



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

by Chris Soucy

I love the way birds adapt. Actually, I love the way all animals and natural systems change to meet the needs of their environment and the ways in which they evolve over time. Did you know that hummingbirds' tongues are not only super long but have grooves in them? They pump their tongues from tip to base in a snake-like movement that pushes nectar up through the grooves and into their mouths. Crazy, right? Hawks and owls, which we love around here, have so many special physical adaptations I could not possibly list them all, but here are a few. Falcons are the speed demons of the bird world. Peregrines have been clocked at well over 200 mph. In order to keep their lungs from filling up with air and exploding inside their chests at such speeds, they have a bony structure inside their nostrils which they can use to close off their airways while in a high-speed dive. Owls' eyes are so big inside their skulls that they have had to sacrifice some of the muscles inside their eye sockets which would normally allow them to move their eyes side to side. Problem for the owl? Not really, since they have evolved extra vertebrae in their neck to allow them to turn their heads 270 degrees. Vultures have almost totally bald heads, but why? As scavengers, they often plunge their entire heads inside the carcasses of the dead animals upon which they feed. If they had feathers on their heads, they would very quickly get filthy and that could lead to infection, parasites and other health problems for them. Solution? Lose the feathers.

These are all physical adaptations; they came about over millions of years. But in each case, the species has changed in a way that has allowed it to fit just-so into its niche. Behavioral adaptations can happen even faster. 100 years ago it would have been a very rare occurrence to see an American kestrel, Peregrine falcon or a Red-tailed hawk in an urban environment, but today these species (and many others) share these city-scapes with humans, even nesting on busy bridges and skyscrapers. In the face of potential conflict, these animals have changed the way they do business in order to fit into the new environment created by humans. Nature is like a big jigsaw puzzle and animals can change, sometimes very slowly, other times quite rapidly, to fit into it.



This adult Bald eagle was shot in Hunterdon County in Dec. 2015. It has been in our care at The Raptor Trust since that time.

Our human systems and behaviors can change quickly too, of course. Technology has sped up the pace of our lives. At The Raptor Trust, while our mission and philosophy have remained constant since we began in 1982, we have changed and adapted the way in which we achieve our goals and it has made us better. We have a new digital x-ray processor for examining our patients. It is faster, produces higher quality images which we can easily share with a whole team of medical professionals via email and we no longer have to keep smelly chemicals in the closet for film developing. We have had a Facebook page for several years now, and while we're not on it 24/7/365 and we don't do a lot of Tweeting or Instagram, we have seen an incredible increase in the number of visitors to our Facebook page and their engagement with the stories we share. The recent and ongoing story of the Bald eagle who was shot in NJ and brought here for care generated over 200,000 Facebook views in a matter of days, a crowd-funding effort by concerned citizens in the area as well as local TV, radio and online news coverage. But it started on Facebook. (More on the eagle later in this report.)

As amazing as all of this technology is and as much as we have adapted to this new environment, The Raptor Trust remains very much an old-fashioned grassroots organization, "family owned and operated since 1982!" When I came on board two years ago it was clear to me that I did not need (and did not intend)

to make vast, sweeping changes here. I simply needed to continue to provide the resources to help our amazing staff and volunteers do the things they were already doing. A few tweaks here, a few repairs there, some upgrades, updates and, most importantly, a continued effort to share stories about our mission and the work we do.

I encourage you to join us in whatever way you can. Come for a visit to see the birds. Bring a group of scouts or seniors to one of our Education Department's programs. Volunteer. Donate if you can. At the very least, visit our Facebook page and find a story that resonates with you and share it. We're ALL a part of this big ecosystem jigsaw puzzle here, so connect with us in any way that suits you. And keep your eyes up; you never know who you might see soaring overhead.

REHABILITATION

The upward trend continued in 2015 and once again we admitted more birds than any other year: 4507 birds to be exact. Three of those birds remain here as permanent residents (two Kestrels and a Short-eared owl). 147 were transferred to other facilities either for care or for permanent residency. 35 others are still here pending release when their treatment is complete and when the weather permits. 1727 were successfully released. In some past years we have released a slightly higher percentage of birds.

What accounted for the lower release rate? Like last year, the winter of 2014-2015 was especially hard on wildlife. Long periods of extended cold and lots of snow and ice made it difficult for birds (and all wildlife, really) to find food. During what is normally our slow time of the year we admitted hundreds of birds emaciated, undernourished and dehydrated. We lost a large percentage of these patients. No amount of care could have saved them. It was sad and disheartening to see so many creatures unable to survive in the wild and it drove our rehab release number down.

But over 1700 birds WERE released and every one of those was an achievement and a reminder to our staff, volunteers, interns and visitors just how important our work really is.

Who made up the 4507 player roster this year? 151 different species. It's no surprise that the most common native bird we receive almost every year is the American robin (569 of them last year). Other very common species in 2015 included Mourning doves (349), Mallard ducks (220), Blue jays (135), Grackles (157), Canada geese (161) and this year a whole lot of Gray catbirds (96).

Lots of very interesting and less common species arrived at our door in 2015 as well. Among them were a Whip-poor-will, Brown thrasher, Black scoter, Black-billed cuckoo, Clapper rail, Pied-billed grebe, Yellow-breasted chat and dozens of different species of warblers.

