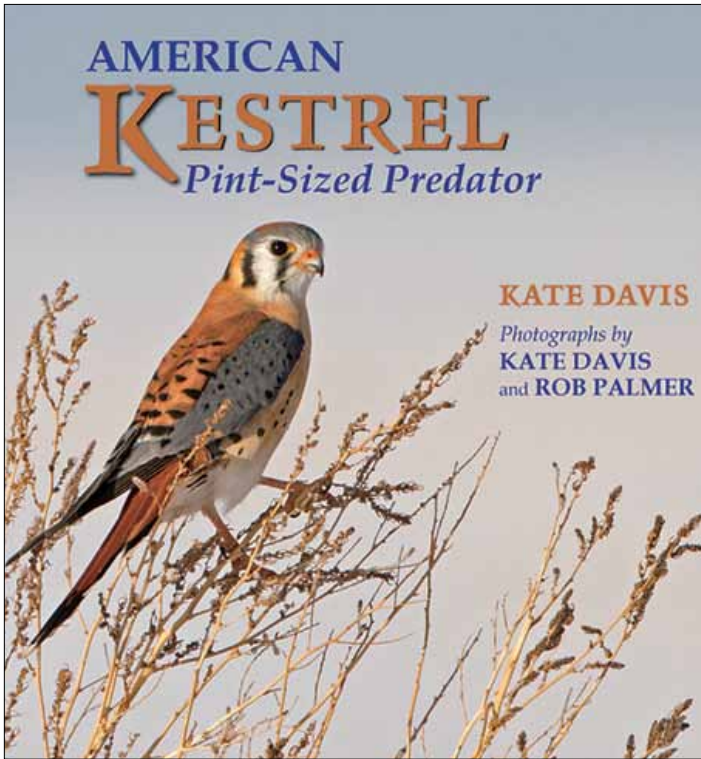


**Raptors of the Rockies**  
 P.O. BOX 250, FLORENCE, MT 59833  
*Celebrating 27 Years of Education Programs*

# Raptor Round-Up

[www.raptorsoftherockies.org](http://www.raptorsoftherockies.org)  
 See a color version of the newsletter  
[www.raptorsoftherockies.com](http://www.raptorsoftherockies.com)  
 Photography and Book web site

**NUMBER 46, NOV. 2014**



Rob Palmer photo ©

Just in time for the holidays! Our new kestrel volume is here and always love to “hawk” new books. This is my fifth, and third with photographer pal Rob Palmer, whose portrait graces the cover. We have six chapters, including one from The American Kestrel Partnership at The Peregrine Fund, plus directions for building and installing nest boxes. With 100 photos, David Allen Sibley, Sibley Guides had this to say:

“Incredible photography is the centerpiece of this book and it will immediately grab your attention: alternately awe-inspiring, intimate, humorous, surprising, and familiar. It is like flipping through the pages of the Kestrel family photo album, with text that complements the photographs, telling the full story behind each moment. Kestrels are overflowing with charisma, and Kate Davis and Rob Palmer have managed to capture that elusive charm in this fitting tribute to a remarkable little falcon.”



## Eagles Back At It

The highlight of the day quite often has been the evening walk to the beach behind the house to visit the Bald Eagles. This was the third year they nested and this summer just one fledgling. I saw his first big flight on July 1st, a pretty good landing in a snag, then 20 minutes later he crashed into a Ponderosa Pine. This photo of the male hauling grass to the nest was taken in April, the chick half grown. It's the cover piece for the Bitterroot Audubon 2015 Calendar.



Kate Davis photos ©

Some evenings I'd stand in the sand and nothing, not a photo for two hours, and other times I would be running to set up the tripod. The nest tree and a few near-by snags were popular hang-outs for all kinds of birds. Ospreys also kept me on my toes, battles between the species. The eagles were always up for a fish theft, and Ospreys got their revenge at the end of the summer, eagles seeking refuge in the thick foliage, cowards.

Photographs of this family for 2014 number about 2000 images. I have been heavily into the delete mode after 4000 photos of the eagle nest three years ago for the book! This is a photogenic pair, always somewhere around the nest. The youngster perched on our eagle enclosure every morning all summer hoping for a hand out. Sorry squire, find your own food.



