



The Raptor Chapter

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Migration Celebration 2014 honors International Migratory Bird Day

Not everyone is aware of the diversity of birds around the world, the amazing migrations some take, and the phenomenal range of behaviors, plumages, and songs they exhibit. International Migratory Bird Day 2014 shares the many ways in which birds matter to the earth, to ecosystems, and of course, to us.

Some bird species provide practical solutions to problems, such as the need for insect and rodent control. Others disperse seeds, helping to revegetate disturbed areas. Others are pollinators, ensuring that we are graced with flowering plants, trees, and shrubs. Beyond the utilitarian, birds are inspirations for the arts.

Amadeus Mozart had a pet starling that motivated the opening theme of the Third Movement of his Piano Concerto No. 17 in G. Beethoven used the songs of thrushes and blackbirds, and many musical pieces contain the call of the cuckoo. Paintings, poetry, and other artistic works all express the intangible joy birds provide us every day.

Join us in raising awareness of birds and why they matter at TRAC's twelfth annual Migration Celebration festival on May 10th at Little Beaver State Park outside Beckley WV. It's a free event, open to the public and runs from 9 AM to 5 PM. It's a family oriented

festival, celebrating West Virginia's wild birds and our natural heritage.

Join Bev Delidow for a birding walk or two, or go bug hunting with WV Dept of Agriculture's Terry Carrington. Not into bugs? Try taking a gentle hike with Naturalist Jim Phillips and experience the natural world like you never have before. Kids activities abound, including crafts and storytelling with Granny Sue Holstein. There are also a lot of hands-on games and displays with Jeff Hajenga and friends from the WV Division of Natural Resources' Wildlife Diversity Program. Rangers from the New River Gorge National River will be on hand as well.

TRAC will have some of our Raptor Ambassadors on display, including Regis the bald eagle, Hoolie the great horned owl and Perry the peregrine falcon, so don't forget your camera. Speaking of cameras, professional photographer Steve Rotsch will be teaching a mini-course on photography techniques that is designed for beginners and experienced photographers alike. There's a half hour of discussing techniques, then it's off to take photos of the TRAC Ambassadors out in natural settings. If you don't have time to pack a lunch, don't worry. Food is available on site from Flynn's Hot Dogs & Concessions.

A full schedule of events for the day is available for viewing and printing on our website: www.tracwv.org. Click on the link above the photograph on the main page.



Clothes Make the Bird

Bird watching is a term that sometimes cracks me up. It is great fun and sure beats the television if one needs to wile away

the time. A few years back we saw a study reporting that more people list "Bird Watching" than "Golf" as a favorite activity. A quick perusal of the golfing sites on the internet reveals that they often list "Bird Watching" or "Birding" as an activity at their resorts. That is a good business model, I'd say. But how does a golfing bird watcher dress for the occasion? And what is the difference between Bird Watching and Birding, anyway? Birders are usually well equipped, intrepid and willing to travel at the drop of a hat. And "Bird Watching" maybe connotes a more laid back approach. Personally, I often succumb to "Porch Disease". I proudly call it research. Bonafide Bird Nuts can kill an afternoon watching Robins pull worms. In any event, if one is patient and observant one can spot something that maybe no one has ever seen before. This past Summer I had one of those moments. It relates to bird decorum.

TRAC received a fledgling Cooper's Hawk in good condition. She was past the stage of imprinting on the wrong species. But still, getting chummy with humans would be detrimental, so I decided to put her in an enclosure with Nick, our 23 year old Red-tailed Hawk. Nick is a dominant, intelligent and even tempered female with strong maternal instincts and good judgement. She has raised a number of Red-tail chicks, but I **was** worried about how she would react to a lonely Cooper's Hawk who just needed the company of a grownup. Normally, Red-tails and Cooper's hawks do not fraternize. Years ago,

I once saw a Red-tail kill and eat a Coop.

So, first, I put plenty of food in the enclosure and then after Nick had eaten some, set the young Cooper's Hawk down on the ground in the center and backed off, prepared to intervene if something went bad. Nick was sitting on a perch off to the side. Although the Coop was big, she was young and lonely. After only a few seconds, she spotted the older bird, ran up the ramp to the perch, and sat down next to Nick. Nick pulled herself up tall, leaned back and glared, but did not move. I did not like the look on her face. Then it happened. Nick craned her neck over the back of the Coop and stared. Then she looked over her own shoulder and checked her own back. Then she dropped her head low and stared hard at the Coop's toes, which are disproportionally long and slender compared to those of a Red-tail. Then she checked at her own feet. She repeated the process again, this time comparing tails. That was apparently enough information for her. She raised her hackles, lifted one foot and slammed it down next to the Coop, blocking any closer approach. The poor Cooper's Hawk got the message and backed off. It was enough for me too. I walked over and picked the poor girl up and put her in an adjacent enclosure where she would be safe but could still see the adult education birds. A little over a week later she was able to be released.

