



# The Raptor Chapter

Volume #19  
2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Edition

Issue # 2  
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*A Publication of Three Rivers Avian Center*

## New Volunteers in Bluefield Area Dive Right In

**C**ollege  
Student  
Emily

Oblinger and her father Mark couldn't have known what lay in store for them when they came to TRAC's 20<sup>th</sup>



7/28/2010 Five mallard ducks, recovered from immersion in diesel fuel in the Bluefield area, are ready to go to their new home in the New River at the foot of the Bluestone Dam.

Anniversary Celebration and Public Tour Day on July 3<sup>rd</sup>. They toured the facility, talked with staff and Board of Directors members and decided to sign up as new volunteers. That decision gave them a bunch of work to do the next week when a spill of diesel fuel wound up in a creek in their hometown of Bluefield, covering 9 ducks and other wildlife!

TRAC was alerted to the duck's plight by the Bluefield Daily Telegraph newspaper's managing editor Samantha Perry on July 6<sup>th</sup>. Diesel fuel had spilled into Beaver Creek over the Fourth of July weekend and had made it all the way down the drainage into the Bluestone River as far as the town of Nemours. Along

with other wildlife throughout the drainage, ducks had been coated with the fuel and were visibly in trouble. The situation was further complicated because Bluefield spans the boarder between Virginia and West Virginia, and existing regulations do not allow birds from one state to be taken over the State line

by a human without specific permission from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the States involved. Since the State line meanders through the spill area, getting the ducks into care became a legal mess, and at times a source of dark humor.

TRAC doesn't normally work with ducks since most of them are game species, but on July 8<sup>th</sup>, the US Fish and Wildlife Service gave us specific permission to bring any ducks found in the area on the Virginia side of the State line over into West Virginia and asked us to step in and do what we could. So, the Oblingers received phone calls, and the rest is history as they say, (See "Ducks" on pg 6)

# Wikka Wikka

From time to time we get woodpecker chicks to raise up at TRAC. The only tricky part about them is that if you have more than one, you have to keep them separated. If you don't, they use each other's head for practice and a nest full of chicks will slowly whittle itself down to one dominate survivor. Aside from this savage tendency, woodpeckers are full of charm and personality. One Yellow Shafted Flicker named Wikka Wikka is famous around here. He arrived pretty small, but had most of his feathers out already.

A diet of meal worms, raisins and suet fattened him up nicely. We introduced him to the patio where we would toss wriggling meal worms down for him to chase. It didn't take long before he picked one up. Then he discovered ants. Unlike slow moving mealworms, ants run away quickly when pestered. He would scuttle along behind them, head outstretched pointing with his open beak and when they didn't jump into his mouth of their own free will, he would yell at them as they fled. After a couple of days, in exasperation, he flicked out his tongue and voila! A tiny snack.

And that's when the light went on in his little brain. While he would still scoot over to his eating area for food, he spent a good deal of his time exploring. Woodpeckers are by nature exploratory. They make their living by listening for tiny bug noises under bark and inside trees and then pry bark and wood apart to get them. As this little guy was still partly flightless, his exploring was mostly on foot. Everything was fair game, every nook and cranny between boards or any new object placed in his sight. If the object moved, he'd scoot over, examine, and shoot out the long thin tongue to taste and

see if it was edible. Potted plants, furniture, bare feet, stones, whatever.

In short order, our dog Fiona abandoned the porch whenever "that thing" was out and about for some exercise. This was Wikka Wikka's first territorial victory. From then on, the bird would declare his space and challenge interlopers by calling, "wik, wik , wikka wik and swing his little head back and forth while he marched around his domain. Anyone who has watched Flickers at the bird feeder knows that even Blue Jays give ground to them when this display is going. Wikka Wikka was now a potential tyrant and the porch would soon be his empire. Flying lessons commenced by putting him on low tree branches which forced him to take the plunge if he wanted to go anywhere. He learned fast. Within a day he was moving from porch to trees and back. In two days he was exploring all around the house, tree to tree to tree.



Fortunately for us, all the woodpecker parents around our place were in the same predicament as we were - what to do with demanding children. A small flock of juveniles of various woodpeckers species were dashing around the trees begging a meal from any adult who happened to be there to take advantage of our bird feeders. Wikka Wikka joined this mixed flock and discovered the pleasures of being a bird. Within a week of his first flight, he no longer came in to visit us but we could occasionally hear his imperious call as he moved around the farm with his new cohorts. It was a pleasure to see him zoom past jamming with another flicker. Fiona was happy too because "that thing" was gone and the porch was once again hers to snooze upon in peace.

