

On the Horizon



Horizon Wings Newsletter – Winter 2012

www.horizonwings.org

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

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

Horizon Wings Hosts Veterans

This past December, Horizon Wings was contacted by the Veterans' Administration Hospital in Newington, CT to inquire about our raptor programs.

We offered our normal one-hour long four bird program, but the veterans wanted to see all of the birds. A visit was arranged and on January 11th we hosted a group of 20 veterans for a special complimentary tour of our facility, where they were able to meet all of our birds.

We were also honored to be a part of the New England Air Museum's open cockpit event on February 19th, where we had the privilege to meet Tuskegee Airman, Connie Nappier.

Horizon Wings would like to thank all of our veterans for their sacrifices and courage in the service of our country.

Written by Alan Nordell



Wish List

- Lumber (Plywood, 2x4s, 2x6s)
- Hardware (deck screws, rafter hangers, hinges, hasps)
- Pea stone for aviary flooring
- Pre-fabricated utility shed (8'x10')
- Zip-Loc freezer bags
- Cleaning supplies (paper towels, bleach, Simple Green)
- Office supplies (Postage stamps, paper, envelopes, card stock)
- Gift cards for building supplies
- Hardware cloth

PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL MERCHANTS WHENEVER POSSIBLE

Rehabilitation Stats:

- 32 died/humanely euthanized
- 28 released
- 6 transferred to educational facilities

Welcome, Little Owl

Saturday, January 29th, was an exciting day for us when a small but mighty Eastern Screech Owl, the newest member of our feathered faculty, made his debut in a program at Glastonbury Audubon Society. He charmed young and old alike with his easygoing manner and engaging personality, and has since been a favorite with audiences in many more educational programs around the state. Back at Horizon Wings, he shares an aviary with Herkimer, another Eastern screech owl, and gets plenty to eat. By the end of March, he'll have a forever name, as we are conducting a naming contest among local elementary schools.

But life was not always this good for the little owl. He was found last Spring in Coventry, CT, under a pine tree in someone's yard. He was emaciated, dehydrated, and unable to stand on his own; he had sustained serious injury to both eyes, most likely as a result of being cat caught. (When first venturing out of the nest, young birds are particularly vulnerable because they aren't yet alert to predators and are unable to fly.) As a result, this little guy had to undergo many weeks of rehabilitation which included administration of various medications, as well as eye drops several times each day. He needed to be hand fed until he gradually gained enough strength to eat on his own. But through it all, this feisty owl never gave up, and he gradually regained his strength and health. Unfortunately, due to limited vision in both eyes, he is unable to survive back in the wild.



But having overcome one challenge, it seemed that this little owl was ready to take on another, as he began the training process necessary to become an educational bird. Not all birds have the temperament and personality to be program birds, but he appeared to be a good candidate. He became accustomed to the sound of his trainer's voice speaking to him in his aviary and, at his own pace, he learned that she was safe to be near. Mutual trust was established during weeks of interaction. Then one day the owl was comfortable enough to allow her to touch his feet and put on anklets and jesses. Next he learned to step up on her glove and balance on this moveable perch as they took walks around the grounds. Once this was mastered, there was practice going in and coming out of a travel box. This was relatively easy for the owl, being a cavity dweller by nature. As the weeks went by the screech owl became more and more relaxed and comfortable on the glove. Soon he was confidently standing in front of a few and then many, volunteers--preening, strutting his stuff, and letting us know he was ready to greet the public. Well done, little one. We're so proud of you!

Written by Patricia Cebrelli

“Oscar” The Great-horned owl (*Bubo-virginianus*)

Oscar came to Horizon Wings in March 2006 after spending several months in rehabilitation with another rehabilitator. He had been hit by a garbage truck late in the summer of 2005 as a young bird, probably not long after leaving his parents nest. Oscar was carried by this truck from southern Connecticut to Hartford where they opened the truck door and Oscar fell to the ground. Although the driver and his passenger had heard a thunk, it was dark and they had not stopped to see what they had hit. Oscar had been carried the entire way lodged between the passenger side mirror and door!

As a result of hitting the garbage truck Oscar's right shoulder had been broken, leaving permanent damage. Oscar will never fly, but life for Oscar was just beginning as he arrived at Horizon Wings on that chilly day in March. He was to become an ambassador for all Great-horned owls, sharing his story in hope of educating people from all walks of life about owls, and our environment and ways in which they can help protect both. He rarely fails to entertain the audience with his deep who-who-who's.

