

On the Horizon



Horizon Wings Newsletter – Spring 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.

Welcome, Cypress and Dante!

Cypress, a Red-shouldered hawk, originally came from Miami, where he was found as a fledgling with a broken wing. His wing had set poorly making him unreleasable. He spent the first 10 months of his life in Florida until moving to Connecticut. It was there where Teresa Kramer, owner of Canton Raptor Care began using Cypress (also known as Einstein) for education. Cypress is also a wonderful foster parent, accepting young Red-shouldered hawks into his aviary, teaching them the ways of a Red-shouldered hawk in order to increase their chances of survival once released back to the wild.

We are extremely grateful to Teresa for entrusting us to become Cypress's new forever home, and look forward to having him join our other birds as an educational ambassador.

Red-shouldered hawks are found throughout the east coast and through the mid-west United States. There is also a small population found in the Southwest. They are a medium sized hawk with barred reddish underparts, and a banded tail. In flight, translucent crescents near the wingtips help to identify the species. They are usually found in hardwood forests near a body of water, although it is not uncommon to see them nesting in



and around populated areas. Their prey includes snakes and small rodents. The Red-shouldered hawks from the southern parts of Florida (such as "Cypress") have a paler chest, and a grayish head compared to that of northern birds.



This (*left photo*) is Dante our Turkey Vulture. Dante came to Horizon Wings from Teresa Kramer and the Canton Raptor Care in Canton, Connecticut. Dante originally came to Connecticut from Raptor Rehabilitation of Kentucky where he was found as a baby with a wing injury. He was imprinted by his finder and then transferred to the rehab facility. It was determined that he was non-releasable. Dante has shown that he is a very gentle shy intelligent bird and we have been working with him to get him used to us. We hope to have him on glove and ready to do educational programs for us in the future. We are very lucky to have Dante as one of our permanent birds.

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Interning at Horizon Wings

Interning at Horizon Wings has been one of the most rewarding and worthwhile things I have ever done. I started as a part-time volunteer in August 2011 and I soon realized that there was a lot I could learn, so in January 2012 I became an intern as part of my university course.

As with anything involving animals, a lot of the work is far from glamorous -- cleaning and feeding. But I soon got used to scrubbing bird-poop and handling the dead rats and mice which we feed the birds. But there was plenty of compensation in the joy of getting to know each of our permanent birds and learning skills associated with rehabilitation. I started learning to jess-up on Kisra, our American Kestrel, who gave me the hardest time and still does! As I got to work with each bird I learned their differ-



ent personalities and quirks; Athena you have to talk to, Kisra you have to be quick and confident, Emrys you have to go slow and steady, Julian you have to watch for his ever-changing emotions and so on. It was so rewarding as I got better at working with each bird.

Everyone always asks who our favorite birds are but it's so hard to pick! You do end up having particular connections to some birds but we love them all the same. It's always fun to take our permanent birds to programs and share them with people. Most people never get to see a raptor in the wild so it's fantastic seeing their reactions and how interested they become. This actually really helped me develop my public speaking skills -- speaking about something I was passionate about to people who were interested.

As for the rehab component, I loved this. There is nothing more rewarding than knowing you're doing something to make a difference. At Horizon Wings I learned a range of skills from catching birds to force-feeding. These are immensely useful skills but, not only that, they taught me to be confident and trust myself. If you ever told me I'd be cleaning the feet of a red-shouldered hawk, I probably would've laughed, now it's just another day!

I could not be more grateful to everyone at Horizon Wings for all they have taught me and what fun they've made it!

Written by Sarah Lee

*(continued from page 1)
at Horizon Wings.*

Turkey Vultures are scavengers that use their eyesight and excellent sense of smell to find their food. They are one of the few birds that actually have a sense of smell. They are often seen soaring in the air with their V- shape wings hunting for food along the roads. They are sometimes mistaken for eagles but eagles soar with flat wings as opposed to the V-shape of the Turkey Vulture. Turkey Vultures also have a very distinctive silvery-white wing feathers when seen from below. Turkey Vultures will nest in caves, on cliffs, in abandoned buildings, or even on the ground.

Written by Mary-Beth Kaeser and Jeanne Wadsworth

Owl Prowl 2012

You're invited to join Horizon Wings on Saturday, October 20th from 6:30 to 8:30 pm for our 2nd annual Owl Prowl! Come meet our owls and learn all about owls in Connecticut. There will be refreshments, a raffle, and special owl activities.

Horizon Wings is located at 9 Sand Hill Road in Ashford, Connecticut. Visit www.horizonwings.org for more information!

Celebrating the Earth

Hawks and falcons and owls--- and llamas.....oh, my!!

On Saturday, April 28th, Horizon Wings held their annual Earth Day Fair fundraiser to the delight of an enthusiastic crowd of supporters, who participated in a variety of nature-based activities throughout the day. This year Carol Millard from Ashford was available with two of her llamas.

Our handlers were stationed throughout the grounds with our magnificent raptors on glove, to provide everyone with the opportunity to be up close and personal with their favorite birds, to learn more about them, and to have individual questions answered. A formal program was offered at 11:00 which included the American Kestrel, Eastern Screech Owl, Red-Tailed hawk, and Barred Owl, as well as an environmental education segment. Children dissected owl pellets, had their faces painted, made pinecone bird feeders, and attended a story-time which featured Oscar, the Great-Horned Owl.



Everyone seemed to enjoy the array of refreshments and raffle prizes.

Horizon Wings is grateful to all who helped make this year's Earth Day Fair possible. Many thanks to those who worked on Spring clean-up to prepare the grounds, baked, donated raffle items, and were so generous with their time, knowledge, and talents, as well as to everyone who chose to attend this event. We couldn't do it without you!

Written by Patricia Cebrelli

Horizon Wings Tours

In addition to our educational outreach programs Horizon Wings also offers tours of our facility. Tours give you a chance to see our birds in their aviaries and also choose which birds you would like to see on hand. We can accommodate individual visitors or larger parties. All tours are by appointment only and weather dependent. Please contact us for more information.



Wish List

- Lumber (Plywood, 2x4s, 2x6s)
- Hardware (deck screws, rafter hangers, hinges, hasps)
- Pea stone for aviary flooring
- 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

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