



Raptors of the Rockies

P.O. BOX 250, FLORENCE, MT 59833

Educational Programs since 1988

Raptor Round-Up

www.raptorsoftherockies.org

See a color version of the newsletter

www.raptorsoftherockies.com

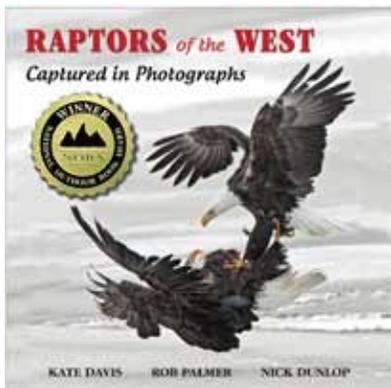
NUMBER 40, APRIL 2012

Montana Book Award!

R*raptors of the West* won the Montana Book Award, grand prize for the best book of 2011! The judges called me from Chico Hot Springs on a speaker phone and Jay and I were just leaving to fly our falcons. Barbara Theroux from Fact and Fiction Bookstore gave me the great news, judges applauding in the background. A reception at Big Sky is on the calendar for April 12, Mom and I attending along with owners of Mountain Press, John Rimel and Rob Williams. What to wear?...

Our book also won the National Outdoor Book Award, and has been hot and heavy in the press lately, including a cover story in the Ravalli Republic. Rob Chaney of the Missoulian interviewed me just as I returned from Washington, and I went on and on, elated from the wonderful trip and it came through in his writing. Plus we were the guests of Monte Turner and KECI, an early morning interview and invited back. We are so happy to see the book in so many hands (and on so many coffee tables.)

“Yippee,” in the words of book photographer Nick Dunlop. We are on a roll.



Trip to Washington Coast

A bunch of bird people celebrated March Madness of the raptor variety, guests of Dan Varland and his organization Coastal Raptors. Photographer pals Nick Dunlop, Rob Palmer and his friend Fi and I met up in Portland, rented 4-wheel drive Jeeps, and headed north to Ocean Shores and Long Beach, WA. Wind and rain were near constant companions, but we still shot thousands of images, above is a photo of a little Bald Eagle mating ritual. Bad timing in a way, as it was coincidentally the big Razor Clam Festival with thousands on the beach digging away, just announced weeks before. But we managed to luck out, photographing Bald Eagles, Peregrines, and even eight Snowy Owls, who were especially cooperative. Dan was the perfect host, and we hope to make it an annual trek. Plus the new 500 mm lens has been my treasured partner lately!

Totals for 2011:

72 Programs, 5466 children and adults



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.

Photos! Upcoming Shows



I always have a supply of photographs on hand, prints only or matted and framed, custom wood creations from our friends at Burnich Frame and Moulding. For the month of May, I'll return to The Artists' Shop on North Higgins downtown for their Birdfest 2012, our fourth year I think. Then all of June, a photography show at Rivers Mist Gallery, downtown Stevensville. Rob and Nick will each have a piece at River's Mist, and I'll be on hand with books for sale at First Friday events for both. Check it out and lots of new images, these shots in the newsletter only big and framed! And in living color...

Aberdeen Program for Coastal Raptors

Dan Varland is the Head Honcho of Coastal Raptors, a non-profit dedicated to research and education, trapping and banding raptors since 1995. He invited Rob, Nick and me to present at his annual fund raiser, and opened the evening at the Aberdeen Historical Museum with an overview. I followed with my famous Raptor Versus Rapture (!) Powerpoint, then Rob on falconry and his recent trip to Dubai and the International Falconry Festival where he took top honors with his photos.

The grand finale though was a 20 minute video by Nick, absolutely amazing images of masses of whirling starlings, tens of thousands in huge balls and ribbons and clouds, chased across the California countryside by Peregrines. The whole film was surreal and you had to keep reminding yourself what you were watching. Nick has spent years pursuing this phenomenon, racing across rural roads in wine country, usually just before dark as the starlings all come in to roost. But not if a falcon appears, and they spiral into the sky, afraid to settle in, even with those huge numbers, the big babies... Nick has still images assembled into a book called "Chaos In the Sky," and the film will soon be on his web site. You'll watch it over and over again!



