



Arizona's Raptor Experience, LLC

December 2018

~Newsletter~

Greetings from Chino Valley!

The holidays are here and 2019 is just around the corner – we hope you are looking forward to both.

2018 has been a busy year ~ and we are now approaching the four-year anniversary of our move to AZ! We're having fun looking back and thinking about all the wonderful people we have met through AZ Raptor Experience. That includes you!

We hope you enjoy this issue of our newsletter ~ it focuses on one of the best parts of 2018 for us ~ the addition of a beautiful Golden Eagle Paul has named Ellis.

*Happy
Holidays!*



Photos by Greg McKelvey



The Golden Eagle (Aquila chrysaetos)

Seventy-one of the world's 10,000 bird species are eagles. They occur on every continent except Antarctica and occupy many habitat types including deserts, grasslands, forests, tropical rainforests, mountains and oceanic islands. Eagles range in size from the tiny Pygmy Eagle weighing in at 1 pound with a 4-foot wingspan to the monster Steller's Sea Eagle which can weigh up to 20 pounds (females) and have a wingspan that can reach 8 feet!

Eagles are often placed in four groups based on shared characteristics besides size: the

Ellis, Golden Eagle booted eagles, sea-eagles, snake eating eagles and forest eagles. The booted eagles, for example, have legs that are feathered all the way to their toes. The Golden Eagle is in this category. In North America, the only other raptors with this feature include the Ferruginous Hawk and the Rough-legged Hawk.

The Golden Eagle is the most widely distributed of the eagle species and is found across the Northern Hemisphere. It is recognized as a formidable hunter with a grip at least eight times more powerful than the human hand and its stoop (power dive) can reach over 150 mph. The national emblems of five countries include the Golden Eagle.



This image illustrates where the eagle's name originates. The body of the bird is dark brown with some gray in the wings and tail, but the nape has lighter feathers which flash gold in the sun. There are six sub-species of Golden Eagles, differing in size and plumage.

Goldens require large open tracts of land with cliffs for nesting. A breeding pair can occupy upwards of a 70 square mile territory. The birds mate for life and can live up to 30+ years in the wild. It is estimated that there are between 60,000 and 100,000 breeding pairs in the world, and they have a status of "least concern" according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Even so, they face many threats to their survival including habitat loss, pesticides, energy exploration, lead ingestion, wind turbines, electrocution, and

countless interactions with humans. Sadly, Ellis, our third and newest resident eagle, was hit by a car here in AZ and has a permanent wing injury. Even so, Paul is working with Ellis (he named him after golden eagle biologist and author David Ellis, Ph.D. of Oracle, AZ) to restore at least some of his flight and hunting capability.

Paul's favorite bird is the Golden Eagle. As he has remarked, "Golden Eagles represent all the best that remains of Earth's dwindling raptors and wildlife. They are beautiful, intelligent, affectionate, loyal and devoted parents, ferocious apex predators and they survive in some of the most inhospitable regions on the planet. Golden Eagles have been carried on journeys and into battles on the gauntlets of mighty emperors, czars, Khans and the Roman Legion. Today, these incredible birds still accompany the Kazakhs in Mongolia, European, central Asian and American eagle hunters afield in pursuit of rabbits, fox, deer and even wolves. The Golden Eagle will always rightfully be called "The King of Birds.""

This year we had to say good-bye to two of our aged ambassadors... both are missed.



*Smokey
Western Screech Owl*



*Cade
Peregrine Falcon*

As 2018 comes to an end, we want to thank the businesses and organizations who continue to support us and our conservation message. We look forward to working with you again in 2019!

Jay's Bird Barn

Enchantment Resort

Watters Garden Center

Chino Valley Library

Prescott Audubon Society

Many thanks to those of you who have visited our facility in Chino Valley.

We wish you a wonderful holiday and a Healthy and Happy New Year!