



# The Raptor Chapter

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## 2009 Peregrine Restoration Project Very Successful

**A**fter a delayed start, the 2009 Project racked up another successful Restoration season, with all 17 young peregrines going out & doing well.

The season's delay came because a pair of peregrine falcons decided to nest right below the hack boxes at the Lansing site. This meant that we needed to find a new place in the Gorge to continue the hacking project. We finally settled on two rock outcrops along the Canyon Rim Trail at Grandview, built new hack boxes, and by the beginning of June the first set of young peregrines were out and learning to use their wings. As we went through the season we discovered other benefits to using Grandview as our hacking area: the Gorge is quite wide there so the peregrines tended to spend a lot of their air time within its' confines, and additionally, we were able to establish a great public viewing area at North Overlook, just slightly up the trail from the hack boxes.

Although the nest at the Lansing site was not ultimately successful, there continue to be sightings of an adult peregrine both at the New River Gorge Bridge at Lansing and also at Grandview. Whether it is the male from the nest site or another bird is unclear so far. Maybe next year there will be another nesting pair in the Gorge.

## TRAC Increases Our On-Line Presence

**I**n discussions over the course of 2008 it became apparent that there were many who wanted news more often and in smaller bites, as well as the chance to have ongoing dialogues on various topics. In response, we started the "TRAC Blog" on our web page in January, with the thought that we would try to post weekly updates on our activities and encourage feedback and discussions. (Some months we've done better on that goal than other months!) Also within a few weeks, TRACWV became an entity on Twitter and began collecting a list of followers. Three Rivers Avian Center is now a Cause on Facebook, and in the beginning of November, we established a Facebook Fan page for Three Rivers Avian Center.

So, join our Blog, Tweet us on Twitter, Friend us on Facebook or Fan us on our Fan Page. Drop us an e-mail, write us a good old fashioned letter, or call us on the telephone. We're always glad to hear from you!

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## “Hey Y’all - watch *THIS!*”

Cute little seed exchanges at the bird feeder, the mutual preening sessions, the boys chasing the girls, the girls chasing the boys. The brawling over territory and nest boxes. It is all so dynamic, and to bird watchers, it really is one of the more enthralling rituals of Spring. Much has been written by poets and scientists about this, but one particular event from this past May really boils it down in terms that should reminded us how fundamental and universal some things can be no matter how different birds may be from us.

There I was this past May giving a tour of the facility here at TRAC. As we pass each cage, I like to have an anecdote or 2 so that I can give guests a wider picture of our birds’ personalities and abilities. At the cage of our Golden Eagle, Spirit, I was just getting ready to start in with how our boy just might, if given the chance, bag his own food should it come too close to the cage, when a Chickadee zipped in from the hill above the cage to perch high up on the chain link wall. His position was about 10 feet from Spirit, who was sitting on his big log perch at the end of the cage, facing the other way.

I had seen song birds slip into the cage before. I have also sometimes found what remains of them if Spirit is hungry at the time and gets lucky. So I was a little apprehensive, especially if something should happen right in front of guests.

The Chickadee started scolding Spirit. Spirit gave his tormentor a quick look and returned to ignoring him, back turned, one foot up. For about a minute the Chickadee continued to berate what seemed to be an indifferent eagle. “I’ll bet he wants to get in to Spirit’s pond”, I surmised trying to spin a light hearted narrative from what easily could turn into bad publicity for a bird rescue facility.

Then the Chickadee made his move. Zinging down to the ground nearly at the foot of Spirit’s perch, not 4 feet away, he snatched something from the grass and was back to his

chain link perch in an instant. In his beak was a small down feather courtesy of the Golden Eagle. Twittering away, a second Chickadee joined him. Chickadee 1 then presented Chickadee 2 with the feathery gift and both flew away happy with their prize - which was, no doubt, going to furnish their nest.

So I put it to you. If a Chickadee wants a puffy piece of discarded plumage wouldn’t he just look around and find it somewhere else safer? I mean, there is always plenty of such fluffy nesting stuff available at TRAC all over the place clinging to the grass, bushes, and fencing.