It was a very busy year for raptors; 386 total raptors were admitted to the infirmary, including some birds we do not see often, such as a Rough-legged hawk. Notably, we took in all 8 species of owls which occur in the state. All totaled, we admitted 21 different species of raptors: Red-tailed hawk (114), Bald eagle (4), Peregrine falcon (15), Broad-winged hawk (2), Cooper's hawk (52), Red-shouldered hawk (12), Rough-legged hawk (1), Sharp-shinned hawk (12), American kestrel (47), Merlin (5), Osprey (5), Barred owl (3), Screech owl (58), Great-horned owl (22), Snowy owl (2), Barn owl (1), Short-eared owl (1), Long-eared owl (3), Northern saw-whet owl (1), Black vulture (10) and Turkey vulture (16).

GNATCATCHERS FOR MY BIRTHDAY!

by Robert Blair

For my birthday this year I helped reunite some baby gnatcatchers with their parents.

In late June, we admitted a pair of fledgling Blue-gray gnatcatchers. The lawn at the Somerset County Park where they were found was being mowed and there were dogs everywhere. The finder had been worried for their safety but was then upset that she possibly did the wrong thing by scooping them up and separating them from their parents. We considered asking her to return them but we needed to be sure the parents were still around to feed their young.

The finder went back to the park and thought she heard the parents chirping in the area but she wasn't sure. We didn't want to risk abandoning young birds alone with no parents to feed them so we held on to the fledglings.



This tiny Blue-gray gnatcatcher was successfully reunited with its parents with help from TRT staff.

Two days later, on my birthday, the finder called again. She was still very concerned about the young birds and wanted them to get back home to the park if possible. She thought she had heard the adult gnatcatchers again but she still wasn't sure. My birthday mission was to go to the park, find the parents of these two puffballs and reunite the family.

I called the finder who was very excited and glad I was taking them back. I got directions from her: where to park, which paths to take and which trees to look for. I was off!

The park was huge, with open fields and walking paths everywhere. This was a challenge. I parked, grabbed a handy map and called the finder again. In a few minutes, I was on the right path.

There were lots of birds calling and singing: Cedar waxwing babies, Chipping sparrows and a cowbird or two, but no gnatcatchers. I found the three sycamore trees the finder had told me about and saw the stone well which was my “if you get to the well, you went too far” landmark. The babies were calling constantly and I must have looked strange standing under a tree, looking up with my miniature, chirping pet carrier in hand.

Convinced I was in the right area, I decided to play a recording of a gnatcatcher (thank you, iPhone and Cornell Lab of Ornithology!) and almost immediately, a territorial male showed up in response. He called and the babies called back but after a while, he left. I played the recording again and the male returned – but then left again. Finally, after 3 or 4 times, two adults came back, presumably both parents!

It was getting late so I made the do-or-die decision to open the carrier. Both fledglings climbed up and flew like slow-motion bumblebees over a small stream and landed in some bushes near each other. The adult male flew in right away and buzzed one of the babies. I waited and watched as the young called and preened and hopped from branch to branch.

It was getting dark and over thirty minutes had passed with no indication that the parents recognized the young as their own. But after about 45 minutes, one of the adults came down and fed one of the babies – success!!!

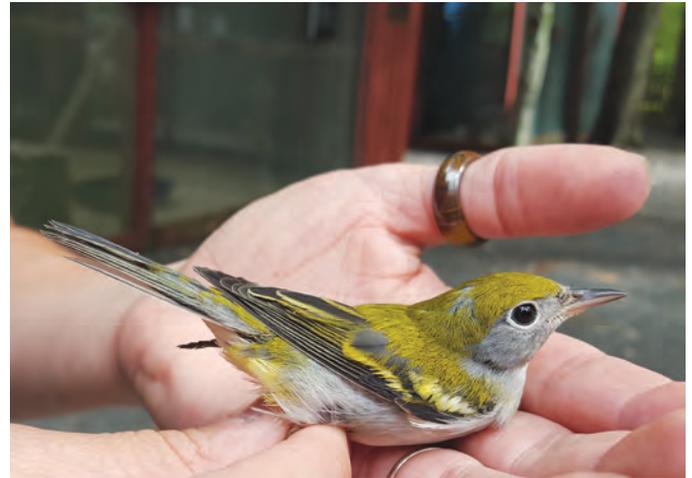
I hiked the long way back to the van and got back to the Trust just in time to feed the owls and help close out the day....not a bad birthday at all!

GLASS: THE INVISIBLE KILLER

by Libby Haines

It is estimated that up to 1 billion birds die in the U.S. each year from collisions with windows. In 2015 The Raptor Trust admitted 323 birds which had suffered such collisions. The species we received ranged from Cooper’s hawks to kinglets, though songbirds seem to be affected the most. Of those 323 birds, 178 recovered and were released; 48 died within 24 hours from their injuries. These collisions happen both in residential areas (flying into windows of homes) as well as cities. Millions of birds use the Atlantic Flyway as their migration path in fall and spring. Nocturnal migrants are often confused and disoriented by the artificial lighting of tall buildings in cities, particularly in foggy conditions. They are often

drawn to the light and can collide with the windows of buildings. There are Good Samaritans that will frequent the more deadly buildings during migration and rescue any survivors they may find. From one such person we received over 130 birds in 2015 from just two locations he surveyed. These were merely the survivors; he didn’t pick up those that had already perished. After a window strike some birds are temporarily stunned and recover quickly. Others, more seriously injured, may be eaten by scavengers or simply swept up and discarded. Some do indeed die upon impact.



