



Raptors of the Rockies
 P.O. BOX 250, FLORENCE, MT 59833
Celebrating 26 Years of Education Programs

Raptor Round-Up

www.raptorsoftherockies.org
 See a color version of the newsletter
www.raptorsoftherockies.com
 Photography and book web site

NUMBER 45, MAR. 2014

The All-Kestrel Channel



Kate Davis photos ©

Raptor Ranch 2013



Bald Eagle on the Beach, story page 5

Another great year, perhaps the best yet - 57 programs including the Holter Museum of Art in Helena, Raptor Festival in Kalispell, and Loon and Fish Festival in Seeley Lake. Plus we returned to good old Leadership Missoula and had six spots on Montana Public Radio. Every year we tally up the total number of appearances per bird for our federal and state permits, and no surprise that Sibley wins again with 84 in programs and tours, followed by Owen, then Miles and Alisa tied for the bronze. Little Sonora had 67 programs in just a half a year. I predict she will be a gold medal contender for 2014.

Gotta love a kestrel! We have two new Teaching Team American Kestrels that were added to our Possession Permit in December. Ella (above) and Wes were confiscated from someone in Helena who had them as pets. They are total imprints, fixated on people and unable to be released. Of course, they had their debut on public radio like all the others on the team, and both pros from the get-go. A sister to our birds joined the education staff at the Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center in West Yellowstone. JayDub our little male kestrel named after my high school art teacher is now semi-retired after *his* 14 years of teaching with us.

They have all been perfect inspirations as I finished up the new book, *American Kestrels, Best and Brightest*. Editing stage now, and just over 100 photos from me and Rob Palmer. Also included is a chapter by Chris McClure of The Peregrine Fund and their American Kestrel Partnership, plus plans for building your own nest box. Mountain Press Publishing promises to have this book out by the end of the year, maybe by the Festival of the Book in October! One caption: *American Kestrels are the best and brightest of the falcons, bright in coloration and perhaps brainpower as well. Brilliant birds, in many respects.*



Rob Palmer photo ©



No matter where you live across the continent, this winter will be one to remember! For once the steel penguin sculpture in the front yard looks right at home, and the dogs are enjoying a brief bit of sunshine between blizzards. Temperatures ranged between negative 25 degrees to over 40 in one week, a 60 degree difference. A crowded house in the cold with Sonora inside for days, joined by 4 other birds over many nights, kennels and perches everywhere. "Trapped," we were plowed out twice, the winds blowing all the snow back into the driveway. We had stocked up on human supplies in anticipation, plus mice, quail, and heart meat filling the garage freezer.

With no distractions, I finished the chapters for the kestrel book and wrote 100 captions, so thank goodness for the weather, and we never lost electricity as did so many others. Wood stove cranked. This will be The Book the Blizzard Built, always making me think of snow.

MISSION STATEMENT

Raptors of the Rockies is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) raptor education project located in Western Montana. Active since 1988, our mission is:

- * To educate schools and the public through the use of live birds - the eagles, hawks, falcons and owls used in raptor education and wildlife art programs;
- * To provide a lifetime of quality care to permanently disabled birds of prey and falconry birds;
- * To instill a sense of respect and admiration for these skilled hunters and to promote wildlife conservation and habitat preservation for our wild bird populations.

Raptor Round-Up Newsletters

45 issues- always news around this place!

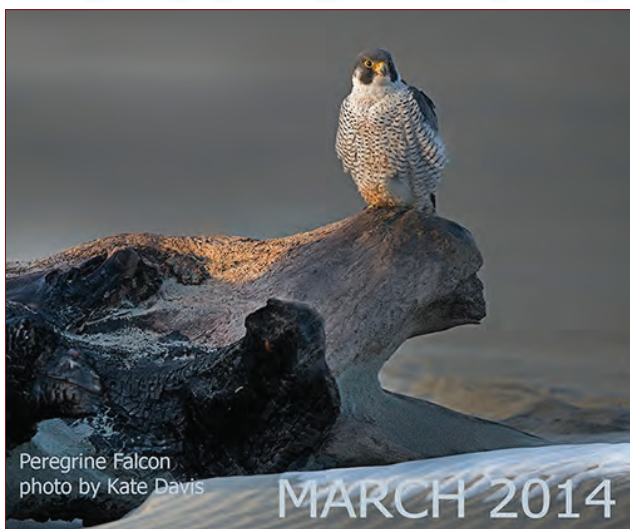
Last spring we decided to write not three but two Round-Ups a year with a new postal protocol affecting newsletters. Several reasons to go back to the three this year, and here's the First: A lot of people aren't plugged in to the internet, and miss the blogs and Facebook posts (my Mom, for example.)