And why the extended vocal preamble to the raid? Keeping his mouth shut would surely increase his chances of not winding up as light snack. But not this guy. If I read this right, he was challenging the hulking monster to “Make your move, you big lummoX! No way you’re gonna stop *ME.*” Where upon he turned to the Little Lady and twittered, “watch this” and bagged a downy white little trophy, a gift for his sweetie.

Much is made of bird song as away for the male to impress the female with his fitness as a mate. But as we all know, talk is cheap. On the other hand, jumping into the dragon’s lair after first announcing to the dragon that you are going to do just that, for the purpose of purloining a little token of your esteem . . . well now, that kind of tossing caution (along with better judgment) to the wind is just a good old-fashioned brand of bull-headed chutzpah! And he got away with it!

I asked Spirit about this. He said, “I do not comment on the idle chit chat of Chickadees.” But as we left, I though I heard him muttering something about hors d’oeuvres, canapes, and something or other being “beneath his dignity.” Maybe I am anthropomorphizing. Or maybe I am just easily impressed because Chickadees are so small and Eagles are so huge. But then again, maybe birds don’t really think about these things. But I know what I saw. Ah, Amore!

-  Ron Perrone, TRAC Education Director



## TRAC's Been On The Road....

Our public education outreach programs have been very active, despite the duties and responsibilities of the Peregrine Restoration Project, Flight Barn construction and wild bird rehabilitation. Appearances at the Vandalia Festival, the Appalachian String Band Festival, and the Pumpkin Festival combined with programs in the WV State Parks and Forests, schools, 4-H camps, and other venues have resulted in a total audience count of over 20,000 individuals so far. The 2010 schedule of presentations for the WV State Parks, Vandalia, and others are on our web site: [www.tracwv.org/upcoming.html](http://www.tracwv.org/upcoming.html).

The Migration Celebration, our annual festival held at Little Beaver State Park in May, had a 25% higher attendance than last year, despite periods of heavy rain! The unique family-oriented festival focuses on educating people about West Virginia's wild birds and natural heritage and also works to involve them in ecosystem awareness and stewardship. The Migration Celebration is a cooperative effort between Three Rivers Avian Center, the WV Division of Culture & History, Little Beaver State Park, the WV Division of Natural Resources, the National Park Service - New River Gorge, and the WV Department of Agriculture. Further event production assistance comes from story teller and kids events coordinator "Granny Sue" Holstein, photographer Steve Rotsch, birder and birdwalk leader Bev Delidow, the Barony of Blackstone Mountain, Kristen Carrington and Holli Lathroum. Many thanks also to the volunteers who helped set up and staff the Celebration! Next year's Celebration will be held on Saturday May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010 from 9 am - 5 pm at Little Beaver. Mark your calendars!

## Hello & Welcome to Jenn Hoffman

Jenn is an enthusiastic, energetic 2009 Wildlife Biology graduate from Virginia Tech with a passion for wild birds and small mammals, the outdoors, kayaking and veterinary care. She has become our latest Residency student, and will be with us until the end of December. We are delighted to have her with us. Welcome aboard, Jenn!

**W**ith the Summer migrants off to more southerly climes, now is the time to start tallying up the local resident birds. There are several great ways to participate in these ongoing data collection efforts, and you don't have to be an expert by any means! And best of all, it's FREE, a great way to meet interesting people and fun for the entire family.



1) join up with the WV online birding listserv to find out who is seeing what bird where and to get current notes and news in the WV birding community (sorry, the link is a bit clunky, but you've got to type it all in...): <http://list.audubon.org/wa.exe?SUBED1=ww-bird&A=1> Contribute your own sightings!

2) join in one of the Christmas Bird Counts (or "CBC"s). They are held late December through the 1<sup>st</sup> week of January. To find a group conducting one near you, visit the web site <http://www.brooksbirdclub.org>, click on the "CBC" link on the side bar.

