



The Raptor Chapter

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Getting Their Wings

A Coopers Hawk swoops up to a perch 10 feet off the ground and surveys the latest dinner offering of quail in Room 1. In Room 2, a Barred Owl recovering from a shattered wing practices short flights and maneuvering tricks. In Room 3, a Screech Owl is learning how to adapt to having only one eye after a collision with a vehicle.

These are just the latest patients to benefit from the generous spaces of the new flight barn. Room 1, which is a 15 foot wide by 20 foot long by 15 foot high space, has already harbored 9 young Peregrine Falcon males for a week while they were getting to be old enough to be placed out into the hack box on the New River Gorge cliffs. Room 3, which is 40 feet long by 15 feet wide by 15 feet high has graduated 2 Red Shouldered Hawk juveniles and 1 Red Tailed Hawk juvenile, a young Peregrine Falcon, a Screech Owl and a Barred Owl. Room 2, which is the same size as Room 1, has just been completed.

The building plans call for an additional 12 foot wide by 12 foot high "racetrack" to be built around the outside of these 3 rooms and we are in the process of securing funds and materials for it. When this last part is finished, the flight barn will be able to provide unlimited flight distances for healing birds in addition to the 3 interior exercise rooms. Got hammers?

It's Baby Season All Over

They are everywhere. Baby house wrens drive their parents crazy by hopping through the treetops, baby robins jump out of their well-constructed grass and mud nests with seemingly little regard for neighborhood dogs and cats, baby barred owls try out their brand-new flight feathers and end up in an astounding variety of ill-advised places.

We have been seeing a lot of babies here at TRAC this season. There have been a number of baby Robins, baby tree swallows, baby Barred Owls, baby American Kestrels, baby Red Shouldered Hawks, a baby Red Tailed Hawk, and baby Great Horned Owls, among others. It seems as if this is going to be a good year for the Great Horned Owls and Red Shouldered Hawks if the intake numbers are anything to go by! The drought conditions are bringing many youngsters to the road to hunt for prey though, so drive carefully!

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The Return of the “Flying Crossbow In the Sky”

By Ron Perrone, TRAC Education Director

The largest hack-out in history. No, its not some computer geek slumber party, it is the most ambitious Peregrine Falcon release effort ever in the US.

The 5 year project got under way last year as a cooperative effort of the, National Parks Service - New River Gorge, the WV Dept of Natural Resources, the College of William & Mary, TRAC, Geoff “Tiny” Elliott, and many other volunteers. The first year saw the hack of 15 birds. So far this year we know of 1 peregrine from last year for certain who has come back to visit this Spring, and there are unconfirmed reports of others in the area.

This year’s project began with 8 birds from the Chesapeake Bay area placed in the hack box in mid- May . All are taken from nests considered to be high risk situations where chick survival is poor from locations around the Chesapeake Bay area. They would be the first group to go. The Original Eight. But then 2 more batches were selected for the project and it fell to TRAC to go to Virginia to get them. We would rendezvous with a representative of Tri-State Bird Rescue and the Center for Conservation Biology for at the College of William & Mary. This was the kind of bird road trip we dream of, starting at 8:00 AM on a beautiful Spring day with a heady sense of purpose; which was good because it turned out to be a 16 hour day for us, mostly in the van.

We drove out into Virginia and east of Charlottesville to link up with John Frink of Tri-State who transferred 9 birds that came the previous day from 3 locations in New Jersey (6 from bridges and 3 from a casino). Then we cruised down to Hopewell, VA and met Shawn Padgept of the College of William & Mary, who has been the one spearheading the relocation efforts. Shawn had been up since 5 AM collecting chicks from different locations in the Chesapeake Bay. He had 5 already, and there

were 2 to go from the Hopewell draw bridge, located in a nest site way up there on top of the north tower, more than 12 stories up. We were parked at a marina right at the bridge, so he and Wendy elected to climb up several flights of stairs to the elevator that would take them up to the level of the nest while I took pictures from the marina. From my vantage point, all I could see were adult peregrines wheeling and diving in toward the little room at the top of the tower where Shawn was grabbing the chicks while Wendy held the window up and waved off the diving adults.

Back at the marina, we had work to do. The New Jersey chicks had already received their US Fish & Wildlife Service bands, but now we needed to do the Virginia crew. Banding Peregrines is an exercise in going nearly deaf. One by one, Wendy gently cuddled up the biting, clawing screamers while Shawn pop-riveted the US Fish & Wildlife Service metal bands around the legs. After a happy but weary (and increasingly somewhat smelly) ride back to TRAC, we had to examine, hydrate and feed all 16 chicks. There was down wafting everywhere!

