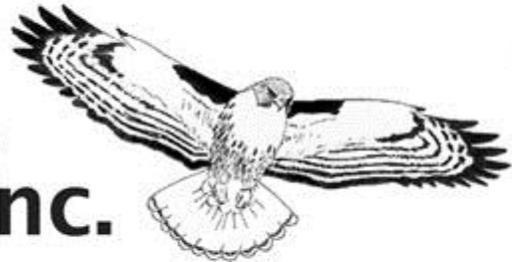


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Volunteers Make Our World Go Round! by Gail Garber, Executive Director

At Hawks Aloft, September is Volunteer Appreciation Month! We could not do even a fraction of what needs to be done without your help. As Terry Edwards, Mary Chappelle and I began planning the Volunteer Appreciation Party awhile back, we figured maybe 40 attendees would participate. For some time, I had estimated our volunteer participation at about 70 total, including the various aspects of Hawks Aloft: research, education, and raptor rescue! That is one impressive number!!!

Within days of mailing out the party announcement, we exceeded our early estimate, and when we hit 70 strong, we reached the maximum of the facility and food capacity of Scarpa's Pizza Oven Truck. And that didn't even begin to include many of you, folks who for one reason or another, cannot attend. Thank you ALL for making our unique organization so robust.

We look forward to seeing 70 of you on Saturday night, where you will meet some of our educational raptors, eat some great food, get to know other volunteers and some of our staff you may not know well, and maybe win a prize or two!

We'll also introduce some volunteer opportunities that just might tickle your fancy and send you off down a new path in life. Did you know that my life changed dramatically back in 1988, when I met an educational Red-tailed Hawk? That could be your story as well!



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We are in a transition period as we work toward building the New Mexico Center for Birds of Prey, a long term goal that will take time to achieve. Already, we are planning the 25th Anniversary Gala that will take place on September 15, 2018, just 12 short months away. Would you like to join the planning committee? Would your company like to be a sponsor for the event? Would you like to donate a silent auction item? If so, just send me an email or give me a call at the office 505-828-9455. I would love to work with you on this project! For now, be sure to save the date! Stay tuned for more!

Images: Gil Clark, above, conducts raptor surveys in the Rio Grande Valley, Image by Jerry Hobart; Roger Grimshaw, Bonnie Long and Susan Ruso survey for raptors in the Estancia Valley, Images by Donna Royer.



Fall Migration, by Angela Green, Office Manager

With the summer winding down, fieldwork has tapered off and come to an abrupt end. You may wonder what it is about the end of summer that means the end of fieldwork. I know I did! It has to do with migration.

Migration, according to the Oxford Dictionary, is “the seasonal movement or animals from one region to another.” Hawks Aloft studies birds when they are considered residents, which happens in either the summer or the winter, depending on the species. During the fall and spring months, birds are just passing through as they migrate to and from their winter or summer homes.

Just as birds are starting their migrations, our biologists are migrating back into the office. For them, it’s a bit of a break and an opportunity to write reports. For me, it’s a pleasure to have company in the office more often, and to get to know my coworkers a little better.

As the seasons turn, our lives and work adjust much like the lives of the birds that we study. When spring returns, much of our staff will head back to the field. Until then, we are all cozied down in the office, perhaps some of us wishing we had also migrated to warmer climates!

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The Migration That Wasn't, and One That Was! by Gail Garber, Executive Director



August saw an influx of recently fledged rescue birds. These rescues were the result of a variety of causes including the dreaded “failure to thrive.” This occurs when a recently fledged youngster fails to learn to hunt adequately after his/her parents stop feeding the fledgling. An average of 75% of fledgling raptors do not survive until their first birthday, due to causes such as inadequate hunting skills, lack of fear of humans, collisions with windows or automobiles, etc. Viruses like West Nile also take a toll on these populations. In the past month two young Cooper’s Hawks were stricken with that particular virus—neither survived.

Late in August, our rescue hotline received a call about an injured hawk stuck in mud on a dirt road near Belen. Luckily for us and the bird, the Valencia County Sherriff rescued the bird, a fledgling Swainson’s Hawk, and dropped it off at the home of Chellye Porter, who lives in Peralta. At 462 grams—about 60% of the normal body weight of a male of that species—and covered in mud, this little fellow was in dire condition. We began fluids immediately and added emaciation formula; these were administered in tandem every four hours. It appeared that he might not survive the day and was clearly not strong enough to withstand the trauma of a medical exam. Yet, with some TLC and lots of fluids, he began taking pinkie mice in addition to the fluids and emaciation formula—which were, by that point, only

administered every two days. From then on, it was a process of weight gain and rehydration. In three days, he went from 462 grams, to 469 grams, and then from 508 grams to 540 grams. One week later, the robust little fellow weighed in at 695 grams and was full of spice and vinegar, even freeing himself from the bonds that held him down for x-rays. His outlook is good now and he will soon be transferred to Dr. Sammie Uhrig and the Desert Willow Rehab Center in Carlsbad, where he will attend “mouse school” to learn how to successfully hunt. It is unclear if he will be ready for release in time for fall migration—Swainson’s Hawks have the longest migration of all North American hawks, a 7,000 mile journey to the grasslands of Argentina, where they are called locust hawks. Clearly, each successful migrant must be incredibly fit to survive that two-month journey in the fall and again in the spring!

As I write this, we are saying adios to Lisa Morgan, who is migrating away from Hawks Aloft to spend more time with family. She has served as our Raptor Rescue Coordinator for the past four years. We could always count on her compassion and dedication to all of our rescued birds, even those in the most critical of conditions. We wish her the very best of success in all her future endeavors and she will be terribly missed.

Jeannine Kinzer continues in her role as the Raptor Rescue Dispatcher, ensuring that the hotline phone is manned at all times. Watch for big changes in our rescue operations in the coming weeks that will include even more meaningful volunteer opportunities. Stay tuned ...

Above, Chellye Porter gavages fluids to the critically ill Swainson's Hawk; below, the same hawk is much improved. Both images by Gail Garber.

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Bleach for bird laundry
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Foam board
Binoculars
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