This juvenile female Chestnut-sided warbler was one of many small songbirds treated for injuries sustained from striking a glass window.

So what can be done to stop this tragedy? Many cities have implemented a "lights-out" campaign. Reducing artificial light at night can help keep birds from being attracted to the buildings. However, this does not help prevent daytime collisions. Glass is reflective and often birds can’t even perceive it. Seeing reflections of trees and the sky, they fly full speed into it. There are currently some newer glass designs and manufacturing processes that can help, but implementing them can be expensive and challenging for large buildings. Individual homeowners do have simple options. Objects can be used to break up the reflection in the glass. Our website has helpful tips if you are experiencing this problem. The American Bird Conservancy are experts on this topic and a wealth of information can be found at their site: www.ABCBirds.org.

Bird window strikes are a huge problem for wild birds. It is believed to be one of the leading causes of bird mortality related to human activity, second only to feral and free-ranging cats, yet many people don’t even realize this issue exists. We CAN make our homes and cities more “bird friendly,” and it can start in your home or business today.



Photo courtesy Ming Chiou

This one-year-old male Peregrine falcon was found injured in Morris County, NJ late in 2015. He had sustained fractures to the scapula and coracoid bones. Though these injuries were severe he healed well and in early 2016 he was released. In cooperation with the NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection and the Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ, this bird became the poster child for a press release publicizing the state's "Income Tax Check-off for Wildlife" which provides critical support to the Division Fish and Wildlife's Endangered and Nongame Species Program. Looking good, Mr. Peregrine!

one by one. They were just over two-weeks-old, nearly ready to fledge. Once near the opening, they were able to grab onto the wood and walk themselves out.

Scoop, one. Scoop, two. Scoop, three. They kept coming! Downy woodpeckers lay an average of five eggs per nest. Once empty, this nest yielded EIGHT fledglings, three males with their red-capped heads and five females, entirely black-and-white. Despite their stressful day, only one had any significant injury: a broken leg, which was splinted and healed very well.

We housed our new wards in a makeshift nest in our infirmary, feeding them insects, fruit and our special high-protein "fledgling mix" every hour. Within days, they were ready to move to an indoor aviary. A week later, they graduated to an outdoor flight cage and began learning to feed themselves.

They grow up fast! By June 17, they were self-reliant and ready to rejoin their wild brethren. All eight of our juvenile Downy woodpeckers were released on-site and flew into the nearby woods, given a second chance at life by the compassion of a concerned man and just a little help from us.

Without the help of "bird finders" like the tree service employee in this story and thousands of others like him (and you!), the myriad birds we care for every year wouldn't get their second chance.

DOWNIES IN A DOWNED TREE

by Cailin O'Connor

Finders bring birds to us in all sorts of containers, from shoeboxes and cat carriers to laundry baskets and birdhouses. But on May 29, a group of patients came to us in a most unusual vessel: a two-foot section of a tree trunk. The owner of a local tree service had been working that day, removing several dying fruit trees from a customer's yard when he noticed a nest inside one of the trees. Luckily they knew of The Raptor Trust and quickly brought the nest to us, tree trunk and all.

Turning this length of trunk around, the perfectly circular opening of a Downy woodpecker nesting hole revealed itself. In the light, we could see the nervous faces of several babies huddled down at the bottom. The hole was less than an inch-and-a-half in diameter and the babies were clustered 5" below that. We began brainstorming ways to get them out without harming them or stressing them further, but how? Several staffers ran to the tool shed to improvise a solution.

Upon inspection, the wood was soft, having decayed somewhat; woodpeckers often nest in dead or dying trees. Carefully, with the back of a metal spoon, we chipped away at the decomposing wood, opening a wide hole in the back of the nest – but the young woodpeckers were still unreachable.

Reorienting our tool changed that! Lowering the wide spoon into the nest, we gently scooped the babies out



A spoonful of woodpeckers. Actually, EIGHT spoonfuls!

Welcome New Staff!

Say hello to our new team members: Dr. Jennifer Norton in the infirmary, Jessica Soucy in the book-keeping and accounting department and Blake Putnam in development. Welcome aboard, folks!



IT'S LIKE A HAIR EXTENSION, BUT FOR FEATHERS!

The Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) is a large, fish-eating raptor found on every continent except Antarctica. It loves tall roosting and nesting sites: dead snags, telephone and utility poles, towering structures of any kind. The methane exhaust pipe chimneys which stick up out of landfills are among those tall structures. When an unsuspecting Osprey or other bird perches atop one of these chimneys and the gas ignites, what we end up with at The Raptor Trust is a torched bird, such as the Osprey that came to us in September with all of the primary flight feathers of its right wing burned beyond repair...or so you might think.

We called upon our friend Dr. Erica Miller who is an expert in the unusual art of “imping,” (short for “implanting”) or repairing and replacing feathers. The shafts of feathers are hollow, like a straw. The imping procedure involves leaving as much of the bird's natural feather as possible, matching the exposed end with a new section of replacement feather and inserting a small piece of lightweight wooden dowel inside the shaft to connect both the old and new pieces. Dr. Miller arrived with a briefcase full of Osprey wing feathers. (Yep, some people just happen to have a briefcase full of Osprey feathers). One by one, she cut the shafts of the burned feathers, measured and matched them with viable replacement feathers, inserted a small bamboo pin to hold both pieces in place, used Loctite brand epoxy from the hardware store to secure the pin and carefully inspected them for proper alignment. The process took approximately 90 minutes and the bird was under anesthesia while we worked on him.