The next day, June 1st, Matt Varner of the National Park Service - New River Gorge came to take the female chicks to the empty hack box on the Gorge cliff. The males were harbored in Room 1 of the new Flight Barn. On June 4th, the first box was opened and the Original Eight went free to the joy of their human entourage watching from a distance. On June 6th the males were moved in to the first hack box. They were released on June 16th, followed by the females on June 18th.

So now we have 24 Peregrines to watch over this Summer and probably one more batch of 5 to go. It’s taking a platoon of observers to track of them and it can get a little crazy out there, but all who have supported TRAC or volunteered to make this endeavor possible should take pride in bringing such a brilliant force of nature back from the brink of extinction to the ledges of the New River Gorge.

For more info on this project, see page 4



Species Spotlight: **House Wren**

Scientific Name: *Troglodytes aedon*

Appearance: Can occur in many variable tones of gray and brown according to geographic location. All are brown tones above with light grayish underneath. Eastern populations are more brown while western populations are grayer. The tail is usually held cocked upright and is proportionally stubby.

Size: A small songbird with a medium length bill and tail. They are 4 ½ to 5 inches long.

Range: A common bird that can be found in the summers in North America from the eastern to western coast and into southern Canada. They winter as far north as Texas and as far south as southern Mexico.

Food Preferences: Diet includes invertebrates such as millipedes, spiders and snails. They will also eat suet and mealworms.

Hunting Technique: House Wrens glean or pick their food items from foliage and branches, but generally not from the ground.

Breeding & Habitat: They breed in open woodland, farmland, shrubbery and even suburbs. They do well in residential areas and

edges along clearings, favoring most vegetated habitats, except in deserts, marshland and very dense forests. During the winter they seek out similar habitats as in the summer, but pay more attention to sites with good cover. The House Wren is polygynous, which means one male mates with two or more females, although it is not totally unusual to have monogamous pairing as well.

Nesting: The House Wren is a cavity nester, and will readily accept a nest box. They also choose natural holes in trees such as woodpecker holes and will sometimes even use the old nest of another bird. Their nests are made of small twigs and grasses and are lined with a variety of fine and soft materials such as moss and animal fur. Nesting time is April through July.

Eggs: Their eggs are white with brown markings. There are usually 6-8 eggs in each clutch and the pair usually has two broods each year, although there are rare examples of a pair having a third. Both males and females incubate the eggs.

Chicks: The chicks hatch within 13-15 days after eggs are laid and remain in the nest for 12-18 days. The chicks hatch out immobile, with no down and eyes closed.

Status: Since the House Wren is tolerant of human settlements, it's populations are in healthy numbers and are even increasing in many areas. It is commonly found throughout it's whole range.

Notes: The males often build crude "dummy" nests, and also exhibit a very strong fidelity to nesting territories from year to year. Once the female has decided to accept the male as a mate, they both inspect the nests he has built and choose one together. Both males and females will destroy the eggs of other house wrens as well as other species in the area. This behavior declines when the adults are caring for their own eggs and chicks. House wrens are rarely a cowbird host, and lead relatively short lives: the oldest house wren on record was 7 years old when he died.



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 304-2-425-9944
Stafford Drive Plaza, Princeton

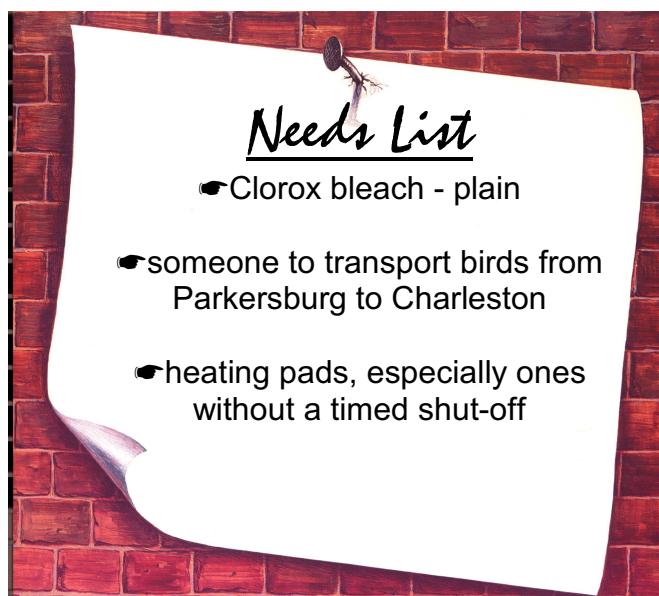
Animal Care Associates	304-344-2244
840 Oakwood Road, Charleston	
Beckley Veterinary Hospital	304-255-4159
215 Dry Hill Road, Charleston	
Cross Lanes Veterinary Hospital	304-776-4501
524 Old Geoff Mtn Road, Cross Lanes	
Ceredo-Kenova Animal Clinic	304-453-6384
750 "C" Street, Ceredo	
Country Roads Veterinary 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	304-562-3221
#1 Davis Court, Hurricane	
Monroe Veterinary House Calls	304-667-2365
Union	
Oak Hill Animal Hospital	304-465-8267
Summerlee Road, Oak Hill	
Raleigh County Animal Hospital	304-253-4787
198 Ragland Road, Beckley	
Stonecrest Animal Hospital	304-525-1800
#1 Stonecrest Drive, Huntington	
Valley West Veterinary Hospital	304-343-6783
201 Virginia Street West, Charleston	

