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THE MOCKINGBIRD CHRONICLES

Newsletter of the South Plains Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, Inc.



1997

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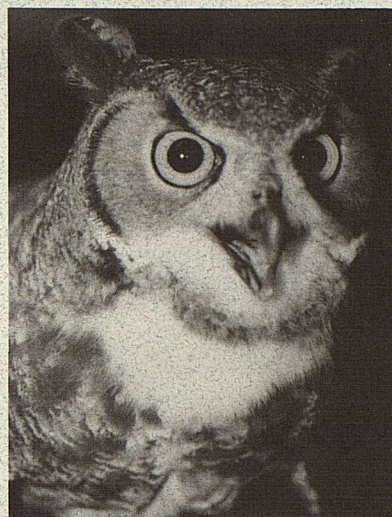
Volume 3, Number 3

A Wonderful Gift

I met Virginia Landwer on only two occasions: the first time was in 1995 at a meeting in someone's home. I had been asked to do a program for a women's group on wildlife rehabilitation. She introduced herself and talked about her late husband, Dr. Landwer, who was a biologist and told me he would have liked what we do for wildlife. About a year later, I met Virginia a second time at a luncheon at the Lubbock Women's Club. I was again doing a program on area wildlife. She was so interested in what we did, and why. She asked more questions than anyone in the audience did, about birds, and squirrels, and opossums. On both occasions, she helped me carry the birds back to my car at the conclusion of the program, talking all the while of how very interested she was in what we did. I was never to meet her again. On June 24th, we received a letter from Norwest Bank, informing us that Virginia had died on November 22, 1996. She had bequeathed \$5000.00 to the Wildlife Center. Born in Marietta, Oklahoma, she later relocated and attended school in Ropesville, and then to Lubbock, graduating from Lubbock High School. She attended Texas Tech and received a bachelors and masters degree in Science. She taught biology at LHS for more than 21 years. Her only survivor was a cousin. We can't thank you in person, Virginia, but we know that you know how much this gift means to us.

This gift, along with the \$1000.00 set aside from fundraising events has been placed in a Certificate of Deposit, and is earmarked for our building fund. South Plains Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, Inc. is a 501(c)3 facility under the IRS code, and all donations to us are tax deductible to the extent the law allows. Recently, the Center also received notice from the State Comptroller, that we are now also exempt from state and local taxes, retroactive from the date we incorporated, June 25, 1992. We are very happy to have these milestones behind us! Our Center, although licensed by Texas Parks & Wildlife Department in Austin on a state level, and the United States Fish & Wildlife Service on a Federal level, receives no funding whatsoever from either regulatory agency. We have no paid staff, and are 100% volunteer. We exist on contributions of time, funds, and services, that have been generously donated by many, many advocates of wildlife in this community and from around the South Plains, and across the country!

We are using this money as a springboard to begin a fundraising campaign for the fifty or more thousand dollars necessary to build an on site initial care and environmental education facility. This would take the functions out of the manager's house, which presently include examination, initial and emergency care for new admissions, laundry and kitchen functions, including food preparation and storage, and volunteer facilities. If you can donate to our building fund, we would be extremely grateful.



"Bubo, our wildlife ambassador"

Our First Crisis

On the heels of this wonderful gift came a tragedy of epidemic proportion. In mid-July we faced a crisis that took us completely by surprise. During the course of five days, July 12th through July 16th, nine Barn owls and two Great horned owls became gravely ill. Nine of eleven owls died in less than twenty-four hours from the onset of symptoms: eight Barn owls, and a Great horned owl. This Great horned owl "Bubo" was our educational bird of 9 years; a remembrance of "Bubo" follows this article. The Center often has 10-15 avian admissions per day in the summer, so one or two or more birds dying is commonplace. Their "histories" are often unknown, and we have to accept death as a part of the rehabilitation process. Beginning on the morning of the twelfth of July, one of two fledgling Barn owls was found dead in our stable (used as a pre-release facility for hawks and owls). Another fledgling there and the surrogate mother appeared "normal." Later that day, in another location, a second Barn owl fledgling was found lying down in its' mew in the barn and near death. It died that evening, despite supportive treatment with IV fluids and medications. On July 13th, two more fledgling Barn owls were found lethargic and barely responsive: the second fledgling from the stable with the surrogate, and another inside the barn. Those two owls were taken to the clinic for examination. One died there within an hour; the second later that evening. On Monday two more owls died, and another two on Tuesday. On Tuesday morning, our Great horned owl "Bubo" was taken outdoors to her enclosure, as always. She was perching, alert, active, and appeared normal. Two hours later, she was exhibiting the same symptoms as the others: alert, active and perching one minute, fluffed up, lethargic, eyes closed, wings drooping, weak and barely responsive the next. We rushed her to the clinic along with

