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The Mockingbird Chronicles



Newsletter of the South Plains Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, Inc.

Number 3/2009

Back to the Wild: Our Goal



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Letter from the Founder



Since our last quarterly newsletter, several changes have taken place.

My retirement status became a thing of the past as I again resumed administrative and clerical tasks after Dorothy Tinkler resigned her Director

position June 15th, 2009.

The vacancy for a new Executive Director was advertised and my brother, Jay Reichard expressed an interest in the position. He manned the Wildlife Center on several occasions when he lived in Lubbock over the past twenty years, helping with every aspect of our operations.

We chose Jay based on his business, financial and computer skills, something that's become a critical need as the Center continues to grow and prosper, now in its twenty-first year.

In the past Jay helped with everything from baby songbirds and Golden Eagles to young cottontails and opossums. He already knew several of our volunteers who were delighted to have him back again. Jay resides in the house on the property where he's available to help with after-hours admissions and emergencies, and to get things rolling in the early morning during our busy months. We're also in the process of centralizing all of our records at that location.

For nineteen years, the organization was 100% volunteer, but we ultimately had to salary three staff members to assure all duties and year-round hours of operation were covered.

We must continue to protect our financial resources, so we can meet our monetary obligations in the future. Jay's primary job will be to raise funds and be sure all administrative and clerical tasks are completed.

We've completed many capital improvements over the past two decades to make the property a safe, attractive, non-profit facility where wildlife orphans and casualties can come for care and recuperative treatments. As always, our goal for our wild patients is release back to the wild whenever possible.

On Another Note: Thank you Letters

Thank you letters have always been a very important part of our administrative details.

Not only do they provide a donor with a document on SPWRC letterhead for tax purposes, the letter indicates your cash or check was received.

During my twenty-year tenure as Executive Director, I always tried to personalize outgoing letters with current news or other updates.

That said, it's sometimes difficult to keep a handle on the multitude of loose admission slips, notes, memos and unaccounted-for cash that's left in our donation box. When our former Director, Dorothy Tinkler, resigned, I again resumed the clerical and other administrative duties through July 31st. During this transition period – which occurred during our busiest time of year – some donations and corresponding thank yous may have inadvertently slipped by unnoticed.

We appreciate every gift, large or small, as the Wildlife Center's *monthly* budget is over \$5,000. We have some monthly "Keystone" donors *and always need more* so we can meet our financial obligations. Happily, after twenty-one years, the Wildlife Center has – and never has had – any debt.

My personal thanks to each and every one of you who helped make our service for wildlife possible.

Hopefully by the time this current fall issue reaches your mailboxes, everything at the Wildlife Center will be back on an even keel now that we have a new Executive Director who comes to us with plenty of skills, energy, new ideas and lots of enthusiasm.

My sincere thanks to our tireless staff, and to our very loyal and dependable volunteers. They and our veterinarians are the backbone of our organization, and without you, our twofold Mission to wildlife and to wildlife education would be unobtainable.



In August we admitted two new species: an Orchard Oriole and a Callope Hummingbird.

Carol

The Mockingbird Chronicles is a quarterly publication of the South Plains Wildlife Rehabilitation Center Inc. (SPWRC). The organization is an IRS determined 501(c)(3) non-profit facility that cares for orphaned, injured, ill and displaced wild animals with the ultimate goal of returning wildlife back to its natural habitat.

SPWRC holds state and federal permits but receives no funding whatsoever from either regulating agency. SPWRC operations are maintained through donations, gifts, education programs, quarterly newsletter subscriptions, memorial contributions, "wildlife ambassador" sponsorships and fundraising events. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent the law allows.

Executive Director
Executive Director, Retired
Operations Manager

Mr. Jay Reichard
Carol Lee
Katie Stafford

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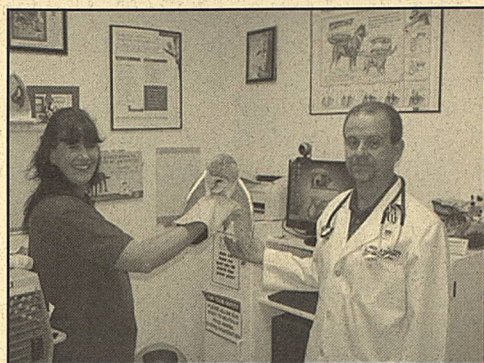
South Plains Wildlife Rehabilitation Center Inc. is located at 3308 95th Street, Lubbock, TX 79423. (95th and Indiana, East side of street).

