



HAWKS ALOFT, Inc.

Conservation, Avian
Research & Education



30 Years
Taking Flight
Let's Celebrate!

Celebrate!
Hawks Aloft is Taking Flight

by Gail Garber
Executive Director

It seems like just yesterday when several of us gathered around my kitchen table to dream about starting a little conservation organization. With little money and no proven research experience, our success was far from assured. We were extremely fortunate to secure the support of [Blue Sky Soda](#) for

our education program, and we secured a grant from [The Frost Foundation](#) even before we had received our 501 (c)3 nonprofit status. Most of all, we were incredibly fortunate to have the support of Jerry and Sally Mayeux, who not only believed in the nestling organization that would be called Hawks Aloft, but also funded all of our expenses that first year!

That was 30 years ago!

So much has happened in the interim, I cannot cover all the twists and turns that brought us to where we are today. However, we began publishing newsletters that first year and have continued since then. Copies are filed away in our front office if you care to research our history.

My heart is overly full with thanks for your support for Hawks Aloft. You are so generous with your donations of volunteer time, in-kind donations and financial donations! We would not be here if it were not for you, our member!

In honor of our 30th Anniversary we have big plans for this year! We all look forward to working together with you into the future to continue our growth for the next 30 years! Thank you for making this possible!



2006 with Big Red
our first avian ambassador



2023 at
Armendaris Bat Caves

Then and Now. 2023 image by Bob McInteer.



The Holiday Miracle 2023!

**by Dr. Christine Fiorello, DVM
Hawks Aloft Board Chair**

Sometimes all the pieces are in place. They were a few weeks ago, when a female barn owl was found trapped in an outdoor toilet at the [Ladd S. Gordon Wildlife Refuge](#). Some alert birders noticed her and immediately notified the Refuge management. New Mexico DGF officer Mike Chavez was able to quickly rescue the owl.

Our rehabber, Chellye Porter picked her up and started stabilizing her. And, I just happened to have 7 years of experience as the Lead Veterinarian for the [Oiled Wildlife Care Network](#) at UC Davis. Moving from California to landlocked New Mexico, I didn't think I'd be called on much to use that experience, but you just never know what trouble wildlife is going to get into!

Although I have a wealth of experience caring for and washing oiled birds, I'd never washed a bird that had been in a latrine. Fortunately, the principles are the same. When you are

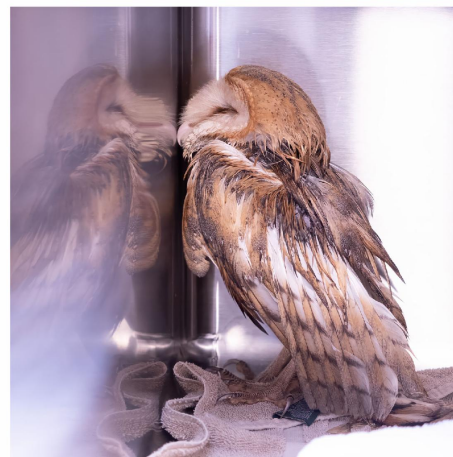
presented with a bird covered in goop, whether it is crude oil, diesel, excrement, or Cheetos cheese (yes that happened), your first instinct is “Clean it off!” This, however, is a terrible idea. Birds rely entirely on their feathers for thermoregulation, so if those feathers are soiled – regardless of what it is – they will not be able to maintain their body temperature.

This sends them into what we call a “negative energy balance,” in which the body is desperately trying to burn calories to generate heat, but the bird is too cold and debilitated to hunt, and of course, cannot fly with soiled feathers. This is NOT the time to put the birds through the intense stress of a wash. Instead, it is important to keep them very warm, provide calories and fluids, and reduce stress to an absolute minimum. The warmth serves two purposes: it helps the bird save on energy, and it discourages them from preening. We don’t want them to preen, because 1) it uses up energy, and 2) they’ll ingest whatever the gunk is on their feathers.

Ideally, we would have waited a full 48 hours prior to washing her, but with the holidays coming up, we had to expedite things. Fortunately, while latrine contents are not a pleasant thing to be coated in, they are less toxic than oil, and this bird seemed to be responding well to Chellye’s careful nursing. We had 24 hours to get everything together: basins, dishwashing soap, wash gloves, water thermometers, and most importantly, a facility! Thankfully, despite the busy season, we were able to get everything we needed. I called [Albuquerque Equine Clinic](#) and asked for some long plastic exam gloves (used for reproductive exams on horses), and they didn’t blink an eye – they just told me to come on over and they would donate some! And, even though [Sandia Animal Clinic](#) was closed, their practice manager Dorothy Newbill—in the middle of preparing for a holiday party—told us to come on down and she’d open up for us. Thanks to that amazing generosity, we were able to wash this poor bird.

The wash itself took less than five minutes – as disgusting as it is, poop does wash off a lot easier than crude oil! Our next challenge was drying. We couldn’t get her to stay put in front of the warmer, so we had to hold her and dry her directly with the Bair Hugger (a warm air blower for surgical patients). Not ideal from a stress perspective, but after the wash, her temperature wasn’t even registering on the thermometer, so we had to get her dry as soon as possible. Once her body temperature was registering above 90 degrees F, she started becoming more responsive. When her feathers were totally dry, I was comfortable wrapping her up in a towel and sending her back with Chellye. Thanks to Amelia Thompson’s foresight, an electric car blanket was available for the ride home.

