

EAGLE VALLEY RAPTOR CENTER

caring for nature's injured and orphaned wildlife

FLIGHTS OF FANCY NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY, 2006

What's New

January was a busy month! We took in 11 birds: 6 red tail hawks, 3 screech owls, 1 Cooper's hawk, and 1 great horned owl. That meant a lot of extra mouths to feed and a big increase in our food bill.

The nice weather has enabled us to get out and do some more construction on a set of pens behind our flight pen for wild birds in rehab. So far we've set about 1/3 of the frame – if the weather holds, we'll probably have a volunteer work day to get them completed. It will be very nice when it's finished – one of the inner walls will be hinged, so we will be able to make a large double-sized pen to exercise the smaller birds and owls prior to release.

The board of directors met last weekend. In addition to electing the slate of officers for 2006, we also came up with some exciting ideas for the coming year. There is an article highlighting the meeting on page 2 of the newsletter.

Other future projects include: a footbridge over the creek to view the beaver dams, a patio area for the new picnic tables, a fire pit, and a "hacking box" (for conditioning young birds to the wild prior to release). Be on the lookout for these and some exciting new programs and events!

-Ken Lockwood, *Program Director*

A Triple Success!

It's not often that we have three large birds ready for release. But that's just what happened this past weekend, when we sent three red tailed hawks back out into the wild where they belong.

One of the three birds came from King's Camp, near Lake Afton. We invited the young men there to witness the release, and a good-sized crowd showed up for the event. They all enjoyed seeing those beautiful birds open up their wings and fly.

When these birds were first brought to Eagle Valley Raptor Center, none of them could fly, and one could hardly perch on its own. However, all three effortlessly beat their powerful wings as they took to the air last weekend, in silent testimony to the excellent care, feeding, and rehabilitation they received.



Board of Directors Update

At the meeting on January 29th, the Board elected the following officers for the 2006 calendar year:

President: Rachel Bournival
Vice-President: Abbie Wisdom
Secretary/Treasurer: Susan Lockwood

One of the main things accomplished was to establish some new committees to generate volunteer manpower and fundraising opportunities. These committees need members! If you're interested in joining one of the committees and helping out a *very* worthy cause, contact Abbie, Volunteer Coordinator at abbie@eaglevalleyraptorcenter.org.

If fundraising is more to your liking, then Merry Brewer is the woman to call! You can email her at merry@eaglevalleyraptorcenter.org.

FIRST FLIGHT

Editor's Note: I can only claim half of the following as mine; the other half (in italics) is the work and genius of Pink Floyd, whose rank will be forever unattainable to the likes of one such as myself. I should also mention that this was never intended for publication of any kind. However, at the request of a friend and Eagle Valley benefactor, I am reprinting it here.

*Into the distance, a ribbon of black
Stretched to the point of no turning back
A flight of fancy on a windswept field
Standing alone my senses reeled*

Today is the day. Perfect weather. Just enough wind.
Today is the day you fly on your own for the first time.

*A fatal attraction holding me fast, how
Can I escape this irresistible grasp?
Can't keep my eyes from the circling skies
Tongue-tied and twisted just an earth-bound misfit, I*

It took time to build your trust, but soon you allowed me to hold you, to carry you, to live in your world for a time. We've been inseparable for weeks; will we stay that way after today?

*Ice is forming on the tips of my wings
Unheeded warnings, I thought I thought of everything
No navigator to guide my way home
Unladen, empty and turned to stone*

Are you really ready for this? Am I? I'm fairly certain you'll come back to me -
You always have before.

(First Flight, continued)

But I've never let you go before without something holding you to the ground, to me.
For all your apparent devotion and attachment, you are still a wild bird.
You could easily fly away and leave me to return home without you.

*A soul in tension that's learning to fly
Condition grounded but determined to try
Can't keep my eyes from the circling skies
Tongue-tied and twisted just an earth-bound misfit, I*

You already know how to fly; it's I who have to learn to let go.
What will it be like to see you soaring free and unfettered?
What will it be like to see those talons spread out, to land on my outstretched arm?