We can be reached by phone at 806-799-2142, by email at spwrc2@yahoo.com or learn more at our website at www.spwrc.org

Cover:

The Gray Squirrel and fawn were both released back to the wild
Photos by Carol Lee

Volunteer Spotlight : Veterinarians Dr. Jeanette Lubenau and Dr. Blaine Oden



Jeanette Lubenau, DVM (left) and
Blaine Oden, DVM (right)

Dr. Jeanette Lubenau is from Alamogordo, New Mexico, where she went to undergraduate school. She then went to Colorado State University Veterinary School and graduated in 1994.

"Dr. J," as she's affectionately called, opened Above and Beyond Pet Care Hospital in 2004 and added Dr. Blaine Oden to the practice in 2005.

Dr. J. has volunteered at the Wildlife Center and loved the diverse species of wildlife we admit there. Everyone at her clinic likes to learn new things and constantly research better care, as there are many diseases and treatments that are unknown, as compared to "companion animals." She especially loves the young animals: skunks, opossums, squirrels, owls, fawns and turtles. Dr. J. has also successfully used "external fixation," an operative technique that's been used successfully to stabilize fractures on birds. With the help of volunteer Gail Barnes, some different therapies were also used on Great Horned Owl chicks with leg deformities. One of the birds with growth-plate closure problems was successfully treated with foam cushions - and ultimately released.

Dr. J. is married to Lonnie Huseman, a West Texas cattle buyer. They have a three year old son, Colton. Dr. J. and family have lots of pets including a Great Dane, horses, Longhorn cow, miniature goat and goldfish. Her hobbies are horseback riding, racquetball, swimming, music, scuba diving and traveling.

She's excited about the opening of their

large, new facility in 2010, complete with underwater treadmill, pet resort and indoor pool. Wildlife patients will be away from barking and meowing.

Theirs will be the only American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) certified hospital in Lubbock, putting them in the top 14% of veterinary hospitals in the nation.

Dr. J. says, "Wildlife has made me a better veterinarian with a greater respect for all creatures." She also said, "Wildlife taught me never to give up. If there's fight left in an animal, then you should give them the benefit of the doubt so long as the quality of life is preserved."

Dr. Blaine Oden was born in Lubbock, and graduated from Texas Tech with a B.S. in Animal Science.

He started his veterinary studies at Ross University on the island of St. Kitts in the southern Caribbean. He graduated from Texas A & M College of Veterinary Medicine, and started working with Dr. J. in 2005 as a staff veterinarian. Dr. Oden knew her, however, for fifteen years and was once her technician.

He also loves the challenges and learning involved in caring for wildlife species. He particularly likes Peregrine Falcons and Great horned Owls.

Dr. Oden also uses external fixation devices, and his results have likewise been very good.

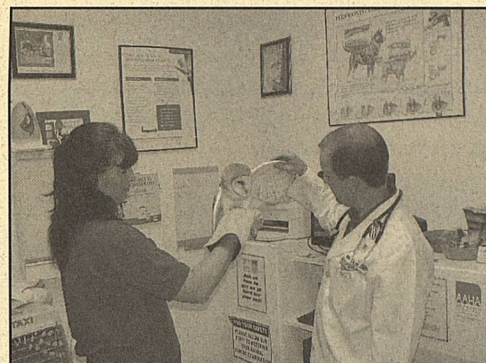
His goal is to repair upper wing fractures so fewer birds have to be euthanized with this diagnosis.

Dr. Oden is married to Christy Oden and they have a five year old son, Camryn, who started kindergarten this year.

The Odens have three dogs. "Max" is sixteen years old, "Riese" has ADHD and is a rescue dog from the animal shelter. "Stella" is a four month old Australian Shepherd in training to be a therapy dog to work with children.

Dr. Oden loves anything outdoors, and he and Camryn collect electric trains and build train layouts together.

We are all thankful for Dr. Oden and Dr. J. who help provide care for many of our wildlife casualties.
.....Ed.



"Let's have a look at this wing"



Above and Beyond's New Hospital and Resort facility
(Photos this page courtesy of Jay Reichard)

Summer Interns



Claire Randall

Claire Randall is a Texas Tech University senior majoring in Zoology. She hopes to get her Masters degree after graduation with emphasis in either zoology or biology with an emphasis on ecology. Perhaps after that she'll go on to earn her Ph.D. from another school. She's also interested in studying big cats. In the year ahead, she's going to do undergraduate research studying birds.