When the floodwaters fill the slough and we pull out the bridge each spring, the evening walk to the river is put on hold. Instead, this year I took up “shooting” swallows, Cliff Swallows nesting on our garage eaves. It is definitely luck, getting these birds frozen in flight and thousands of shots of nice blue sky and clouds. Only a few of the nests stayed in place, sadly. Most baked in the sun and fell off the building. It's the east and west aspect, wrong directions. I even mixed some potting clay into their mud at the slough hoping that would help (!) Our only year of Cliff Swallows nesting in the yard and quite the flying circus.

## MISSION STATEMENT

*Raptors of the Rockies* is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) raptor education project located in Western Montana. Active since 1988, our mission is:

- \* To educate schools and the public through the use of live birds - the eagles, hawks, falcons and owls used in raptor education and wildlife art programs;
- \* To provide a lifetime of quality care to permanently disabled birds of prey and falconry birds;
- \* To instill a sense of respect and admiration for these skilled hunters and to promote wildlife conservation and habitat preservation for our wild bird populations.

## Raptor Ranch Through the Seasons

I sure enjoy the change of seasons around here, and it can be pretty dramatic at times, fall turning into winter in an hour or two. The hoses were wound up, eagle building shade cloth taken down, and their Mr. Turtle swimming pool stashed in the shed. For the most part, the birds are outside all year and require modifications to their enclosures. The Harris's Hawk and Aplomado have heated perches and 100 watt red bulb lamps, but everyone else does just fine if they stay out of the frigid winter winds. I found that clear shower curtains can be cut up and stapled to the windows. They allow the sun in and are durable as can be. I used to take the potted bushes out of some buildings to plant them, but found that they survive over the winter and provide shade and a cheery atmosphere the following year. With our first blast of Arctic weather this week, we've had four birds in the house, something you just get used to. I did take the bell off the Peregrine, however, and learned a lesson years ago about head scratching in the middle of the night. Ringing sounds in the dark.



## Corpus Christi Conference a Huge Success



I've had a second job the last few years (or third or fourth, and as a volunteer) - that of the Conference Chair for the Raptor Research Foundation. My first one "from scratch" was Corpus Christi, Texas in September. I had traveled to South Padre Island to trap and band migrating Peregrines in 2010 and vowed to return to the Texas coast. Corpus was the perfect location, scenic, friendly locals, and the site of the highest fall hawk migration numbers in North America at Hazel Bazemore Park (95% of the Broad-winged Hawks in N.A.) We chose the days to coincide with their annual Celebration of Flight, and were not disappointed.



Over 200 attendees enjoyed four days of workshops, papers, posters, and the meeting of the minds - Raptor Capital of the World in Texas. Our keynotes Grainger Hunt and Montana Audubon's Steve Hoffman were an ideal opening and finale to the conference, and symposia included Coastal Raptors, American Kestrels, and Raptors and Energy Development. A highlight for me was a tour of the Serpentarium (yes, poisonous snakes) and a visit to the Kleberg Institute with co-host Tom Langschied. He also conducted a tour of the King Ranch, and co-host Joseph Dane of HawkWatch International showed off Bazemore Park. We had our first ever photography competition with nearly 100 entries in categories flight, portrait, behavior, raptors and humans, and humor. Rob Palmer, Nick Dunlop and I judged, and we vowed to do it again. The winner- a juvenile Rough-leg at the nest, photo by Erik Hedlin in the Rankin Inlet, Canada. Tough choice, great image and on our Blog, Oct. 7th. See you in Sacramento 2015!



Top: A Crested Caracara at the King Ranch, an odd member of the falcon family, the long-legged scavenger.

Below: Harris's Hawk, and the first one I have seen in the wild, unlike our hawk Chesty in the yard every day.

Right: A Turkey Vulture shares the skies above Hazel Bazemore Park with over 1000 migrating Wood Storks, 2500 total for the day followed by 21,000 Broad-winged Hawks + 57,386 BW the next day!





The male Peregrine at the cliff on May 1st, the Nest of Mystery for the last few years. Adults show up (this year a young female with many brown feathers) and they act like they are breeding then disappear. We hope no one is interfering, but a popular recreation site and a possibility. Fingers crossed for 2015.