Thanks for such a great weekend and program, Dan!



Kate Davis photos ©

Montana Public Radio Pea Green Boat

We are so happy to be invited every two months for an hour on the radio, "Pea Green Boat" children's programming with host Annie Garde and lately, human guests too. Last visit, Oliver and Noah joined us and read a few book captions when Degas the Long-eared Owl was on display for the listening audience. Annie said he looked like a puppet, something we have been accused of having in the studio instead of bringing live birds to a radio show! There was no mistaking Ansel, the Gyrfalcon/Peregrine hybrid, who was quite vocal the whole time. Ansel was raised in a play-pen in the living room, a word I could not think of at the time, and could only think of kennel. "Were you raised in a kennel, Noah?" He replied, "No, that would be inhumane." See you on the radio again May 3rd, 4-5 pm.



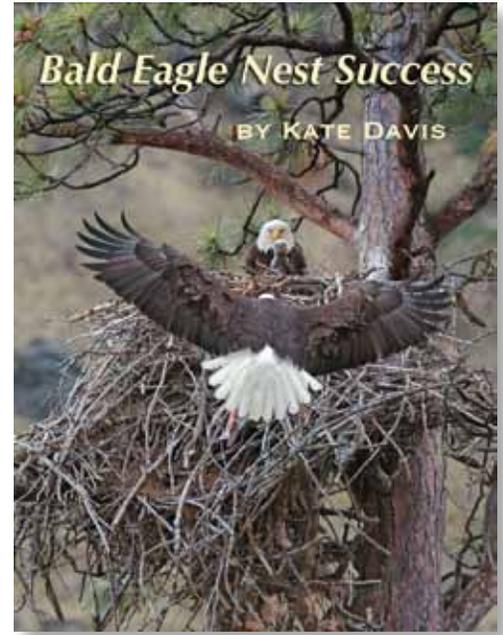
Nick plays a 20 minute video he made of millions of starlings being chased and caught by Peregrine Falcons this winter. Ooooh's and aaah's galore.



Bald Eagle Book at the Publishers ³

I just made up this cover and title, but well on the way to publication, with Stackpole Books in Pennsylvania now in control. They have the new book, layout and 135 of my photographs and captions, plus some new shots since I first turned it in back in November. The day they received the first draft was the day *Raptors of the West* won the National Outdoor Book Award, so editor Mark Allison told me about the submission, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." They are going with my design.

Wonder of wonders is a discovery in the back yard here at the Raptor Ranch- a Bald Eagle nest we can see from our living room, scope trained on the incubating female as we speak. Kristi DuBois of Fish, Wildlife & Parks alerted me of the nest, which didn't produce any young last year, and that aerial photo sure looked familiar. Down to the river I went every night and some great shots! I am guessing the young will start to hatch around the 19th, and what a drama will unfold. And what a distraction every time we walk through the room- we have to stop and peek at the eagles.



More From The "Left" Coast:



Some more photographs from the Washington trip, and kind of amazing to get any with all of that incredibly bad weather. People in Long Beach don't even wear rain coats and hats, they are so used to it!

The Snowy Owls were at the end of a peninsula, the road washed out years before so a bit of a hike. Thanks to our guide, Mary Kay Kenney, Dan's researcher that has moved to Florida, and we would have been lost without her. With a tiny break in the rain and wind, we made the trek to find ourselves suddenly surrounded by owls, standing out on the root wads and grass and trees like beacons. I was the happiest girl in the world.

The Peregrines were more of a challenge, and Nick and I lucked out with a pair hunting shorebirds in **huge** winds that almost knocked us over. No photos, waving that big lens around, but an image that will be etched in my mind for all time.



Kate Davis photos ©



TOP: The wettest eagle that ever lived.

LEFT: These are a different subspecies than we have in Montana, called "Peale's Peregrines," less migratory but making it as far as Ocean Shores.

