

# On the Horizon



Summer/Fall 2024 Edition

[www.horizonwings.org](http://www.horizonwings.org)

Welcome to Horizon Wings' semi-annual newsletter, *On the Horizon*. We want to keep you informed about happenings, events, and news at Horizon Wings.

Our mission at Horizon Wings is to rehabilitate birds of prey for release back to the wild, maintain their populations and educate the community to enhance awareness of the environment. We hope to reach people of all ages and inspire in them a desire to help preserve our natural world.

## Rehabilitation 2024

At this writing, we have had 80 birds come to Horizon Wings for rehabilitation this year. The most common cause of injury was motor vehicle strikes, and the second most common was rodenticide or suspected rodenticide poisoning. Other injuries included getting caught in soccer nets and fencing. We also received young birds that needed to be re-nested or reunited with their parents.

We'd like to share three of our rehabilitation stories with you.

### Cooper's hawks nestlings

On Thursday, June 21, I received a call about four very young Cooper's hawks that had been displaced when their nest tree was cut down. Cooper's hawks can be secretive nesters, and the nest was not discovered until the main trunk of the tree had been cut.

The homeowner carefully gathered the young and brought them to a local veterinary hospital, and from there they were brought to Horizon Wings. Dr. Ann Bourke of Northeast Bird Clinic was quick to respond, carefully checking each nestling for injuries. Although all the birds were found to be healthy, their ears were infested with maggots, which Dr. Bourke gently removed. This is not an uncommon finding with young raptors as botflies often lay their eggs in the ears of young birds. The nestlings were voracious eaters, fighting among themselves to grab food from the forceps from which they were being fed.

The homeowner reported that she was seeing the adult birds in the area, and we were able to work with the tree company to arrange a time to re-nest the young birds. The morning of Sunday, June 24, we met with the tree company and the homeowner to begin the re-nesting process. A climber scaled a tree near the original nest tree and placed a wicker basket among the branches, tying it securely in place. We put the young birds in a pillowcase to raise them to their new nest. Once they were settled, we stepped back to see what would happen next. We saw the parents in a distant tree, but they did not approach the nest. We decided it would be best to leave the area. The homeowner agreed to watch the nest for the return of the parents—and they did return! They accepted the new nest and successfully raised their young there.



*Cooper's hawk nestlings*

### Red-tailed hawk

On September 8, EnCon Officer Anthony Dota brought us an injured red-tailed hawk. This bird had a very large traumatic wound to her chest. The cause was unknown, but we suspect a collision with a motor vehicle.

*(Rehabilitation cont.)*

Weighing in at a little over 1300 grams (about 2.87 pounds), the hawk appeared to be in good health aside from her injury. Once again, Dr. Bourke was available, and we got to work suturing the wound. The hawk was feisty and quite a handful from the time she arrived. She was a good eater, enabling us to give her antibiotics and pain medication in her food. She was kept on oxygen for the first 48 hours with us. An active girl who was definitely not happy with the idea of cage rest, the hawk eventually pulled out her sutures, leaving us with no choice but to let the remainder of the wound granulate in. This required twice daily bandage changes for the first few weeks. I don't know who was happier, us or the bird, when we were eventually able to do only one bandage change each day!



After two-and-a-half months, the wound had healed enough that it no longer required bandage changes, and we were able to move her to an outdoor aviary. Finally after 3 months she was released back to her territory on a beautiful Sunday morning in December.

## **Barred Owl**

On October 30, we received a call from a man who said that he had just struck an owl and that it was stuck in the grill of his truck. By the time we arrived at the site, the owl had freed himself but was sitting in the parking lot looking quite dazed.

We easily scooped him up and brought him back to be examined. Although nothing major seemed to be wrong, we believed that he likely had sustained a concussion. We administered fluids and pain medication. After a few days of cage rest, he was able to be moved to an outdoor aviary, where over the next few days he gained strength and was soon ready for release. On November 4, we took the owl back to the area where he'd been found and released him. It was a quick turnaround for one lucky owl!

Thank you to David Stevens for the use of his flight aviary, as all our aviaries were full at the time.

– *Mary-Beth Kaeser*

# **Annual Open House draws enthusiastic crowd to meet birds and other wildlife**

Scores of visitors enjoyed sunshine and warm temperatures on Saturday, October 5, as they learned about and met Horizon Wings' raptors and corvids and toured the grounds. Volunteers presented birds outside their aviaries, allowing guests to see them up close, ask questions, and tell stories of their own experiences with birds of prey. The afternoon program featured bald eagle Atka, presented by Myles Ierardi; red-tailed hawk Patrick, presented by Jeanne Wadsworth; barn owl Tyton, presented by Deb Csere; and young peregrine falcon Noah, presented by Mary-Beth Kaeser.