*-Ron Perrone, TRAC Education Director*





## Fall 2010 Birds of Prey Photo Workshop

**Saturday  
October 9,  
2010**

J o i n  
Positive Image  
Photography's  
Steven Wayne  
Rotsch and

Three Rivers Avian Center in a day of congenial photography fun! Amateur and professional photographers alike are invited to take this opportunity to capture images of raptors native to West Virginia in natural settings in either half day or day-long sessions.

Twelve birds of prey will be modeling for the cameras, including a Golden Eagle, Barn Owl, Red-tailed Hawks, Broad-winged Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, and Great Horned Owl among others. All raptors will be available during the both the morning and afternoon sessions. Photographers may also pick up technical tips in Adobe Photoshop CS2 during one-on-one sessions with instructors, but the focus of the workshop is having fun and photographing the birds.

Participants should bring a camera, flash, a telephoto lens, extra batteries and lots of film or memory cards. If you have a monopod or tripod, participants in previous workshops have found them useful. All photograph sessions will be outdoors, so dress appropriately.

### **To register or for more information:**

Workshop Leader Steve Rotsch can be contacted directly at **304-541-7574**, his email is **swrkab@aol.com**. Full details of the workshop, registration forms, and a gallery of photos from previous workshops can be found

on his website: **www.stevenrotsch.com**. The site also has full directions to Three Rivers Avian Center, a downloadable registration form and the opportunity to prepay your Workshop registration using any major credit card or Paypal.

Participants may sign up for the full-day 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. session (which includes lunch) for \$100, or either half day session for \$50.00. The morning session runs from 9 a.m. to noon, the afternoon session runs from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Please indicate your preference when you register.

### ***And now, a word from photographer Steve Rotsch, TRAC's Photo Workshop Leader:***

*I am a photographer who has chased wildlife for over 35 years. The Three Rivers Avian Center's Birds of Prey Workshop allows photographers the unique opportunity in one day to capture award-winning images of about twelve birds that would be impossible to capture during a lifetime of shooting. Raptors are usually shy and secretive in the wild. The Avian Center's raptors, used to being photographed and on exhibition, are fantastic models.*

*As the instructor I feel it's my job to mediate between the participants and the bird handlers to get realistic photos that don't stress the birds. I try to help the photographers use the equipment they have to get the best photographs they can get. I emphasize the need to use fill flash, even in these ideal conditions, and urge the photographers to move around the birds to find new and different views and backgrounds.*

*We have such a diversity of talent attending the workshops, from rank amateur to professional photographers, and I learn something from most of them. I am always amazed that 15 people, shooting side by side, will capture 15 completely different interpretations of the same scene. I look forward to each workshop as another photographic adventure.*

The adventures continue.

Won't you join us?



**TRAC Staff Veterinarian: Dr Bill Streit**  
 All Creatures Veterinary Clinic 304-425-9944  
 1916 West Main Street, Princeton  
*Many thanks to Dr Sue Mohler and the All Creatures Staff as well!*  
*Thanks also to TRAC Advisory Board members*  
**Dr. Jeff Patton & Monica Patton LVT**  
 Animal Care Associates, 840 Oakwood Road, Charleston 304 -344-2244  
 & the Animal Care Associates veterinarians and staff

The TRAC Hospice Veterinary Network works together to provide high quality veterinary care our wild bird patients. We couldn't do without them, and we appreciate their help immensely. Let them know you appreciate their help too when you have a chance!

**Beckley**

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

Animal Care Associates	840 Oakwood Road, Charleston	304-344-2244
Good Shepherd Vet. Hosp. (Dr. Sarah Stephenson)	3703 MacCorkle Ave. SE, Charleston	304-925-7387
Kanawha Co. Animal Emergency Clinic	5304 MacCorkle Ave SW, South Charleston	304-768-2911
Valley West Veterinary Hospital	201 Virginia Street West, Charleston	304-343-6783

**Cross Lanes**

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

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

Stonecrest Animal Hospital (Dr. Kris King)	#1 Stonecrest Drive, Huntington	304-525-1800
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**Hurricane**

Hurricane Animal Hospital	2120 Mount Vernon Road, Hurricane	304-757-2287
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**Lewisburg**

Greenbrier Veterinary Hospital	Rt 219 North, Lewisburg	304-645-1476
Lewisburg Veterinary Hospital	US Route 60, Lewisburg	304-645-1434

**Oak Hill**

Oak Hill Animal Hospital	2525 Summerlee Road, Oak Hill	304-465-8267
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**Parkersburg**

A-Vet, Inc. (Dr. Joe Conlin)	3602 E 7th St, Suite 3, Parkersburg	304-428-8387
Parkersburg Veterinary Hospital	1504 36 <sup>th</sup> Street, Parkersburg	304-422 - 6971

