



The Raptor Chapter

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Young Bald Eagle Gets A Second Chance

A four year old female bald eagle was found at the entrance of the Greenbrier County Landfill on August 10th, weak and barely able to stand. She was picked up by Animal Control Officer Robert McClung and brought to TRAC. She was so weak that she was having trouble maintaining consciousness during exam and x-rays, and everything pointed to another case of lead poisoning. But no lead was visible on x-ray anywhere in her body.

She was placed in intensive care at TRAC, and we began treatment for heavy metal ingestion while we waited for the blood work to be analyzed at the lab. By the next day she was able to stand, but she still appeared dazed and disoriented and was unable to eat on her own. It took another 3 days before she was able to perch easily and start to be interested in food. Finally the lab results came back: although most values came back normal and her West Nile Test was normal, her blood showed very high levels of zinc.



The 4 year old female bald eagle is released back to freedom by TRAC Staff Veterinarian Dr Bill Streit on August 29th.

The source of the zinc is hard to determine, but it is an ingredient in some rodenticides. We could only speculate that perhaps she ate some rodents that had been ingesting poisoned bait in amounts large enough to make them ill but not enough to kill them. If she had eaten several of these rodents the zinc could end up in her bloodstream.

She also had troubles with her digestive tract, vomiting on her first day in care and having diarrhea over the next two days. We treated her with probiotics and she gradually regained her appetite and interest in food. All evidence pointed to having eaten something that had some toxic bacteria built up in it, probably a carcass that had been out in the warm temperatures for a day or two.

By August 27th she was back to being a normal bald eagle and was able to fly and maneuver well in the flight barn. Her release was scheduled for August 29th and she flew out beautifully, watched by the folks who rescued her: Ray Henson, Wayne Childers and Robert McClung. You can watch the video of her release on the TRAC website: www.tracwv.org, there's a link to the video on our front page. Fly well Lady, and watch what you eat!

Migration Madness...

People don't generally know it, but birds begin their Fall migration while it is technically Summer.

Certain coastal birds, for instance, actually start as early as late June. But for most North American inland birds, the process gets underway in August and remains high through October. This is because the shorter days following the Summer Solstice triggers physical and psychological changes in the birds. For others, such as the raptors, sparrows, waterfowl and blackbirds, migration can be variable and may continue well into December.

Migration is greatly affected by the weather. While birds may be moving every day, the volume we might see can increase suddenly when favorable winds trigger more birds to move. A cold front with clear, dry weather often has great numbers of birds moving in front of and in the first day or 2 after the front passes. This is because the winds associated with cold fronts are often out of the North.

Most songbirds move at night and come down during the day to rest and feed ravenously. They can nearly double their weight, putting on fat. Songbirds can fly as long as they have fat to burn, returning to earth, not when they run out of breath, but when they run out of fat. Migrating at night gives them a measure of protection from the raptors, who migrate during the day when they can hitchhike on the thermal updrafts to conserve energy. Raptors must, of course, hunt as they go. Some birds from the Canadian Maritimes actually stay put on their Summer range putting on huge amounts of fat and then migrate in one non-stop flight to their Wintering grounds in South America. For some birds, migration is not such an urgent affair. Whereas Broad-winged Hawks always head south, some Red-tailed Hawks stick around all Winter, moving on only if food becomes scarce or if the weather becomes severe.

But why do birds do it? The answer lies in the fact that in those parts of the world where Winter gets cold, the available food supply is drastically cut back. Insects die and plants go dormant. There is simply not enough food to go around. Only a relatively few species stick it out. But with the coming of Spring, there is a sudden abundance of everything edible that exceeds the needs of those birds who been able to Winter over. This overabundance is a boon to migratory birds from the tropics where there is always competition for the available food. So they head North and raise their families here where the pickin's are better.

Migration is also a trial for birds. Those that must clear the Gulf of Mexico in a single leap do so at great peril. While birds are over land, they face a number of human obstacles. Migration routes are often ancient paths following mountain ridges, or straight line geological features like peninsulas and coastlines when they are oriented north/south. In areas where agriculture has removed most of the trees and cover, the remaining plots of cover become critical stopover points, especially if there is water.