A few quick general notes:

⌘ Window alert decals have come a long way and have gotten even more high-tech. We encourage anyone who is having trouble with birds hitting their window to purchase the latest in the innovation line: decals that apply without adhesive to the outside of your window and reflect the ultraviolet spectrum of light. This makes the decals stand out blazingly bright to birds and we've seen window strikes decline almost to nil since we've started using them here at TRAC. The decals work much better than ribbons (which can sometimes tangle and thus become useless) or predator-shaped cutouts, and they are not expensive. A package of 4 decals is in the \$7.00 range from the website: www.windowalert.com.

⌘ The National Park Service - New River Gorge has set up a live feed web cam from the peregrine release (or "hack") site on the Gorge cliffs. The live feed can be viewed at the Canyon Rim Visitor's Center at the New River Gorge Bridge during normal business hours, and is located in the main display area, around the wall from the welcome desk. If you can't get to the Visitor's Center, you can still catch the action by going on-line:

www.nps.gov/neri/photosmultimedia/neri_peregrine.htm
or you can go to the TRAC website and click on the link on the main page: www.tracwv.org.



Introducing Celeste Cantees

When a good friend I go to Concord University with told me that Three Rivers Avian Center offered summer internships, and that she had happily engaged in one, I was immediately excited at the thought of such an opportunity. I contacted the Center to inquire as to if they had filled their 2007 summer position yet, and upon a visit to the Center they accepted me. I was so happy to look forward to a summer of education, scientific study and fun, instead of the mind numbing work of waitressing I had been reluctantly subjecting myself to. With a whole life full of interest for animals and the natural world, TRAC is exactly the kind of supportive organization I need.

As I study the sciences I also study art, and I have always loved portraying raptors in my work. TRAC is giving me valuable information when it comes to the anatomy and movement of these great birds and I will be forever grateful for this rare chance. As I wind my way through odd jobs during my time as an undergrad, I am becoming increasingly discouraged with their lack of meaning. I want to help while I work, make a difference to something that needs it with my daily time out of classes. As of now, what needs more help than the natural world we live in and its animals? Causes such as the one supported by TRAC need all the assistance they can get, and now I finally feel like I am helping something with a lot of meaning. It is a great feeling in the midst of all our environmental turmoil.

In addition to that, I am learning all kinds of valuable information that no book can let on. Nothing can tell you how to rotate your hands around a Great Horned Owl's wings to his legs for a correct body-hold except experience plus one who holds that experience. I am gratefully learning a rich amount of knowledge about the State I have grown up in and it's environmental and wildlife policies, interesting geological and flora facts, and of course all the avian information I can hold. This is a huge benefit

for me, as I intend to practice licensed wildlife rehabilitation when I complete school.

The daily cleaning tasks that come when caring for animals are no new job for me and I have always taken some kind of joy in the daily repetitive acts of heeding the needs of animals, from changing soiled bedding to emotional connection. I find it amusing that some of the most important and needed objects for an established and respected avian rehabilitation center and my own little rabbit hutch are the same; newspaper and scrub brushes. It is yet even more amusing when I look up from changing a water bowl to see the intense eyes of an owl or a hawk instead of the soft face of a rabbit or a ferret. It is a refreshing and alarming shift from the domesticated animal world that I am ever immersed in, and I love it.

With the raptors, as I "prepare" their rodent rations and learn how to handle their long talons I feel closer the beautiful and raw side of the natural world that I have missed since I have given all my time to text books and study. As I have still yet only been with TRAC a few weeks, I look forward to the rest of the knowledge and experience I will be lucky enough to get this summer.