**Princeton**

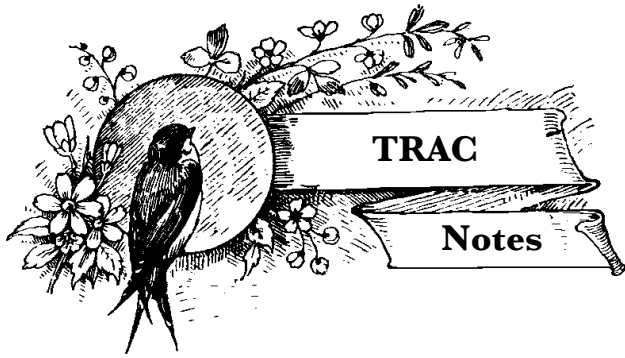
All Creatures Veterinary Clinic	1916 West Main Street, Princeton	304-425-9944
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**Union**

Monroe Veterinary House Calls	Union	304-667-2365
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***Needs List:***

Bath-sized towels	Unflavored Pedialyte	Paper towels	Simple Green cleaner
Good quality common bird seed	Black sunflower bird seed	Safflower bird seed	
Disinfecting wipes	AA Alkaline Batteries	Postage stamps	



**T**he Bald Eagle pair that nested near Hinton had two young eaglets, and they have continued to stay near and even in the nest all Summer long. Periodic observations by volunteers over the months since the young birds fledged have provided watchers with views of the young birds coming back and lying down in the nest as late as mid-August. Whitey and Streaky, the two adults, are also still staying right around the nest site, often near one or more of the youngsters. Streaky will be hard to tell apart from Whitey soon - her head is turning completely white as she comes into full adulthood. Monitoring will continue, so keep an eye on the TRAC Blog on our website and/or check out our periodic updates on the Three Rivers Avian Center's Facebook page.

**T**he Peregrine Restoration Project had another successful year at Grandview in the New River Gorge, adding another 21 peregrines to the skies. 9 came from New Jersey and 12 came from Virginia, including one late-hatching group rescued from the Godwin Bridge in VA. 3 of the first birds that were released disappeared quickly from the hack site and were not seen for the rest of the season, but the other 18 continued to stay in the hacking area until mid-July then began to drift off. This gave the Project an 86% release rate for our fifth year.

The New River Gorge Peregrine Restoration Project is a cooperative effort between the New River Gorge National River, the WV Division of Natural Resources, the Center for Conservation Biology, Three Rivers Avian Center, Virginia Department of Game

and Inland Fisheries, and the New Jersey Department of Natural Resources. Tri-State Bird Rescue has provided invaluable assistance. A full report on the Project will be available on our website within a few weeks: [www.tracwv.org/restoration.html](http://www.tracwv.org/restoration.html).

**F**light Barn construction has been an on-again, off-again endeavor for many of the last months. We have decided to hire ourselves out as rain makers! Our schedule from late April until the end of August is filled with commitments for the Peregrine Restoration Project, educational programs around the State - especially in the WV State Parks and Forests, and wild bird rehabilitation work (and we had no intern this Summer), but we set aside scheduled days for construction work. About 70% of the time, the scheduled day was rained out. Now that September has arrived and we're looking at drier weather the hammers are swinging again. A 3 person crew put 20 rafters up in one day this week. We have a few more to go and some sheathing boards, then the roof goes on. We'll be posting pictures on the TRAC Blog of our progress: [www.tracwv.org/wordpress](http://www.tracwv.org/wordpress).

**M**igration Celebration 2010 was a big success, despite unseasonably chilly weather. 1,500 attendees enjoyed family activities ranging from birding and nature walks to bug hunts, to all sorts of kids crafts and storytelling led by Suzi Whaples. Participants in Bev Delidow's birding walks around Little Beaver State Park tallied up 38 species of birds including osprey, northern parula, orchard oriole, wood thrush, and blue headed vireo among others. Photographers in the popular Photo Workshop with Steve Rotsch worked to get that perfect shot of their favorite TRAC raptor: Spirit the Golden Eagle, Perry the Peregrine Falcon or Twister the Barn Owl. When not involved in one of these activities, people visited interactive displays from the WV Dept. Of Natural Resources, the National Park Service, and the WV Dept of Agriculture. Next year's Migration Celebration is set for May 14, 2011. See you there!