And there is always the weather. When birds run into rain, overcast conditions, or fog, they can be confused. Along the coast, they have been known to swing out to sea where they may spend fruitless time before returning to land at dawn exhausted. Sometimes they never do get their bearings and perish at sea. Where cities or towers light the fog or haze at night, birds become disoriented. The lights draw them in where they have been known to crash in large numbers. In short, wherever migrating birds are forced by conditions to interact with humans things can go wrong, especially at choke points in the migration path.

You can assist birds on their migration both south in the Winter and north in the Spring. Look on the last page of this newsletter for a list of tips.

- Ron Perrone, TRAC Education Director

The Great Suet Recipe

Here's a suet recipe you can make at home, doesn't melt or mildew in the summer heat and is attractive to many species of birds year 'round. (It's also easy for kids to make, so it's a fun project at home...) In testing here at TRAC, we've found that birds will eat this suet readily and prefer it to commercial products available locally. The recipe makes 3+ suet cakes. The extra cakes can be put in the freezer to keep until needed. Many thanks to Dr Scott Shalaway and to his book: "Birds, Bats, Butterflies...and Other Backyard Beasts". If you don't have a wire mesh suet holder or one attached to a bird seed feeder, a plastic mesh bag that held onions, fruit or garlic works really well. Just hang it so that it is suspended from a branch away from the tree trunk. Here's the recipe:

1 cup crunchy peanut butter

1 cup lard (no substitutes!)

2 cups old fashioned oats (oatmeal, no instant)

2 cups plain cornmeal (we use stone ground)

1 cup whole wheat flour (we use stone ground)

several handfuls of raisins

Melt peanut butter and lard together (we put them in a glass bowl in our microwave to do this step). Mix in other ingredients. Once it's well mixed, place into old store-bought suet containers, or form into whatever shape you need to fit in your feeder.

A note from experience: If you put it into plastic "tupperware", remember to line the container with plastic film. That way you can easily get it back out once it's frozen. The original mixture will be soft, but it hardens in the freezer and doesn't go back to being soft.

facebook

Miss getting updates from TRAC in newsletters? We're on Facebook, and you don't have to be a FB member to read the updates. Just click on the link on our website's main page: www.tracwv.org



Mark your Calendar!

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

September 22nd 3 pm @ Cacapon State Resort Park (Berkeley Springs) TRAC will be presenting our "Wings of Wonder: WV Birds of Prey" program. Bring your family and friends to meet Regis the bald eagle, Perry the Peregrine Falcon, Hoolie the great horned owl, Nick the red tailed hawk and their friends. Don't forget your camera! The program is free and open to the public.

October 4th & 5th 9 am - 5pm @ The Pumpkin Festival (Milton) Come look for the TRAC raptors and display booth near the Veteran's Memorial Wall. We will be changing the birds on display on an hourly basis.

October 6th 1 - 5 pm @ TRAC Last free public tour day for 2012 at Three Rivers Avian Center's facility on Brooks Mountain. Interactive displays, live birds of prey on display, and more. Fun for all ages!

October 13th 9 am - 4 pm @ TRAC Annual Fall Photography workshop at TRAC. Photographers of all skill levels are invited to capture images of raptors native to WV in natural settings. Half day or day-long sessions available. Registration is required, deadline for registration is Wednesday October 10th. For information and registration contact Workshop Leader Steve Rotsch directly at **304-541-7574**, his email is **swrkab@aol.com**. Full details of the workshop, fees and registration forms, and a gallery of photos from previous workshops are on his website: www.stevenrotsch.com



TRAC Staff Veterinarian: Dr Bill Streit

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

Many thanks to Dr Mohler, Dr Hughes & 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

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

Elkview

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

Huntington

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

Hurricane

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

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

Parkersburg

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

Princeton

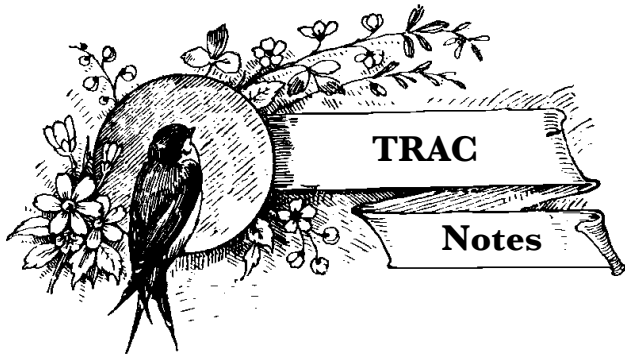
All Creatures Veterinary Clinic 1916 West Main Street, Princeton 304-425-9944