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another sick owl. Both died, having lived only 15 and 22 hours respectively after the onset of symptoms. Our educational Barn owl "Casper" was marginally ill, but recovered within two days. "Mean," our surrogate owl, never had symptoms, despite being in close contact with her two charges that expired earlier. Carcasses were shipped Texas A & M Veterinary Diagnostic Lab in College Station, TX, for necropsy. Organophosphate poisoning (we do not use OP's) avian botulism, and several other possibilities have not been ruled out. Salmonellosis has been ruled out. We are devastated at our losses, and yet have little to go on. A third carcass was also shipped to the National Fish & Wildlife Forensics Laboratory in Ashland, Oregon. Food samples will likewise be analyzed, and we will update these findings in the September newsletter. We thank Dr. Lane Preston, Dr. Roger Freund, technician Drew Davis of Amino Medical Center, and Rob Lee of the FWS wildlife law enforcement for their prompt help during this emergency.

"Bubo" was brought from New Mexico years ago by a Lubbockite visiting there, Ann Milliron. She came upon the little displaced owlet on the ground, near a Potash mineshaft. Unsteady on its feet, she presumed it had fractured its legs during a fall. Having heard of our facility, she returned with the owl to Lubbock. After thorough examination, we knew she was simply too young to walk but had sustained no injuries. Beautiful, covered in white down, the owlet was only about ten days old. It was my first Great horned owl. I gave her royal treatment, so she might survive when I was just a novice. I did the job a little too well, and Bubo became docile and manageable. Not "tame" but she did tolerate human presence. At the time, I knew little about "imprinting" and we were becoming attached to one another. Bubo grew into a beautiful Great Horned owl. I made application to the state and federal agencies to keep her for education. A gentleman from Texas Parks & Wildlife Department in Austin asked "Why?" I still remember my reply: "There is not quite anything like a magnificent Great horned owl to capture a child's imagination and attention. If I can change just one child's mind to treat these wonderful birds of prey with respect and appreciation, I will feel that my efforts are rewarded." From then on, Bubo went to every educational presentation with us. She was awe-inspiring. As soon as the kennel was opened, she hopped out on to her log, undisturbed by noise and the presence of hundreds of people. Later on, she would hoot, as if she realized all eyes were on her. Over the years she "spoke" to many thousands of area children and adults. Bubo was our wildlife ambassador, and was the most famous and photographed owl on the South Plains. Debbie and I and all of our volunteers will feel this loss. She was our Center personified.

"In nature there are no punishments or rewards - only consequences."

THE BOTTOMLESS PITS ARRIVE!

Many are unaware that during the summer our wild animal casualties are cared for at two licensed and separate locations. The raptors, raptor chicks, mammals and reptiles continue to receive care at the wildlife Center site. The orphaned, injured and displaced songbirds are cared for here at my home. This



