grass, and then comes the rodents that are prey for our beloved raptors.

The birds return each year to the same nesting area, knowing there will be food for the young. With the drought there hasn't been much food and the adults haven't been laying as many eggs or they didn't breed at all — no food, no kids. We should take lessons!

Every year we receive birds that the public has rescued. Some people feel they can take care of the animal themselves. But by the time we finally get the animal in, it's usually in very poor condition and we're not always able to save it.

This past year we had a Cooper's Hawk turned in to our vet's office. Its wings and tail had been trimmed, keeping it from flying. It takes a year for a bird to go through a couple of molts (growing new feathers) and that much time really takes a toll. After a YEAR with team member Nicole Perretta, the bird was released, back into the wild where it belongs, now free and in time to find a mate. Wishing you all a wonderful Spring!

Blessings, Nancy and John



Get to Know Local Raptors

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

Last spring, we took in a fledgling Osprey from Lake Murray where they nest each year. This youngster was a little too active and fell out of the nest, breaking a bone in its wing. Off to the vet we went, to Dr. Todd Cecil. The bird had a clean, repairable break, so it had surgery then came back to us for rehab.

Osprey eat fish, and getting a youngster to eat on its own is a major achievement. Adults are tough to rehab since they catch live fish! We didn't have a pond, let alone any live fish, so John found a big round livestock tub and filled it with water. We put some large thawed out fish in shallow water and then some small fish that would float on top of the water to entice the bird to eat. It worked! The youngster was with us for about six weeks of healing.

A final checkup with Dr. Cecil gave good news – the bone had knitted together perfectly! So back to our large cage for a couple of weeks to get strong flight skills, then time for release. We returned to Lake Murray with team member Randy West, then opened the carrier and off the Osprey flew, back to its family territory.

Ospreys are common sights soaring over shorelines, patrolling waterways, and standing on their huge stick nests. These large, rangy hawks do well around humans and have rebounded following the ban on the pesticide DDT.

Ospreys dive with feet outstretched to catch fish and are unusual among hawks in having a reversible outer toe that allows them to grasp with two toes in front and two behind. Barbed pads on the soles of their feet help them grip slippery fish. When flying with prey,

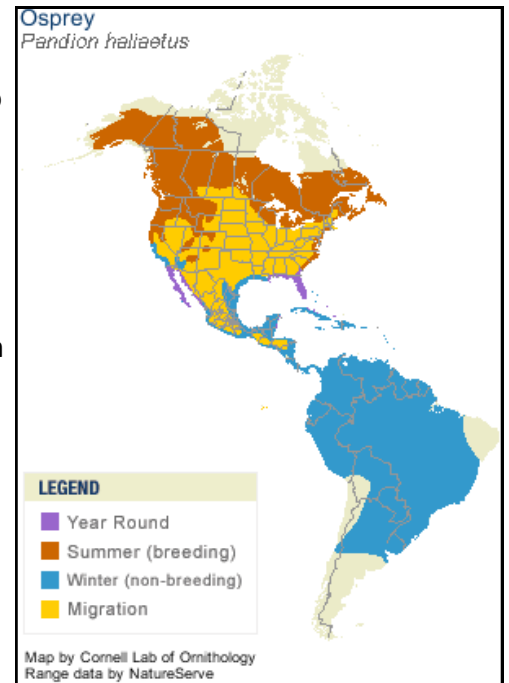
an Osprey lines up its catch head first for less wind resistance.



Photo by Earl Stuart Cryer



Photo by Stan Keiser, Natureandlens.com



Ospreys build nests on manmade structures, such as telephone poles, channel markers, duck blinds, and nest platforms, and man-made structures are an important tool in reestablishing the species where they had disappeared. The oldest known Osprey was at least 25 years, 2 months old. An Osprey may log more than 160,000 migration miles during its 15-to-20-year lifetime. Scientists track them by strapping satellite transmitters to the birds' backs. During 13 days in 2008, one Osprey flew 2,700 miles, from Massachusetts, to French Guiana, South America.

Thank You to our Volunteers!

Each newsletter we thank our dedicated volunteers who show up every Saturday to help. But in several newsletters, we have neglected to recognize one volunteer who not only is available on Saturdays, but all week long, day and night. Taking calls from the public, and climbing down canyons and drainage ditches to reach injured birds. Picking up and delivering sick, injured and orphaned birds to our vet's office, and helping with releases. And on top of all that, doing education programs at many schools, campgrounds and community events. That's our **Shawnie Williams** and she has been with us for eight years, through thick and thin. She's been a board member with the California Council for Wildlife Rehabilitators. Now, as if she didn't have enough to do, she is in charge of San Diego Fawn Rescue, the only fawn rescue group in southern California. She also has volunteered with other rescue groups, as a fox, raccoon and opossum team leader. We are privileged to have **Shawnie**, with her knowledge and expertise, on our team!

Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers!

Do you want to volunteer? Call 619-445-6565 to discuss opportunities!

SKY HUNTERS EVENTS CALENDAR — SEE YOU THERE!

DATE and TIME

May 7—Noon to 3 pm

May 21— Noon to 2 pm

May 21—3 pm

May 28—6 pm

June 4—Noon to 3 pm

June 11—6 pm

June 18—3 pm

July 2—6 pm

August 13—3 pm

August 13—6 pm

September 3—6 pm

LOCATION

Alpine Garden Club

Mission Trails Regional Park

Cardiff-by-the-Sea Library

William Heize County Park

Alpine Historical Society

William Heize County Park

Lake Morena County Park

William Heise County Park

Lake Morena County Park

William Heise County Park

William Heise County Park



EVENT ADDRESSES

Alpine Garden Club at Christ the King Church —1460 Midway Dr, Alpine CA 91901

Alpine Historical Society—2116 Tavern Rd, Alpine CA 91901

Cardiff-by-the-Sea Library —2081 Newcastle Ave, Cardiff CA 92007

Lake Morena County Park—2550 Lake Morena Dr, Campo CA 91906

Mission Trails Regional Park —1 Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Diego CA 92119

William Heise County Park – 4945 Heise Park Drive, Julian CA 92036

Sky Hunters RAPTOR EDUCATION & REHABILITATION

Member and Sponsor Application

RETURN TO SKY HUNTERS

c/o Nancy Conney

PO Box 1275

Lakeside, CA 92040

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www.skyhunters.org
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_____ \$100 _____ Great Horned Owl _____ Barn Owl

_____ \$250 _____ Bald Eagle _____ Golden Eagle

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