Second: We have so darn much to report and so many photos to share.

Finally: We could use your support as half of our revenue comes from tax-deductible donations. A gentle reminder and hopefully fun addition to your mailbox.



Falcons in the News



LEFT: The Peregrine Fund Calendar, and have the month of March with this Washington Coast Peale's Peregrine.

RIGHT: The Cover shot of American Falconry Magazine

BELOW: Bill Heinrich's Teita Falcon in International Falconry Magazine

BELOW RIGHT: A four page spread and story in Pheasants' Forever



I'm always psyched to see one of my photos on the wall for a month, then flip to the next month and bird. This year I was in The Peregrine Fund Calendar, HawkWatch International Calendar (two months) and Bitterroot Audubon with a shrike. Plus Montana Magazine featured a story on Peregrines with four shots, the March/ April issue, and got the cover of the latest American Falconer Magazine with Sib grabbing a hen mallard by the tail.



Another fun project was writing a story about falconry for Pheasants Forever Magazine, Sib again catching gamebirds: "a tail chase ensues with the falcon binding to the pheasant and going for a ride. Diabolically, the intended victim usually runs for cover and simply swipes the falcon off it's back; the reward is just a foot-full of feathers." A gentleman in Belgium is using five more falcon photos for his book "The Art of Falconry" and right along side Rob Palmer and Nick Dunlop's images. Always have your camera wherever you go.



Montana Peregrine Watch 2014

3



Volunteers on the Smith River, watching a falcon ledge and parents feeding four young. It's a tough job, but someone has to do it.

Ever want to be involved in science, get outside, park yourself in a lawn chair, and stare at a cliff for two to three hours at a time? Do we have the perfect volunteer opportunity for you - look for nesting Peregrine Falcons this April and again in June and July. They are incubating eggs all May, so no real activity and a month off. Last year Jay Sumner, Director of the Montana Peregrine Institute had over 100 watchers putting in more than 1500 hours, what a resource and all agreed, what fun. The real reward is spotting those falcons racing across a rock face in courtship, and feeding young on the nesting ledge. The ultimate is watching the young mastering flight (especially landing) and chasing their parents all over begging for a meal. These formally endangered birds were absent from the state, and are now a major part of the landscape. Peregrines nest on cliffs over or near waterways, more than 100 nests in Montana today.

Contact Jay today:

peregrine@blackfoot.net
<http://www.montanaperegrine.org>

That's right, come on down to Texas this September! I am the Conference Chair for the Raptor Research Foundation and organized this one with a lot of help from our friends. Join us for workshops, three days of scientific papers, symposia, poster session, keynote presentations, and field trips during the peak of hawk migration. HawkWatch is hosting a field trip to Hazel Bazemore Park for their Celebration of Flight. Twenty-one raptor species are counted and single day totals of up to 400,000 birds, including 95% of North America's Broad-winged Hawks. Plus a trip to the legendary King Ranch, sign me up!



Raptor Research Foundation
2014 Conference
September 24th-28th
Corpus Christi, Texas



Co-hosted by:
Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute
HawkWatch International

The bird featured here is a White-tailed Hawk, photo by Rick Harness. Keynote is our very own Steve Hoffman, Director of Montana Audubon and founder of conference co-host, HawkWatch International. Talk about a dynamic and inspirational speaker, we are thrilled to have him. Bet Steve's seen a White-tailed Hawk before!