has become necessary due to lack of space at the Center. Last year, I had a utility room extended fourteen feet to create a separate and contained "bird room." There is still not ample space by summer. All winter we store closets and drawers full of tiny cups and dishes, soft baby blankets and hundreds of towels, and wonder why we hang onto them. By June, every item is suddenly in use, and we need more. This year, April 28th marked the onset of "baby bird season" for us; a bit later than usual. The trickle of avian admissions soon became a deluge of tiny birds of every shape, species and color. By mid-July, the days are long, stressful and tedious. You go to bed tired and wake up tired. Life is chaotic, filled with distractions, constant interruptions, and a never-ending stream of young birds needing help. Free time has suddenly become a luxury. You feed the scores of hungry mouths before you do anything else in the morning. There may be 60 or more at any given time. The noise level reaches deafening proportions as they all cheep, peep, shriek, whistle and twitter in unison. The Blue jays far and away are the noisiest. You check the incubator and hope the injured and tiniest birds have lived through the night, and feed them also. A few you may have to struggle with to force-feed or tube feed. Some require antibiotic injections or fluids, and you take care of this. By the time you've made the first round, it is time to begin again, and to feed the young doves by baby bottle. After each one is sufficiently "stuffed" you clean the cages, carriers and containers. In twenty minutes and often less, the clamor begins again. They are hungry continuously, despite being fed every 30 minutes or so 12-15 hours per day. You will feed these same little mouths again and again until dark, and they are equally ravenous each time you appear with food. The workload is staggering. Your life as you have known it comes to an abrupt halt. You relive the magic of sleep deprivation. This is a seven day a week job and commitment, all day, every day for approximately four and a half months. If you need a break to do anything for much longer than an hour, a volunteer comes to take your place. You plan for any time off far in advance. You fall behind on everything else at once, and there is never time to catch up, as each day is a carbon copy of the previous. Piles of bird laundry reach new heights; bird dishes fill the dishwasher. As June drew to a close, eight or ten and occasionally more bird

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admissions a day became commonplace. The oldest self-feeding birds are transferred to the wildlife center periodically for a few days in the aviary prior to release. It is here they will have ample room to fly and condition their flight muscles, be away from people, eat without being hand-fed, and experience changes in weather conditions. As these birds are released, they are quickly replaced by more admissions that you raise and care for. The telephone rings incessantly at both locations. We spend a great deal of time on the phone educating people about what to do, and more importantly, what not to do. You know that virtually every knock on the door will result in a person bearing a shoe box with a baby bird inside. Young birds that are uninjured and have been "kidnapped" are sent back with the finder to the care of the parent birds. Every now and then, you must drop everything to care for a new casualty, like the soaking-wet cold turkey vulture that arrived July 4th, downed in the previous night's storm. Two mockingbirds arrive in a box...more storm casualties; one is already dead, the second has a broken leg that must be splinted. In the afternoon we are called to a local golf course. A Mississippi kite has been hit deliberately by a golfer swinging his club. The wing was completely severed in mid-air. You drop everything once again to help this hawk. The stress mounts. You know you can't save them all, or even help them all. But, year after year, and summer after summer, we gain some satisfaction knowing we have given a helping hand to indigenous songbirds of every size, color and species. However, we do continue to ask ourselves in those moments of rational thinking, "Why do we do this?" A thankless job, yes, but the same folks return year after year to participate in the craziness. While we care for all the animals knowing at the time some won't make it, others are being released nearly every day - jays, opossums, ground squirrels, owls, hawks, turtles. We take it all in stride, (and we pray for September!).

National wildlife rehabilitation statistics indicate that if you can save one of two wildlife casualties, or 50%, you have achieved a measure of success. Grim as this sounds, this also means we *can* save 50%, and many of the animals do survive, mature, recover and are released. Our Center's success rate in the summer may be as high as 70%, while we are admitting healthy kidnapped fledglings and raising them, but this quickly shifts to sometimes dismal numbers when we receive hawks and owls in the fall and winter. Often these raptors are emaciated and starving, shot, electrocuted or poisoned. Statistics also state that if a bird (and we have found this to be true for mammals as well) lives three days, it still only has a 50% chance of survival. We only begin to be hopeful after the third day of admission but there are no guarantees, and animals sometimes die after a prolonged period of care. These statistics include all birds and mammals, healthy, injured or not, because stress frequently takes its toll on them. However, despite the hectic, stressful summer months, we still achieve great personal satisfaction from the experiences we share, the people we meet, and the many lives that have benefitted from a helping hand. Spend one day with us, and see just how much our lives are enriched by the little ones we take care of!