3) Join Jim Phillips, TRAC and volunteers in the 5th Annual Eagle Survey January 9, 2010. No experience needed, just sharp eyes & binoculars. Contact TRAC for more info.

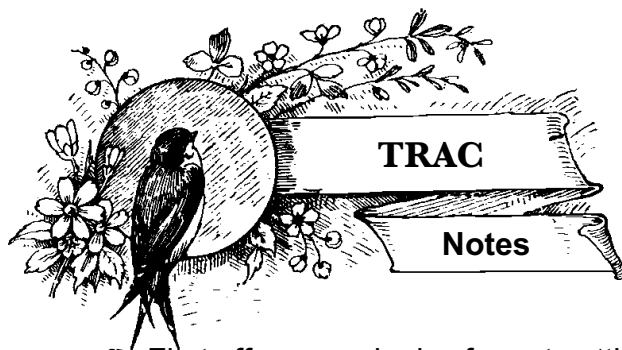
## **Avian Rehabilitation @ TRAC:** **“Winter Blast” Data Points**

For a while now we have been wondering what, if anything, 2885+ bird records could tell us about what overall patient trends we see here at TRAC. So from time to time I will be picking through the haystack and publishing what I find here in our newsletter.

The first notion that was blown out of the water was that we think we see a spike in bird intake when the first real blast of cold weather hits in early Winter. Every Fall we steel ourselves for it. But the data say only in the years between 1992 and 1995 that December was a big month. After that, the proportion of intake for that month shrivels away to way less than even the proportional 1/12<sup>th</sup> one might expect for the year. Our worst ‘Winter Blast’ was in 2002 when we had 47 birds turned in during October. But that turned out to be more than November, December and the following January the combined! So back in 1992 through 1995, Wendy and I were just getting started in wild bird rehabilitation and the surprising spikes we experienced in bird intake back then made a lasting impression on us. Since then, we have also had intermittent cold snaps which do bring down birds, but these events do not seem to be driving overall bird intake at all even on a monthly basis.

So is the ‘Winter Blast’ phenomena just a perceptual thing as the data suggest? Not really. While December, January, and March don’t bring in a disproportional number of patients, the storms of Fall and Winter pose challenging bird rescue moments. Winter storms often make getting the bird in to safety a much bigger deal than it normally would be. It can involve cajoling the bird ‘rescuer’ to drive when they might otherwise not want to. Or, we might have to find someone willing to volunteer to go, pick up and transport the bird. More bird rescues take place in the dark in Winter. For our part, it might mean chaining and unchaining the van, bad road conditions, and longer drives to connect with transporters.

We remember the ‘Winter Blast’ because it takes more time and energy and because of one final fact that the data does support. Patient survival decreases as the Winter progresses. Winter is a bad time to be on the ground starving, or with a head injury, or with a broken wing, or any of a myriad of other acute and debilitating injuries. The severity of the presenting cases, the mental, emotional and physical energy and concentration that it takes to try to turn those severe cases around against the odds takes it’s human toll. And that makes a deep impression.



✿ First off, our apologies for not putting out the newsletter in a more timely fashion this year. The workload these past several months has precluded having very much “in the office” time - to the detriment of our normal publishing cycle. The TRAC Blog covered some of the gap, but we’ll work on correcting the newsletter problem for 2010!!

✿ Internship applications are now available for those individuals who would like to work with us for the Summer 2010 season (May - August). Qualified applicants will have the ability to complete tasks independently, have the flexibility to work with many different people and personalities, enjoy being outdoors, have excellent communication skills, be enthusiastic, be willing to work in a fast paced environment, have their own vehicle and be at least 18 years old.

Interns can expect to be handling wild birds of prey & other bird species, helping with rehab treatments and education programs, working in the Peregrine Falcon Restoration Project and more. For more information, contact Wendy Perrone: [wendy@tracwv.org](mailto:wendy@tracwv.org).