Upcoming Public Raptor Programs:

Tuesday, April 8 Coeur d'Alene Audubon: Our first program for our friends in Idaho, a Powerpoint and Raptor program, 7:00 pm at the Lutheran Church of the Master, 4800 N. Ramsey Rd. Sibley the Peregrine and three other birds including two owls, plus a box of books and posters as gifts. Fun!

Monday-Thursday, June 16-19 Birds And Art for Kids: Missoula Art Museum, 10 AM - 12 PM / Ages: 7-12 / This popular four day class teaches you how to make fantastic sculptures from real life bird models. Campers study and observe live raptors, make drawings and studies, then life-sized papier-mâché avian friends. With Bev Glueckert and contact the MAM at 728-0447.

Saturday, August 9 Bannack State Park and Ghost Town: We love Bannack, and our program last year was cancelled due to the catastrophic floods, all fixed now. In the beautiful Grasshopper Valley outside of Dillon. 2 pm in the campground. Free and open to ghost town and raptor lovers from everywhere, a full day of events.

Saturday, October 11 Festival of the Book: We hope to have the new American Kestrel book out by then.

Some Saturday, this Summer Raptor Ranch Open House: To be announced and we'll see how ambitious we can get, Board of Directors.

Raptor Blogs

Several entries each week,
posted on our web site.

Add this as a bookmark on your tool bar:
raptorsoftherockies.blogspot.com

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2013

"Right On, Brother"

"Power to the people! I mean kestrels!" I have been working on the new book today and found this photo deep in a Lightroom file from July entitled AMKE MPG 2013. That translates to American Kestrels from a nest at the MPG Ranch across the river. This is a shouting newly-fledged female, with fist clenched in defiance. Okay, her foot is in a stretch, and her brother eats a grasshopper just delivered by a parent. This attempt at humor would be lost on anyone under the age of 50 or so.



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2013

Snowy, Sunny Day with Steve

I had a long visit with Steve Hoffman today, on the shortest day of the year - Winter Solstice. Steve is Director of Montana Audubon, and a hero. We met back at the original Raptor ranch in Clinton, twenty-something years earlier. I was having a streak of bad luck with the death of a bird, a few nightmare programs, and trouble with funding. He gave me what we refer to as "The Pep Talk," and I play it back in my head any time I need to a cheering up. Today we started with a duck hunt with the Peregrine and an impressive mallard capture in "5 or 6 seconds" admits Steve. Not what I had in mind, but still pretty cool. Then a little tour and he met the new kestrels and Sonora the Aplomado Falcon. He had great stories of wild Aplomado's chasing any raptor that flew by on the Mexican Coast, so I guess a family trait and not just this bird. Yep, we could both talk raptors all day long, and night too.



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2013

Bonner Lumberjacks!

Today we had an assembly in Bonner, and actually the first school we ever set foot in armed with birds, back in 1988! Featured in the gymnasium on the left is their mascot, a big carved wooden woodsman, complete with a crosscut saw. Mr. Lumberjack was my perfect prop in describing how the Saw-whet Owl, with Owen on hand, was named in the 1800's. One of their calls has been likened to the sound of sharpening (whetting) a crosscut saw. Perfect!



SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 2014

Devil Dog

Mookie the English Black Lab has been a treasured member of our family for two years since she joined us from our friends the Frederickson's of Hamilton. Her AKC certified pedigree shows that parents are Landmark's Boss Dog and Lady Duchess of Landmark, with siblings called Sage's Dizzy Lizzy Lou and Greenviews Duke of Sapphire, among others. Mookie sounds so Bohemian in comparison. Today she was "hunting 'em up" and this photo of her having the time of her life with a smile on her face, not at all a devil dog like the 1980's song from the band X!



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2014

Longevity

My SnowBowl pal Caroline Lonski has an amazing bird, and told me this ring-necked dove has been in her family nearly as long as our little raptor program has been in existence. She got her in 1989 as



an adult so perhaps even older than we think. We found out that the longevity record for a dove is one week shy of thirty years. This one will beat that, we're sure. My friend Kenny Sterner in Wyoming kept a Red-tailed Hawk that lived 37 1/2 years. Hey, Max our Golden Eagle turns 25 this spring, Chesty the Harris's Hawk 24. And those new kestrels Ella and Wes aren't even a year old yet. What a commitment...We love it!