The Birds of Summer

Enchanting to watch and listen to, the summer songbirds continue to delight people of all ages. Because half of our workload in the spring and summer is nestling and fledgling birds, part of this issue will be devoted to our work with birds. Occasionally, however, they run into problems, and we would like to share some of the encounters with our avian visitors.

TWENTY QUESTIONS

If you have ever telephoned us, you know what we mean by "being grilled." After a series of questions, we try to decide on the correct course of action for you, and the animal you are calling about. We never want to discourage a caller to the point of hanging up, but we must always know what to ask when. At the same time, we try to be firm and direct with our questions, and our advice, and we do not always tell people what they want to hear. Is the jackrabbit or cottontail as big as a tennis ball? If so, it is old enough to be on its own. Some individuals find this hard to believe. *We always encourage the caller to do what is best for the animal.* This scenario happens frequently during the summer when people call to say there is a baby bird in their yard that cannot fly. We immediately try to find out if it is simply too young to fly, or if it is in trouble, or has sustained a broken wing or laceration. If we don't ask questions, we are not able to zero in on what treatment protocol is best. Finding out exactly what you need to know is not always easy: "How long did you have it and what have you fed it, if anything? Bread? Hamburger? Cow's Milk? Other foods?" These are all common questions. (And, incidentally, these are **the worst possible things you could feed a young bird or mammal!**) It is likewise imperative that we find out exactly under what conditions the animal was found. Recently, a week old fawn was brought in by two women from out of town. They assured us the mother had just been hit by a car, and the fawn was brought directly to the wildlife center. When this supposed uninjured fawn was dead less than 12 hours later, we knew there was more to the story. Bloated and having a peculiar smell, Debbie knew instantly the fawn had been fed cow's milk. Calling them back once again, they admitted having the animal several days, and gave it milk from the refrigerator. This is yet another case of well-meaning people who are "just trying to help." Other mammals such as opossums and squirrels are frequently given this milk by a rescuer, and they simply cannot digest it. This will set an animal back very quickly, and if such feedings persist, the animal will quickly develop diarrhea, bloating, and will die. People often look at us strangely as we also "smell" the new admissions, but the Common barn owl has a distinctive "normal" smell upon admission, as do the Mississippi kite and the Blue jay. When someone calls to say they were watering the lawn, and the little jay seems to be injured we believe them...a normal healthy jay, although he may not yet be able to fly, will move from the water spray. Our advice, welcome or not, always comes from experience and observation.

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Diseases At the Bird Feeder

Often we are called for advice on what to do about several or more birds suddenly found dead near a residential bird feeder. There are four diseases that affect birds that use feeders. (Remember, not all species of birds use feeders). The most common disease is **Salmonellosis**, caused by a group of bacteria called *Salmonella*. This can affect both animals and people. It is also the most common of the bird feeder diseases. The infection causes abscesses to form in the crop and esophagus, and birds die quickly once affected. Birds at feeders are often thought to be "poisoned" because of rapid death. Weakness, drowsiness, depression and diarrhea have been observed. Some species may gasp for air, the eyelids may be swollen, the wings droop, and they may stagger, fall or have convulsions just before death. Healthy birds may become ill by eating food contaminated by bacteria in the fecal droppings of sick birds. Spoiled seed, hulls and feces beneath platform-type feeders can spread salmonella if allowed to build up. **Trichomoniasis** is a protozoan infection, and is a problem we encounter at the center frequently. One celled microscopic parasites affect pigeons, doves, blue jays, kites, and occasionally other species. Birds develop a cheesy-like exudate in their mouth, and crop, and the throat appears swollen. When unchecked, this disease can damage internal organs as well. The bird actually starves to death. Although it is hungry, it tries in vain to eat and drink, but is unable to swallow. This is treatable when it is caught in time, by a relatively new drug, Spartrix. 'Trich' is spread through infected food and water. In years past, we have also had cases of Barn owls with this problem. **Aspergillosis** is an infection of the respiratory tracts of birds and mammals caused by fungi. Although the disease is caused by an infectious agent, it will not spread from bird to bird. Infection results from inhalation of *Aspergillus* spores that grow on damp or moldy seed, food and straw, and also in the debris under feeders. Birds inhale the fungal spores, and the disease spreads through their lungs and air sacs. The bird exhibits increased respiratory difficulty and frequently dies of pneumonia or bronchitis. **Avian Pox** is a virus, which causes warty growths on the featherless parts of a bird, such as face, legs, and feet. Spread by direct contact with infected birds, healthy birds pick up the virus from infected food, perches or feeders, or by insects carrying the virus on their body. Birds become weak, and emaciated, and lesions may interfere with vision or feeding. Some birds may show signs of labored breathing. Sick birds are more susceptible to starvation, predation, and severe weather. The poxvirus is resistant to drying. All these diseases can lead to death. Here are a few things you can do to minimize the disease problems at your bird feeders: Provide ample feeder space so birds are not crowded; use fresh food; never use seed that looks moldy or is wet. Don't feed moldy bread to birds; Store seed in insect and rodent proof containers. Remove spilled and spoiled seed promptly; many people use an indoor-outdoor vacuum for this. **Keep feeders clean.** (Use 1 part Clorox to 9 parts water) to disinfect. Immerse clean feeders completely in solution for about 3 minutes, then air dry. Weekly cleaning is best, but once or twice a month is essential.