There's no way we can match Mother Nature's precision and it's not quite a perfect fix for this Osprey. But it doesn't need to be perfect or permanent; birds molt and grow a new set of feathers each year. It just needs to be good enough to give the bird a temporary second chance and it only needs to last until the next spring and summer when the new feathers come in.

We gave the bird a few days to practice with its “new wings” and then we set it free. It flew beautifully. After the next molt, it will have all of its own personal, natural gear back in its tool box. But for now, it has some borrowed equipment, courtesy of some other Osprey, and it was able to get back into the wild in time for fall migration. The alternative – spending the entire winter in captivity waiting for the next molt – was not a great option. Better to have the bird on its way, even with second hand feathers.

This is the kind of stuff we do, every day. Sometimes creative solutions require amazing new technologies and brilliant ideas. Sometimes plain old hardware store glue, a bamboo barbecue skewer and some slightly used feathers do the job. After almost 40 years, we have a few tricks up our sleeve.



Wing feathers badly burned by a methane exhaust chimney at a landfill.



Replacement feathers being prepped with wooden pins and adhesive.



Replacement feathers carefully implanted, aligned and secured.



Almost as good as new!

AN EAGLE'S TALE

In early Dec., 2015 we received a call that an adult Bald eagle had been sitting for two days in a tree in a suburban yard in Pittstown, NJ. We investigated and saw that the bird had an injured right leg. The bird was captured thanks to the heroic efforts of Giselle Smisko of the Avian Wildlife Center and brought to TRT for examination. The x-ray, pictured below, revealed two gunshot pellets: one lodged in the bird's side, the other in the leg where it had shattered bones and broken into fragments. Further examination revealed that the eagle also had elevated levels of lead in its system and significant nerve trauma to the leg.



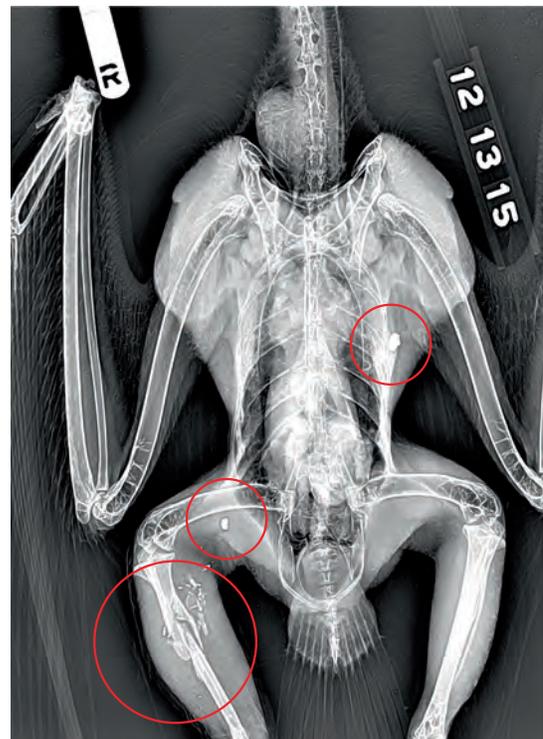
Treatment began immediately. The broken leg bones were pinned. A process called “chelation” was started to treat the lead poisoning. We removed as many of the lead fragments as we could without doing further tissue damage. As of this writing, we are 14 weeks in. The bone in the leg has healed well enough, but the nerves in the leg are healing slowly and it is still too soon to say whether they will heal well enough for this bird to be released. Each time we treat for the lead poisoning the levels drop and then after the treatment they rise again. This is unusual and likely a result of the many tiny, tiny fragments of lead we could not safely remove from the leg. The story is not over and the outcome remains unclear. It's frustrating and heartbreaking, especially given the fact that this bird's injuries were the result of an intentional, criminal and malicious act of violence.

This particular story made the news in a hurry. Neighbors who had been watching the bird in Pittstown shared about it on Facebook and in no time TV news crews from Philadelphia and online reporters from NJ.com were at both the recovery site and The Raptor Trust for stories and interviews. When we began sharing the story of the bird's treatment here at TRT even more media outlets got involved: New York talk radio, local newspapers, bloggers. Local families started crowd-funding efforts to help pay for the eagle's treatment. People called and visited

The Raptor Trust, lots of them, to inquire about the bird's welfare. We took it as an opportunity to provide some public education about these birds, the medical procedures involved in this bird's treatment (chelation for lead poisoning, for example) and perhaps most importantly about the law.

All migratory birds are protected by federal law under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and eagles have extra protection under the Bald and Golden Eagle Act. Convictions in cases like these for shooting an eagle are rare however. Crimes of this type are rarely witnessed, and even more rarely reported. In an attempt to encourage someone to come forward, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Crime Stoppers of Hunterdon County, The Humane Society of the United States and The Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust have offered a joint reward of \$8000 for any information leading to a conviction which could result in fines up to \$115,000 and up to one and half years in jail. As of this time, no suspects have been identified, but the investigation is ongoing.