Union

Monroe Veterinary House Calls Union 304-667-2365

Needs list:

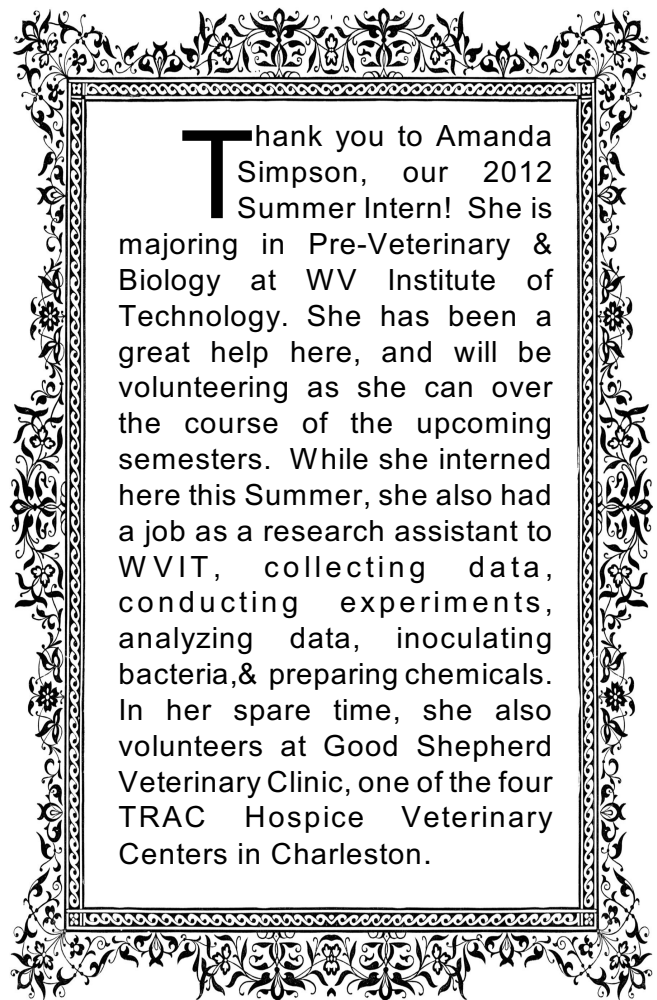
Unflavored Pedialyte Wash Cloths Scrub brushes
Disinfecting wipes AA Alkaline Batteries



Welcome to Sharyn Ogden, originally a member of TRAC and now an volunteer assistant with TRAC on the weekends and holidays. She has a

day job as a Payroll Administrator at a company in Blacksburg, VA, but her heart is in photography and nature. Originally from Adelaide, Australia, Sharyn has years of birdwatching and photography in her background and is glad to talk with anyone and share her love of the outdoors. Now she's learning the art and fun of working with wild birds first hand. Glad to have you with us, Sharyn, and thanks!

In the "Who'd'a thunk?" category, we had a very unusual case handed to us in mid July: a great blue heron, first year, who had been predated by a mink. The mink had jumped the heron while it was perched on a large log above the Greenbrier River near Willowood, just outside Hinton in Summers County. The attack was witnessed by the Blankenship family and they rapidly intervened to save the heron. The mink's canine teeth made holes around the head and very close to the spinal column of the heron, but somehow did nothing more than soft tissue damage. The bird healed up ok and was released back to the area where he was found. A video of it's release is on the TRAC website: www.tracwv.org/tracvideos.html



Thank you to Amanda Simpson, our 2012 Summer Intern! She is majoring in Pre-Veterinary & Biology at WV Institute of Technology. She has been a great help here, and will be volunteering as she can over the course of the upcoming semesters. While she interned here this Summer, she also had a job as a research assistant to WVIT, collecting data, conducting experiments, analyzing data, inoculating bacteria, & preparing chemicals. In her spare time, she also volunteers at Good Shepherd Veterinary Clinic, one of the four TRAC Hospice Veterinary Centers in Charleston.

Are you looking for great ideas for gifts for Christmas? TRAC is having a sale on many of our T-shirts and other selected other items through October. If you want to save money on shipping and handling fees, come check out the savings at our final public tour day for 2012 at TRAC. We'll be open from 1 - 5 pm on October 6th!