## ***Ducks.... continued from page 1***

documented in detail by the Bluefield Daily Telegraph newspaper (Visit their website at [www.bdtonline.com](http://www.bdtonline.com), and enter "Three Rivers Avian Center" into the search box. Many thanks are due to the newspaper for their care and coverage of this issue. )

Mark and Emily teamed up to wade into the diesel covered water, pressing reporter Greg Jordan into service along the way to help ferry contaminated ducks from the edge of the creek to cardboard boxes kindly provided by Bluefield VA's Mayor Don Harris. They then transported the 4 ducks they'd gotten on this first attempt over to TRAC's Staff Vet Dr Bill Streit and his crew at All Creatures Veterinary Clinic in Princeton, WV and helped with the first series of gentle baths to remove the diesel and with initial medical treatments. Then it was back to check for more ducks. In all, over a period of several days they were able to rescue 7 ducks, including one very young one. The fuel oil took it's toll though, and we lost the young duck and one adult female, both of whom succumbed to the toxins within 24 hours of intake.

As soon as the ducks were stabilized, they were transferred from All Creatures Veterinary Clinic to the flight barn at TRAC. Here they were ensconced in a large 20 foot by 15 foot room, with a nice sand floor, comfortable places to lie down, rocks to clamber on, plenty of cracked corn and other good food, and best of all, a large, 5 foot in diameter kiddie pool to paddle around in. They seemed to relish their new mini-habitat, and spent the next several weeks recovering from the effects of the fuel oil. They were released as a group into the New River at the foot of the Bluestone Dam on July 28<sup>th</sup>. The area is a hot spot for all kinds of waterfowl, and the 5 mallards blended right into the mix.

Not all volunteers get tossed right into heavy active duty right off the top. Some wait for weeks or more to get called into action. We're so glad that Emily and Mark were so ready, willing and able to pitch in so effectively on such sort notice. Kudos, folks! (Now, about that flight barn work party...<grin>)

# Announcing:

## **West Virginia Birds of Prey**

*A Tribute to the Three Rivers Avian Center*

*Photography by Steven Wayne Rotsch*



## **West Virginia Birds of Prey**

### **A Tribute to the Three Rivers Avian Center Photography by Steven Wayne Rotsch**

This book is a tribute to the Three Rivers Avian Center (TRAC) in Brooks, WV, and it's veterinarians, volunteers and donors. The Center's co-directors, Ron and Wendy Perrone, have released hundreds of rehabilitated birds to the wild. Many of the birds included in this book are considered "education" birds at TRAC, birds that could not be returned to the wild. Some of the birds were photographed in the wild.

The author and photographer, Steven Wayne Rotsch, has been a professional photographer for over 35 years and leads bi-annual photography workshops at TRAC.

All proceeds will be donated to TRAC, an IRS registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. To preview up to 15 pages of this 40 page beautiful coffee table quality book, or to place an order, go online and visit <http://www.blurb.com/bookstore/detail/1545856> or click on the link from TRAC's online Blog ([www.tracwv.org](http://www.tracwv.org)) or from our Facebook Fan Page.

***Congratulations, Steve, and thank you!***

**B**ecome 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.

**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
Perry	Peregrine Falcon	\$30
Robbie	Barred Owl	\$30
Twister	Barn Owl	\$30
Ginger	Long Eared 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 date!**

**Your name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone #:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Starting this year, we are working to reduce our carbon footprint, conserve TRAC resources, and save precious funds by using e-mail instead of the US Postal Service as much as possible. If you provide us with your e-mail address, we will use it to acknowledge donations and to send important notices once in a while (we promise not to cram your inbox!). TRAC has a long-standing policy of not selling or sharing member's addresses or other contact data, so your information is safe with us.*

**Your support is vital to our ability to continue caring for wild birds. Thank you!**

**Hey everybody!** There is still 1 more free Public Tour Days scheduled from 1 - 5 pm at TRAC on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Bring your family and friends to see live raptors up close and learn about the environments they live in. Discover what it takes to build a nest, watch a golden eagle fly, tour the facility and learn about the hazards wild birds face on a daily basis. Get some tips on how you can help wild birds. Tour Days are free & open to the public. Lots of fun for all ages! Contact TRAC for more information: [trac@tracwv.org](mailto:trac@tracwv.org) or 304-466-4683.



## **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.*

All Creatures Veterinary Clinic  
Sharon Anderson  
Animal Care Associates  
Anne & Warren Ballard  
Pat Barker  
Charles & Nancy Brabec  
Evelyn Bradley & Fred Gilkey  
Scott & Emily Briers  
Joyce Broyles  
Brooks Bird Club  
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Allen & Mindy Waldron  
Harlan Wilson  
James & Mona Wiseman  
Charles & Beverly Wright  
*(Your name could be here.....)*

### **A Special Thank You to:**

**The Acker Foundation**

**The H. P. & Anne S. Hunnicutt Foundation**

**The One Foundation**



**Three Rivers Avian Center**  
HC 74 Box 279 Brooks, WV 25951  
(304) 466 - 4683 [www.tracwv.org](http://www.tracwv.org)