

The *Bird Rescue Flyer*

Volume XXII, No. 1 • Winter 2005

BIRD RESCUE CENTER
 P.O. Box 475 • Santa Rosa, CA 95402
 (707) 523-BIRD • www.birdrescuecenter.org

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Planning for 2005

We are already planning for an even more successful year in 2005 than we achieved in 2004. We are evaluating our procedures, tabulating data, reorganizing our databases, working on a 2005 budget, preparing for construction in the new Education Compound and much, much more. Coordinators are being asked to prepare a plan and a budget for each of their areas. Our fundraising folks have been hard at work pursuing new funding sources. Planning is moving forward on design for the new Education Compound and site preparation will start soon. Approximately 40 new raptor handlers are busy learning how to hold birds on their fists, tie knots, perch and un-perch, and all of the many other skills and information associated with this. All this and much, much more so stay tuned and put us on your calendar for 2005!

– Your Board President, Alida Morzenti

New For 2005 Baby Bird Season

TRAINING IS BEING COMBINED WITH THE VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION SESSIONS. This year new volunteers have the opportunity to “get on board” right away. New Volunteer Orientation will include an introduction, requirements and paperwork. After a short break, the Hospital Shift Supervisor will give a tour of the Center and will begin the volunteers’ first training session. Techniques and procedures will include how to feed babies, set up their housing, and monitor their weights and other critical skills. Further training will occur when you attend your first shift but these orientations will provide the basics needed before you can start helping rehabilitate ill, injured and orphaned native birds of Sonoma County. Welcome aboard! You must attend one of the orientations, followed by the training. See times and locations at left.

Adult Volunteers

If New Years’ Day is past, can Spring be far behind? Not when it comes to baby bird season! We have barely breathed a sigh of relief at finishing the hectic baby bird season when we are already gearing up for this coming year. We would like to have volunteers trained and on the job before the onslaught of baby birds in May. Orientations for new volunteers will begin in late February, peak

Upcoming Events for January thru March 2005:

Life of Birds Series, Videos and Accompanying Talks
 January 7th and 28th
 February 11th and 25th

Note: These are to be held at 7:00pm at the Center.

Community Education Basics
 February 13st at 2:00pm

Field Rescue
 February 12th at 9:00am

Volunteer Orientations
These are to be held at the Center.

February 19th at Noon
 February 27th at 2:00pm
 March 1st at 6:30pm
 March 5th at Noon
 March 9th at 6:30pm
 March 13th at 2:00pm
 March 17th at 6:30pm
 March 25th at 6:30pm
 March 26th at Noon
 March 28th at 6:30pm
 Arpil 3rd at 2:00pm
 April 5th at 6:30pm
 April 9th at noon
 April 13th at 6:30pm

Raptor Rehabilitation & Release Lecture
 Open to the Public at Bird Rescue Center

To: **BIRD RESCUE CENTER** Date: _____
 P.O. Box 475
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I would like to: Become a member Renew my membership Be a volunteer
 Receive information on your Sponsor-A-Bird Program
 Make an additional contribution (Amount \$ _____)

Membership Rates – Please Check One

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual.....\$35.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing.....\$75.00
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Does your employer participate in a matching gifts program? Yes No

Name _____ Phone _____

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Enclosed is a check for _____

*Bird Rescue Center is a nonprofit 501 (c) (3) organization.
 Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law (Tax I.D. #94-2378213).*

• P u b l i s h e d b y t h e B i r d R e s c u e C e n t e r •

A Field Trip to Bodega Bay

With a break in the busy spring and summer bird care season, a group of fourteen Bird Rescue Center volunteers headed to Bodega Bay on Sunday November 14, 2004 to see what fall and winter migration had brought.



We began with good looks through binoculars and spotting scopes at brown pelicans, common loons, and cormorants from the wharf at the Tides. In three hours of scanning we saw 50 species. That's why Bodega Bay has been designated an Important Bird Area (IBA) with many species present and significant numbers of individuals as well. At Doran the rising tide was pushing masses of shorebirds onto a tiny island of land just in front of us. Marbled godwits, willets, black-bellied plovers and dunlins crushed together onto the available land. Near the jetty at the end of Doran spit we puzzled over a small white bird mottled with black. All binoculars studied the bird and a variety of books were consulted. Finally, seeing into this bird's red-lined mouth, we were able to identify a juvenile pigeon guillemot (not looking at all like the adults).

We visited other good birding spots around the bay, adding different species at each stop. A group of large white pelicans captured our attention before our lunch stop at Campbell Cove. We hope you will join us on our next field trip.