Celeste is going into her senior year at Concord University, double majoring in Biology and Art. In the photo above, she is helping put the 8 male and 1 female young peregrines into Flight Barn Room 1 to spend the next week of their lives getting ready to go free in the New River Gorge as part of the five year Peregrine Restoration Project.

If You Weren't At The Migration Celebration, You Missed a Good Time!

Kids painted wildlife shapes on the sandy beach, photographers lined up for that perfect photo of their favorite raptor, over in the arts and crafts area kids learned about how various types of rocks were formed and made outrageous bird-like sun visors that they showed off all day long.

Birders came up with 33 species of birds on their walks, including: tree swallow, Canada goose, mallard, northern rough winged swallow, crow, American robin, red eyed vireo, eastern phoebe, house finch, blue jay, downy woodpecker, hairy woodpecker, eastern phoebe, barn swallow, Carolina chickadee, tufted titmouse, wood thrush, blue headed vireo, northern parula, yellow warbler, chestnut sided warbler, yellow rumped warbler, yellow throated warbler, worm-eating warbler, black and white warbler, ovenbird, Kentucky warbler, northern cardinal, eastern towhee, song sparrow, turkey vulture, black billed cuckoo, scarlet tanager, & ruby throated hummingbird.

Thanks to the WV Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Diversity Section, the WV Dept of Agriculture Insect Survey, the National Park Service - New River Gorge, Southern Red's BBQ, Granny Sue, Jaime Ford, Steve Rotsch, our volunteers and Little Beaver State Park for making the event such a great success. See you next year!



Gardeners donate \$500

The Greenbrier District Garden Clubs donated \$500 to Three Rivers Avian Center in April in support of our work to care for injured wild birds and to educate and involve the public in ecosystem stewardship. The Greenbrier District Garden Clubs consist of 15 Garden Clubs in Greenbrier, Summers and Monroe counties.

Shown at the check presentation are (left to right) TRAC Education Director Ron Perrone with Perry the Peregrine Falcon, Greenbrier District Garden Club's Joan Tuckwiller, Loretta Jones and Mary Jane Carr, and TRAC Executive Director Wendy Perrone with Twister, the Barn Owl.



The Raptors are Coming to a State Park or Forest Near You!

Beginning Friday, June 28th, the TRAC educational birds will be out doing programs around West Virginia in the State Parks and Forests. The programs are free and open to the public, and are a great family event. Check our web page for upcoming programs in your area:

www.tracwv.org

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. Those who are 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.

For those who wish to purchase t-shirts, polo shirts, stickers, patches posters or CD's, we encourage you to please visit our website www.tracwv.org/generalstore. There you will find full color pictures of all the above and the opportunity to purchase them using Paypal or your credit card. *New item alert:* we have a limited supply of dark blue t-shirts with a drawing by Roger Tory Peterson of two peregrines; the TRAC triangle logo is in white on the sleeve.

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.

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

Spirit	Golden Eagle	\$60
Apex	American Kestrel (male)	\$30
Ayla	American Kestrel (female)	\$30
Perry	Peregrine Falcon	\$30
Robbie	Barred Owl	\$30
Twister	Barn Owl	\$30
Ginger	Long Eared Owl	\$30
Casey	Eastern Screech Owl -red	\$30
Clara	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

You may have noticed that the newsletter has a new printing format. We had a lot of problems with the post office machines getting hung up on the staples and ripping and mutilating the newsletter before it could be delivered. Drop us a line and let us know if your newsletter arrived in better condition this time!

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

Your name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail address: _____

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 tax-deductible & will help advance the work of Three Rivers Avian Center.

All Creatures Veterinary Clinic	Crown Hill Equipment Co.	Kanawha Co. Animal Emergency Clinic	Harlan Wilson
Animal Care Associates	Deb Darden & Richard Segars	Bev & Tom Kinraide	James & Mona Wiseman
Anne & Warren Ballard	Rodney Davis	The Lathroum Family	
David & Martha Brumfield	DuPont Belle Plant Employees	Leon Wilson Bird Club	<i>(your name could be here too!)</i>
Evelyn Bradley & Fred Gilkey	Gary & Betty Ellis	Dean & Gail Osgood	
Brooks Bird Club	The Forman & Frame Family	David & Sherry Patick	
Brooks Bird Club - Handlan Chap.	Good Shepherd Veterinary Hospital	Jeff & Monica Patton	
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A Special Thank You to: The Acker Foundation