Oscar is more than just an ambassador for Horizon Wings. He is also a wonderful foster parent helping us to raise young owlets, teaching them the ways of a Great-horned owl so they will be better prepared to live their lives in the wild.

As Great-horned owls have been known to live up to 40 years in captivity it is our hope that Oscar will continue to educate and entertain audiences for years to come.

Great-horned owl facts:

- * Great-horned owls are found throughout much of South and North America.
- * “Bubo” comes from the Latin word meaning “Owl”, Virginianus is Latin for Virginia where the first specimen of the Great-horned owl was taken for scientific collection.
- *The tufts on their head are not horns, but feathers used for camouflage.



Here We Grow Again

Last year Horizon Wings experienced one of its biggest growth spurts, with the addition of an aviary for Atka the Bald Eagle and the reconditioning of three other aviaries. All of these projects were planned and well-funded.

This year we find ourselves with some unexpected growing pains. With the unanticipated addition of three more birds to our educational line-up we will be building at least three more aviaries this year. The first will be a 16'x12' enclosure for a turkey vulture with an estimated cost of \$800. The second project will be a double aviary to finally give Silo the Barn Owl a new home and replace our Barred Owl Emrys' outdated aviary. This aviary comes with a hefty \$1300 price tag. These two projects along with our normal repair and maintenance costs bring our building budget close to \$3000 this year (approximately \$1200 more than planned).

Some of the funding for these projects will be defrayed by our ever expanding educational outreach programs but unfortunately this may not be enough. We are once again asking that any help you may be able to give in the way of time, money or materials to get these projects completed would be greatly appreciated. We thank you in advance.

Written by Alan Nordell

* The male great horned owl is smaller than the female and has a much lower-pitched call.

* Great-horned owls are known as the “Tiger of the Woods” for their tenacious nature.

* Great-horned owls take a variety of prey items including skunks!

* Great-horned owls nest early in the year usually laying 2-4 eggs in late February or early March. They don't make their nests as they use the nests other large birds have built.

Life span: 5 to 15 years in the wild

Size: Body, 18 to 25 in (46 to 63 cm); Wingspan, 3.3 to 4.8 ft. (1 to 1.5 m)

Weight: 2 to 5.5 lbs. (1 to 2.5 kg)

Written by Mary-Beth Kaeser

Earth Day Fair 2012

Horizon Wings is happy to announce our 3rd annual Earth Day Fair to be held on Saturday April 28th, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Admission is a donation of \$7.00 for adults, \$5.00 for children, and free to children under 5 years old.

This year's event will feature the following:

- 11:00 – 11:45am a formal program featuring 4 of our program birds.
- 1:00 -1:30pm a special story-telling featuring our Great Horned Owl, Oscar.
- Tours of our aviaries. We currently have 11 different species of raptors at our facility. American Kestrels, Peregrine Falcon, Eastern Screech Owls, Barred Owl, Barn Owl, Great Horned Owl, Red Tailed Hawk, Broad Winged Hawk, Crow, Raven, Bald Eagle.
- Throughout the day we will have some of our raptors out on glove with our volunteers so you can see them up close. This will be a great opportunity to learn more about these spectacular birds and for photographs.
- Live llama from 1:30 – 2:30.
- Face painting.
- Nature related Arts and Crafts activity.
- Refreshments.
- Raffles

Last year's event was a huge success. We had an incredible turn out and the weather was spectacular. We hope that all of you will join us again and we hope to see many new faces. This is a great opportunity for the whole family to reconnect with nature and enjoy some of its most incredible creatures.



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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email: _____

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

Mail to:

Horizon Wings Raptor Rehabilitation and Education
P.O. Box 238
Ashford, CT 06278

Board of Directors

Mary-Beth Kaeser – President

Alan Nordell – Vice President

Jeanne Wadsworth – Treasurer

Brenda Lyons – Secretary

Sandy Vinton

Patricia Cebrelli

Newsletter Editor: Patricia Cebrelli

Newsletter Designer: Brenda Lyons

Did you know? Horizon Wings Raptor Rehabilitation and Education is on Facebook! Visit us for current news, photos, and information on upcoming programs.

Horizon Wings Raptor Rehabilitation and Education
P.O. Box 238
Ashford, CT 06278

www.horizonwings.org
860-429-2181