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2014

Beat the Rush

Order your
Bald Eagle
nest boxes
today!



(Seriously, we do have kestrel boxes, so let me know.)

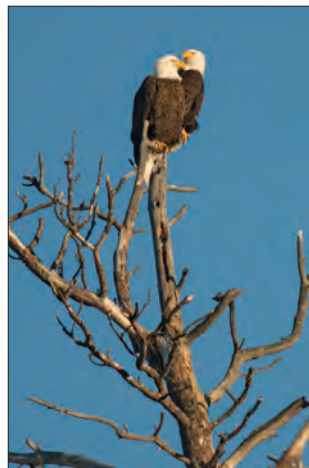
Bald Eagle Nest Update

Kate Davis photos ©



“Our” nest on the river behind the house is once again occupied, and incubation began around March 10th. We (I) was afraid the bridge construction 1500 feet away would scare them off. Apparently they are more tolerant than I thought, and sure hope they stick it out. They’re less likely to leave the longer their investment. A scope is set up in the living room, a peek at the nest every time we walk through the room.

We recently hosted friends from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and the Department of Transportation for an “inspection.” Kristi Dubois discovered this Bald Eagle nest in 2011, flying the river to monitor nests for FWP and the Bald Eagle Working Group. That year the pair was unsuccessful, but they fledged young the next two years. We were joined by Linda Dworak from the DOT, also interested in the nest and from the standpoint of the new bridge construction upstream. DOT will wait until the young fledge in mid-July for the major noise.



A new bridge in Florence and major renovation of East Side Highway, widening the road, a big round-about at Eight Mile, and lots of commotion.



Linda Dworak of the Dept. of Transportation, and Kristi Dubois, FWP pointing at an eagle.

Sonora’s Last Tour of the Bitterroot



When Sonora the Aplomado Falcon took off on her third (and final) road trip on November 14th, our seven-year-old neighbor Jason was the hero. Despite what I thought was a perfect flying weight, she split at noon chasing our pigeons, and flying up river. I lost her radio transmitter signal several times, thinking the worst and driving a hundred miles at least. She could not survive for long on her own.

I finally located the wayward bird that night just after dark a few miles from the house in a small subdivision. She had flown back north! Panicking and knocking on the door, I informed the Agostino family that my lost falcon was in their back yard. I would be back before light the next morning to try to get her back. With the radio receiver beeping loudly at dawn, I called Jay on my cell phone to say I had found Sonora and hoped to get her back right away. Young Jason was standing at my side and was trying to tell me a story. A story I thought, then I re-played what he had just said. “Kate, when you were talking on the phone, a bird flew by and every time it flapped it’s wings, it would make a jingling sound.” It didn’t dawn on me for a second or two, and then I asked. “Like a bell?!” “Yes, a bell.” I grabbed his shoulders and shouted, “You found her!” Jason will go down in the annals of Raptors of the Rockies history. Got her back after she stood in a tree for two hours, thumbing her nose at me and the lure below. Whew, never again.

Nigel the Spokesman

I'm sure you read the headlines and heard the news, "Utility Company Sentenced in Wyoming for Killing Protected Birds at Wind Projects," November 22nd and the shot heard 'round the world! Our friend Bob Anderson is Senior Counsel for the Environmental Crimes Section of the U.S. Dept. of Justice, based right here in Missoula. We met about ten or so years ago, pals with our mutual passion for birds...and movies.

Last year he asked that I bring Nigel to his downtown office, as some folks would like to meet a live Golden Eagle. He wouldn't tell me who these people were, despite my curiosity and prodding, and only a year later I found out. They were with Duke Energy Corp., the North Carolina company fined \$1 million for killing 14 Golden Eagles and 149 other protected birds at two wind farms in Wyoming. The prosecutor? Our Bob Anderson. He sent me the press release and wrote, "Do you remember our meeting in my office several months ago? This is the outcome of that negotiation." Nigel apparently made the right kind of impression that day. This was the first ever criminal enforcement for killing birds at wind farms, and Bob was also the prosecutor for the first electrocution case, Moon Lake in 1999. Justice and thanks Bob and Nigel, both Rock Stars!