Since the wash, she’s been doing great! She’s eating well, has gained lots of weight, and



is starting to have opinions about her accommodations. Her feather condition is wonderful and veterinary ophthalmologist Dr. Auden assessed her vision that remains in excellent condition. However, Mother Nature, is now snowing on our dreams of release! We have high hopes that this beautiful girl—known variously as “Toilet Owl,” “Miracle,” “Pepe Le Pew,” and “Lil Stinker”—will be flying back in her true home as soon as the storms pass.

We thank [Avangrid Foundation](#) for their long term support of Raptor Rescue!

Photos by Chellye Porter and Gail Garber.



**Thank you Nusenda Foundation for generously funding
Raptor Rescue and Living with the Landscape for 2024!**

**Thanks to Nusenda
we now have a co-branded [Bonzai website](#).**

**SAVE THE DATE:
WINGSPAN 30 Years!
A Celebration of Flight
April 6, 2024**

To ring in this big milestone, we invite you to join us for an evening of dinner, drinks, and fun! We will have entertainment and hold both a silent and live auction. Keep a look out for more information about this event in the coming weeks!

WINGSPAN

Celebration of Flight



Become a sponsor! Or, if you have auction items to donate, email Stephanie at the link below. No items are too small, or too big! We will create baskets of goods that we receive.

[Email Stephanie](#)

THANK YOU TO OUR DECEMBER DONORS!

We were truly blown away by the increased donations in 2023 and we simply could not have done it without you! Thank you to our team of volunteers that make our Raptor Rescue successful. It isn't easy work and we appreciate every single person that has donated time to us. We thank you for your generosity and appreciate you following along with our monthly newsletters and social media.

We recognize the following December donors:

- Joe Alcorn & Sylvia Wittels
- Theresa Araiza
- Dorothy Baumer
- Ben Blackwell
- Jessalyn Brach
- Louise & Jeff Bradley
- Monica Cardozo
- Cheryl Cathcart
- Niels Chapman & Ruth Burstrom *
- Mary & Ed Chappelle
- Cathleen Daffer
- Don & Laura Dapkus
- Frank Dobrushken
- Dawna Lee Driskill
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- Victoria Heart
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- Myles Lathrop
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- Bonnie Long & Donald Giles
- Richard Lutz
- Sue Lyons *
- Douglas Maahs
- Brandt Magic
- Malinda Marker
- McCaughin Mountain Foundation for Empowerment
- Susan Kay Metcalfe
- Trish Meyer
- David Mikesic
- David & Tracey Raymo
- Hildegard Reiser
- Ann Rhodes
- Mary Rhodes
- Jennifer Richmond
- Linda Rodgers & Nelson Leonard
- Bonnie Rucobo
- Allison Schacht *
- Charles & Annie Scoggins
- Jeannie Sellmer
- Corinne Shaw
- Susan Shook
- Virginia Sillerud
- Barilee Silver
- Kim Sorensen
- Mikah "Mike" Stake

- Carol Emerson
- Linda Emrick
- Catherine J Erbaugh
- Farmer's Electric Cooperative
- Gail Garber
- Teresa Garcia *
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- Mary-Anne Mitchell
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- Nusenda Foundation
- Joseph O' Leary & Anita Broadway
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- Elisa Taylor-Godwin
- Sylvia Tsao
- Linda Walsh & Terrell Dixon
- Tamryn
- US Charitable Gift Fund
- Weidemann
- Wayne & Drena Welty
- Kathryn Zimmer

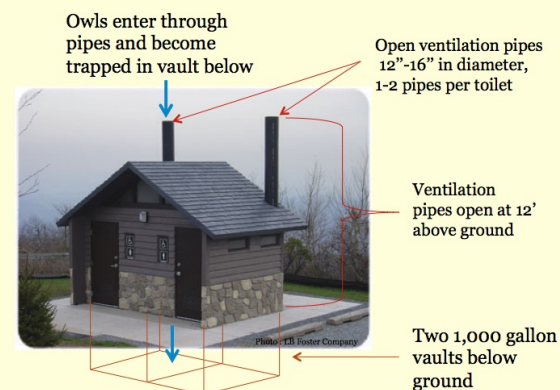


The Poo-Poo Project

by **Amanda Penn**
Avian Care Technician
Poo-Poo Project Coordinator
Teton Raptor Center

We have followed the work of Teton Raptor Center for many years, including their work to reduce avian mortalities due to uncovered pipes and toilet vents. We reached out to them for information about their efforts. Thank you for sharing this important information.

Vault Toilet Design



Each year thousands of cavity-nesters, animals that prefer dark, narrow spaces for nesting and roosting, become entrapped in vertical open pipes such as ventilation pipes, claim stakes and chimneys. Vault toilets, the self-contained restrooms found in many of America's wilderness areas, feature 12" vertical ventilation pipes that mimic the natural cavities preferred by various bird species for nesting and roosting. Once a bird enters a ventilation pipe and is inside the vault toilet, they are entrapped and succumb to starvation or disease.