This exercise was not a science experiment. But what I observed that day is clearly etched in my mind. Nick had not in any way been threatened by the submissive and ignorant newcomer in her cage. She new it was a youngster and she knew it was trying to make contact with her, but something was wrong and rather than just reacting reflexively, she made a decision to reject the immature bird based on what she knew. She has good observation skills, as you would expect from a hawk. So while clothes don't really make the birder or the golfer, they may matter quite a bit to Red-tailed Hawks.

-Ron Perrone, TRAC Education Director



Mark your Calendars!

Join us for these upcoming free events. A complete schedule of activities is available on our website: www.tracwv.org

May 2 7 pm Tygart Lake State Park near Grafton, WV "Wings of Wonder: WV Birds of Prey" program featuring live hawks, owls, a falcon and Regis the bald eagle. Contact # 1-304 - 265 - 6144

May 3 1 - 5 pm Free Public Tour Day @ TRAC facilities. Come meet our nonreleaseable Raptor Ambassadors, enjoy hands-on displays, and much more.

May 4 10 am - 2 pm WV Raptors display at Animal Care Associates in Charleston, WV. Contact Monica Patton at Animal Care Associates: 1- 304 - 344 - 2244

May 10 9 am - 5 pm MIGRATION CELEBRATION 2014 at Little Beaver State Park outside Beckley, WV. See more information including a full schedule of events on our website: www.tracwv.org Click on the link towards the top of the page. Free fun for the entire family!

May 17 9 am - 4 pm (this event does have a fee to participate) Photography workshop at TRAC, featuring our Raptor Ambassadors in natural settings. For more information contact photography workshop leader Steve Rotsch at 304 - 541 - 7574. There is a morning session, an afternoon session or you can sign up for all day, lunch included. A fee applies.

June 7 1 - 5 pm Free Public Tour Day @ TRAC facilities. Come meet our nonreleaseable Raptor Ambassadors, enjoy hands-on displays, and much more.

June 14 7 pm Beech Fork Lake State Park outside Huntington, WV "Wings of Wonder: WV Birds of Prey" program featuring live hawks, owls, a falcon and Regis the bald eagle. Contact # 1- 304 - 528 - 5794

June 28 7:30 pm Watoga State Park near Hillsboro, WV "Wings of Wonder: WV Birds of Prey" program featuring live hawks, owls, a falcon and Regis the bald eagle. Contact # 1- 304 - 799 - 4087

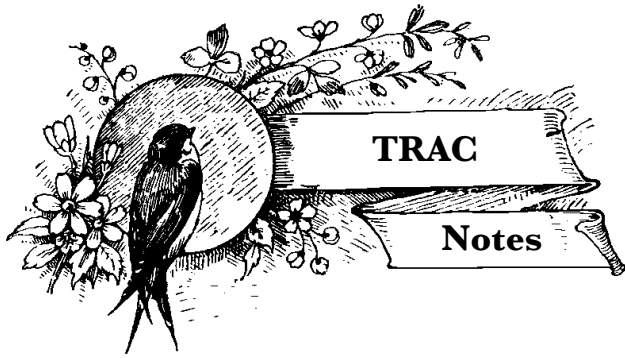
July 5 1 - 5 pm Free Public Tour Day @ TRAC facilities. Come meet our nonreleaseable Raptor Ambassadors, enjoy hands-on displays, and much more.

July 5 7 pm Babcock State Park near Cliff Top, WV "Wings of Wonder: WV Birds of Prey" program featuring live hawks, owls, a falcon and Regis the bald eagle. Contact # 1- 304 - 438 - 3004

July 25 7 pm Lost River State Park near Mathias, WV "Wings of Wonder: WV Birds of Prey" program featuring live hawks, owls, a falcon and Regis the bald eagle. Contact # 1- 304 - 897 - 5372

July 29 7:30 pm Cacapon Resort State Park near Berkley Springs, WV "Wings of Wonder: WV Birds of Prey" program featuring live hawks, owls, a falcon and Regis the bald eagle. Contact # 1- 304 - 258-1022

Many more programs can be found listed on our website: www.tracwv.org/upcoming.html, including more programs in WV State Parks and free public tour days!