Junior Volunteers in Training

Last summer the junior "feeder-volunteers" (ages 12-17) made our baby bird season a success.

For new juniors, bring your parents to the orientation. At the orientation, new prospective junior volunteers will hear the work we do described in vivid detail complete with samples of the types of foods birds eat. That means that live mealworms will be passed around in a dish for each person to see up close. Other yummy bird treats will also be passed around. Anyone who is easily grossed out will have to get over it to feed birds. If you are still interested, you attend a 5 hour training the following weekend; your parents only come to the first hour. Call Marlena Hirsch 546-5720 or Cindy Jansen 577-8344 if you have more questions.

Junior Volunteer Training Schedules

To be held at the Bird Rescue Center:

Orientations

To be held at 7:00pm
 March 14th or 15th
 April 11th or 12th
 May 9th or 10th
 June 20th or 21st

Training

To be held 10:00-3:00pm
 March 20th
 April 17th
 May 15th
 June 25th

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Bird Rescue gratefully acknowledges the following generous contributions which enable us to carry on our work:

Donations of \$50 or more

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In Memory of...

Jim Maize
 from William & Patricia Pedersen
 Jim Maize
 from Shirley Flaurnay

In Honor of...

the wedding of
 Kevin & Silvia Casta
 from James Stickney

...continued from page 5

at least 3 years of age. It is most likely a hybrid of a barred owl and Northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*), but that proposition should remain conjecture until proven by genetics (I've been wrong before, obviously!). The patterning of the bird is an intriguing mix of spotted and barred owl characteristics: The overall darkness of the brown pigment suggests spotted owl, while the extensive barring on the head and back suggest barred owl. The breast displays a complex assortment of spotted and barred patterns, with prominent streaking (a-la-barred owl) on the belly. The sex of the bird remains unknown at the time, as the only reliable sexing methods for spotted and barred owls is to either carefully listen to their hoot (each hybrid, by the way, also has a unique hybrid hoot) or examine their reproductive organs postmortem.

Spotted-barred hybrid owls are unique, both individually (no two hybrids look or sound the same) and collectively. Relatively little scientific data has been published about hybrids, as they are rarely encountered in the field and numbers are invariably too low for statistical analyses. What is known is that they typically occur in the early stages of a biological invasion: As barred owls infiltrate an area occupied by spotted owls, the intruding barred owls will mate with spotted owls to give hybrid progeny. As barred owls continue to invade, hybrid numbers will decrease as barred owls preferentially breed with other barred owls. A recent scientific paper (Kelly and Forsman, July 2004) compiled hybrid owl data from the Pacific Northwest: Over a period of 26 years, only 47 hybrids have been observed—extremely few. Interestingly, all confirmed spotted-barred hybrids were the result of male spotted owls mating with female barred owls; it is thought that perhaps this is due to male barred owls being as large or larger than female spotted owls. Spotted-barred hybrids are also fertile, and can mate with spotted or barred owls to create back-crossed hybrids.

The hybrid given to Bird Rescue is quite a unique bird; the rarity of hybrids alone makes the bird of great interest to science, in addition to their ephemeral existence on the front of a critical biological invasion. Any opportunity to study a hybrid, dead or alive, is greatly valued. I certainly am very grateful for the opportunity to study the plumage of the bird before it moved on to serve science as part of the Cal Academy collection.

Article contributed by Claire V. Gallagher, Ecologist, Sierra Nevada Research Center

The Passing of an Ambassador

We're saddened to bring you the news that our American Kestrel, Runway, passed away earlier this month. His diminutive size and colorful plumage made him not only a joy to handle, but a favorite of schoolchildren and adults at community events. Diane Hichwa recalls one child who peered closely at Runway and commented, "It's like each feather was painted."

Runway came to us as a young bird in 2000, having injured his wing in an accident at the Sonoma County Airport. He is buried next to his mew mates in the front garden at the Center. Many thanks to Gloria Heinzl and Jeannie Terry for their help and to Mag Lazar for the plantings, chosen for their colors which are reminiscent of a kestrel's feathers.

A beautiful wooden plaque, carved by Frank Miekle, marks the spot on the white fence near the spot where Runway is buried. This smallest of falcons was truly an educational ambassador to the community and will be sorely missed.



– Kit Daine

...continued from page 3

inspecting last year's red-tailed hawk nest. It appears that the owls are "apartment shopping"! This nest looks well built and still fresh (no young great horneds have taken their toll on the construction).