In 2010, Teton Raptor Center (TRC), a nonprofit raptor education, research and rehabilitation organization located in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, addressed this problem by installing vent screens in Grand Teton National Park and Bridger-Teton and Caribou-Targhee National Forests. In 2012, TRC's Poo-Poo Project developed its own vent screen to prevent wildlife entrapment on a national scale. TRC's Poo-Poo Screens are easy to install, affordable, durable and they effectively protect wildlife without compromising vault toilet pipe ventilation. Since 2010, TRC has distributed 19,628 screens to every state in the U.S. plus locations in Canada and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

While the high number of screens distributed has certainly made a positive impact on cavity-nesting wildlife, the work is never done. Just last week, a Barn Owl was rescued from a vault toilet in the Ladd S Gordon-Bernardo Waterfowl Management Area near Bosque, NM. This owl is currently receiving treatment at Hawks Aloft!

The public can easily contribute to the Poo-Poo Project by keeping an eye out for vault toilet ventilation pipes that lack screens or covers when they are out recreating on public lands. If you ever come across an unscreened pipe, please record the location and submit the information via TRC's website or email Amanda.

Another impactful way to participate is by sponsoring a screen for \$45. Many public land agencies lack the budget for screens, making sponsorship a vital support mechanism. Sponsoring a screen not only helps protect wildlife but also makes for a thoughtful and meaningful gift. Join TRC's Poo-Poo Project in safeguarding cavity-nesting wildlife, one screen at a time!

*Photos: American Kestrel in vault toilet, PC: Elko District BLM; Northern Saw Whet Owl after rescue from a vault toilet PC: Diane Diebold Sequoia National Forest-USFS
Vault Toilet Diagram PC: TRC Staff*



The Winter Field Season Begins!

by Dr. Trevor Fetz
Research Director

December brought the beginning of the 21st winter field season for the Middle Rio Grande Songbird Study (MRGSS). This winter, we are surveying 50 transects between Rio Rancho and Belen. So far, I've only seen about 65%

of the data from December, but overall bird numbers look to be close to normal for this time of year.

Among the more common wintering species, [Dark-eyed Junco](#) and [White-crowned Sparrow](#) numbers appear to be normal to above normal so far, while [Song Sparrow](#) numbers seem to be low and [American Robin](#) numbers are very low. Robin numbers vary widely in the bosque during winter. There are some years with huge invasions into the bosque, with robins particularly seeking out New Mexico olive and Russian olive berry crops, usually when other food resources are relatively scarce. Thus, the low robin numbers so far this winter is probably a good sign.

Additionally, mild weather conditions, like we generally saw in December, tend to result in birds being more widely distributed and not necessarily grouping up in large numbers in the bosque. When weather conditions are more challenging and food resources more difficult to find, generalist species that aren't particularly tied to the bosque tend to converge there in larger numbers in search of food.

Several fairly common wintering species of note were present in relatively strong numbers in December, including [Northern Flicker](#), [Western Bluebird](#), and [Yellow-rumped Warbler](#). Yellow-rumped Warbler numbers have been particularly low in the bosque over the past four or five winters relative to earlier years of the MRGSS. Yellow-rumped Warbler numbers in December still weren't approaching what we used to documented during the first 15 years or so of the MRGSS, but it was nice to see them in higher numbers than the past few winters.