It has been a Winter to remember! Piles of snow to shovel, temperatures that hit lower than -10 degrees Fahrenheit and stayed there for many, many days, ice storms that brought down flocks of migrating water birds around the State...a busy time for us all here at Three Rivers Avian Center for sure!

The educational birds, our non-releaseable Raptor Ambassadors, got very tired of being cooped up inside their indoor rooms but at least they were safe from the deep snows and below normal temperatures outside. All birds in the flight barn did well as did the barn itself. It's first full test of Winter conditions. We did not lose power and the water kept running wherever we needed it, so we are looking back on the Winter with a sigh of relief that it's over. It is a happy sight to see blooming forsythia, redbuds and dogwoods and to see the world wake up to Spring.

In an effort to keep as many people "in the loop" of the work here at TRAC, we have been focusing much of our informational outreach on the Three Rivers Avian Center Facebook page. Posts are put up at least once a week, sometimes more. Photographs and discussions happen a lot. Not everyone likes the idea of using Facebook we know, but it is an excellent way to reach many people and it allows us a venue to get news out quickly, such as in the case of the Snowy Owl invasion in January and the issue of the Brooks Bald Eagles, and at the same time allows an easy to use venue for back and forth discussions. We are using the Page as if it were an interactive Blog, and we encourage everyone to join in. You do not have to be

signed in to Facebook to view our Page. Just go to the TRAC website and click on the Facebook icon to be taken there. The only constraint is that if you are not signed in you cannot make a comment on the Page. But that's what e-mail or the US Postal System is for!



Remembering Ginger

The one big sadness from the Winter was the passing of our Long Eared Owl Ambassador "Ginger". She came in as an adult in October of 2000 after being tangled in a barbed wire fence in Wheeling, WV. She was

cared for by Oglebay Good Zoo's Raptor Unit then transferred to TRAC as a permanent resident due to the loss of her primaries on her left wing from the injury. One of the TRAC Board of Directors members noted her long eyelashes and named her "Ginger".

Ginger was always a big hit with visitors and photographers. She was a shy but peppery individual, who definitely knew who she was and what she expected of those around her. She was best friends with her cagemate Robbie, a barred owl who came to TRAC as a first year bird in 1995. On sunny days it was not unusual to see the two sitting next to each other on a perch sunning themselves, or they might be hanging out together in the hutch during inclement weather or during the night.

Ginger was found dead on the floor of her indoor room on February 17 with Robbie sitting next to her. This was during the peak of yet another snow storm. We had been noticing that Ginger was having some troubles so we'd been opening her mice for her for the last 3 months or so. It is a sad passing and she is very much missed. She will remain as the opening image on the TRAC website, photo courtesy of David Fattelah.

The Brooks Island Eagles - An Update

As many will recall, the Brooks Island pair started nesting in December 2009 on the end of Brooks Island in the New River, just down-river of Hinton, WV. Whitey, the male, was a full adult with a pure white head. The female was not quite an adult and still had the typical streaky-headed markings of a 4 year old so we named her Streaky. The first year they raised 2 chicks, the next year they raised 3 (Streaky now had the adult full white head and tail) and the following year they raised another 2 chicks. Then things started to fall apart.

On March 17, 2013 Whitey was struck by an Amtrak passenger train. He had been eating something dead on the tracks and didn't leave the carcass soon enough. Streaky was sitting on eggs on the nest and did not leave them for days, Whitey was AWOL. Attempts to find him along the tracks via foot search yielded nothing. Three days later an adult bald eagle was sitting with Streaky at the nest as the sun came up. We all hoped it was Whitey, it seemed to be. The eggs did not hatch, but the two were still together and we hoped for a successful nest in the 2013-2014 season.

The pair started bringing in nesting materials in November. Numerous mating sessions were observed, and during the January 11, 2014 Eagle Watch, we were very certain that we got a glimpse of at least one and probably two eggs in the nest.

Then we started noticing that they were not sitting on the eggs very much. They were both gone from the Island nest for hours at a time. Then we saw them fly over together to the opposite hillside where they were building another nest! An eagle was close to or in the Hillside nest from February on into March, but we had no way of knowing if or how many eggs were in the nest.. It is too far away and too high up on the hillside to view inside the nest.

Streaky was struck by the same Amtrak train on March 7, 2014 just across from the Island nest. We were able to get to the site of contact pretty quickly, but there was no eagle

to be found. There WAS a huge pile of grain on the tracks and several dead deer and other smaller dead animals around it, seemingly hit by passing trains as they came to the grain pile.