A flock of food- the shorebirds would ball up and take evasive measures like a school of fish being chased by a shark, only in this case, two Peregrines! Just like Nick's videos of starlings.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2011

Grouse Escape Route

After a big book signing downtown on Friday night, I packed the Subaru with falconry gear, met Jay Sumner and headed to Choteau for two days of bird hunting. Guests of Skip Tubbs, we joined a great group of gun hunters similarly chasing the pheasants in the frigid cold on Skip's ranch. On Saturday, Jay's bird nearly caught this Sharp-tailed Grouse, and what a flight. These birds apparently barrel roll as an escape tactic, and it worked here. In the lower shot, the grouse put on the brakes, and the falcon blew past empty-handed!



WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2012

Current Conditions Across the Country

Well, across the west at least, and 8 inches of snow since this morning with no break in sight. Chesty the Harris's Hawk didn't seem to mind at first, then went back to her building to wait for some nice mice and part of a quail. Heated by the wood stove. Spoiled? Unbelievably, all the hype and predictions are coming true, and a great excuse to finish the new book and veg out to some neglected Netflixes.



FRIDAY, JANUARY 20, 2012

Stuck!

The last few days of snow have been heaven for skiers, and it's just a matter of getting up there for some of us. We are stuck in our collective driveways around here, the powder turning to heavy mush after light rain all day. At least we have enough pet food, bird food and human food. And a great excuse to finish up the eagle book, almost there! That's the penguin sculpture under all that snow. Later I'll take a walk up to the Post Office to mail my annual permit reports. (ps: Plowed out at 5 pm thanks to Bob Tabke and Tyler!)



TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2012

Happy Birthday, Bill!

Our favorite artist celebrated his birthday yesterday, and we were thrilled to be included in the celebration. Bill Ohrmann and wife Phyllis of Drummond hosted a spontaneous get-together at his Gallery and Museum, the finest spot to view welded steel sculptures of animals, oil paintings of his controversial views of the west, and wood carvings. If you haven't stopped by his "Usually Open" mecca, you must! Bill turned a 93 years young on Monday, and here he holds a raccoon I made for him after he taught me to weld, a heart recently installed in the center. Bill places hearts in every one of his sculptures, and make sure you climb up the step to see the one in the metal 12 foot running woolly mammoth, the most amazing piece of art in the world. And give him a little hug!



THURSDAY, JANUARY 12, 2012

Go Hellgate Hawks!

Want to see what 480 kids, kindergarten, first and second graders looks like? These are the students at Hellgate Elementary School on the west side of Missoula yesterday afternoon. Principal Candy Johnson was a wonderful host, and the four birds including Max the Golden Eagle were "awesome!" Looking back in the records, our first program at Hellgate was in 1989, a generation ago and Candy was the principal. I think the school has at least doubled in student numbers, though, and all on their best behaviors for the birds. I'll print them a nice portrait of Alisa, the Hellgate Hawk, for the office.



MONDAY, JANUARY 30, 2012

My Hero, Bill Harley

Singer, songwriter, author, artist Bill Harley filled the University Theater for a show yesterday. The packed house was about half kids, all enthralled for two hours and nearly 900 voices singing along. Today, the luckiest students on earth were at Bonner School enjoying two assemblies plus workshops all day, thanks to an arrangement from principal Mrs. Parks. Living in Massachusetts, Bill Harley has been a Missoula favorite for more than 20 years, with heavy airplay on Montana Public Radio's children's programming and a Grammy winning recording here in 2007. He told me he has visited over 2500 schools across the U.S. and yes, he is my hero. Here he is the Skunk Chief of Police telling Charlene the Skunk in the Middle that she has to set the table. The entire school was singing, "you're not the boss of me" in the cafeteria line afterwards. My sister Betsy was cracking up next to me in the bleachers, because she used to say that all the time as a kid. [Check out his web site.](#) We Love Bill!



Bayern Celebration ⁵



Perry Backus photo ©

Ravalli Republic Cover, photos and story by Perry Backus, called "Tales of Talons." I guess I should look happier in the photo, but I didn't know Sib's intention as she headed right toward Perry!



Rough-legged Hawks are out here, heading back north to the tundra.



Keith Fialcowitz photo ©

THANKS Raptor Backers!