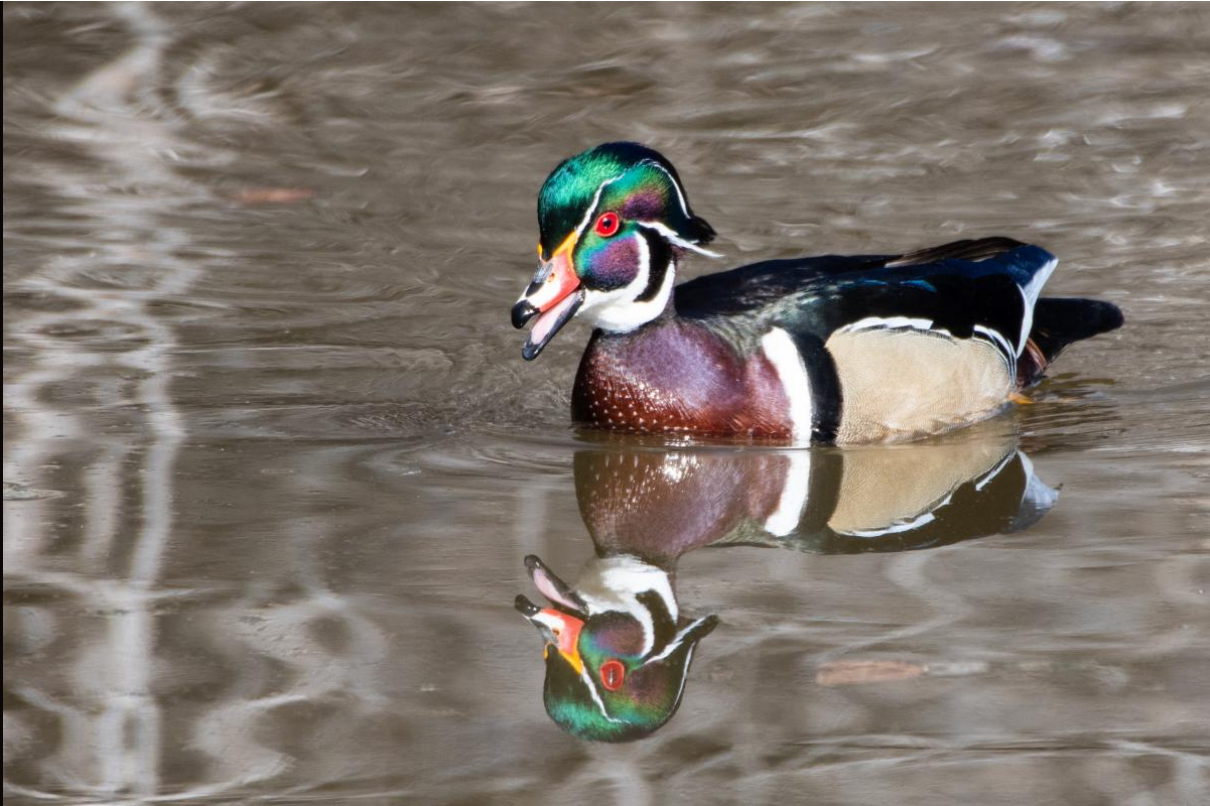
In contrast to the large Western Bluebird numbers in December, [Eastern Bluebird](#) numbers were very low. Normally, the ratio of wintering Western Bluebirds to Eastern Bluebirds in the bosque is somewhere between 2:1 to close to even. But so far this winter, the ratio has been about 8:1. My most interesting detections during December were an [American Tree Sparrow](#) and a [Brown Thrasher](#) in Corrales, and two [Verdin](#) (foraging on Russian olive berries) in Belen. It will be interesting to see how the bird numbers play out over the remaining two months of the winter field season.

Brown Thrasher and Verdin photos by [Alan Murphy Photography](#).

NOW HIRING

**(2) SONGBIRD AND RAPTOR FIELD TECHNICIANS:
February 1 – July 30 (Start and End Dates Are Flexible)**

[Click here to view and share](#) the Field Tech position(s) announcement.



An Affinity for Trees!

**by Nate & Jeanne Gowan
Guest Authors**

New Mexico waters are home to many duck species, but the handsome [Wood Duck](#) looks like he is dressed for a special occasion. The males are most striking with bold white stripes along their chestnut breast and flashes of emerald green, an iridescent crest, red eyes and a bill striped with yellow, red,



white and black. Like most species, the females are less colorful but still beautiful. They have vibrant blue patches on their wings and a distinct white ring around their eyes.

Ducks are considered waterfowl, and Wood Ducks do spend their lives on and near the water. But these ducks are more associated with trees and forests, which is probably why they were named Wood Ducks. They nest in tree cavities created naturally or by other species. They will also nest in man-made nesting boxes. Because of their affinity to trees, they have evolved

with claws on their webbed feet that help them perch and climb on tree branches. Newly hatched Wood Ducks have feathers and are instinctively able to swim and find food. Consequently, they only stay in the nest for a single day before jumping out to follow mom to water. The baby ducks must leap from their nest to the ground or water. This is an impressive feat when you consider that some of their nests may be 50 feet or more above ground. They seem to defy gravity as they safely flutter down. They are so light they are not injured. Once they land, the mother duck will call them to join her. You will often find their nests in trees that stand near or over water so that the young can drop safely into the water.

In the late 19th century, Wood Duck populations declined seriously. Destruction of bottomland hardwood forests and market hunting were the two major factors that contributed to the species' decline. Their uniquely beautiful plumage was used in making women's hats and their meat was considered a delicacy. By the late 1800s to early 1900s, extinction of the Wood Duck seemed imminent. Happily, the recovery of Wood Duck populations in North America is a wildlife management success story. In 1918, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act prohibited the hunting of wood ducks nationwide. Wood duck populations started recovering and seasons were reopened in 1941. Thanks to ongoing conservation efforts, Wood Duck populations have continued to recover and are currently considered to be stable or increasing throughout most of their range. Every sighting of a Wood Duck is a special occasion for avid bird watchers.

All Photos by Nate Gowan



New Year, New Game

**by Stephanie Schulz
Marketing/ Fundraising
Specialist**

Last month we talked about enhancements made to the 'Dress-a-Raptor' game that our wonderful educators, Jenny Sternheim and Liz Roberts, implemented to make the



activity more visually engaging and easier to explain a bird's physiology and adaptations. This prompted them to reevaluate other activities in their curriculum, leading to much needed updates with the Bioaccumulation game.

The Bioaccumulation game demonstrates the food chain and visualizes how an accumulation of toxins moves through it, starting with producers at the bottom of the food chain, and ending with a tertiary consumer at the top. When the weather permits, we enjoy setting up this activity outdoors with the students in a circle, each one

representing producers and consumers as they “eat” and move up the food chain. This allows them to learn about this complicated topic in a playful and engaging way as they run gleefully, chasing each other, with little thought to the message that will later be graphically emphasized.