The Flight Barn is almost complete. We have been using the 3 center rooms heavily all Summer, but we're moving the rehabbing birds out of the Barn on a few scheduled days in September so we can finish the Leon Wilson Memorial Flyway by October. We'll be using it during October, but there will be a Grand Opening Ceremony on the 1st Saturday of November. Watch your mailbox!

Storm Report:

The Derecho of 2012 hit TRAC on June 29th at 7:30 pm. We had a program scheduled at Bluestone State Park for 7 pm that evening, but the excessive heat (102 degrees at TRAC at 3:30 pm) made it very dangerous for our birds so we cancelled the program. It was a fortuitous decision! The Storm hit like nothing before. Our power went out, as did our land-line telephone. Many roads in the County became impassible due to large and numerous downed trees and power lines. We fortunately had a 400 watt, 19 year old generator on hand as well as a few containers of gasoline and were able to limp along for a couple of days until we could purchase 2 more, larger generators.

Our telephone did not start to function correctly until a month after the storm hit. Our cell phones became our main telephones, and we were glad we'd switched to a mobile internet hotspot a few months back. Neighbors quickly cut up the downed trees that covered our roads around the top of the Mountain.

We did not lose any of the donated raptor food in the freezers. The Hospital's interior mews rooms provided a cool place for birds who had been healing up in the flight barn to relax in relative comfort, and our educational birds all had cool places to retreat to as needed. The generators provided enough power to run water from our wells so everyone had plenty of fresh water all the time.

TRAC came through the crisis in fairly good shape, and all the birds in our care barely noticed anything different, except for the flight barn birds that got moved inside until the heat broke. Thank you to all who e-mailed to check on us and who followed and messaged us on Facebook during the outages. We would also like to recognize and thank the utility crews who worked long and hard to restore services. Many came from long distances to help despite having similar troubles at home.

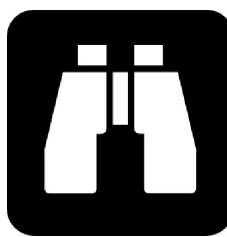
Visit this website for more information on this unique event: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/June_2012_North_American_derecho



Update on the bald eagle from Seebert:

As you may recall, we placed a non-releaseable bald eagle from Seebert WV (near Marlinton, WV) at the Children's Zoo at the Houston Zoo in Texas in April 2012. We just got an update, and he is doing very well. The staff has named him "Apollo", which we think is great, and they enjoy working with him. He's settling in just fine, according to staff reports.

On September 8, 2011 he was found floating in the Greenbrier River by volunteers tending the Greenbrier River Trail, 2 miles down-River from Seebert, WV. They rescued him from River and took him to Alan Shipley, WV DNR Wildlife Biologist, who met TRAC staff in Lewisburg. He was thin and worn out, exam showed old healing fractures of both the left wing and right leg. No surgical repair was needed for the leg and due to the extensive callous around the fracture on the wing there was no chance for repair there either. He stayed with us until he'd regained his weight and attitude, and now is a permanent resident at the Houston Zoo.



Watching migration is a fun family activity. Hanging Rock Raptor Observatory is staffed by volunteers and open to the public. You can see what's migrating through lately and get directions to the Tower at their website: <http://www.hangingrocktower.org> You don't have to be an expert to join in the fun - there are many helpful folks up there.

- M**igration is an endurance test for birds. It is exhausting and dangerous, but you can help these winged ones on their trek to their wintering grounds. Here are some tips:
- > keep your bird bath filled with fresh water. All that flying is dehydrating.
 - > keep your hummingbird feeders filled with fresh nectar until you haven't had a hummer visit for 2 weeks. Some hummers have been seen moving through in late October or later.
 - > if you have a window that birds collide with, break up the reflective surface by placing ribbons on the outside of the window, putting a screen on it, or take a fluorescent highlighter and make marks on the inside of the window where birds hit the window.
 - > keep your cat indoors. Many birds migrate at night and are exhausted by morning. They often will be found on the ground in the leaf litter and brush, resting and hunting for bugs and seeds. In their fatigued state they are easy prey for cats.
 - > put suet out. The fat in the suet is a great source of easy energy for insect eaters.



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

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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!

Your name: _____

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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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