Andrew Brock is a senior at Texas Tech and is working one-hundred hours for three hours of credit. His advisor is Dr. Gad Perry. His major is Environmental Conservation of Natural Resources. Andrew is from Taylor, Texas, about fifteen miles northeast of Austin

"When I graduate I'll commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps." Andrew is interested in all areas concerning wildlife, but finds bird behavior the most interesting at the present time. "I particularly like the variety of raptor species and other large birds that are at the Wildlife Center. I wouldn't normally expect to see some of them in the middle of Lubbock."

Jamaya Blood is Texas Tech Senior whose major is music and minor is Natural Resource Management. She also graduates in December and plans to move to Colorado and find a job there. She has a passion for wildlife and especially enjoys working with children. She'd love to combine the two and educate young ones on important issues involving our environment.

She says, "This internship with the Wildlife Center has taught me a lot about caring for some of our Texas wildlife species, as well as great hands-on opportunities that I can use in the future."

Alana Bourgeois is a student at Texas A & M University majoring in Wildlife and Fisheries Science. She graduates in December and will move back to Lubbock and look for a job involving wildlife. If her job allows, she'd like to continue to volunteer at the Wildlife Center. She said, "I've learned a lot from doing an internship here. I had absolutely no hands-on experience before this opportunity but now I do. I think it's very valuable to me when I start looking for a job."

The two students in the photo below were at the Wildlife Center July 8th when they were banding our American Kestrels.

Their advisor is Dr. Clint Boal in the Department of Natural Resources Management at Texas Tech University.



Austin Teague, (L.)
undergraduate assistant and
Ben Skipper, (R.), Doctoral student

Thank you all for the talent and enthusiasm you brought to the Wildlife Center over the summer months.

Internships with the Wildlife Center and Texas Tech University were first implemented in 1990.

Internships are definitely a win-win situation for everyone involved.....Ed.

A new Species



Bat rehabilitator Gail Barnes admitted a Western Small-footed Myotis bat. He came in weighing 2.79 Grams and was released at 5.1 Grams.

Gail raised him on bat formula and mealworms. He was released in the Guadalupe Mountains. Dr. Robert Baker from Texas Tech identified the bat and did a DNA test prior to release.

Community Service

The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution honored Bebe McCasland of Big Spring, Texas, as the NSDAR Conservation Committee's 2009 National Winner at the organization's 118th Continental Congress in Washington, D.C.

The Nancy Anderson Chapter of DAR in Lubbock nominated Mrs. McCasland for the honor for her thirty-four years of wildlife rescue and rehabilitation efforts. Bebe is a licensed wildlife rehabilitator who works in harmony with our Center. Congratulations!

Programs and Field Trips

Field trips to the Wildlife Center are offered. We have native mammals and birds of prey that are premitted by our regulatory agencies and used in education presentations.

If you'd like to schedule a time to bring your students or group to visit, call Gail Barnes at (806) 799-2142.

A donation is requested and is based on the number of people attending. Gail will answer your questions and provide information.

Memorials

Sympathy is expressed from our staff to Jerry Dobbs on the passing of his wife, Barbara, June 20, 2009. Jerry brought Barbara to the Center on several occasions and was a devoted husband. We're sorry for the family's loss. Dobbs family members purchased several bricks in Barbara's memory.

Gail and Larry Barnes sent a Memorial gift in the name of Eddie Hancock who passed away in August. Maggie and Danny Hancock have long been Wildlife Center supporters, and Maggie is a regular volunteer. Our heartfelt sympathy to Eddie's family.

Mr. Brent L. Suther of Minneapolis, Minnesota, purchased a Memorial Brick in the name of Eddie Hancock.

Michael and Jamie McCalib made donation in Memory of Eddie Hancock.

Carol Lee made a Memorial donation in the name of Vivian Kososki, mother of Monthly Donor Carre' Avian, who passed away August 23, 2009 in Kingsford, Michigan.

Stanley, Denise and Phelan Davis purchased a brick in Memory of Hallie Carlo.