Auction Item Donations:

Rick and Diana Nash
Dale Manning
Erick Greene
Rob Domenech
Kate Davis
Deborah Richie
Jill Perelman
Kent Perelman

Sponsors:

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Kristi Dubois
Jon Salisbury
Dan Fruechte
Patrick and Bernadette Bannister
Debra Demmons
Sally Phillips
and MANY Thanks to
Juergen Knoller and
Bayern Brewing

Our 5th Annual Raptor Backer Party featured a little silent auction this year, with lots of bird-related items. John Heffernan is holding up a gorgeous mounted California Quail, donated by board member and best taxidermist in the world, Dale Manning. Photographer and pal Keith Fialcowitz was there to capture the fun, and win the bid on the New York Cheese Cake to die for, from Deborah Richie. Other items were a trip to the Rocky Mountain Front to trap eagles with Rob Domenech, and an Osprey banding day with Erick Greene, who amused us all by recounting some odd items discovered in Osprey nests over the years. Next time, first Saturday of Spring, will be our 25th Anniversary Party! Hard to even imagine, isn't it?



Feb. 28th, and our first Peregrines, looking out of place with a huge snow drift.



Kate Davis photos ©

Speaking of Peregrines...

The Montana Peregrine Institute is already hard at it, surveying the state for the returning migrants, and the first ones I saw were up the Blackfoot. Jay spotted them first, so I owe him a beverage of his choice. Then on April 3rd, I saw the two up One Horse Creek, within 5 minutes of installing myself on a rock. Almost a survey record, instead of the three-or four-hour protocol that is required to be "sure" that a cliff isn't occupied.



Peanut and Mookie are waiting patiently for me to put the scope away and head down the hill.



A Drink For A Snowy Owl

An unusual shot from Washington: One of the Snowy Owls flew down to a "root-wad" on the beach to take a drink from a little puddle. (Heaven forbid you would call it driftwood!)

Upcoming Public Raptor Programs:

Monday-Thursday, June 11-14 Birds And Art for Kids at MAM, 10 AM - 12 PM / Ages: 7-12 / Fee: \$54/60 non-members
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.

Monday-Friday, June 18-22 Missoula Community Access Television, Young Filmmakers Raptors Camp. 1:15-5:15 each day. Campers will learn how to use digital cameras, both still and video. Computer editing and the use of a television studio is part of the experience. Hands-on training, teamwork, and imagination lead up to a public screening and live television show on the last day of camp. and broadcast to more than 17,000 Missoula households on MCAT's Channel 7.

Tuesday, July 17 Missoula Public Library Family Reading Program: Fun for parents and school age kids, our yearly trek to the Missoula Public Library with a car load of birds and books. Begins at 2 p.m. sharp, limited space to free tickets available before.

YouTube Slideshow



Don't you hate it when your Powerpoint won't play? I was in that boat at the Bayern Party when I saved it as some foreign language. So instead, I put it to music (Robben Ford) and posted it as a YouTube movie on our web site. Part One is the Teaching Team, facilities and programs the last few years, and Part Deux will be the BOOKS! Hundreds of photos. I think that sound track will be Roxy Music "Avalon" (okay Brian Ferry?) So next time you are watching Madonna's new video on your computer, remember to check us out too!



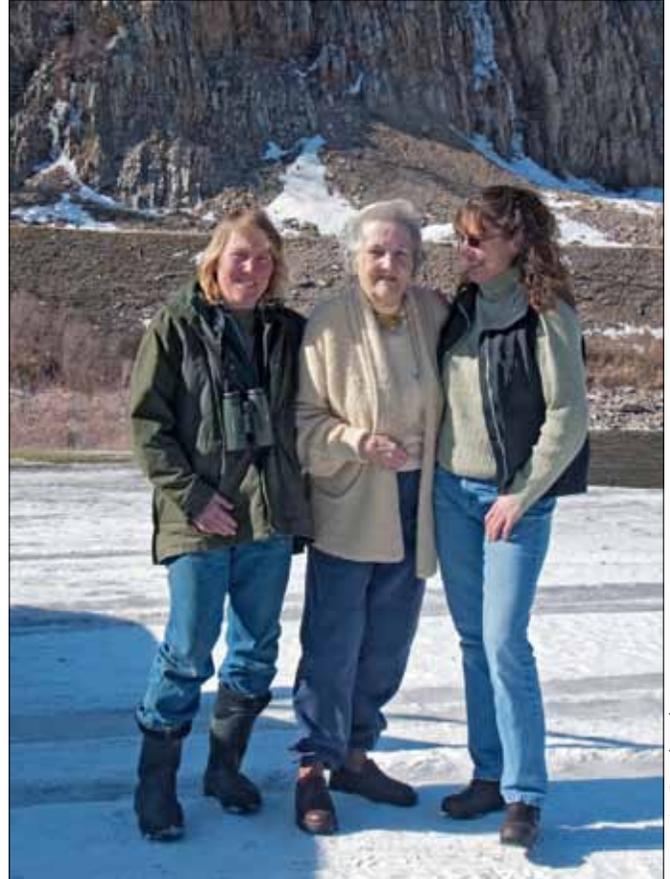
Go Florence Falcons!