# Montana Peregrine Watch 2014<sup>3</sup>

The results are in from the Montana Peregrine Institute:

104 territories total were checked by Jay Sumner and 80 volunteers. Of the ones used by falcons last year, 85 % were again occupied this year. The big news is they found 12 new territories, a dozen new cliff nests, wow! Every three years, MPI conducts a very thorough formal survey with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and 2015 is the last one. The end of an era and a very successful recovery of a species that was once completely absent from most of the continent, including Montana. With the banning of the pesticide DDT in 1972 and the release of 7000 captive bred Peregrines, these birds have made a full recovery, listed and delisted in just thirty years time! Currently we have more than 120 breeding pairs of Peregrines (that we know of) so start looking in April. Plus know that Jay and some hearty volunteers will be out searching for more after the survey years are over.

[peregrine@blackfoot.net](mailto:peregrine@blackfoot.net)  
<http://www.montanaperegrine.org>

## NEW T-SHIRTS!



Sonora shirts,  
 5 color silk screen  
 All cotton and adult sizes.  
 \$15



Jay's young Peregrine Falcon  
 in her first stoop on a wild  
 rooster pheasant.



## Facebook Favorites

Social media can be a bit scary, but I've been hearing the line from folks around town, "I follow you on Facebook" and commenting on photos I've posted. *Friend* is now a verb, and *like* has taken on a new meaning. These three images have been favorites, and the young Western Screech-Owls above were west of Missoula in June, hanging tight with both parents always near-by. The Osprey is another from Flathead Lake. I'm always amazed at how many people are checking out FB at 11:30 at night....well, some of my posts have been that late...HA!

[www.facebook.com/kate.davis.330](http://www.facebook.com/kate.davis.330)



## ✦ Upcoming Public Raptor Programs:

**Saturday, Dec. 6** **Fact and Fiction Bookstore, Missoula:** Join us Saturday afternoon, 2:30-4:00 p.m., at Fact and Fiction our favorite bookstore, 220 N. Higgins Ave. New books! American Kestrel: Pint-sized Predator, and meet Wes, the little teaching team falcon.

**Monday, Dec. 8** **Five Valleys Audubon:** The monthly meeting, 7:30 p.m. at the Gallagher Business Building, U of M, free and open to anyone. A big slide show, live birds including Sonora the Aplomado Falcon, and books on hand for the signing.

April 8, 2015 - Spokane, WA Audubon \* May 14-16, 2015 - HawkWatch International, Salt Lake City, UT

# Raptor Blogs

Several entries each week,  
posted on our web site.

Add this as a bookmark on your tool bar:  
[raptorsoftherockies.blogspot.com](http://raptorsoftherockies.blogspot.com)

FRIDAY, MARCH 28, 2014

## Pileated On the Pole

This woodpecker was just on the phone pole in the driveway, right where the Harris's Hawk always perches and pigeons line up on the wire. Female Pileated Woodpeckers have less red on the head, and she was hammering on the pole, not for insects but to proclaim, "This is my yard!" When I was a kid we had these things on every house called TV antennas, and woodpeckers learned that they were perfect resonators. It was a common sound back then, that metallic tapping to mark nesting territories. Just like sonic booms and Passenger Pigeons.



WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 2014

## Coeur d'Alene Audubon ROCKS!

Thanks George and Katie Saylor for the invite to Idaho and a program in the Lutheran Church in Coeur d'Alene, a quick 3.25 hour drive with jazz on the stereo and birds in the car. We packed the bird devotees in there, and I counted 150 plus with kids in the isles and latecomers watching through windows from the front lobby. That's Sibley on her perch in the center of the photo with a little halo around her... After a PowerPoint, everyone met Alisa the perfect Red-tail followed by Owen the owl who started calling for his first time in front of an audience. I motioned to the stained glass as his inspiration for the operatic debut. Then Sibley showed off, and finally Jillian the Great Horned Owl inspired everyone to join in for a group HOOT.



SUNDAY, JULY 27, 2014

## Now I've Seen Everything

Throwing sticks for the dogs and this floated by this evening. A stock tank full of merry-makers navigating the Bitterroot River. That's a big galvanized tub for watering livestock. Stock tank...



SATURDAY, JUNE 21, 2014

## The Whole MAM Gang

The final products after a week of rigorous research and construction... HA! Here are the kids in front of the giant metal Woolly Rhinoceros by Bill Ohrmann at the Missoula Art Museum. You can see several Golden Eagles, Saw-whet-Owls, a Harris's Hawk, Red-tail, American Kestrel, and Rocky Mountain subspecies male Peregrine Falcon. Plus we had our first mounted Bald Eagle head and extinct Archaeopteryx. What a fun group, and I promised surprise inspections over the next few years to make sure they still had their paper mache sculptures in their bed rooms at home.