South Plains Wildlife Center Accepts Donations via eBay Giving Works

Sell Your Unwanted Items to Benefit SPWRC

The South Plains Wildlife Rehabilitation Center is now an officially registered charity with eBay Giving Works. eBay Giving Works helps non-profits by giving every day eBay sellers the ability to donate to the certified nonprofit of their choice. Anyone can select SPWRC as the recipient for a portion of their sale price of an item (minimum \$5 donation required). Any eBay seller can donate 10-100% of the final sale price. Read step by step instructions on how SPWRC can receive donations via your sale on eBay on our web site at spwrc.org

Special thanks to Board Advisor Bill Van Pelt of Washington, D.C. for setting this up.

You can also shop at igitive.com and if you designate SPWRC, Inc. we'll receive a percentage of the proceeds. We've received several checks, and appreciate the patronage of our readers. New stores are added all the time.

Commemorative Brick Walkway



The Wildlife Center designed a way for anyone to have an opportunity to leave a permanent mark on the Wildlife Center. A Memorial Brick Walkway was created - a walkway of memories composed of individual bricks inscribed with names, personal messages, or memorable quotes. This is a wonderful way to support the Center while honoring a family member, friend or pet. Bricks are \$50.00 each.

The walk is an attractive brick pathway in front of the amphitheater on the Center's grounds. Each commemorative brick along the walk is available for purchase and will be inscribed according to your wishes.

The 4"x 8" size accommodates up to three lines with a maximum of 15 characters per line. The second set of bricks will hopefully be in place by our Holiday Open House Saturday, December 19th, 2009 (11AM-2PM).

This project is ongoing until all bricks are sold. Sadler Monument Company does the inscriptions when each batch of seventy bricks is sold. They've done a great job.

Thanks to Board Member Beth Bartley for spearheading this project.

You can download the form from our web site by visiting spwrc.org and click on the link on the left, or go to: http://spwrc.org/pdf/Brick_Order_Form.pdf

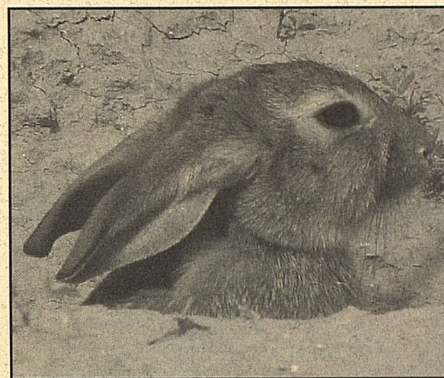
Brick Walkway contributors this quarter:

Lisa and Larry Gilliland
Rick and Terri Cohen, Ransom Canyon, TX
The Dobbs Family:
Jerry Dobbs
Judy Miles
Sammy and Gwyn Dobbs
Brent L. Suther of Minneapolis, MN
Stanley, Denise and Phelan Davis

Consider giving a gift or purchasing a brick as a Tribute to Honor or Memorialize a loved one or pet. Your donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law, and help provide food, supplies and care for the scores of wildlife orphans and casualties admitted in 2009.

Camera-Ready

Brandon Grigg of the Smyer (Texas) Volunteer Fire Department is almost always ready to take wildlife pictures. Here are two he sent recently: top is a Jackrabbit in a burrow; below is a rather defiant-looking Burrowing Owl.



Chimney Swifts,

What the sky is for

On Sunday evening August 2nd, eleven fully feathered, healthy Chimney Swifts were released to the wild. The Center was inundated with swifts this summer, often because people don't cap their chimneys, and find the birds "annoying" with their chattering by the time they're a few weeks old, but not yet ready for release.

These unique birds are protected by state and federal laws, and it's illegal for individuals to remove the birds or their offspring— or to pay someone like chimney sweeps to remove the birds from their chimney.

Very beneficial, swifts feed on the wing and scoop up hundreds of flying insects in the course of a day.

Chimney Swifts are very challenging for wildlife rehabilitators because these birds never self-feed in captivity. Their specialized, insect-rich diet is expensive and time-consuming to make and must be made fresh every 3 days.

The smallest birds are kept in a temperature controlled incubator and they're fed about every half - hour during daylight hours. Healthy youngsters chatter ever- more loudly as meal-time approaches.



Like lightning, eight Chimney Swifts took wing immediately
Here, three are left looking around and in short order, they took off too



Only a speck in moments

When we have a dozen or more swifts and they're nearly ready for flight in our outdoor aviary, each bird must be caught one-by-one and force fed. Conversely, other birds like BlueJays, come to you willingly for handouts.

Chimney Swift quarters are special, too — two rooms in our outdoor aviary are specially outfitted for swifts and swallows.* There's lightweight screen over the interior out-facing windows, and a deep, artificial "chimney" lined with burlap or other material that swifts can cling to. Their small, weak feet and tiny claws aren't designed for perching on branches, but act like Velcro to cling to surfaces like the inside of chimneys.

