



Arizona's Raptor Experience, LLC

~Our First Newsletter~

September 2016

Greetings!

We hope this newsletter finds you well and enjoying a beautiful fall. All is well here in Chino Valley!

By sending this newsletter – our very first - we hope to stay in touch and keep you posted on the birds, upcoming events, things you can do to benefit raptors and much more!

We also plan to include a spot in future (hopefully monthly) newsletters for guest bird of prey photos – maybe you need help with an ID? Or you captured a beautiful bird in your yard on film? Let us share it!

Also, if you have any bird of prey questions, send them our way and we will answer them in the next newsletter!

Upcoming events:

Please join us at

Jay's Bird Barn!

JaysBirdBarn.com
928-443-5900

October 27th Flagstaff

October 28th Sedona

October 29th Prescott



Saying Good-bye to Wellington

On August 20 Wellington the Eastern Screech Owl passed away of old age. Originally transferred to us in July of 2009, Wellington was at least nine or ten years old having been cared for by another educator prior to living with us. The oldest documented Eastern Screech Owl in the wild was 14 years 6 months old. The average lifespan for most of these small owls is likely to be much

lower with many young not surviving their first year and those that do facing many perils.

Our understanding of the circumstances leading to Wellington's life in captivity is that he was found hanging by one leg from the exit hole of a nesting box, his foot tangled badly in monofilament fishing line. The ever tightening line cut off the circulation to his toes, two of which were lost, putting him at a distinct disadvantage as a bird relying heavily on his feet to capture food.

As an education bird Wellington served as an ambassador for his species. Perhaps more importantly, he played the important role as an example of how human carelessness with garbage can have devastating effects on wildlife. He will be missed!

Getting involved - Arizona Falconers Association



Although hunting with the birds is just one aspect of our lives and business, we're very excited to be new and active members of the Arizona Falconers Association. You too can join! The organization is not just for active falconers, but for anyone who wants to learn about the sport or is considering becoming a falconer. Each year a field meet (Desert Hawking Classic!) is held somewhere in the state where falconers from all over bring their birds to hunt. This is a great opportunity to find out if the sport is for you. The field meet is also a social event including a banquet with presentations, meetings and apprentice workshops. We've met some wonderful people and are getting more involved. I've been working on a new directory for the group and Paul was recently added to the Board of Directors! You can learn more at arizonafalconers.com.

"If future generations are to remember us... We must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not just after we got through with it."

--Lyndon B. Johnson

Welcome Marlee!!

Sometimes life can be full of surprises, and a few months ago we got a big one when we went to check on the Barn Owls. Lyra (adult female) had been sitting on eggs for about a month. It was time to take the eggs and relieve her of her incubating duties – you see, she had laid eggs many times before, but they had never been fertile. This we attributed to the young ages of Lyra and Luna, her mate. I climbed the ladder to peek into the nesting box and pull the eggs...and was VERY surprised to see five unhatched eggs and one live chick!

We quickly phoned a friend of ours who has raised many Barn Owls, and he suggested we bring the chick into the house and hand raise it to ensure that the bird would be comfortable with people. We brought her in at 9 days old, before her eyes had opened.

Our first duty was to feed her properly, which involved getting out of bed in the middle of the night to feed her every four hours! She also needed to be comfortable, feel safe and warm. This we accomplished with soft towels, a stuffed owl and a heat lamp.

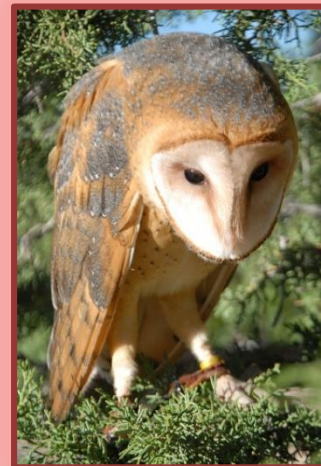


Marlee at 13 days old (5/23/16)



Marlee at 21 days old (5/31/16)

As she grew in her feathers, we were able to determine that we had a female chick who we named Marlee. Watching her grow and learn has been an amazing experience. She is now just over four months old (pictured on the right) and is becoming a wonderful education bird.



Marlee on 9/6/16

Hawking Season – The Break Is Over



Once a year all the birds shed their old feathers, slowly replacing those that have been damaged, worn and sun bleached over time. This process ensures that the birds remain well equipped for flight, maneuverability and protection from the elements. Captive hunting birds whose weight is carefully maintained during the hunting season are fed larger amounts during the molt to support this high energy process. For this reason and to protect the emerging feathers still in blood fed shafts, many falconers choose not to hunt during the molt.

In addition to the molt, we refrain from hunting year round - although it is legal to hunt rabbits year-round with falconry birds in AZ – because the prey animals also need time to rebuild their populations through reproduction. Removing a lactating female from the population affects not just the individual, but her offspring as well.

So, after four long months of waiting, it's finally time to get the birds out in the field again! We begin the season by simply taking the birds out to let them fly and by starting to work on hunting weight maintenance; we weigh them daily, gradually lowering their weight to prepare them for the season ahead. Remember these are athletes that need exercise and food to keep them in top flying condition.

The birds really seem to enjoy their first flights of the season – and this year they even caught a rabbit their second time in the field! Just like young wild birds they get back into practice pouncing on any type of prey – which so far this season has included huge grasshoppers and even a cicada or two...tasty???



Odin eating a cicada



We look forward to sharing this experience with you! Please let us know if you'd like to book a day to join us for a hunt.

Guest photo:



Coda and Odin together on a “T” perch, Kingman, AZ

Photo by:
Wildlife photographer Bobby Wright
bwrightphotos@cox.net

We'd love to see you again. Use the coupon below and join us for a photo session, hawk walk, meet and greet with the birds, or let us design a special event for *you!*

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