Back in the classroom, this activity introduces a farmer who sprays some of their plants with pesticides. The plants are “eaten” by grasshoppers, who are in turn “eaten” by songbirds. Each consumer eats more than its immediate predecessor. Finally, the tertiary consumer, a Peregrine falcon, eats all the songbirds, thereby ingesting all the pesticides that are consumed by some of the grasshoppers. We enjoy connecting this activity back to the birds we bring to classrooms. So, in this scenario, we can refer to Flash, our own Peregrine Falcon. Previously, the producers and consumers were demonstrated by a plastic cup and poker chips represented the water, sunlight, and soil that helped the plants grow, in addition to a chip that represented the pesticides. Having “eaten,” children would pour chips into the consumer's cup.

To improve the appearance and sustainability of the demonstration, Liz and one of our volunteers, Sami Sanborn crafted cloth bags to replace the cups and better represent the different levels of the food chain: producers (plants), primary consumers (grasshoppers), secondary consumers (songbirds), and tertiary consumers (Peregrine Falcons). They also replaced the poker chips with laminated images of the water, sunlight, soil, and pesticide spray that are visible through the clear portion of the bags to see what has been consumed. After the interactive portion, students return to the classroom and arrange the bags in a pyramid to correlate to the final explanation of bioaccumulation. By combining a variety of teaching styles into one activity, more students are more likely to understand and connect with this complex subject matter.

Thank you [Nusenda Foundation](#) and [PNM Resources Foundation](#) and McCaughin Mountain Foundation for funding Living with the Landscape.

Photos by Gail Garber

Volunteer Training Class

When: February 3, 2024

Where: [Bachechi Open Space Education Building, 9521 Rio Grande Blvd](#)

Time: 9 AM – 12 PM

Cost: \$25

Includes membership and volunteer manual



Light refreshments will be provided.

Hawks Aloft (HAI) is unique in that the four pillars of our foundation are quite diverse:

- Conservation Education
- Avian Research
- Raptor Rescue
- Collaboration with Others

Attend our volunteer training to learn more about Hawks Aloft programs and how volunteers are an integral part of all of our programs. Meet current staff and volunteers, including our veterinarians who oversee the raptor rescue program. Meet some of our avian ambassadors and begin to learn about the different species as well as the injuries that cause them

to be non-releasable.

Learn how you can get involved! We particularly seek volunteers to help with Raptor Rescue, education programs, and field research. We also seek writers who appreciate crafting a story about a particular species or group of birds, for social media. And, we seek experienced woodworkers and makers to help with various construction projects such as building flight cages, nest boxes and assisting with maintenance on flight cages. We look forward to meeting you and beginning to work together.

[Register for Volunteer Training](#)



Thank you Veterinary Technicians!

For the past 4 years, Acequia Animal Hospital has provided *pro bono* veterinary services to wild birds brought in through the Hawks Aloft Raptor Rescue Hotline. Over the years, they've helped care for hundreds of injured birds. Sadly, the corporate owner of Acequia has decided to end that relationship, as it is not financially profitable. We would like to express our deep appreciation to veterinary technical staff for their skilled and compassionate care of these birds. Despite most of them never having touched a bird before, all of them became adept at avian handling, anesthesia, and radiology. Thank you Bethany, Monique, Jasmine, Emily, Carol, Ray, Ashley, and Darlene for making a difference for the wildlife in your community. A special shout-out goes to Monique, who

ensured that every bird got a pep talk, and Carol, who photo-documented every patient.

Hawks Aloft Tours





Hawks Aloft & Holbrook Travel

Ecuadorian Cloud Forest and the Galapagos Islands

June 18-29, 2024

\$7495 per person

***includes land cost only**

Only 2 spots left!

Join Gail Garber and Hawks

Aloft as we return to one of our favorite places on Planet Earth – the Galapagos Archipelago! After our first magical trip there in 2018, everyone agreed it was the trip of a lifetime!

Before we head off to the Galapagos Archipelago, we will begin our adventure by exploring [Sachatamia Reserve](#) as well as the [Yanacocha Reserve](#), home to the critically endangered endemic [Black-breasted Puffleg](#). We thank MacCauley Library for the above photo of the puffleg.

Combining a wild array of endemic species like the giant tortoises, albatross, Sally Lightfoot crabs, flamingos, marine iguanas, penguins and Blue-footed Boobies, several of these unique volcanic islands will be ours to explore. Our home will be a luxury yacht, the Tip Top 5. Swimming and snorkeling will be available nearly every day, along with panga rides, and both dry and wet landings. Access to each of the islands is carefully controlled by the Ecuadorian government, so crowds will not be a part of this excursion.

- Visit the [Alambi Cloud Forest Reserve](#), where 250 species-including 32 varieties of hummingbirds-have been recorded.
- Venture to Milpe Bird Sanctuary, a 250 acre subtropical rainforest reserve and ecoregion and biodiversity hotspot that supports 62 restricted-range species, the largest of any Endemic Bird Area in the Americas.
- See [North Seymour Island](#) and observe [Blue-footed Boobies](#), marine iguanas, pelicans, frigatebirds, shorebirds, sea lions, and endemic Palo Santo trees.
- Land at Punta Espinosa to observe a large colony of sea lions, marine iguanas, Flightless Cormorants, and clumps of lava cactus.
- Witness the native forests and [Los Gemelos](#), a pair of sinkholes created by the collapse of surface material in underground fissures and chambers, on Santa Cruz Island.