On the evening of release, volunteers brought the birds to my home, securely covered and inside a basket. We walked to a nearby open area, set the basket down and removed the clothespins. Within moments, their tiny eyes widened as they saw their destiny above them, and in short order one by one each took off and headed skyward. One bird hesitated momentarily, but rather than risk being returned for another round in the aviary, it too, took off for life on its own. All eleven were good, strong fliers, and the light breeze helped them to get the hang of soaring very quickly. We watched the birds for twenty minutes as the agile acrobats zoomed and swooped high and low, enjoying to the fullest their new found

freedom, extending into the vast sky above.

Special thanks to Manager Katie Stafford and helpers Dorothy Tinkler and Sabrina Robbins for their combined efforts to raise and release these beautiful birds

* Two Eagle Scout projects contributed to the successful rearing and release of our swifts and swallows. Wade Goolsby constructed the artificial chimney in spring, 2004, and Andrew Ritchie screened the two aviary rooms in April, 2006.

Did you know?

Chimney Swifts spend the winter in the Amazon Basin of South America, then travel to parts of the United States in spring to breed and raise a family.

Each fall Chimney Swifts congregate in large groups as they prepare for their migration back to South America.

Visit www.chimneyswifts.org website for more information.

The letter that follows is written to area chimney sweep companies in an effort to educate them about our summer visitors.

It's used with permission from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Special Agent Russell Carter.

August 3, 2009

Dear Company Representative:

Recently the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Law Enforcement has become aware of an ongoing problem involving chimney swifts in the local area. According to several local bird rehabilitators, many baby chimney swifts have been turned over to them as "abandoned" birds. The rehabilitators take in the chimney swifts and attempt to provide

the Laws, and You

for the birds until they have grown and developed enough to be re-released, often at a great expense of time, effort and money to the rehabilitators.

In a proactive effort to provide education and outreach, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service would like to remind all Chimney Sweep Companies in the Lubbock area that it is illegal to remove active nests from chimneys. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), 16 USC 703 states in part, that it is unlawful to pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill or attempt to take, capture or kill any migratory bird, any part, nest or egg of any such bird included in the terms of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. A list of protected birds can be found in 50 CFR 10.13, and does include the chimney swift, *Chaetura pelagica*. Violation of the MBTA could result in punishment of up to \$15,000.00 and/or six months in federal prison per violation.

As a service to individuals who may call your respective companies asking to have chimney swifts or any other birds and/or bird nest removed from their chimneys, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service recommends nest removal during non-nesting periods. Birds on the Texas South Plains typically begin building their nest during early spring (mid March) and the birds have generally left the nest by the first of September. The Service would strongly encourage your business not to remove any nest, or install chimney caps on those chimneys that contain an active nest. Cleaning and inactive nest removal can then begin and continue from September 1st through March 30th of every year.

If you have any questions regarding this notification, please contact me at 806/472-7273. Additional information regarding the chimney swift and/or the MBTA can be found on the following websites.

<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/>

wild/birding/pif/
chimney_swift/
<http://www.chimneyswifts.org/>
[http://www.ncsg.org/
ForthTrade/ChimneySwifts/
tabid/79/Default.aspx](http://www.ncsg.org/ForthTrade/ChimneySwifts/tabid/79/Default.aspx)
<http://www.fws.gov/le/>

Sincerely,
Russell Carter,
Special Agent

Ornate Box Turtles in West Texas: Urban Survivors

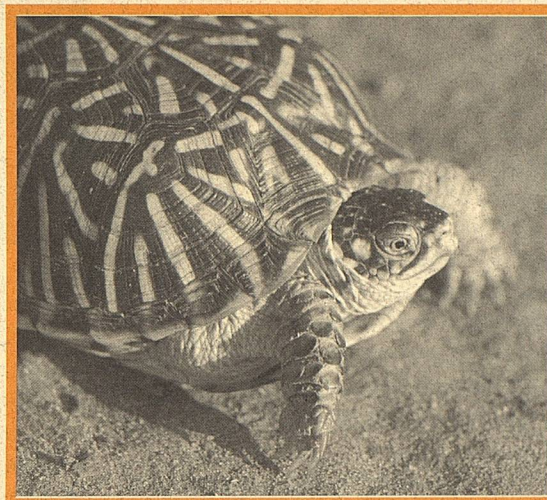
by Alan Sosa, Dr. Gad Perry,
and Maggie Hancock, SPWRC

Once considered common in West Texas, the Ornate Box Turtle is declining across its entire range. Habitat destruction, collection, and human-induced mortality are the main factors implicated in the decline. Many West Texans have helped turtles across the road or collected turtles for their yards. Although helping turtles across the road is a well-intentioned act, a new state law makes it illegal to "hunt" wildlife from roads (including assisting, photographing, and collecting).