In a 1995 study conducted by the United States Fish & Wildlife Service, Migratory bird conservation has had significant benefits for the economy. The 65 million adults who watch birds spend up to \$9 billion a year on everything from bird seed to birding trips.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

BY DEBBIE TENNYSON

Renee Meunier has been with the center since March of 1995. She has been an invaluable volunteer in every aspect of the operation, including going above and beyond her duty to help deliver the neighbor's cow. Renee has a Bachelor of Science degree in biology with a minor in Chemistry. She is currently working on her Masters at Texas Tech. She also works at Methodist Hospital in the Cardiac Catheterization Lab. Renee's favorite part of volunteering with us is "the joy you experience when an animal that you worked hard on to save, is released back to the wild" and knowing "you helped gave it a second chance at life." Her most memorable event was the release of the Bald eagle. Renee helped with daily treatments, handling and exercise of this eagle prior to its release. She remembers that majestic bird taking flight and soaring to the sky as if he never left it. Renee exclaimed, "For a time my heart soared with her, knowing I played a role in reclaiming her freedom." Thanks Renee for all you do for our organization and the animals in our care!

Name that Nestling!

Years ago, when a tiny and sometimes featherless baby bird arrived, you hoped it would survive and grow up so you would be able to identify it. Since that time, dozens of "unidentified" nestlings have appeared during the breeding season. Some are pink and featherless, some covered in fluffy, wispy down. The contour of the beak and the birds' weight in grams can sometimes help to identifying a nestling. Mouth colors likewise give us important clues to identification: yellow-mouthed nestlings include House sparrows and Starlings and scores of other species. Blue jays, when immature, have a bright pink mouth, but this turns almost black as they mature over the summer. By observation, we learn a great deal, and even though the bird may have long tail feathers and look like an adult, the mouth color often provides a clue to the bird's age, and it can be treated accordingly. Regardless of the species, most