11-2-04 Again the owls call as 6 p.m. approaches. One watches Millie, then flies into the woods behind the house.

11-3-04 An owl gives an odd 3-note call repeatedly this morning. Six deer of varying ages and sizes parade past the pond and check the bird feeders for leftovers.

11-11-04 The owl calls in late afternoon from up in the woods beyond the water tank. It's a showery afternoon but he still wants the world to know he's there.

11-13-04 The showers have passed and left mushrooms popping up everywhere. The birds seem to head for the sunny patches in the trees; maybe warmed up insects to feed on are

there. An Anna's hummingbird flits through the live oak—wee bugs on his menu. He lights and his head and gorget are a brilliant spot of magenta in a dark green tree. The black phoebe alternates between prominent perches, tv antenna to pond branch and back. The bright yellow flash I just saw must be a Townsend's warbler but all I can locate are chickadees, juncos and a kinglet. The kinglet flutters, then lazily floats down like a falling leaf. Is it to fool a predator? Two sounds betray woodpeckers at work; adjacent trees hold a male and a female hairy. One is close enough in the spotlight of sun to see his toes splayed out on the trunk and the tail with stiff spiked feathers providing support as he stands out from the trunk. They call "pik pik pik" and drum

Nest Box Program for Ages 8-11

On Jan. 16 from 1:00-3:00pm, Wade Belew will give a slide show on bird nest boxes for the 8-11 year olds. Wade is a local expert on nest boxes. During the following months, the 8-11 year old can participate in putting up nest boxes and monitoring them.

This is a big help to cavity nesting birds who have difficulty finding nesting sites, because non-native birds like starlings tend to take the holes. People tend to cut down old dead trees near homes. Those old dead trees are perfect for woodpeckers to make into homes. Of course, these trees can also fall on homes. We can give back a little something to the birds by putting up nest boxes.

Please get the word out to any 8-11 year olds that they are invited to participate in this program. This program meets each month on the third Sunday from 1:00-3:00pm.

Call Marlena Hirsch at 546-5720 if you have any further questions. Better yet, just come on the third Sunday of the month at 1:00pm.

The third Sunday is also Bird Rescue's day for public viewing of the raptors.

Special thanks from BRC to...

Drs. David Rupiper, Ray Visco, Rob Jereb and Lee Thorne

for their donations of supplies, as well as their time and their continuing veterinary care of our resident and rehab birds.

Special thanks to Santa Rosa Recycling and Collection

for providing debris boxes for demolition of our rehabilitation aviary.

Our sincere thanks to Jason Severn

for lending a hand in organizing, overseeing and participating in the demolition of our almost 25 year old rehabilitation aviaries.

Mela Brasset, our new Gardening Coordinator

for her efforts in beautifying our entry and front garden.

Mela, Barb and Frank

for dealing with yet another downed tree.

Katherine Rasmussen

for donating equipment just when we really needed them: a copier, a small TV/VCR and a scanner.

Special thanks also...

for the donations of the businesses and individuals who helped make our Open House such a success:

Bear Republic Brewing Company • Cal Flora Nursery • Copperfield's in Sebastopol • Mom's Apple Pies • Patterson Nurseries • Wild Things • Empire 1 Nursery • Diane Jorgensen • Wild Birds Unlimited • Laura Kline • Giorgio's Italian Restaurant • Wanda Harris • Judy Brinkerhoff • Carol Ulrich • Amy Erickson

And Very Special Thanks to...

the students of Matanzas Elementary School in Santa Rosa for over \$300 worth of gifts from our Wish List, including a much needed digital gram scale. And to PTA mother Kirsten Tyrell for searching for and purchasing all the gifts.

...continued from page 1

By that time the birds are coming in regularly and we would like to have volunteers awaiting their arrival. Many volunteers work with the birds, feeding and cleaning. We also staff our admissions desk and telephone line throughout the spring and summer. Please check the calendar for specific dates of orientations. There are plenty of choices. And do let all your friends know that we need

Sonoma Mountain Journal

9-1-04 At 4 a.m. an owl shrieks very loudly. So loud that I look out the window, then out the sliding door, then up as I hear footsteps on the roof—not reindoor—but an owl. Then I hear the metallic vibration of the old television antenna, set in motion by a heavy object. The big juvenile great horned owl is sitting on the antenna! I can see him above the roofline as I look up from the door. In a few minutes an owl glides from roof to pond but he doesn't stay.