[Click here for more details and a complete itinerary.](#)

Albatross in flight. Photo by Gail Garber.

Black-breasted Puffleg, photo by MacCauley Library.



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Birding Costa Rica
with
Hawks Aloft & Holbrook Travel
February 9 - 19, 2025

From \$3625.00

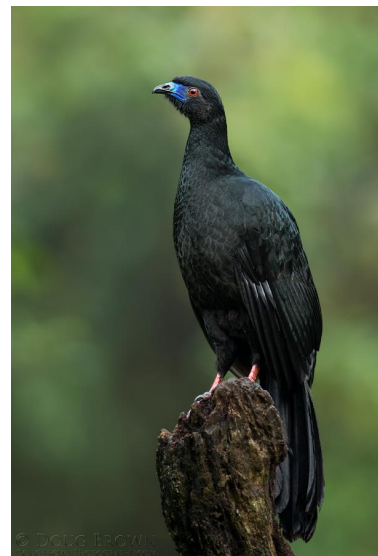
It will have been 10 years since our inaugural visit to the wonders of Costa Rica, with its incredible biodiversity found in 12 different climate zones and numerous ecosystems packed into a small country. We are excited to return again!

We will begin our journey with a stay at Selva Verde Lodge, owned by Holbrook Travel since the mid-1980s. The lodge protects 500 acres of primary forest in the Sarapiquí region. It was after a visit to explore Costa Rica that Andrea Holbrook wanted to take an active part in preserving the country's natural resources. As a result, visitors might view some of the country's 900-plus bird species, including toucans, macaws, motmots, quetzals and trogons. Our journey will take us to the cloud forest, Caribbean lowland rainforest, arid mountain peaks, and dry Pacific forests.

Costa Rica's natural wealth is no accident. In the mid-20th century, leadership determined that conservation was the future of the nation. Now, 23 percent of Costa Rica's land mass is under preservation. Rather than developing a military, officials instead built educational and social security programs. Despite the ensuing growth of tourism, the country remains peaceful, friendly and open. Costa Ricans continue to exude appreciation and joy for the treasures of their country.

Highlights include:

- Take guided hikes in the private rainforest reserve at [Selva Verde Lodge](#), home to more than 350 bird species, including the endangered [Great Green Macaw](#).
- Ascend the 328-foot suspended walkway at [Tirimbina Biological Reserve](#) for the chance to see species that spend their time high within the forest canopy layer. Enjoy an evening talk about the lives of bats!



© DOUG BROWN

- Bird the trails of the world-renowned [La Selva Biological Station](#), where more than half of Costa Rica's species have been recorded, including the [Great Tinamou](#), [Ornate Hawk-eagle](#), [Pied Puffbird](#), and [Spectacled Owl](#).
- Spend a full day in [Carara National Park](#), an ecologically diverse hotspot due to its location at the convergence of northwestern tropical dry forest and humid southern Pacific rainforest with perhaps its most famous inhabitants, not birds, the enormous American crocodiles that lounge on the banks.
- Search for the [Resplendent Quetzal](#), [Slaty Flowerpiercer](#), [Ruddy Treerunner](#), and other high-elevation species in the cloud forests of the [Talamanca Mountains](#).

[Click here for more details and a complete itinerary.](#)

We want to thank Doug Brown and Kristin Brown for providing numerous bird photos from their previous trips to Costa Rica.

*Resplendent Quetzal and Black Guan
photos by [Doug Brown Photography](#).*



2023 Year-End Review

by Lisa Morgan
Raptor Rescue Coordinator

After reviewing the numbers from 2023 and 2022, we have accomplished a lot! In 2023, we admitted 30% more patients, a total of 225 birds compared to 173 in 2022. Our top five species were: Cooper's Hawk, Great Horned Owl, Western Screech-Owl, Barn Owl, and Swainson's Hawk.

We released 50 birds in 2023 compared to 26 releases in 2022, a 92% increase! Of these: 15% of youngsters were reunited with their families after falling from their nest; 39% were

'soft' releases, meaning they were given food and shelter until they were able to learn to hunt and find territory on their own; and 15% were 'hard' releases meaning that they were adults that already knew how to hunt. Forty-nine birds were transferred to other facilities in 2023, as compared to 45 cases in 2022. These numbers indicate that the cases were either a species we rescue, but do not rehabilitate (i.e., songbirds), or they simply needed more flight/hunting training.

Sadly, we had 56 deaths this year compared to 34 deaths in 2022. Most of these cases were due to the heat wave in July 2023 when we had three consecutive weeks of temperatures above 100 degrees. Both youngsters and adults were in trouble, many in the active phase of perishing. Vehicle collisions and other impact events accounted for another 17% of admissions. While this is typically the top cause of injury, it highlights the seriousness of the heat wave. Often, after an exam, fluids and a meal, these youngsters were able to be returned to their nest. Those unable to be returned were kept together and sent to Matt Mitchell where they could learn to hunt and fly together. They were 'soft' released as a group. Matt continued to provide food and shelter until the young birds were succeeding on their own. Thank you, Matt, for all that you do!