FRIDAY, AUGUST 1, 2014

## Veriscope Swoops In

Filmmakers from Boston yesterday and the project: the Evolution of Flight with host, paleontologist from the University of Texas at Austin, Julia Clarke. We



were seeking shade in 95 degrees, and cameraman Kris "made some" with all of the gear he had on hand. Sibley the Peregrine was on her best behavior, mostly, and seemed to feel comfortable perched on Julia's glove. Then close-ups of a few other raptors, and Chesty flying all over the place. Whew, a nerve-wracking several months hoping everything would go without a hitch. The film will be played in high school science classrooms across the country, cool.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2014

## Amazing!

The most incredible behavior last night at the river! I took a couple photos of the male doing nothing remarkable and right after he flew I noticed the moon through the trees. The young eagle was loudly begging when an Osprey flew by, caught a big squirming fish, and out of nowhere, both adults chased him upstream. He dropped the fish next to me, adult eagle tried to retrieve it but is escaped, then all three eagles chased the Osprey for a short distance then came back and perched. The Osprey flew back in and took some pot shots at the adults perched in the foliage. Of course all this happened after the sun went behind the Bitterroots, but I would have missed it anyway - it was too close to photograph with a 500 mm! Plus I was shaking too hard...



# Flathead Lake Fishermen

Kate Davis photos ©



An Osprey pair nests right off the deck, and is familiar with Barry's whistle and occasional hand-out.

I spent just 24 hours at my friend Barry Gordon's cabin on Flathead Lake in August and took over 700 photographs! Ah, digital. Ospreys everywhere and one particularly tame Bald Eagle fledgling. Barry says that in the heat of the late summer, fish tend to hang out in the colder water on the bottom of the lake, less accessible to Bald Eagles. Ospreys completely submerge, diving deeper and are the subject of thefts from their larger shore mates. We witnessed quite a bit of aggression between the two, eagles sometimes hiding in the limbs of trees like they do in my back yard. I met Barry back in the early days of ROTR, and he was my photography guru, famous for his Polar Bear shots taken at Churchill, Manitoba with bear expert Chuck Jonkel. What a slice of heaven, Barry's cabin on the shore built by Clancy Gordon in 1963. Dad used to have Barry swim to the dock on mainland every summer, over two miles. What a feat... Either that or you can't use the boat, Barry.



My dear friend and art mentor Bill Ohrmann passed away on Nov. 18th leaving this earth and moving on to his world. Nearly 96 years of age, he had more gusto and passion in his long life than anyone can begin to imagine. As son John says, "Keep his visions in your hearts." We all love you, Bill.



Western Screech-Owl adult

## Our New Friend at Boise State

A young lady named Tempe Regan approached me at the Raptor Conference in Texas and told me this story: "You came to my school in Superior, Montana when I was 9 years old. I remember you standing there with a bird on your arm and being in awe and thinking I want to do that!" She's now working on her Master's degree in Raptor Biology at Boise State studying Barn Owls! My records show:

*Superior Elementary, Feb. 21, 1996.  
Mr. Woodford, 230 students k-6,  
two one-hour programs  
Max the Golden Eagle, Red-tail,  
Cooper's Hawk, Western Screech-Owl  
and Great Horned. (and Tempe)*



# Pint-Sized Predator



Great book title and wish I could take credit for thinking of it. I selected the phrase "Best and Brightest" but the staff at Mountain Press Publishing Company said they could think of a better one. They had a brainstorming session and *voila!* Someone came up with it, uncertain who, but Rich Van Buskirk of Portland, Oregon added this beer slide to his PowerPoint at the Raptor Conference, a big hit.



What's that falcon eating? I took these photos in May, a kestrel across the river at dark. Blowing them up on the computer shows it's a lizard! Dr. Kerry Foresman who ID's prey items for us all the time, said "Northern Alligator Lizard (*Elgaria coerulea*). Pretty neat!" She'd eaten the front half and that's the tail and back legs. New for my lizard life-list. Oh, I guess this doesn't count.