An assembly for the hometown kids at Florence, 380 to be exact, and Sib listens intently to principal Chrissy Hulla as she explains that the students will learn something. I had a "Go Florence Falcons" poster in with Ansel the gyrfalcon, and his new roommate Alisa the Red-tail pulled it off the wall, put it in her water bath, and stood on it for hours. True story.



The next metal sculpture will be a big Peregrine, standing on some driftwood. Or a root wad. HA!

Kate Davis photo of wild Golden Eagle ©



Jay Sumner photo ©

The Phillips Girls celebrate Mom's Birthday on Feb 28th, with sister Betsy on the right. Where? The Blackfoot Peregrine Eyrie. Actually we did have lunch first, but this becoming a favorite place for Mom to spot the falcons as they race across the cliff. What a trooper!

Adopt a Raptor For a Year

Your generosity helps us with:

Food Purchases
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Daily Care, 365 days a year
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Travel
Web Site, Blog Page
Telephone, Postage
Freezer Space
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and Newsletters



Kate Davis photo ©

Sibley the Peregrine is nine years old now!

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	Deja ~ \$ 200
Harris's Hawk	Chesty ~ \$ 150
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Margo ~ \$ 100
American Kestrel	JayDub ~ \$ 75
Peregrine Falcon	Sibley ~ \$ 400
Gyr/Peregrine hybrid	Ansel ~ \$ 250
Northern Pygmy-Owl	iPod ~ \$ 50
Long-eared Owl	Degas ~ \$ 100
Barred Owl	Graham ~ \$ 300
Great Horned Owls	Jillian ~ \$ 150
	Miles ~ \$ 250

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!

Raptors of the West: Captured in Photographs

P.O. Box 250 Florence, MT 59833
raptors@montana.com www.raptorsoftherockies.org

Name _____

Address _____

Autographed copies of *Raptors of the West* at \$30.00
each plus \$5 shipping and handling

Number of copies _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Please make checks payable to Kate Davis

*An autographed copy of our book
and an easy-to-fill-out order form!*

What to do with that tax refund?

YES, I want to sponsor the Raptors of the Rockies with this tax-deductible contribution:

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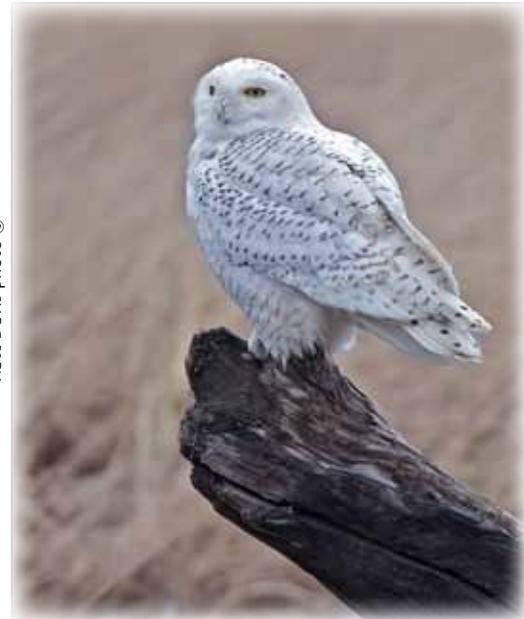
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Thank you Raptor Backers!

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Kate Davis photo ©

Snowy Owl on the Washington Coast

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And THANKS to our Raptor Backers from
our 5th Annual Bayern Party, Page 5

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