

On the Horizon



Horizon Wings Newsletter – Summer 2011
www.horizonwings.org

Welcome to Horizon Wings' quarterly newsletter – *On the Horizon*. We would like to keep you informed of happenings, events, and news going on at Horizon Wings.

Our mission at Horizon Wings is to rehabilitate birds of prey for release into the wild, in order to maintain their population and to educate the community to enhance awareness of the environment. It is our hope by doing this that we reach people of all ages and create the desire in them to help preserve our natural world.



Home for an Eagle

On April 25th 2011, Horizon Wings added a new member to its family of educational birds--- Atka, a juvenile Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus Leucocephalus*)! This magnificent eagle has a permanent shoulder injury, which prevents his release back to the wild. The addition of Atka is an enormous commitment for us and one which we hope will enhance our educational programs in the future.

The decision to add a Bald Eagle to our facility began last year. Mary-Beth began working with Hope Douglas and her eagles at Wind Over Wings in order to acquire the recommended 500 hours experience needed to obtain a captive eagle. Hours of volunteer work at the Shepaug Dam eagle observation site were also logged this past winter. Another federal requirement for the acquisition of an eagle, is the ability to establish a sizable financial endowment. Fortunately, we were able to overcome this obstacle through the selfless generosity of Jeanne Wadsworth and Fred and Midge Kaeser.

In October of 2010, with the encouragement of Hope and others, we began looking for just the right eagle to become part of our family. In November, a bird was located at Washington State University. Langley, as he was known to his care-takers at WSU, was found in August of 2010 near the South Dakota border with an injury to his right shoulder which would never heal well enough to allow him to fly free again. Because he was a young bird, the choice was made at WSU to try to find a permanent home for him. The

applications were filled out and sent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the State of Connecticut's Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection. Then the wait for approval began. Within a week, the state DEEP sent its approval. The USFWS would take a little longer.

Meanwhile, in June of 2010, Horizon Wings was entrusted with its first Bald Eagle for rehabilitation. The bird was a fifteen-year-old female born in Massachusetts. She was probably nesting on the southern part of the Connecticut River when she was found with a badly broken and infected wing. Because of her age and severity of her injury, it was decided she would probably not do well in captivity and the decision was made to humanely euthanize her. This experience brought to the forefront our need for a sizable aviary for larger birds. The call went out in our first newsletter (Fall 2010) for donations and help for this massive project.



In March of 2011, we received an e-mail from Vaughn and Sheila Numrych. They had seen our newsletter and were interested in making a donation in memory of Vaughn's father, George Numrych. Vaughn and Sheila had made a number of generous donations to Horizon Wings over the past few years, but we had never met them. After a few e-mails we finally invited them out. We had the footprint of a 20'x32' aviary laid out and a rough idea of the cost for building it. When our estimate was presented to Vaughn his response was "Are you sure that will be enough?" The Numrych's generous donation covered the entire cost of building the new aviary, as well as some additional renovations to existing ones. They were also willing to come and help out on one of our volunteer clean-up days before our

Earth Day Fair. The plan was to have the foundation done and an artist's drawing of the aviary posted for our Earth Day Fair on April 30th. As we were to discover, these plans would change dramatically.

On April 11th we received stunning news. USFWS granted us the permits to obtain Atka (formerly known as Langley)! Arrangements were quickly made with WSU. Atka was to arrive at Bradley Airport in two weeks on April 25th! Our first volunteer day was April 16th. We had about a dozen volunteers, and with the help of Vaughn's carpentry skills, we had four walls of the aviary framed and standing. Just a day later, with the help of our volunteer Jeanne's father, John Calchera, Alan had the 20' rafters up. In rapid order, the walls went up on the 18th and 19th. By April 22nd more wonderful volunteers from Alan's work helped put up the roof and dig a two foot wide trench around the entire structure for a predator guard. Our second planned volunteer day was held on the April 23rd, and we carried on our work despite the heavy rain. Wire was put up and two intrepid volunteers from UCONN's honor club slogged in the mud to bury the predator guard. On the 24th an 8'x8' atrium was constructed and a 500lb. stump was brought in for "furniture". Throughout the entire construction of the aviary, volunteer Jeanne Wadsworth worked tirelessly each day to help complete the project in time. Finishing touches were put on the aviary the day Atka was due to arrive, and the last perch was secured 45 minutes before leaving for the airport to meet Atka!

Atka is settling in to his new surroundings and is in the process of training to become comfortable enough to take out on public programs. We will keep you informed of his progress and announce his public debut when he is ready. We cannot possibly thank everyone enough for all of the contributions of time and money that has made this dream a reality for Horizon Wings. Thank You!

Written by Alan Nordell

Plan to attend a very special event!



Horizon Wings is kicking off the Fall season with an Owl Prowl!