This particular story is still developing and after 14 weeks, the eagle remains here undergoing medical treatment without any clear picture of what the end result will be. Our hope, as always, is that we will be able to release this beautiful bird back into the wild. And in this case, we hope that our efforts to publicize the story will lead to a better understanding of the the law surrounding the protection of wild birds and possibly even an arrest or conviction for the shooting of this eagle. If you or anyone you know has information about this crime, or one like it aimed at a protected migratory bird species, it can be reported anonymously to your local US Fish and Wildlife Service office.



INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Raptor Trust's summer 2015 Interns were an awesome group. Haley Nelson, Sophie Jo Drossman, and Allison Wagner all came from the University of Delaware and brought great spirit to the program. Howard Reid Craig joined us from the University of Connecticut. His excellent sense of humor helped diffuse summertime tensions around the busy infirmary. Marissa Grisaffi of Fairleigh Dickinson University, with her thoughtful nature and quiet curiosity, was our youngest intern. Nicolette Albanese of Montclair State University stood out as the first to arrive and the last to leave, remaining with us as a part-time staff member through November to help care for the last of our summer babies. Gary Clare from Drew University came on as a fall intern to help with various administrative projects. This year's interns were hard-working, fast-learning and quick-witted. They kept spirits high, morale intact and reminded us all, through the hot and humid summer, just how cool our jobs can be!



Summer intern Sophie D. releases Kestrels.

2015 VOLUNTEERS

by Shari Stern

Our staff, while slowly expanding, has remained relatively small throughout the years, though the number of birds we care for continues to increase annually. The Raptor Trust's ability to feed, medicate and care for these patients effectively is due in large part to our dedicated force of volunteers. From admitting birds and assisting visitors to raking leaves and folding laundry, our hard-working volunteers support our great staff and show a great deal of dedication to our mission.

2015 was my first year as volunteer coordinator at TRT and I have found it to be an unexpectedly uplifting position. In working with (and for) the volunteers I meet great people, hear new and exciting ideas and revisit my emotional connection to the avian patients we receive as I see the experience through our volunteers' eyes. As a rehab technician it is easy to lose a sense of wonder and surprise, to dull the sadness and temper the excitement as you work 5 days a week, 12 months a year, with thousands

and thousands of birds. Working closely with our volunteers helps tear down some of those barriers. Our volunteers bring an enthusiasm, curiosity, interest and emotional openness that I have come to understand is simply necessary to creating the kind, generous and loving environment that is The Raptor Trust.

All the volunteers who contributed their time and effort during 2015 are listed below, along with the year they began volunteering with us. Thank you to everyone for your commitment, cooperation and efforts. We couldn't do it without you!

To contact the volunteer department, email Shari Stern at volunteers@theraptortrust.org or visit our website at www.theraptortrust.org to fill out a volunteer interest form.

2015 Mary Kay Adams	2015 Kira Leinwand
2012 Jody Austin-Dominguez	2013 Alexis Levorse
2015 Erin Barone	2015 Christine Macri
2015 Jessica Beatty	2005 Pat Mallon
2010 Brian Billiams	2010 Ed Malok
2003 Nita Blatt	2015 Ana Maroldi
1992 Jennifer Books	2010 Kate Matta
2015 Barry Bowman	2012 Andrew McAdam
2015 Daniel Carabba	2013 Emily Melander
2014 John Carroll	2015 Kevin Melman
2006 Janet Cicariello-Cook	2015 Stephanie Messina
2015 Gary Clare	2014 Reece Minerley
2013 Ashley Cohen	2002 Bill Most
2015 Amanda Cox	2003 Muriel Mota
2005 Bob Cruickshank	2015 Meredith Ocetnik
2015 Tim DiNapoli	2015 Nicole Orbe
2015 Evangelia Diplas	2014 Kathryn Ornstein
2013 Melanie Dodds	2015 Amanda Ostella
2005 Richard D'Orazio	2015 Joe Peters
2015 Elizabeth Drenkard	2002 Marion Philips
2015 Grace Eid	2015 Lisa Pinney
2001 Debra Falanga	2015 Taylor Rich
2015 Megan Feeney	2015 Allison Rietze
2001 Barbara Feno	2013 Eileen Rudio
2014 Johnny Fernandes	2009 Alan Roberts
2014 Conor Fitzgerald	2011 John Roepke
2009 Caroline Ford	2015 Natalie Salinaro
2009 Barbara Franko	2014 Emily Smith
2015 Debra Freundlich	2015 Grace Smith
2014 Trish Gradley	2014 Kyle Smith
2003 Bob Gray	1999 Danielle Sonye-Reising
2015 Marisa Grisaffi	2012 Chassidy Speir
1999 Stephen Gruber	2010 Chris Springle
2015 Eric Hagen	2015 Jennifer Stollery
2003 Fred Harvey	2013 Doris Stoner
2007 Joan Hoeckele	2015 Jade Tollis
2000 Lisa Huguenin	2015 Gwyneth Turner
2014 Amanda Hummell	2015 Taryn Urban
2014 Deborah James	2015 Matt Vail
2014 Russell Jackson	2014 Robert Jr. Weber
2015 Shannon Keeney	2015 Sandra Whitlock
2013 Melanie Krebner	2015 Olivia Yeager
2015 Kasey Lam	

EDUCATION NEWS: NEW PROGRAMS

by Donna Pandolfino

Educating people about wild birds has been taken up a notch at TRT with the addition of two part-time educators to our staff. As Director of Education, I am delighted to welcome Kate Matta and Alyssa Frediani to our team.