10-6-04 Early October has been very chilly AND the house has been repainted. Both issues are of concern to my "bat buddies". The painters were apprised of the situation and pledged to be careful and considerate of the bats. They did not put paper over those bat-occupied areas nor did they spray any paint, only brushwork in the vicinity and never up into the crevices. They were successful; after four days of work there are still bats in all the crevices. No known fly-outs. The painters have even kept one garage door open at all times, even during painting and drying of the doors themselves. This evening is finally warmer and fifteen-plus bats cluster on the door. There must be a pallid or two in the upper corner because the tell-tale potato bug legs litter the carpet.

10-7-04 I must watch for migrants. Change is in the air, quite literally. I heard golden-crowned sparrows this morning and the black phoebe is back on the antenna. A red-breasted nuthatch calls softly (there are many in the woods at Sea Ranch this year). This evening an odd tremolo sounds from the ridge; it must be coyotes but it's a very different tone than the usual. (Judy Temko calls in the morning to ask about newly arrived golden-crowns and red-breasted sapsuckers' holes...and she comments about puzzling over that same odd tremolo that she'd heard from the other side of the ridge.)

10-10-04 This morning only one owl calls. I see him at the pond edge. He must have already bathed. He flies up and sits on the sculpture—a convenient perch for drying and also for watching. His head moves constantly—watching squirrels, quail, hopefully gophers, and me.

A busy head swiveling in all directions. His demeanor suggests an inquisitive juvenile; I can't imagine an adult being so attentive to all these movements.

10-12-04 As I watch the bats emerge at dusk a screech owl calls from the woods behind the house. There are two nestboxes there but my eyes can't see a thing in the dusk.

10-20-04 Tonight at 6 the two owls hoot and duet. One sits on the old nest platform, the other is on a branch two feet above; he bends forward as he hoots.

10-26-04 The two owls call again from the area of the nest. Interesting. A varied thrush gives its one note call—winter has arrived if the varied thrush are here. Red-breasted nuthatches are prevalent in the woods in front of the house and at the feeders by the pond.

11-1-04 I look for last year's owl nest. It was there just the other night but it looks like our wind and rain have demolished it. I see and hear one owl at 6 p.m. While trying to locate it I hear a second call just above me. I'm looking directly up into a "beehive" of feathers. She calls, then flies across the street to the far hill. He flies on as well but—there he is—

It's Easy To Help Out Fundraising

BRC is perennially short of operating funds. Here are some great suggestions on some ways you can help with fundraising for the work we do at the Bird Rescue Center.

You will see signs around town for the Community Smart Card, which is just that, a smart way to support a non-profit organization in your community. You can apply for this free shopping card by visiting www.communitysmart.com online or you can fill out an application at a participating merchant or at the Bird Rescue Center. On the application you designate a nonprofit (us!) to benefit from your purchases. When you shop at these merchants you present your Community Smart Card and a percentage of your purchase will go to the nonprofit organization.

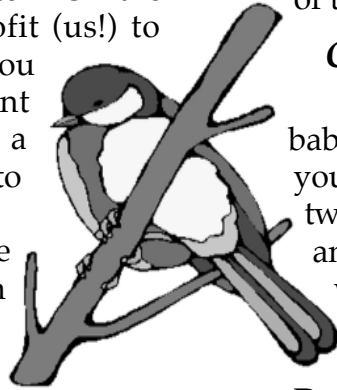
Participating merchants include Copperfield's Books, Friedman Brothers, Oliver's and Pacific Markets, some tire stores, carwashes, pizza shops, and over 100 businesses. A list of participating merchants is available on the website and on a small foldout card. These businesses have already agreed to support our local nonprofits. Please apply for a smart card and lend your support as well.

Human Race: Sonoma County residents really get behind The Human Race. We want to have a BIG Bird Rescue team participate in The Human Race in May 2005. We hope you will think about running/walking, about getting pledges, and about being part of our organizing committee (contact Barb Clough 433-4833 if you can help). We still talk about the year we had a "covey of quail"

walking in the race. Not only was it good PR, but we won a \$100.00 prize!

We realize that some companies match donations of time or money made by their employees to a nonprofit. Other businesses will consider a donation of goods or services. We know there are many other ways to support nonprofits in the community. Please let us know about these opportunities and contacts. Helping with fundraising will be Diane Hichwa.

Your donations are welcomed, appreciated greatly and essential for the continuing operation of the Center. Thank you for your help.



Community Education Gears Up

So, what do we do when there are no babies? If you read our mission statement you will see that the Bird Rescue Center has two primary missions: to rescue, rehabilitate and release orphaned, injured or ill native wild birds AND to educate the public regarding the ecological importance and natural history of these birds.