If you see a box turtle on the road, try not to hit it. If you feel you must help it across the road, make sure it is heading in the same direction it was going.

Box turtles found in nature should be left in nature — other species of turtles and tortoises make much better pets. Just seeing a box turtle in its natural habitat should be considered a lucky find, as sightings are becoming less and less frequent.

In addition to living in natural areas outside of town, box turtles also free-range throughout neighborhoods in Lubbock and generally go unnoticed. If you find a box turtle on your property in town, chances are it has been there for quite some time.



As a graduate student in the department of Natural Resources Management at TTU, I studied such free-ranging urban turtles and found they do quite well without any assistance from humans. Hence, if found there is no need to do anything but enjoy the visit from a declining species. Many people, however, bring these uninjured box turtles to SPWRC.

Another aspect of my research involves relocating box turtles admitted to SPWRC. Most box turtles brought to Wildlife Center aren't injured and were discovered in backyards, alleys, or walking down the street. We found that relocated turtles don't do well because many leave the release site (a common result with relocated reptiles). Our advice is simple: leave box turtles alone unless they're injured.

For those who already have box turtles on their property, keeping them healthy requires special care. The worst place for a box turtle is inside in an aquarium or in a pet store. There are countless resources available for those who already have box turtles and need more information, including numerous books and Internet sites.

If you already have box turtles, please take responsibility and provide them with a suitable climate, diet, and substrate.

NEWS and NOTES

- Thanks to the *Lubbock Avalanche - Journal* and columnist Ray Westbrook for doing a feature story the eight deer fawns that were admitted over the summer months.

The story appeared on the front page July 30th, along with a nice photo of our fawn caregiver, Barry Johnson. A second photo appeared on page 6.

Barry provides most of their care, coming back to the Wildlife Center four or more times daily to provide bottles of formula, fresh food and water. He'll release them on his private ranch when they're ready to live life on their own. Even post-release, Barry provides back-up feeding and care as the animals make their way toward complete independence.

- Theodore Pisarski of Lubbock asked his friends and family to make donations to the Wildlife Center in Honor of his June birthday when he turned nine years old. We are very appreciative of his generosity! Theodore is a student at Christ the King school in Lubbock.

- Thank you to Ricky Eade of Ricky Eade Plumbing in Lubbock for the donation of a vehicle. Ricky donated much of his plumbing expertise to renovate our new baby bird building, which has now had a full season of use during our "baby bird" months this year. Thank you, Ricky!

- Kathleen Mcgaughey is new a graduate student at Texas Tech and will be working with us as she studies squirrels and what happens to them post-release.

She's from Springfield, Missouri, and did her undergrad work at St. Louis University. We have lots of admission statistics on Eastern Gray Squirrels from years' past that she'll be able to look over as she zeroes in on her research project.

- Phelan Davis was our "Junior Volunteer of the Year" this summer, returning for his second year of service at the Wildlife Center. Jay made him a nice Certificate of Appreciation with a great photo of "Percy" the pelican. Thanks for your service, Phelan!...Ed



July "Welcome" Picnic

On Sunday, July 26, old and new friends gathered for a "Welcome, Jay" pot luck picnic lunch in our outdoor amphitheater.

Jay already knew several of our longtime volunteers, and was eager to meet many new ones.

Katie Stafford is our Program Manager and oversees animal care and volunteers. Jay will be tasked with administrative and fundraising duties, along with a number of other things. (Jay is seated on the first row, far left in the photo above).

New Magnetic Signs



Volunteers Danny and Maggie Hancock asked Jay to work up a graphic that could be turned into magnetic signs for use on a vehicle when volunteers go on wildlife res-

cues or releases.

After several exchanges of ideas and which animals should go on the finished product, they decided on the species in the photo above, in addition to our Mockingbird logo. The Hancocks also paid for the signs, and their donation for that project is sincerely appreciated!