# Thank-You Chutney Foundation!

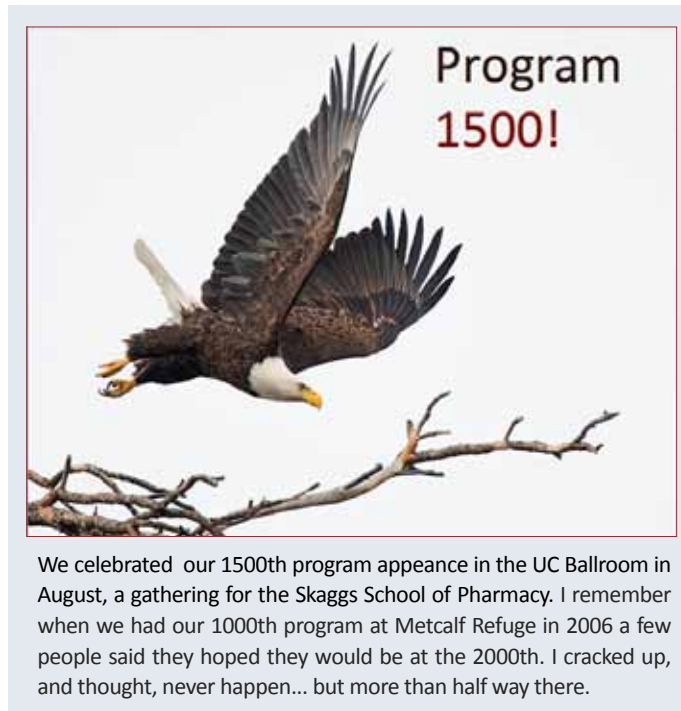
Back in the late '90's I invited board members of the Chutney Foundation to attend a program at Bonner Elementary School and see the birds in action. Nigel (Mansel) the eagle and Mika (Hawkinen) the harrier were in attendance, named for Formula 1 drivers. A couple from Chutney asked me afterward if I ever name birds for Indy Race League drivers. "Robbie Buhl is our son," said Larry and Fay Buhl. "Want tickets to the Indy 500?" What?! Cool! Robbie won two world championships and came over with all the Buhl's in 2004. Here is a photo Robbie with Sibley:

The caption in the newsletter was "Who is faster?" It's a tie and 240-ish miles an hour, Robbie in an Indy car, Sib on her own.

The Chutney Foundation has been our longest and most generous sponsor over many years. The foundation has come to a close and we so much appreciate your faith in ROTR. Thanks Beth, Tom and Jim, plus past members William, Jack and Land. Our condolences to Fay for the passing of Larry. We are so sorry. Some day I'll make the Indy 500.



F1 Fans - We also had a Kimi (Raikkonen)- Prairie Falcon, Timo (Glock) - Red-tail, Keke (Rosberg) - cat



We celebrated our 1500th program appearance in the UC Ballroom in August, a gathering for the Skaggs School of Pharmacy. I remember when we had our 1000th program at Metcalf Refuge in 2006 a few people said they hoped they would be at the 2000th. I cracked up, and thought, never happen... but more than half way there.

# Lemon Aid



Here's one to make you smile and this came in the mail. The note says, "I got 20 dollars for you" from her stand Lemonade for Wildlife. I think Cidney Tawney is about 4 years old, perhaps our youngest Raptor Backer ever, daughter of Land. The Tawney's are a family of conservationists and sportsmen that treasure and work to protect our natural world. Young Cidney has a legacy of activists and a life enjoying the out-of-doors. Like she says at the end, "By!" and best wishes, young philanthropist!

# Raptors in Rafters - Headlines in Lake County Leader



What a program - 700 kids k-4 from two cool schools in Polson on Flathead Lake, Linderman and Cherry Valley. Our friend Luan Atkinson hired us for an appearance at Stevensville Elementary 20-something years ago, then we had an appearance 10 years ago for a combination of both schools at Linderman. Here they are and my first ever program with a bucket and mop at the ready, next to the tables. Excellent audience and the Junior Zoologists were probably "hooting like owls" all weekend, so sorry parents. Linderman mascots are the Purple Pirates, a very popular color this day, and it felt like a Prince concert, sort of.

# Adopt a Raptor, Score a Book for the Holidays

Your generosity helps us with:  
EVERYTHING!