During our busy summer season of rescuing baby birds we are balancing both missions. At the same time that we are deluged with incoming birds, in person at the admissions desk and on the telephones we are often educating the public about local birds' nesting, behaviors, and development from nestling to fledgling to independence. As the nesting and baby bird season slows down, a group of volunteers swings into high gear to focus on that second mission of the Center.

These volunteers go into classrooms around the county and meet with cub scouts, girl scouts and other youth groups. Over the year we do more than 50 formal presentations. The variety

schoolers, the SRJC Biology Forum and Environmental Forum, a junior high natural history class, two Farms Leadership groups representing eight area high schools talking about birds and vineyards, and an array of scouts and grade schoolers. This variety includes public and private, children and adults, even extending to a mobile home park, a few independent living groups and nursing homes. We are available to talk to civic groups as well.

Thanks to Jeannie Terry, who is assisting with scheduling, we are able to respond promptly to telephone requests. We are excited to have a new group of raptor handlers in training. They will be able to meet the public during Visitors' Days on the first Saturday and third Sunday afternoon each month when we staff the resident raptor area for the public to drop in between 1:00 and 4:00. We invite you to attend! Raptor handlers form the core of the Education Team but any volunteer is welcome to

assist in the classroom, at table events like the Fair, and in meeting the public at the Center.

The resident raptors are very important members of our Education Team. As part of our licensing agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service these non-releasable birds must be used in public education. This is their purpose in being part of the Bird Rescue Center. It would be hard not to be impressed looking carefully at a great horned owl with strong feathered toes and perfect camouflage coloring. People recognize the important role of a turkey vulture in the environment and many begin to admire the bird itself when they see it up close and have a chance to exclaim at the iridescent feathers and wide-reaching wings. Children and adults are amazed at how small an owl can be: a northern pygmy owl weighs in at 2 ounces and stands 4 inches tall! These residents represent the richness of Sonoma County's birdlife and we hope they enrich the lives

The Bird Rescue Center has two primary missions:

First

To rescue, rehabilitate and release orphaned, injured or ill native wild birds, and,...

Second:

To education the public regarding the ecological importance and natural history of these birds.

Bird Rescue Wish List

Astroturf (Daisy doormat) door mats
Frozen berries (blue, black, rasp, straw)
Bleach (no Clorox Ultra, it contains lye)
Clamp lights
Dawn dish soap
Dry erase markers
Elastic 3/4" and 1/2" in width
Kleenex (plain, no lotion)
Viva paper towels
Peanut butter (natural, no salt)
Vet wrap 2" to 3" wide

Suet cake
Sunflower chips
Telfa pads
Dixie cups small
Pine shavings bale, dust free
Scissors
Ziploc freezer bags gallon size
Folders with fasteners attached
Rolls of 1" welded wire 18" and 24" widths

Spotted-Barred Owl Analysis

When Alida asked me to visit Bird Rescue and take a look at a mystery owl that was either a barred owl (*Strix varia*) or a spotted-barred owl hybrid, I first uttered a series of unpleasant phrases directed at the barred owl invasion of California. I then promptly exaggerated my bad start by jumping to two incorrect assumptions: First, I wrongly figured that, strictly using probabilities, the bird was probably a barred owl. The (il-)logic made sense at the time: Historically, barred owls inhabited only eastern forests; they began to expand their range westward in the early 1900s. Recent decades have seen a southern movement of barred owls along the west coast: a barred owl first appeared in Washington in 1973, Oregon in 1979, and California in the early 1980s. Barred owls have been documented as far south as Nevada County, California (1998), and their range now almost entirely overlaps the range of the Northern spotted owl. As one would expect from an invading species, barred owls are known for dispersing great distances (unlike their spotted owl relatives). In areas experiencing the very beginnings of a barred owl invasion, nomadic visiting owls (often called "floaters") form the front of the invasion wave (envision the Marines). As a barred owl (nicknamed "Darth Owl") appeared in Muir Woods, Marin County, in 2003, it would be reasonable to expect a barred owl in Sonoma county. Furthermore, spotted-barred owl hybrids are quite rare; the probability of a barred owl is low enough—of a hybrid, ridiculously low. Second, I wrongly assumed, again using probabilities, that the bird was most likely a dispersing juvenile whose inexperience with the wilds had scheduled it a date with disaster. The timing of the bird's expiration—late October—would be typical of a dispersing juvenile.

It goes without saying that I was quite shocked to see that the bird was a spotted-barred owl hybrid