*Above the planet on a wing and a prayer,
My grubby halo, a vapour trail in the empty air,*

Deep breath; I remove the leash. The only thing holding you to me now is your will.
I set you on a perch.
Then I walk away.

*Across the clouds I see my shadow fly
Out of the corner of my watering eye*

I walk as far as I dare. I glance back - you're still there, watching me.
I raise my arm. I blow my whistle.
And pray you'll come to me.

*A dream unthreatened by the morning light
Could blow this soul right through the roof of the night*

A hundred thoughts run through my head in that instant.
My heart skips a beat. You spread your wings.
Your shadow skims across the grass, flying swift and sure.
Toward me.

*There's no sensation to compare with this
Suspended animation, a state of bliss*

A little thrill runs through me as you pull up to land.
Your feet reach out to me.
I feel the grip on my heart as surely as I feel it on my hand.

*Can't keep my eyes from the circling skies
Tongue-tied and twisted just an earth-bound misfit, I*

You didn't have to come to me, but you did.
You could have kept going. You could have gone the other way.
Instead, you chose to put your life in my hands.

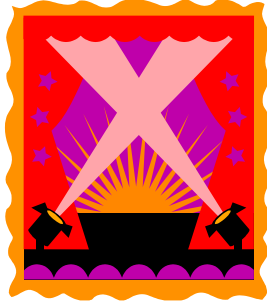
And that's as close as I'm ever going to get to learning to fly.

EVRC Vet Wins Award

Congratulations to Dr. Davey Harkins on winning the Kansas Vet of the Year for 2005! Dr. Harkins sits on our board of directors and provides veterinary care to our resident and rehab birds. Personally, we couldn't think of anybody more deserving for this award.

Dr. Harkins will be honored with a dinner on February 4th in El Dorado. Program Director Ken Lockwood and Board President Rachel Bournival are planning to attend.

Bird Spotlight: Miles



Miles the barn owl was born at the Dodge City Zoo, the last surviving chick of the clutch. Zookeepers pulled him from the nest and called Ken, who drove all those miles to pick him up (hence his name).

Miles is a favorite at programs and tours for his free-flight demonstrations (usually right over everyone's heads!) and beautiful coloration. He is also exceptionally comfortable with humans, which makes him the perfect avian ambassador to schools.

You can adopt Miles and get an annual membership to Eagle Valley Raptor Center for just \$30.



Miles in 2002

Calling All Scouts!

We have some projects that would be just perfect for a troop of boy or girl scouts...or a classroom or church youth group or anybody who might like to do some work for a good cause!

Eagle's Nest - eagle's nests are enormous, and we're building one! The nest will be used during tours and educational programs on-site to teach about eagle reproduction and behavior.

Footbridge - there are several acres of land across the little creek that divides the center property which we'd love to utilize. A footbridge across the water is the perfect solution.

Jump boxes - jump boxes will allow us to tether our birds outside for a little fresh air and sunshine, while still providing appropriate shelter and protection. Ken has plans and photos for interested parties to use.

Hacking box - this is like a "halfway house" for juvenile birds to condition them prior to release. It will be set back quite far from the center so the birds would not be disturbed by everyday human activities.

Even for the "mechanically impaired", there is still a way you can help: by providing funding for these projects. Your gift to Eagle Valley Raptor Center is completely tax deductible, plus we will recognize your contribution with a visible plaque on the project of your choice. We will also send you a certificate and an 8x10 photo of the completed project. And you'll be featured in both our monthly newsletter and on our website.



Did You Know...?

Bald eagles return to the same nesting site every year, very often reusing the same nest. Each spring they add more and more material to the nest.

One nest in Maryland, which was repeatedly used for over thirty years, weighed almost 3,000 pounds!!!

Upcoming Events

- Prairie Days at Cowtown
- Wichita River Festival's KidFest 2006
- Annual Garage Sale/Fundraiser (~April)

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Wichita State University is offering a course on grant-writing in early March (3 Wednesdays, March 1, 8, and 15) at the Hughes Metropolitan Complex at 29th & Oliver. Ken will be attending so that Eagle Valley can be more proactive in applying for – and ultimately getting – grants to fund our activities.