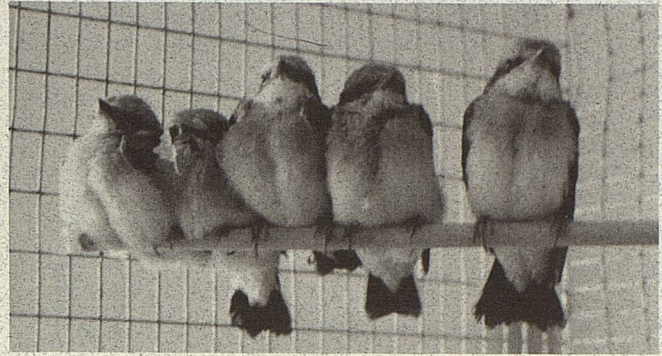
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appear to be all mouth! Some youngsters are born helpless, and other newly hatched babies may be up and walking almost immediately. This year has been a record year for baby robin admissions. Surprisingly, many people fail to recognize them when they are youngsters: the fledglings have rusty colored *heavily speckled breasts*. Western kingbird nestlings and fledglings are often confused with Mockingbirds.* They appear similar, but the kingbird has a bright orange mouth, and the mockingbird's is yellow. Also, mockingbird is primarily gray with white wing patches; the kingbird, gray on top, has a yellow breast and belly. 1997 has also been a record year for kingbird admissions; last year we had very few. Occasionally we also admit a Scissortailed-flycatcher, looking very much like the kingbird. The difference early on is very subtle- the Scissortail is a much lighter gray. Since 1986, thousands of birds have passed through our hands, but we still have a few each season that we have never seen before! *Our first kingbird nestling arrived June 25th this year, about 10 days earlier than any previous year.



Boris Does Boise

On April 21st, a baby badger was brought in-a new species for us. He grew, thrived, and was quickly becoming imprinted and too tame for his own good; we wanted him to grow up with other badgers. Our friend and nationally known nature photographer Wyman Meinzer visited May 14th, and took twelve rolls of film of the badger at Buffalo Springs Lake, in natural surroundings, and Boris was most cooperative. Attempts to place him were looking grim, but one day a rehabilitator in Boise Idaho, saw our request on our wildlife rehabilitation e-mail discussion list. She raises and releases many badgers, and had appropriate habitat. The airlines would have charged us \$150.00, so we provided Renee with gas money instead. Renee has always been one to go way above and beyond the call of duty, and we sincerely thank her for this! Off she went on May 27th, with Boris in tow.



Western Kingbirds

NOTES: On July 9th, Veterinarians Pat Allen, Jeanette Wyant, and Cheryl Boehm from the South University Veterinary Hospital, and Dr. Tracy Jenkins of the College Avenue Animal Clinic in Levelland met some of our volunteers, and we held an orientation session on the subject of wildlife, casualties, treatments and care. State and Federal paperwork for all is in process. This meeting was also attended by Dr. Allen's wife, Kathy and their clinic staff. It appears that Jeff Jenkins, Dr. Jenkin's husband may be persuaded to get involved as well! We are so glad to have the help of these people! Congratulations to volunteer Colin McRoberts, accepted at Trinity University in San Antonio. We appreciate the help of Lupe and Larry Rocha, who have given the most volunteer hours over the summer. Both are students at Texas Tech and also have summer jobs. A large Mule deer that was hit by a car earlier this Spring and got quite a bit of publicity. Dr. Carl Andersen transported him to his ranch, where he could take advantage of more space to recover fully from the head and other injuries he suffered. On May 7, Girl Scouts, headed by Adrienne Nichols, planted vines and morning glories in our waterfowl enclosure. Also a note about our FWS law enforcement officer: National Audubon Magazine journalist Ted Williams visited last month from Massachusetts, and interviewed Rob Lee for a September 1997 article. This will be a nationwide expose' of the oil pit-bird kill issue. These investigations currently have spread throughout the country. Midge Erskine, "bird lady" of Midland, TX, brought this bird mortality issue to Rob's attention in 1987, and he spearheaded the investigation on this volatile issue between the oil companies and environmentalists. As a result, all oil tanks and pits now must be covered with netting by law, to prevent migratory birds from landing in them.

Our Annual Open House

for Members and Friends of

the South Plains Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, Inc.

will be held Saturday, September 13th, 11 AM - 3 PM.

Last years' event was attended by over 300 visitors. Volunteers and our wildlife ambassadors - our educational birds - will be on hand to show guests what goes on behind the scenes.

Thank You...