Kate has been a Trust volunteer since 2010 and was a summer intern in 2013, caring for hundreds of orphaned wild baby birds. Alyssa worked as a biology intern for the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge for a year before joining the Trust in the fall.

It has been gratifying for me to brainstorm with Shari, Kate and Alyssa, who bring new perspectives, ideas and enthusiasm to our Education Dept. Among our many offerings this year: several "Open Houses," a "Halloween" program and an owl nest box building workshop. These additions not only enrich our programs, they help explain our purpose, mission and passion to people of all ages.

We are looking forward to presenting more amazing, interesting, fun and educational programs and events in 2016. Please check The Raptor Trust website for information, dates and times.

DONATIONS

When you shop online, keep in mind these easy ways to contribute to The Raptor Trust.

AmazonSmile.com will contribute 0.5% of your purchase price to The Raptor Trust. You can create an AmazonSmile account with your existing Amazon information by logging into AmazonSmile.com and following the prompts to select The Raptor Trust as your favorite charitable organization.

Goodsearch.com - A contribution will be made to us with your everyday purchases by using Goodsearch and selecting The Raptor Trust as your charitable cause.

Wish List and Donations of Supplies - We've selected items that can be shipped directly to us through our **Amazon Wish List**. A link to our wish list can be found at the bottom of the donation page on our website.

You can also purchase some regular day-to-day supplies if you'd like to bring them to us on your next visit. A complete list can be found on our website on the donation page. Some of the items most needed are gift cards to supermarkets, pet stores or Amazon, paper towels, unscented lotion-free tissues and mixed bird seed. Spring and summer items include fresh or frozen blueberries and seedless grapes.

Monetary donations can be made via our website using the **Donate** link along with credit card options. **Anything you are able to provide would be helpful and greatly appreciated by the staff and the birds.**

Thank you!

BOOK STORE AND GIFT SHOP

Thank you to all those who made purchases at **shop-the-raptor-trust.myshopify.com**, our new online gift shop. We've added more items to the online store, including ladies shirts with our TRT logo. You'll also find beautiful new coasters featuring pictures of some of our permanent resident owls.

The Wendy Shadwell Book Store and Gift Shop has new items as well. Along with the new coasters, we've added beautiful leather carved earrings of hawks, eagles and other bird species. As always, you'll find birding books, raptor books for every age and fun, unique gifts. **All proceeds from our gift shop and online store benefit the birds in our care.** Consider a purchase today. The birds thank you.

We are still in need of **Receptionists** in our admitting office and **Gift Shop volunteers** during the week. If you are interested in these opportunities, please contact Kristi Ward at **kward@theraptortrust.org**.

DIRECTOR'S THANKS

by Chris Soucy

The Raptor Trust is a not-for-profit organization and a tax-exempt corporation under IRS 501(c)(3) regulations. We do not receive public funding of any kind. Our dollars come from private foundations, trusts, corporations and organizations, individual contributors and money we raise ourselves. To everyone that supplied us with financial assistance this past year, we thank you for caring about us and the birds. There's not enough room in this report to list all your names, but please know how much we appreciate your support.

A sincere thank you to the trustees, directors and managers of the following foundations and trusts for their generosity during 2015:

- Melza M. and Frank T. Barr Foundation
- Michele & Agnese Cestone Foundation
- Marta Michelle Heflin Charitable Trust
- SuPau Trust
- Hyde and Watson Foundation
- Tonzola Family Foundation
- Baker Street Trust
- Gelfand Family Foundation
- Wildwood Foundation
- Bassett Foundation
- Grassmann Trust
- The Gurwin Foundation
- Conger Family Foundation
- Farrand Family Fund
- Kean Foundation
- Arthur and Barbara Vitarius Foundation
- Clara T. Jeffery Trust
- Nick Ogurtsov Fund

- Union Foundation
- Albert Payson Terhune Foundation
- Druskin Family Foundation
- Tyler Foundation
- Abbey K. Starr Charitable Trust
- Investors Savings Bank Charitable Foundation
- Helen and William Mazer Foundation
- Renaissance Charitable Foundation
- Harmony Fund
- Weinshel Goldfarb Foundation
- V. Brackett and N. Monoyios Foundation
- ZPR Family Foundation
- Holt Charitable Foundation
- Arnold A. Schwartz Foundation
- Glenn N. Howatt Foundation
- Janes Family Fund
- Frelinghuysen Foundation
- Crabapple Cove Foundation
- Brisgel Family Foundation
- Charles E. and Edna T. Brundage Foundation
- Duke Farms Foundation
- Taussig Foundation
- Gayda Family Foundation
- Michael and Susan Napolitano Foundation
- Charles and Lucille King Family Foundation
- Prospect Foundation
- 3 B's Foundation
- McDonald Chartible Gift Fund
- Berlin Family Foundation
- Robert and Jane Engel Foundation
- Lawrence T. Quirk Family Foundation
- E. D. Foundation

My sincere thanks to the following corporations and organizations for their generous support this past year:

- Millington Savings Bank
- The O'Hara Project
- A&P Supermarket of Basking Ridge
- Kevin Eberle Photography
- Nature's Art Productions
- The Meyersville Inn
- Dan's Tree Care
- Meyersville Veterinary Group
- Mercer County Wildlife Center
- Woodlands Wildlife Refuge
- Tri-State Bird Rescue
- Shelter Helpers on Wheels
- Ashleigh Scully Photography
- Laeger Metal Spinning
- Basking Ridge Animal Hospital
- Bergen County Audubon Society
- The Stirling Hotel
- Chris Brennan Photography
- Garden Club of Montville
- Yardville Supply Company and Ace Hardware
- Red Hook Management
- ShopRite of Stirling
- Ludlow Heating and Cooling
- Raccoon Ridge Raptors
- Great Swamp Greenhouses
- Spheres Web Design
- Jeager Lumber
- EM United Welding & Fabrication
- Upper Saddle River School
- Paxson Hill Farm
- Ocean Mental Health Services
- YMCA Newark
- Ace/Twill
- Basking Ridge Garden Club
- Franklin Lakes Animal Hospital
- Bernardsville Garden Club
- Short Hills Home Garden Club
- Neshanic Garden Club
- Rotary Club of the Mendhams
- Town and Country Garden Club
- Garden Club of Watchung
- Temple Emmanuel El of Westfield
- Craftsmen Photo Lithographers
- New Jersey Assoc. of Wildlife Rehabilitators
- Country Child Care
- Morris County Chamber of Commerce
- Ashland Specialty Ingredients
- Windbrook Farm
- Lacquerite
- The Seeing Eye

SPECIAL THANKS TO TRUSTEE EMERITUS,
LYNNE COMBS

Our most sincere thanks to longtime Board member, Lynne Combs. Lynne has been involved with The Raptor Trust since 2000. As former mayor of Long Hill Township, Lynne has been a most trusted advisor in matters of long-term planning, facilities and renovations. Lynne has retired from active service on our Board after 15 years and we are pleased to announce that she has been named Trustee Emeritus. Lynne recently told us, "The Raptor Trust is a truly unique place and Len Soucy was a truly inspirational and passionate individual. The Trust is a rare gem and a valuable resource for the people of Long Hill Township and all of NJ. It has been a pleasure to have served on the board, and to have lived close by enough that my family and I got to know



this place and its people so well." Thanks, Lynne, for a decade and a half of dedicated service and for your passion and concerns for NJ's wild creatures.



Niña, a resident
Barn owl



Vilma, a resident
Barred owl



Sylvie, a resident
Screech owl

*Our new owl coaster collection, sold online
and in our Gift Shop.*

SPECIAL THANKS

Our most sincere thanks to the following organizations and people for their assistance, generous support and hard work during 2015: Dr. Andrew Major, Dr. Jennifer Norton, Dr. Erica Miller, Dr. Michael Brown, John Beattie Architecture, Erwin Schnitzer, Esq., Chris Stevenson, Esq., Jason Rudin Contracting, Oak Knoll School, Montgomery School, BASF, Bonnie Brae School, Engel and Devlin Law, AT&T Bedminster, Merck Research Laboratories and the many volunteer “Raptor Runners” and Animal Control Officers who transported patients to us throughout the year.

Also, a special thanks for the wise counsel and leadership shown by our fantastic board members.

Our 2015 Trustees were:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| William Conger | Barbara Franko |
| James Fiorentino | Greg Tusar |
| Nancy Miller-Rich | Diane Soucy |
| James Diverio | Chris Soucy |
| Marion Philips | Sean Devlin (2016) |
| Andrew Major, VMD (Emeritus) | |
| Lynne Combs (Emeritus) | |

FROM THE BOARD

by Bill Conger

Having been involved with The Raptor Trust for more than 30 years, I’ve seen a lot occur at 1390 White Bridge Road. Chris Soucy has stepped in for his father and has managed the most difficult of jobs; succeeding a legend. While he doesn’t cuss quite as much as his dad, he brings the same intensity to the organization’s mission and welfare of the birds. Chris’ business experience has brought a new level of professionalism to our operations and planning. His social media skills alone have raised our profile with the public and younger bird enthusiasts. The place still has the feel of a comfortable old pair of shoes that we all love. Len would be proud as a peacock with the job Chris and the staff have done the past two years. Kudos also to our volunteer staff who work tirelessly at the less glamorous tasks that are so necessary for The Raptor Trust.

Our Trustees meet quarterly and we are guided by the institutional memory of Raptor Trust co-founder, Diane Soucy. Emeritus Trustees Dr. Andy Major and Lynne Combs are still involved as well. We are meeting more frequently, helping Chris and the staff with the planning and development support necessary to ensure the continued success of The Raptor Trust. Thank you Trustees for all that you contribute.

Finally, I want to welcome Blake Putnam to The Raptor Trust family. Blake is our first Development Director ever at The Raptor Trust. With a 2015 budget exceeding \$800,000 and more than 4,500 birds coming through the door it was time to take the next step in our evolution and give Chris more time to worry about birds. If you want to discuss giving to the cause feel free to contact Blake. Remember, whenever you see a hawk soaring or hear an owl hooting, smile and think of Dr. Len Soucy. We do.