Hotline calls increased exponentially to 660 calls over the 506 calls in 2022, a 30% increase. Evelyn McGarry took almost every call and also transported many of these cases to our rehabilitation team! I speak for us all when I say "Evelyn, Thank You!" I also want to thank our Raptor Rescue Team. This group of committed and caring people drive all over New Mexico rescuing downed birds to bring them into care 365 days a year.

Our team of falconers in the Farmington area, and our team of rehabilitators in southern New Mexico fill in the 'dark' areas of the state where we have not had care in the past. I am particularly proud of our small team of rehabilitators in Albuquerque that came into this program with little rehab experience. They have attended classes to expand their knowledge and are always willing to help. Thank you Chellye, Amelia, and Dr. Contos! Our veterinarians round out our team! Without the expertise and dedication of Dr. Fiorello, Dr. Contos, and Dr. Jones, many of these birds would perish. Thank you!

Thank you to many other rehabilitation facilities throughout the state that coordinate care with us.

Finally, thank you to our fearless leader, executive director, Gail Garber. Gail works tirelessly and mostly behind the scenes for the Raptor Rescue program, as well as many other programs and projects. I am amazed by her spirited dedication to this work, and truly do not know what we would do without her leadership. Thank you for everything, Gail!

It takes a Village!

Photo by Gail Garber

Hawks Aloft Merchandise



T-shirts (both long and short-sleeved) are \$30 and can be ordered on our website or can be picked up at the office. Ladies sizes are available in short sleeves; all long-sleeved shirts are unisex, and we also have youth sizes in short sleeves available for \$25.

[Order yours today!](#)



Donate Your Old Car to Hawks Aloft!

Your old car might just be taking up space in your garage—but it could make a huge difference in the lives of New Mexico's native birds, natural landscapes, and the many people who delight in these things.

Car donation is simple. And in fact, it might just make your life *easier*.

[Here's the link to donate your old vehicle!](#)

Call our office if you still have questions: **505-828-9455**.

**Thank you,
One Community Auto!**



Where Everybody Wins!

Support Hawks Aloft by Shopping at Smith's

Many of you have long been Hawks Aloft supporters, and a good number of you have also been longtime Smith's shoppers. For those not in the know, the grocery chain has a program that provides a small kick-back quarterly to nonprofits when their supporters link their shopper's cards to the organization.



The company recently changed their policies regarding the program—so even if you've signed up in the past, you may need to do it again! The good news is that it is easy to do so.

1. Go to [Smith's Foods](#)
2. Either create an account or sign-in to an existing one
3. Once logged in, click on "**Account Summary**" on the left sidebar
4. From there, scroll down to "**Inspiring Donations Program**" and click "**Enroll**"
5. A searchable list will come up, you can either search for "**Hawks Aloft**" or enter our ID number for the program, "**GL430**"
6. Shop using your card and know that every time you do, you help out Hawks Aloft!



Meet Iris! Our newest Avian Ambassador!

Iris was admitted into our Raptor Rescue program in 2022, after she was found with head trauma and a severe eye injury. Her left eye was completely sunken in, to the degree that our veterinarians initially didn't think she would survive. Iris proved she was a fighter and was given a second chance at life.

After healing from her injuries, she went to a falconer for training. Iris now lives with Quemado, another Red-tailed Hawk, after his long-time partner, Jamaica, passed over the Rainbow Bridge in 2023. She is named for the keen eyesight that most hawks have.

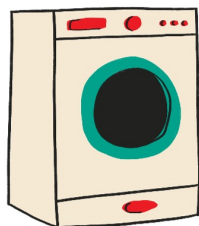
When you adopt a Hawks Aloft raptor you receive:

- A one-year Hawks Aloft membership
- An adoption certificate
- An information sheet about the individual bird you have adopted
- Exclusive access to video updates about your bird
- Your choice of:
 1. A professional 8×10 photo of your bird, or
 2. A stuffed Audubon Bird with realistic vocalizations (if available for that species)

[Click here to learn more about our Avian Ambassadors](#)

Photo by Larry Rimer

Adopt A Raptor



Thank you to Jim &
Betty Church for
donating a
washing machine!
We appreciate
you!

Photographer's Monthly Gallery

Alan Murphy

What began as a peaceful and passionate hobby, Alan Murphy has refined into a business. Thanks to his background in the beautiful countrysides of both Ireland and England, Alan developed a love for birds and nature.

Alan is enthusiastic about leading workshops and teaching other photographers how to capture the perfect image. He is an award-winning photographer with numerous publications, a Nikon Professional Service Member, a Wimberly Professional Service Member, and the author of several e-books and educational videos. He enjoys traveling and speaking at festivals and photo clubs. Alan and his wife, Kim, live in Evergreen Colorado, and enjoy nature and their rescue dogs.



[Visit Alan's Website](#) to view more of his amazing images.

To keep up with Alan's photography and travel adventures, [sign up for his monthly newsletter here](#).