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Thank you once again to **Lois Tanner** of **Tech Type Secretarial Services** for typesetting this newsletter, and her architect husband, **Larry Tanner**, for his contribution: Larry has been crafting bird houses and bird feeders out of recycled materials. Half of the proceeds from each sale is donated to the Wildlife center, and we very much appreciate this. These can be purchased at **Tech Type** 3817 50th Street, in the Memphis Place Mall. Thanks to **Jeff Jenkins** of **Levelland** for supplying us with oxygen and a nebulizer for a Blue jay with a persistent sinus infection. Thank you to **Greg & Linda Bulls of Bulls' Horse and Hound** for the donation of grain. Thanks to volunteer **Carla Davis**, for her generous donation, and for her personal help! To **Marla Riddlespurger**, and **Loretta Groven** for helping here with the birds; Marla also donated supplies. Thanks to **Debbie Tennyson**, **Renee Meunier**, **Marcy Miles & Terry Taylor** for organizing a wonderful going away barbecue for three of our volunteers who recently relocated: **Susan Carpenter**, **Judie Marquis** and **Sterling Van Coutran**. Susan, one of my sub-permittees, will be doing wildlife rehabilitation in Amarillo. Thanks to **Karen Steinert** for her donation and to **Joe Bill Rogers** for supplies. **Cathy Mottet** donated pecans; Also to **Joe Wilbanks**, **PetsMart**, **K-Mart** and **Target** stores for their contributions of supplies; To **United Grocery** at 50th and Indiana, (Manager **Russel Gould**), for donating much needed produce to us year round; to **Ann Boggs** and **Barnes and Noble Booksellers** for hosting a wildlife program on August 2nd. Thank you also to **Gyna Cole** of **The Ad Shoppe**, and to **Jancy Jester**, of **Jester's Art Service**, for creating two very different educational displays for us with the grant money from the **Junior League of Lubbock**. . . more on this in the next newsletter when those projects are completed. A big thank you to **Petra McCarty** of **Petra Hair Design** in Lubbock, for holding a month long fundraiser for us in her shop. Contributions totaled \$499.00! The native plant garden, an Eagle Scout project by **Shawn Wallace**, CHS Senior, was completed and looks great! They also constructed a large collapsible cage for us. **Matthew Figun** also completed his Eagle Scout project: construction of new perches and equipment for our raptors. More thank yous to **Art Needleman** and **Bill Howe** for the beautiful posters we received from the United States Fish & Wildlife Service office in Albuquerque! To **Jerrie Rodgers** and **Karen Dawson** for always thinking of us, and to our volunteer **Sean Grimland** for hosting a presentation for the Students of Environmental Awareness at TTU. To **Bonnie Dockray** for the donation of a pet-carrier; **Bob Rasa** and **Eric Burrell** for entering some of my data, to **Dr. and Mrs. Eeon Cockings** for a wonderful supply of pecans for our jays and squirrels; to **Mary Baze** for having our riding mower repaired by an anonymous friend; to **Mr. Ted Simon** for supplies, and to **Dr. and Mrs. Robert Grant** for fence material. Thanks also for the thoughtfulness of **Beth Bodden** and her mother **Dorothy**: one evening I returned home from some errands to find about 3 shoe boxes in the kennel on my front porch. To my great delight, one of the boxes contained not a baby bird, but a box of cookie bars and a note: "We thought you might like something in a shoe box besides a bird!" *Thanks also to our wonderful volunteers and our monthly benefactors!*

Grant Writer Needed - Please

We need someone who would be willing to write a grant for us. At the present time we are looking for a professional grant writer.

Other Needs

Also, Debbie will be doing a workshop at the fall IWRC conference for rehabilitators. She will present "Creance Flying: A Technique for Conditioning Raptors." If you or your business can sponsor or help sponsor her trip (airfare, accommodations) we would be most appreciative. We need dry "Purina" Cat chow for our bird babies; seed, nuts, liquid laundry & dish detergent, Zip-Loc freezer bags Kleenex-type pop-up tissues, trash bags, "pet" carriers, towels without fringes, paper towels, and a small Xerox machine that works. We sincerely appreciate any help you can give us!

Remember that wildlife suffers in silence.