March 8, 2014 was the second Eagle Watch for the year, and a passing CSX train engineer saw a bald eagle at the impact site and got word to us. This time, success. Ron Perrone and Sam Richmond were able to find the eagle, but Streaky flew (in very labored flight) across the River to Brooks Island and sat perched and fluffed in a tree far too high to get anywhere near her. By the next day she had made it over to the Island nest and that seemed to be working very well as a healing up spot. Our big concern was that she didn't eat for several days at least. Then we noticed that some days the eagle in the Island nest was much better, even normal, then on other days, exhibiting problems with the right leg's mobility and not able to stand up for long periods of time. We hoped Streaky was getting better albeit erratically.

On March 18th, Summers County 911 called us - a bald eagle was in a ditch across from the Island nest. It was Streaky. It appeared that she had been hit by a vehicle a couple of days before, now her legs were totally paralyzed - on top of the other injuries & starvation. The bruise on her keel from the train strike was very bad and deep into the cartilage of the keel that holds the muscle attachments for flight. We knew we would be lucky to save her.

At the same time, we knew that there were still 2 adult bald eagles hanging out at the Brooks Island area, mating, flying together, seemingly doing fine. The new female was nicknamed "Jezebel" by one of the watchers.

We were not successful in our efforts to save Streaky. After more than 3 weeks of intense rehab work, her liver shut down & she started having strong seizures while her legs stayed paralyzed. We finally had to euthanize her. So now we wait to see what next nesting season holds. Streaky will be buried here at TRAC. She was one amazing eagle.



TRAC Hospice Vets

These veterinarians listed below have kindly agreed to donate their talents and veterinary care to TRAC patients. We couldn't do our work without them. Please let them know that you

value their assistance too!

TRAC Staff Veterinarian: Dr Bill Streit

All Creatures Veterinary Clinic 304-425-9944
1916 W. Main Street, Princeton
with Dr Sue Mohler, Dr Karen Hughes & ACVC staff

Animal Care Associates 304-344-2244
840 Oakwood Road, Charleston

Dr Jeff Patton & Monica Patton RVT, TRAC Advisory Board

Beckley Veterinary Hospital 304-255-4159
215 Dry Hill Road, Charleston

Cross Lanes Veterinary Hospital 304-776-4501
524 Old Geoff Mtn Road, Cross Lanes

Ceredo-Kenova Animal Clinic 304-453-6384
750 "C" Street, Ceredo

Country Roads Veterinary Clinic 304-586-0700
3420 Winfield Road, Winfield

Elk Valley Veterinary Hospital 304-965-7675
113 Frame Road, Elkview

Good Shepherd Veterinary Hospital 304-925-7387
3703 MacCorkle Ave. SE, Charleston

Greenbrier Veterinary Hospital 304-645-1476
Rt 219 North, Lewisburg

Hurricane Animal Hospital 304-757-5937
2120 Mt Vernon Road,, Hurricane

Kanawha Co. Animal Em. Clinic 304-768-2911
5304 MacCorkle Ave SW, South Charleston

Monroe Veterinary House Calls 304-667-2365
Union (Dr Sue Mohler)

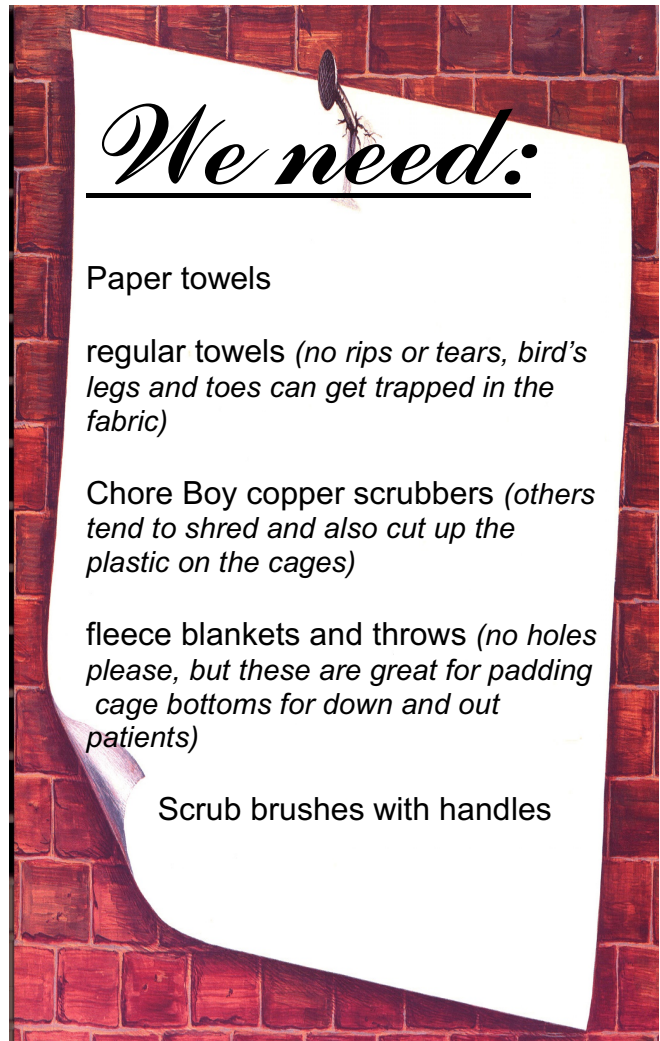
Oak Hill Animal Hospital 304-465-8267
Summerlee Road, Oak Hill