MONEY MATTERS

We always strive to get the most out of every dollar. In spite of that, it does indeed take a lot of money to run a large, professionally staffed business like ours, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. We tackled a few large-scale repair and renovation projects this year and we have several more scheduled over the next few years. Our facility is showing its age in some areas, but as we address these issues one by one, we bring the best, most modern and useful tools on site to do what we do. We could not do any of this without your generous support. Here’s where we obtained (and spent) our money in 2015:

INCOME (Cash Basis)

Foundation grants	264,813.00
Individual, group & corporate contributions ..	469,083.00
Sales & investment income	89,481.00
Educational presentations ..	25,496.00
Total	848,873.00

EXPENSES

Salaries	439,547.00
Insurance & taxes	140,338.00
Vehicle maintenance ..	5,263.00
Facility maintenance, improvements & supplies ..	57,835.00
Bird food, medical supplies & outside animal care services ..	44,800.00
Outside services & supplies ..	38,500.00
Printing & postage ..	13,600.00
Professional fees & payroll services.....	29,000.00
Utilities	30,648.00
Cost of goods sold	25,300.00
Miscellaneous ..	7,729.00
Total	832,560.00

IN CONCLUSION

We've wrapped up our busiest year ever here at TRT. In fact, three of the last four years have each hit the "busiest year ever" mark. We can't tell for sure if there are more birds being injured, if there is more public awareness about wildlife and more birds are being found by people, or if there is simply more awareness of The Raptor Trust. Whatever the case may be, the numbers continue to grow in our admit office.

Our dedicated staff, volunteers and interns rise to the task every year and their hard work is inspiring to see every day. And of course we continue to be inspired by you, our supporters, without whom none of this would be at all possible. As my dad always did before me, I'll close with a summary of our philosophy. I come back to it and refer to it often. It's the best reminder of who we are, what we do and why we do it.

We believe that all living things are important, and if, because of humans and human activities, injuries and injustices befall wild creatures, then humans have a responsibility to help heal the injuries and attempt to correct the injustices. And if, through education and understanding, many of the injuries and injustices can be prevented, so much the better for us all. And if, by living in this manner, The Raptor Trust can provide a humane example for others, then our efforts will truly have been of value.

On behalf of the entire team here: Diane, Cathy, Kristi, Libby, Donna, Liz, Shari, Jess, Bethany, Mike, Dr. Major, Dr. Norton, Robert, Fred, Barbara, Cailin, Debra, Alyssa, Kate, Blake, and all of our volunteers and interns, we wish you all the best.

Sincerely



Christopher D. Soucy, EdM
Executive Director, The Raptor Trust

For more information about The Raptor Trust, see our website at www.theraptortrust.org



Enclosed is my gift of \$ _____ Date _____

Mr. _____
Mrs. _____
Ms. _____

Receipt requested

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email address _____

Amex, Visa or MC _____ Amount authorized to charge _____

Credit Card Number _____ Exp. _____

Signature of Credit Card holder _____

Your tax-deductible donation supports the work of The Raptor Trust. Thank you.



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UPCOMING EVENTS FOR 2016

Registration is required. For more information or to register, please call 908-647-1091

Saturday, April 23: Bringing Up Birdie

Baby bird season is here! Learn more about this amazing time in the lives of NJ's birds. Take a close-up look into the nests of several endangered raptors by way of a nest cam and meet a live raptor who nests in NJ.

2 p.m. at the Ed Center.

Ages 7 years – adult. \$10 per person. Registration required.

Open House:

* Saturday, April 9

* Saturday, May 7

Visit our Education Center as we open our doors to families & friends of all ages. Guests can measure their wing span, view a collection of avian artifacts & explore our touch table full of fun facts & activities. Who wouldn't want to meet a live owl?

11-2pm Doors are open. Free. Donations welcome.

Registration Not Required

Raptor Trust Tour Talks

* Saturday, May 28 (Memorial Day weekend)

* Saturday, July 2 (Independence Day weekend)

* Saturday, September 3 (Labor Day weekend)

Join us for a guided tour to learn about the Trust and hear some of the fascinating stories of our fifty resident hawks and owls.

Meet at the Gift Shop. Tours at both 11am and 1pm.

Adults \$10, children (12 years & under) \$5. Registration required.

Saturday, October 8: Focus on Raptors Photo Event

An opportunity for committed shutterbugs to take close-range photos of our educational hawks and owls in an outdoor setting.

2-4 p.m. at the Ed Center.

Adults only. Limit of 10 people. \$150. Registration required.

Saturday, October 29: Not So Scary Screeches & Scavengers

Join us for a look into the secret world of owls & the often misjudged vultures of NJ. Children will enjoy a program, an up close look at a live owl and a Raptor Trust guided tour.

2 p.m. at the Ed. Center to start. Registration required.

Children ages 5-9 years (with adult) \$7 per person.

Saturday, November 12: Owls in the House

Nest box workshop: Learn more about NJ's owls, meet a live owl and build an owl house for your own backyard. What a great holiday gift for family, friends and for the owls.

2 p.m. at the Ed Center. Registration required.

Ages 7 years - adult. \$10 per person (\$40 box kit optional).

Saturday, December 10: Two Calling Birds & a Horned Owl in a Bare Tree

Celebrate the holiday season! Bring a donation from our online list & attend our "Sharing the World With Raptors" program. Meet two of our educational raptors, learn more about our mission and our ongoing work caring for the injured, orphaned and sick wild birds of NJ.

1 p.m. at the Ed. Center. Registration required.

Ages 7 years – adult. \$10 per person.

For event updates and directions, visit

www.theraptortrust.org

[Facebook.com/theraptortrust](https://www.facebook.com/theraptortrust)



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[facebook.com/theraptortrust](https://www.facebook.com/theraptortrust)