Please join us **Saturday, October 22nd** anytime from **7:00pm to 9:00pm**

Donation: (cash or check)

Adults: \$5.00

Children: \$2.00 (under 5 free)

Our Owl Prowl is a family event, fitting with the season. You and your children will be guaranteed to see 4 different species of live owls! Learn fun facts and uncover the mysteries of the secret lives of owls. There will be raffle prizes of owl-related items and we will be serving complimentary hot apple cider and cookies. This is an early evening event, held at Horizon Wings. Bring flashlights! (no headlamps, please)

Please call Horizon Wings at (860) 429-2181 to pre-register.

We look forward to seeing you!

Rehabilitation Update



An update on a red-tailed hawk that needed a toe amputated from being caught in a trap that Horizon Wings had in rehab from the last newsletter.

On a bright sunny afternoon in March we drove out to Woodstock with the

beautiful red-tailed hawk ready to go back to the wild. Mary-Beth felt something special with this bird and would be doing the release herself.

She walked her over to a release spot and opened the box. The red-tailed hawk immediately flew out of the box, across the lawn and up into a tree. She sat there

perching in the tree getting her bearing after spending several weeks recovering from her injury. As we were sitting there admiring her, we heard another red-tailed hawk starting to call.

She took off and then turned and flew back over us one last time before meeting up with her suspected mate. The two of them soared together again in the skies calling continuously. They made several passes over us before they disappeared together. What a special release!

Written by Jeanne Wadsworth



Rehabilitation News

As of August 2011, Horizon Wings has had a total of 53 birds in rehabilitation. 18 have been released, three transferred to education centers due to permanent injuries, and 10 are still in rehab. 22 birds died or were humanely euthanized due to their injuries.

Earth Day 2011

Our 2nd Annual Earth Day Event on April 30th was a huge success! The weather turned out spectacular compared to last year's rainy event. The doors opened at 11:00 am and we had a steady flow of people until we closed the doors at 3:00 pm. We had folks of all ages that enjoyed the aviary tours, face painting, owl pellet dissection, creating pine cone bird feeders and the programs. As a matter of fact, most stayed for both programs throughout the day.

All of the activities went so well because of the numerous volunteers who helped with parking, manned the raffle and refreshments tables, painted many faces, helped with the crafts, educated many about what is in the owl pellets and all that handled our birds. We even had lots of volunteers come the weekend before for clean up so everything looked wonderful.

This year we added refreshments which went over extremely well especially since a lot of people made a whole day of it. We ended the day with the raffles, winners or not everyone seemed to walk away with something, either a raffle item or a new appreciation for our feathered friends.



This year's donations from the event is funding a new Screech owl aviary and the refurbishing of our Kestrel aviary. All of us at Horizon Wings (including our resident birds) thank you for your generous donations and are looking forward to seeing you again at our next year's Earth day.
Written by Sandy Vinton

Farewell and Best Wishes to our Summer Intern



Heather McGahagin is a senior at Unity College going for a degree in Wildlife Conservation. She spent the summer of 2010 interning at the Salisbury Zoo in Maryland and discovered she wanted to continue working with raptors. Since the spring and summer are the busiest seasons for us, we knew we could certainly use the extra pair of hands. It seemed like a win-win situation for both parties.

Heather started with Horizon Wings in mid-May. We immediately put her to work cleaning aviaries, scrubbing water bowls, cleaning rehab crates, and weighing baby birds. Since she had prior experience from the zoo, we were able to let her start handling some of the smaller birds right away. As the weeks went on throughout the summer, we settled into a nice routine of Heather coming out to Horizon Wings on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Other tasks that she tackled were re-wrapping perches, putting up new perches, working on building a new aviary, training new education raptors, sorting and packaging mice and rats, caring

for rehab birds, speaking at educational programs, going out on wildlife rescue calls, bringing birds to the vet, and releasing birds back to the wild.

Heather has a very positive attitude and is very willing to do all of the tasks that are part of working at a raptor center. It was a pleasure having her here this past summer and we wish her all of the best in her future endeavors. Thanks for everything Heather – Great job!

Written by Jeanne Wadsworth

Thank You!

Horizon Wings would like to thank Vaughn and Sheila Numrych for their generous donation of time and funds, which made Atka's aviary possible.

We would also like to thank Vern Ellis for his printing services, Paulien Rorick for her hard work with the Horizon Wings website, Paul Watson for his generously given accounting services, Bolton Veterinary Hospital for their ongoing care, and Wind Over Wings.

Thank you to Fred and Midge Kaeser, and Jeanne Wadsworth, whose generous donations allowed Horizon Wings to set up the endowment fund necessary to give Atka a home.

Wishlist

- Lumber
- Cordless power tools
- Vinyl coated wire
- Zip-Loc freezer bags
- Postage stamps
- Paper towels
- Astro-turf
- Pea stone

Please contact us at horizonwings@ymail.com if you can donate any of these items.

Monetary donations may be applied to any of the above.

Would you like to help Horizon Wings? Fill this form out and mail back with a donation.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email: _____

Would you like to be added to our email mailing list? Yes No

Mail to:

Horizon Wings Raptor Rehabilitation and Education

P.O. Box 238

Ashford, CT 06278

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