Update on the Swainson's Hawk

In our spring newsletter, we had an overview of the plight of the Swainson's hawks. Thousands were inadvertently poisoned by Argentinean farmers after using a "cheap and plentiful" organophosphate insecticide to control grasshopper devastation in alfalfa fields. Biologists estimated 20,000 hawks were killed by ingesting grasshoppers, one of the birds' favorite foods. The birds were literally falling from the trees as they roosted during the night. Recognizing that quick action was necessary, the United States Fish & Wildlife Service facilitated a partnership with numerous agencies and launched an intense effort to educate farmers and provide them with alternatives to monocrotophos, the poison being used which is not registered for use on either grasshoppers or alfalfa. *As the result of this cooperation, only 24 hawk deaths were reported this winter.* According to a FWS press release, "Much has improved in the 35 years since former U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist Rachel Carson awakened America to the problem of pesticides with her book *Silent Spring*. The Nation's air and water are cleaner. Harmful chemicals such as DDT have been banned and the bald eagle, peregrine falcon, and other species have rebounded as a result. But, unfortunately, many of the Nation's 800 migratory bird species are still in peril because of loss of habitat and misuse of common pesticides that can be found at any hardware store. Every year, an estimated 4 million tons of pesticides are applied across the U.S. from farmland to homes and gardens. Additionally, well over 100,000 tons of pesticides no longer permitted to be used in the U.S. are shipped to developing countries where migratory birds spend the winter. Populations of some species are declining as fast as 2 to 4 percent per year. Individuals can play an important role in stopping the decline of some bird populations . . . something as simple as learning the appropriate time and way to apply pesticides. Many people are inadvertently poisoning birds by misusing these chemicals or applying them when birds are especially vulnerable, such as when they are nesting."

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Jill Haukos, friend and consultant to our wildlife center and the local Llano Estacado Audubon Society, is an expert on use of these chemicals. At one time, Jill headed the National toll free Pesticide Hotline, based in Lubbock at Texas Tech University. She can be reached at (806) 797-2012 - Ed.

THE BALD EAGLE PROTECTION ACT

Bald eagle protection began in 1940 with the passage of the Eagle Protection Act. This Act provides further protection to all Bald and Golden eagles and prohibits all commercial activities and some non-commercial activities involving these species, their feathers or parts. Golden Eagles are included in the Act because the Golden Eagle is very similar in appearance to the juvenile Bald Eagle. In 1972, raptors and members of the Corvid family (jays, ravens, crows) were included in the protective umbrella of this Act. The Endangered Species Act further protects endangered species like the Peregrine falcon, the Northern spotted owl, and the Bald Eagle. By definition, "endangered species" is an animal or plant listed by regulation as being in danger of extinction. A "threatened species" is any animal or plant that is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future. (Note that in Texas virtually all species are "protected," but this does not necessarily mean they are also "threatened" or "endangered" - Ed.). Violations of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Eagle Protection Act, and Endangered Species Act are considered criminal offenses and can result in significant fines and imprisonment. A conviction might also result in the forfeiture of equipment (vehicles, boats, airplanes, weapons, etc.) used during the commission of the crime. Many complex local, state, and federal laws provide wildlife protection. The preceding is general information only. Consult an official regulating agency for the final word.

— MEMORIALS —

A memorial contribution was received in the name of Donna Sue Scarborough from Austin, Texas, who passed away March 22, 1997. Donna was 42 and was passionate about nature and wildlife.

Lori Havens Rogers of Lubbock, made a donation in memory of "Shep," a Border collie. Shep was a member of the W. E. Rogers family for over ten years.

Mr. Jack McCarty, made a donation in memory of Greg Marcy and his dog "Petie."

NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

*Renewing Members are marked with an asterisk.

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Sincere thanks . . . also to our monthly benefactors, Mr. Stephen Thrash of HubNet for providing us with internet service; Joyce Lisenby, Joyce Komkov, Rob Lee, Glenn Joyce, Grace Joyce, and Carre Avian.

THE MOCKINGBIRD CHRONICLES

If you will consider becoming a member, and help our organization continue to help wildlife, please send the attached form, along with your tax deductible check to: Carol Mitchell
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