"In all things of nature there is something of the marvelous.".....Aristotle

Adoption

Leslie Self of Lubbock adopted "Festus" our Turkey Vulture, and "Toenails" our Red-tailed Hawk

Please tell us what you think!

We've explored an issue at past Board Meetings and want our readers' opinions. Paper, printing and postage costs have skyrocketed over the years. We can create and send out an electronic version of *The Mockingbird Chronicles* if that's what an individual wants, or we can continue with a paper copy. Many people tell us they like to hold and look at a newsletter, newspaper or other document as opposed to reading it online.

Others prefer a "green" approach to save paper. The same subscription rates for a pdf (electronic) copy would apply, but no hard copy would be delivered to your mailbox. Please e-mail me at spwrc@suddenlink.net and I'll keep a tally of votes and opinions.



Thanks to Kevin Hutchins, Transition Counselor for the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) - Division of Blind Services in Lubbock. Kevin supervises a youth camp (Camp Villa held at Caprock Canyon State Park and Ceta Glen). This year his group selected SPWRC for their project. Kevin helped campers build four owl nesting boxes and make four 4-foot perches for the owls, and they were then delivered to the Wildlife Center. Thanks for a great project! Photo above of Kevin and Gail Barnes by Rob Lee.

Education

Fourteen education programs were presented since the first week in June, thanks to volunteer Gail Barnes. Three programs during the last three weeks June were to Ventura Place Retirement Center; Abernathy (TX) Public Library and Sugar and Spice Day Care.

In July, a program was given to Grand Court Assisted Living residents; two programs at the Patterson Library in Lubbock; three programs in Nazareth, TX; one presentation during "Hart Days" in Hart, Texas; one program for Lubbock's Maxey Community Center and one private tour for an individual.

On August 9th, two programs were given to the Guadalupe-Parkway Neighborhood Centers.

A big thank you to Gail and her crew of other volunteers who help transport our education animals to teach area residents about native wildlife and its conservation.

Species Profile: Swainson's Hawk

The Swainson's Hawk, (*Buteo swainsoni*) is a neo-tropical migrant. Common, it's a large but slender buteo of the grassland region of the western U.S. and Canada. A buteo is a hawk species of the genus *Buteo* with broad, rounded wings and a relatively short tail. Buteos soar during flight. The Swainson's hawk is smaller in size than a Red-tailed Hawk but has a longer wingspan.

Named for British naturalist William Swainson, an adult Swainson's has dark brown

plumage with a brown breast and pale belly. It also has a prominent white patch on its throat. When perched, its wings are pointed slightly and are longer than its tail.

This species has been reported as early as April 3rd when it returns to the Texas South Plains during spring migration. Immediately they claim their previous year's nest if it's still intact, and if not they build a new one. The nest is usually placed in the crotch of a deciduous tree at a height of 6 - 50 feet. It's constructed of sticks, twigs and lined with bark. New, leafy twigs are added intermittently. The nest takes up to two weeks to build.

An average clutch size is 2-4 pale-greenish eggs and they're laid in May and incubated by both sexes for 28-34 days. Parents feed their young rodents, rabbits, and reptiles. Youngsters are capable of flight when 4-5 weeks old. Pairs have one brood per season.

After rearing their families, Swainson's Hawks leave our area again around the end of September or early October.

Most Swainson's Hawks winter in the pampas region of Argentina, although some winter in other South American countries, southern Mexico, California, and Florida.

In Argentina, they feed almost entirely on grasshoppers during their stay. They also consume butterflies, dragonflies, moths and other insects in great numbers, and are very beneficial to the agricultural community. During our summer, they may also feed on small rodents.

These hawks gather in enormous numbers as they pass through Mexico and Central America, making one of the longest migration flights of any North American raptor. They travel the entire 6000-7000 mile one-way journey that may take two or three months. They're able to do this by passively using solar energy, gliding from one rising air thermal to the next. This keeps their energy demands low, and they've stored body fat over the summer.

Unfortunately, Swainson's Hawks are in decline because of habitat loss or destruction, a reduction of its main prey species, and pesticide use.

Although the use of DDT was banned in the U.S., the

Swainson's hawks still encounter pesticide use when they migrate to South America. Known also as a "Grasshopper Hawk," it consumes an average of a hundred grasshoppers a day during summer. If the insects are tainted with pesticide, the hawks in turn ingest a high amount of toxin, which causes thinning of eggshells. Almost six thousand Swainson's hawks died on the Pampas (the flat, agricultural heartland) in Argentina between 1995-1996 due primarily to exposure to the organophosphorus insecticide, monocrotophos, used by farmers to control grasshopper infestations.