Image 1: [Greater Roadrunner](#) - Birds of Arizona Workshop

Image 2: [Greater Prairie Chicken](#) - Birds of Arizona Workshop

Image 3: [Clark's Grebe](#) - Birds of California Workshop

Image 4: [Belted Kingfisher](#) - Birds of Colorado Workshop

Image 5: [Bald Eagle](#) - Alaska Workshop









DONORS, SUPPORTERS, AND VOLUNTEERS

[Donate to Hawks Aloft](#)

[Become a Hawks Aloft Member](#)

Thank You to our December Donors & Members!

Look for the full article above that recognizes all the generous year-end donations by our members, corporations and foundations.

**We really appreciate
ALL of your support!**

Our Veterinarians and Rehabilitators

Kariana Atkinson, DVM
Candace Auten, DVM
Avery Berkowitz, DVM
Calista Veterinary Hospital
Mary & Ed Chappelle
Linda Contos, DVM
Coronado Animal Hospital
Desert Willow Wildlife
Rehabilitation Center
Eye Care for Animals
Christine Fiorello, DVM
Tim Fitzpatrick, DVM
High Desert Veterinary Care
Daniel Levenson, DVM
Stephanie Lindsell
(NMWLC)
Sherry McDaniel
Mike Melloy, DVM

December Calls and Intakes

Total Calls: 28

Total Cases: 14

- Great Horned Owl: L wing injury; emaciated
- Great Horned Owl: R eye injury; emaciated
- Cooper's Hawk: Window strike; L eye injury
- Greater Roadrunner: Predator attack
- Cooper's Hawk: L wing injury
- Great Horned Owl: L wing injury
- Western Screech Owl: Predator attack
- Cooper's Hawk: Predator attack
- Cooper's Hawk: R wing injury
- American Crow: R

Matt Mitchell
Lisa Morgan
New Mexico Wildlife Center
On a Wing and a Prayer
Petroglyph Animal Hospital
Chellye Porter
Sandia Animal Clinic
Santa Fe Raptor Center
Southwest Veterinary
Medical Center
Samantha Uhrig, DVM
Amelia Thompson
Wildlife Rescue of New
Mexico

- wing injury
- Barn Owl: Fell into toxic cesspool
 - American Kestrel: Hit by car; L wing & head trauma
 - Western Screech Owl: R eye & head trauma
 - Great Horned Owl: L wing injury

Raptor Rescue Team

Wendy Brown
Mary Bruesch
Ed Chappelle
Mary Chappelle
Charles Cummings
Chris Gibson
Lee Hanks
Carole Heimann
Chuck Heimann
Denise Inight
Devona Jensen

Ruth Latta
Evelyn McGarry
Sherry McDaniel
Matt Mitchell
Jenee Moore
Eliane & Johnny Notah
Chellye Porter
Dianne Rossbach
Susan Shook
Davedda & Tony Thomas
Amelia Thomspen

Thank You to Our Corporate & Foundation Donors!

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American Association of Zoo Veterinarians

Anonymous

Avangrid Foundation

Benevity Fund

Bureau of Land Management

Central New Mexico Audubon Society

Charles Schwab

Cottonwood Environmental Consulting

Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation Service/Arroyo Classrooms

Defenders of Wildlife

Facebook

Farmers Electric Cooperative

FHL Foundation

Four Corners Bird Club

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Kroger/Smith's Inspiring Donations

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NextEra Energy Foundation

Nusenda Foundation

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Owings Gallery

PayPal Giving Fund

PNM Resources Foundation

Peabody Natural Resources Company

Rio Grande Jewelry Supply

Smiths/Kroger

Summit Construction

Talking Talons

US Army Corps of Engineers

USDA Forest Service - Jemez Ranger District

Valles Caldera National Preserve

Wild Bird Seed Trading Company

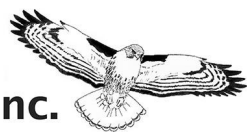
Wild Birds Unlimited

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Hawks Aloft, Inc.



*Conservation Education, Avian Research, Raptor Rescue
& Collaboration with Others*

[Contact Us](#)



Who We Are

Gail Garber, *Executive Director*
Jessalyn Ayars, *Field Technician*
David Buckley, *Avian Surveyor*
Linda Contos, *DVM, Consulting
Veterinarian*
Brian Dykstra, *Surveyor*
Trevor Fetz, *Research Director*
Jeanne Gowan, *Guest Author*
Nate Gowan, *Surveyor*
Roger Grimshaw, *Raptor Surveys*
Sue Harrelson, *Project Manager*
Jerry Hobart, *Project Manager,
Raptor Driving Surveys*
Brian Jay Long, *Raptor Surveys*
Evelyn McGarry, *Office Manager,
East Mountain Representative,
Raptor Rescue Dispatcher*
Lisa Morgan, *Raptor Rescue
Coordinator*
Larry Rimer, *Project Manager*
Liz Roberts, *Educator/Naturalist*
Stephanie Schulz, *Marketing
Specialist*
Jenny Sternheim, *Education
Coordinator*

Our Board of Directors

Christine Fiorello, *DVM, Chair*
Terry Edwards, *Treasurer*
Linda Contos, *DVM, Director*
Nate Gowan, *Director*
Claudette Horn, *Director*
Joan Morrison, *Director*

Hawks Aloft, Inc. | PO Box 10028, Albuquerque, NM 87184

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