I took this photo with Sibley the Peregrine perched on my left knee after a little pheasant hunt. I was leaning way over with the camera to "shoot" this Great Horned Owl, perched in a cottonwood thinking he was invisible blending in with that cryptic coloration.

More Winter of 2013



Go Ahead, Get Comfortable



Alisa the frosty Red-tail, twenty below zero, and snow and pigeons in the driveway.

Kate Davis photos ©

Adopt a Raptor for the Year, Score a book

Your generosity helps us with:
EVERYTHING!

Daily Care, 365 days a year
Food Purchases
Program Insurance & Travel
Web Site, Blog Page
Telephone, Postage, Office
and 3 Newsletters a year!

Suggested adoption rates, and receive a matted photo of your bird and tax-deduction receipt, plus be listed on our web site and next newsletter. Thanks adoptive parents for your support!

Teaching Team:

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Golden Eagles | Max ~ \$ 1000 |
| | Nigel ~ \$ 500 |
| Bald Eagle | Sonny ~ \$300 |
| Rough-legged Hawk | Otto ~ \$ 200 |
| Swainson's Hawk | Evita ~ \$ 200 |
| Red-tailed Hawk | Alisa ~ \$ 150 |
| Harris's Hawk | Chesty ~ \$ 150 |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk | Margo ~ \$ 100 |
| American Kestrel | JayDub ~ \$ 75 |
| American Kestrel | Ella ~ \$ 50 |
| American Kestrel | Wes ~ \$ 50 |
| Peregrine Falcon | Sibley ~ \$ 400 |
| Gyr/Peregrine hybrid | Ansel ~ \$ 150 |
| Applomado Falcon | Sonora ~ \$ 200 |

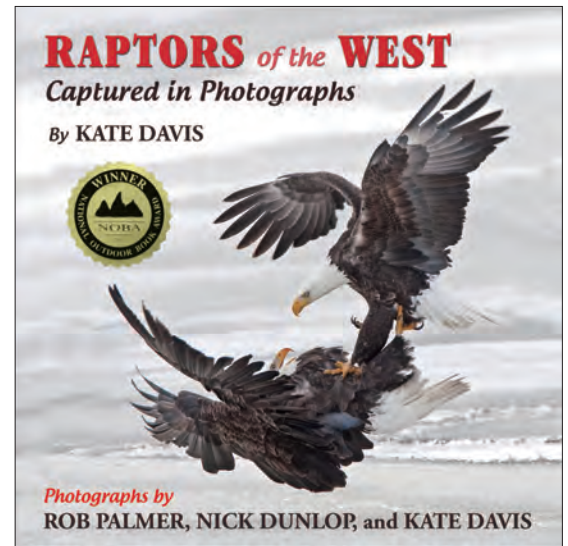
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Button on our
web site!*



| | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Northern Pygmy-Owl | iPod ~ \$ 50 |
| N. Saw-whet Owl | Owen ~ \$ 50 |
| Barred Owl | Graham ~ \$ 300 |
| Great Horned Owls | Jillian ~ \$ 150 |
| | Miles ~ \$ 250 |



Owen and Sonora



WINNER! National Outdoor Book Award
WINNER! Montana Book of the Year Award

Pages: 250 Price: \$30/\$35 shipping
Photographs: 430



Pages: 112 Price: \$16.95
Photographs: 135

A portion of all book proceeds goes back to help fund our program

YES, I want to sponsor the Raptors of the Rockies with this tax-deductible contribution, check written to Raptors of the Rockies, books to Kate Davis

Name _____

Address _____

Contribution amount or Adopted Raptor _____

Thank you Raptor Backers!

sponsors since our last newsletter

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Kate Davis photo ©

An artsy shot of Sonora the Aplomado Falcon and wouldn't this make a nice new t-shirt? Not exactly a Raptor of the Rockies, but what a great bird!

Raptors of the Rockies

P.O. Box 250, Florence, MT 59833

www.raptorsoftherockies.org & [.com](http://www.raptorsoftherockies.com)



Raptors of the Rockies

Educational Programs since 1988