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## Leon Wilson Memorial Flyway is Back Under Construction:

**V**olunteers, materials and good weather have all finally come together at the same time to help get the Flight Barn Flyway headed towards completion.

In the photos above, left to right: 1) TRAC's Ron Perrone and volunteer Jeff Busche construct the flyway foundation, 2) TRAC's Wendy Perrone

drives rebar stabilizing rods into foundation, 3) Tri-River Trucking's Dwayne Rudisell manages to finesse dumping over 50 tons of limestone sand precisely within the foundation, 4) John Dunn (& Jenn Smith, not pictured) from Concord University lend a hand with the first stud walls, 5) Andy Woodruff, TRAC Advisory Board member Carol Jackson & Ron Perrone put up the first hip rafter, 6) with the back stud walls completed, Carol, Andy and Ron lay the front and final section of foundation, 7) TRAC Board of Directors member Terry Carter joins Ron to straighten up a final stud wall. Not pictured: volunteers Elana & Linda Lee Emerich, Andy Maier & Jenn Hoffman.

The final picture shows all the stud walls up as well as all the hip rafters, some of the outer plywood is set in place to brace the walls, and now it's all about RAFTERS! If we can keep the weather cooperating and the volunteers helping out, we should have the project finished and birds flying in the space in just a few weeks. Check our website for progress reports: [www.tracwv.org](http://www.tracwv.org)



**TRAC Staff Veterinarian: Dr Bill Streit**  
 All Creatures Veterinary Clinic 304-425-9944  
 1027 Stafford Drive Plaza, Princeton  
*Many thanks to Dr Sue Mohler and the All Creatures Staff as well!*  
*Thanks also to TRAC Advisory Board members*  
**Dr. Jeff Patton & Monica Patton LVT**  
 Animal Care Associates, 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
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**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
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**Elkview**

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

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

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

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

**Princeton**

All Creatures Veterinary Clinic	1027 Stafford Drive Plaza, Princeton	304-425-9944
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**Union**

Monroe Veterinary House Calls	Union	304-667-2365
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***Needs List:***

Bath-sized towels	Unflavored Pedialyte	Paper towels	Simple Green cleaner
Good quality common bird seed	Black sunflower bird seed	Safflower bird seed	
Disinfecting wipes	AA Alkaline Batteries	D Alkaline batteries	Postage stamps

**B**ecome 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.

**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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Ayla	American Kestrel (female)	\$30
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
Jack	Merlin (male)	\$30

**Remember to check your newsletter mailing label for your current membership level and expiration date!**

Your support is vital to our success! Thank you.

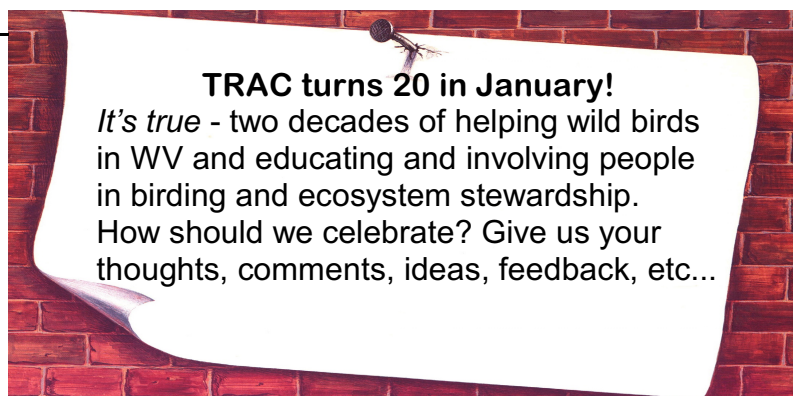
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*Your name, a loved one's name or your group or company's name can be listed here for an annual donation of \$150 or more.*

*Your donation is tax-deductible & will help advance the work of Three Rivers Avian Center.*

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Brooks Bird Club - Handlan Chap.	The Forman & Frame Family	Bethany Hopta & Rob Leach	Harlan Wilson
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