Stonecrest Animal Hospital 304-525-1800
#1 Stonecrest Drive, Huntington

Tri-State Veterinary Clinic 304-525-8387
6474 Merritts Creek Road, Barboursville

Valley West Veterinary Hospital 304-343-6783
201 Virginia Street West, Charleston

A snowy owl came to Beckley in Raleigh county and stayed in the surrounding area through most of January. He was kind enough to hang out on prominent buildings, lamposts and in surrounding areas in the main shopping mall between Robert C. Byrd Drive and Eisenhower Drive in Beckley, giving photographers a great gift. People from many States away came to see him (it may have been a "her"). We had people travel to see the Snowy Owl in Beckley from Tennessee, Ohio, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Georgia, Indiana, Missouri, and all over West Virginia. How do we know? TRAC became the "call for more information" point until and after the bird left the area. It was a great opportunity to introduce birders to the area! Tracking studies show they went all the way to Florida.



Hummingbirds are migrating through these next few weeks, so get those feeders ready! We get a lot of questions about hummers and feeding them, so here's a quick primer. Hummingbirds get their nutrition from flower nectar and small bugs (they are masters at stealing bugs from spider webs without disturbing the web). You don't need to purchase any special mixtures of hummingbird food. Avoid using or purchasing any food that has red dye in it - or any dye. Hummingbirds do not need to see the red color to come to a feeder - that's an old wives tale, and their bodies cannot process the dye. Keep your feeders clean and free from mold and mildew and change the fluid in your feeder when it starts to get cloudy, or every 2 - 3 days in hot weather. Use only white sugar for your hummer food, do not substitute honey (it is harmful to hummers) or any other sweetener.



HUMMINGBIRD NECTAR RECIPE: Dissolve 1/4 cup of white sugar in 1 cup water. Refrigerate any unused portion. The refrigerated mixture will keep for a week or two.

Become a new member or renew your membership and you'll help TRAC continue to care for West Virginia's wild birds. Feathered Friend Sponsors are members who also receive a certificate of sponsorship with a photograph of their chosen raptor from our educational raptor stables. Members at the \$150 or higher level have the option of being listed on the back of the newsletter. All donations and memberships are tax-deductible under IRS code 501(c)3. Memberships and Feathered Friend Sponsorships can also be purchased directly from the TRAC website if you would prefer to pay using a credit card or Paypal account. Thanks for your support!

Memberships

Eagle	\$1,000+
Falcon	\$500+
Owl	\$250+
Sponsor	\$150+
Patron	\$100+
Benefactor	\$75+
Supporting	\$50+
Family	\$25+
Individual	\$10+
Feathered Friend	See other box

Feathered Friend Sponsorships

Regis	Bald Eagle	\$60
Perry	Peregrine Falcon	\$30
Robbie	Barred Owl	\$30
Twister	Barn Owl	\$30
Rudy	Eastern Screech Owl -red	\$30
Thomas	Eastern Screech Owl - gray	\$30
Hoolie	Great Horned Owl	\$30
Nick	Red Tailed Hawk	\$30
Harlan	Red Tailed Hawk -dark morph	\$30
Kendra	Red Shouldered Hawk	\$30
Chip	Broad Winged Hawk	\$30

Remember to check your newsletter mailing label for your current membership level and expiration!

Your name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____ **Phone #:** _____

Many Thanks to our Sponsors!

*Your name, a loved one's name or your group or company's name can be listed here for an annual donation of \$150 or more.
Your donation is fully tax-deductible & will help advance the work of Three Rivers Avian Center.*

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(Your name could be here.....)

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