Wish List

- Mini-fridge for the rehab room
 - Autoclave Sterilizer
 - Pine Bark Mulch
 - Copy of Microsoft Office Professional (version 2000 or later)
 - New doors for the bird pens
- Contact Ken Lockwood at 316-393-0710 if you're interested in donating any of these items to the center. Transport for large or bulk items can be arranged.

Did you ever wonder how much it costs to feed a bald eagle?

About \$100.00 a month. And with two full grown eagles as permanent residents, plus six owls, one hawk, and one falcon, food costs alone run upwards of \$350 per month. That's over \$4,000 every year! And that doesn't include vet care, or the cost of rehabilitating injured or orphaned birds. And once you factor in building maintenance, insurance, gas, and supplies, the costs mount. In 2005, Eagle Valley Raptor Center's expenses were almost \$20,000.

Which is why we need *your* help. EVRC receives no funding from any city or state agency; it relies solely on the generosity of the public and the dedication of Ken, Susan, the board of directors, and volunteers to continue their commitment to the birds and the community. We feel that our message of education and conservation is a vital one.

Please consider donating to Eagle Valley Raptor Center; even a small donation can be a big help. Every penny received goes directly to the birds. On the next page are the details of our Adopt-a-Bird and School Sponsorship programs. You can also help by funding a special project (see page 3 "Calling All Scouts" for information about on-going projects).

Recent Events

Some of the birds made the long trek to Greensburg, KS this month for their conservation district's annual school contest. Students drew posters and wrote limericks about the importance of conservation. Winners were featured during the program and will represent their schools in the state competition later in the year.

A reporter for the Kiowa County Signal attended and took some photographs of the birds; we hope to have those pictures in the next newsletter.

We're also hoping that this will open the door to us for some more programs throughout south-central Kansas. Each county has its own conservation district, which holds annual meetings and sponsors educational programs for schools.

Our website is now also listed on several Kansas tourism websites, including the City of Wichita's section on recreation for visitors.

Adopt-a-Bird

Adopting one of our resident birds makes a wonderful gift for any bird or nature enthusiast! Every adoption packet comes with the following:

- Certificate of adoption
- Framed photo (4x6) of your bird (eagle photos are 8x10)
- Biography on your bird, including information about the species
- Free tour passes to visit Eagle Valley
- 1-year membership to Eagle Valley Raptor Center's Feathered Friends

Adoption levels and prices:

Small Owl – \$30

Lucy (screech owl)

Small Falcon – \$30

Turnpike (American kestrel)

Medium Owl – \$50

Miles (barn owl)

Templeton (great horned owl)

Annie (barred owl)

Tundra (snowy owl)

Hawks & Vultures – \$50

Harley (Harlan's red tailed hawk)

Large Owl – \$75

Tara (Eurasian eagle owl)

Eagle – \$300

Wasu (bald eagle)

Talon (golden eagle)



Programs & Field Trips

Is your company interested in doing something a little different this year? Why not consider sponsoring a school program or field trip? Many school districts are suffering severe budget constraints, and teachers are often left with only one or two field trips allowed per year. By sponsoring the program, you can ensure that the students will get the opportunity to learn about these magnificent birds and meet them up-close and personal, without cutting into the already limited funding available.

And it's not just limited to corporations – hosting a school program is great for individuals as well!



Programs at the school are \$150 per group. Depending on the size of the classes, we can accommodate several classrooms at once. Field trips to our center vary depending on the number of students, and will probably need to be arranged with the school first due to transportation issues. Contact us at 316-393-0710 to discuss on-site field trips.

If you decide to sponsor a class program or field trip, you'll receive:

- Certificate of sponsorship, featuring the name of the recipient school
- Photographs from the program
- Feature article in our monthly newsletter
- Listing on our website
- Feature article in the school's newsletter (if available)

Corporate Sponsorship

If you'd like to see your gift be more visible at our facility, consider either funding one of our ongoing projects (see page 3) or sponsoring one of our bird pens for a year. Project and pen sponsors will be featured with a hanging sign on the premises.

Bird Pen Sponsorships

Small Owl/Kestrel - \$50

Hawk/Vulture - \$100

Medium/Large Owls - \$200

Eagles - \$500

This Pen
Given By:
YOUR NAME HERE
2006