Guest exhibitors offered visitors even more wildlife encounters. Pam and Bill Lefferts of Ferncroft Wildlife Rescue brought two of their ambassador opossums. Cassandra Blais from Riverside Reptiles Education Center and volunteer Lizzie brought with them a Mexican alligator lizard, a gargoyle gecko, an African fat-tailed gecko named Buggy, a Mexican black king snake named Melvin, a Dumeril's boa, and a bearded dragon named Freddy.

Falconer David Stevens hosted a falconry equipment display and jess-making demonstration. Later, with his red-tailed hawk, Jack, he gave a presentation on falconry, in general and as it's practiced in Connecticut. Rounding out the Open House's educational activities were a display of raptor skulls, wings, and talons and a large poster with raptor silhouettes



*(Open House cont.)*

showing a range of wingspans at life size, from the tiny northern saw whet owl's reach of one-and-a-half feet to the great golden eagle's seven-foot wingspread.

At midday, beloved musician Bruce John delighted visitors and volunteers alike with his renditions of classic songs.

Just for fun were cutouts where visitors could pose for photos as a screech owl or saw whet owl and a kids' Halloween coloring activity.

Visitors helped support Horizon Wings' rescue and rehabilitation mission with the purchase of monthly calendars and note cards featuring photos of Horizon Wings' ambassador birds, T-shirts, and key chains. Drawing prizes included a basket of bird-related games, a basket of indoor/outdoor owl figures, two rustic owls, an owl tote bag, a bird feeder basket, a basket of plush bird toys, a children's bird activity basket, and two owl nest boxes.

Free refreshments included the famous chili that's served each year, homemade brownies and cookies, cider donuts, some spectacular owl cupcakes, coffee, tea, hot chocolate, and lemonade.

Horizon Wings thanks all who joined us for the Open House, and we look forward to seeing you at a future program. To learn where we'll be next, check out our website or follow us on Facebook!

– Sara Putnam

## Projects 2024

As always it has been a busy year, and Horizon Wings is blessed to have a great grounds crew!

They were kept very busy this year. Along with the routine maintenance of our aviaries which includes such things as roof and perch repair, we received a grant from First Light and Power to buy pea stone for our largest rehabilitation aviaries. This was a big undertaking for the grounds crew as in order to get the stone into the aviaries they had to first remove a wall from each aviary. As always, they combined a sense of humor with their hard work and the work was completed in a day's time. This task was made easier with the loan of a tractor from our friend David Stevens. Thank you, David! And thank you Paul, Don, Andy and Bob!



*Paul, Don, Andy, Bob*



*Goldens Memorial Garden*

In May of this year, we lost our beloved Golden eagle Skywalker due to complications of old age. He was 35 years old and a well-loved ambassador first with Hope Douglas of Wind Over Wings and for the last eight years of his life with us at Horizon Wings. I thought it was only fitting to memorialize him, and his beloved mate Chrysos, who passed before him, with a

garden. It is a work in progress and will have more added next spring and summer. Thank you to Beth Andrews for helping this garden come to life.



*Skywalker*

**This newsletter is dedicated in loving memory of  
Skywalker. 1989-2024**

# Thank you to our friends and supporters

## Our grantors:

- Hartford Audubon Society
- Eversource
- Trinity College
- Schawb Charitable (Kathleen and Patrick Sullivan)
- FirstLight Power
- Quinebaug Hatchery
- Jackson Laboratory

## Donors:

- Vaughn and Sheila Numrych
- David Miller
- Sheila (Robert ) Dougan

## Our veterinarians:

- Dr. Ann Bourke, Northeast Bird Clinic
- Dr. Maureen Murray and staff, Tufts Wildlife Clinic
- Fenton River North Veterinary Clinic

## Special thanks to:

CT DEEP and ENCON Officers who have gone out of their way to bring us injured animals and fish for our eagles.

The wonderful, dedicated and hard-working volunteers of Horizon Wings, and all of you who support us in many ways with your donations of goods along with your monetary donations!

THANK YOU!

## **Mary-Beth Kaeser**

Founder and Director Horizon Wings

## Wish List

- Lumber (Plywood, 2x4s, 2x6s)
- Roofing material
- Hardware (deck screws, rafter hangers, hinges, hasps)
- Zip-Loc freezer bags
- Cleaning supplies (paper towels, bleach, Rescue)
- Office supplies (Postage stamps, paper, envelopes)
- Gift cards for building supplies
- Hardware cloth
- Disposable vinyl cleaning gloves
- Amazon ([https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/genericItemsPage/2QDT9KR9W3EX2?ref=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/genericItemsPage/2QDT9KR9W3EX2?ref=wl_share))

***Please support your local merchants whenever possible!***

## Board of Directors

Mary-Beth Kaeser – President

Jeanne Wadsworth – Vice President

Lori Young – Secretary

Dr. Ann Bourke

Patricia Cebrelli

Paul McKiernan

Bob Lofquist

*Newsletter Editor: Sara Putnam  
Newsletter Designer: Sandy Vinton*

**Did you know? Horizon Wings Raptor Rehabilitation and Education is on**



**Visit us for current news, photos, and information on upcoming programs.**