International groups responded to the die-off very quickly, and researchers from Argentina and the U.S. were joined by academic, government, non-government and chemical industry representatives from several countries in an international effort to avert recurrence of these deaths. These actions greatly decreased monocrotophos use on the Pampas.

Thank you for services and supplies

Thanks to Linda and Jimmie McDowell for their help with our bulk mailings, and labeling of our quarterly newsletter.

Thanks to William Van Pelt of Washington, D.C. for supplies.

Thank you to Bebe and Art McCasland of Big Spring, Texas, who donated many pounds of beef heart.

Thanks to Covenant Hospital School of Nursing for the donated medical supplies.

Monica Sheehan of Lorenzo, TX, donated linens and baby blankets

Denine and Lea Criswell donated hand towels and other supplies.

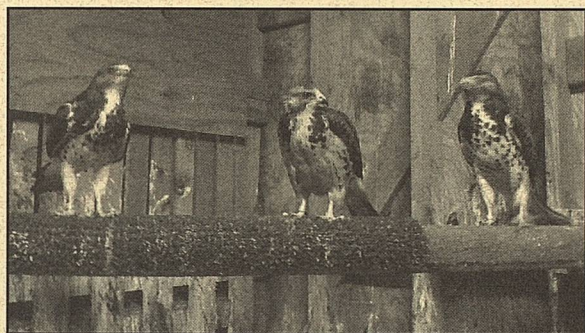
Angie Gibler left supplies in our drop-off building.

An anonymous donor brought raptor food that we appreciate!

Please note:

If your donation arrived after August 25th, it will be acknowledged in our December/Holiday quarterly.

Our December issue will go to the printer the first week in December so it will be out by Christmas. If you'd like to give a year-end donation, please have it to us by December 3rd, 2009, for inclusion in the year-end issue.



Volunteers released these three Swainson's Hawks August 15th (Photo taken by Daniel Andrews at the Wildlife Center prior to release)

Acknowledgements

Thanks to everyone who helps support our efforts. We appreciate every penny, and with donor contributions, we can continue to help injured, displaced, ill and orphaned wildlife.

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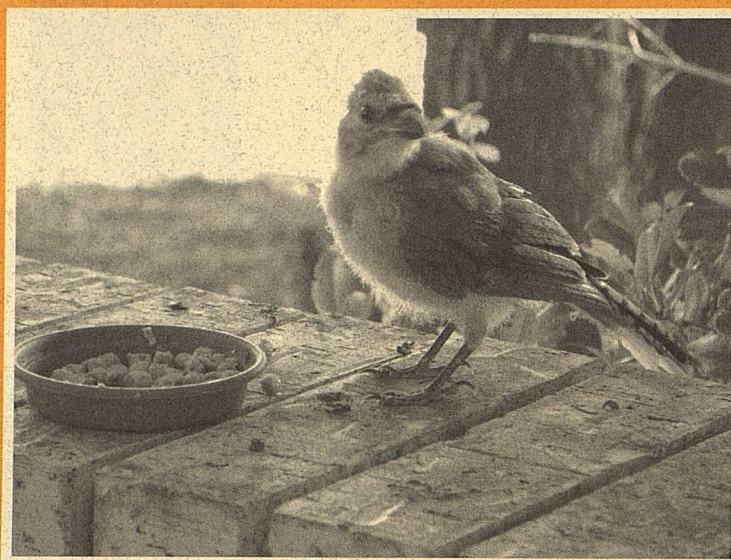
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Enchanted Moments



I raised two young Blue Jays this summer and released them August 23rd. It was gratifying to watch them fly short distances from tree to tree, explore their surroundings and stop to take a bath in the birdbath. I offered handouts frequently throughout Day One until they found a high limb to roost on to spend their first night. By mid-week they weren't staying as close to the house nor coming back for food as often. The two always hang around together.

Captive-raised youngsters predictably stay close by for the first few days and even weeks, needing repeated reassurance that back-up feedings will be provided. Yes, we get "attached" but release is the desired outcome of wildlife rehabilitation, and what many "enchanted moments" are all about. These wonderful experiences provide the fuel that keep us all going, with our dedication and commitment to wildlife as strong as ever.

One of Carol's two Blue Jays recently released, and now both are free



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