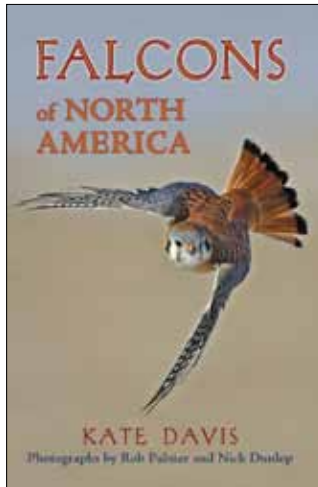
Daily Care, 365 days a year  
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and 3 Newsletters a year!

*Suggested adoption rates, and receive a matted photo of your bird and tax-deduction receipt, plus be listed on our web site and next newsletter. Thanks adoptive parents for your support!*

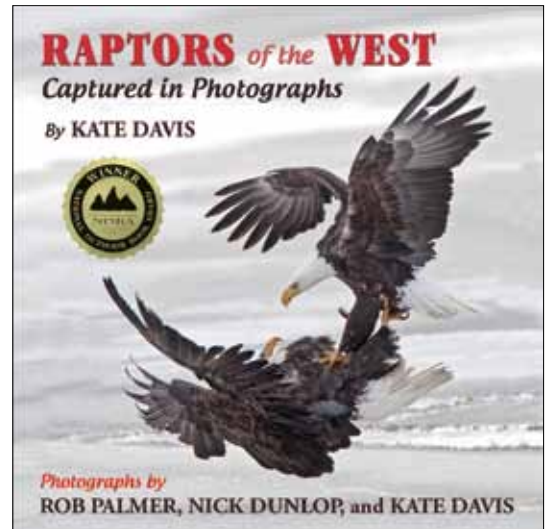
*A portion of all book proceeds goes back to help fund our program*

## Teaching Team:

Golden Eagles	Max ~ \$ 1000
	Nigel ~ \$ 500
Bald Eagle	Sonny ~ \$300
Rough-legged Hawk	Otto ~ \$ 100
Swainson's Hawk	Evita ~ \$ 150
Red-tailed Hawk	Alisa ~ \$ 200
Harris's Hawk	Chesty ~ \$ 150
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Margo ~ \$ 100
American Kestrel	JayDub ~ \$ 75
American Kestrel	Ella ~ \$ 50
American Kestrel	Wes ~ \$ 50
Peregrine Falcon	Sibley ~ \$ 400
Gyr/Peregrine hybrid	Ansel ~ \$ 150
Aplomado Falcon	Sonora ~ \$ 200



Pages: 240 Price: \$22  
Photos/illustrations 230



WINNER! National Outdoor Book Award  
WINNER! Montana Book of the Year Award

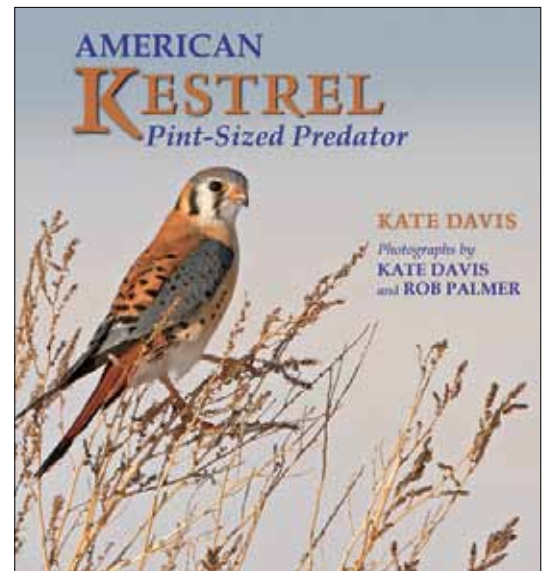
Pages: 250 Price: \$30/\$35 shipping  
Photographs: 430



Northern Pygmy-Owl	iPod ~ \$ 50
N. Saw-whet Owl	Owen ~ \$ 50
Great Horned Owls	Jillian ~ \$ 150
	Miles ~ \$ 250



Pages: 112 Price: \$16.95  
Photographs: 135



Pages: 104 Price: \$18/23 shipping  
Photographs: 100

YES, I want to sponsor the Raptors of the Rockies with this tax-deductible contribution, check written to Raptors of the Rockies, books to Kate Davis

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution amount or Adopted Raptor \_\_\_\_\_

## Thank you Raptor Backers!

*sponsors since our last newsletter*

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Kate Davis photo ©

The adult eagle , fledgling, nest and Super-moon.  
Framed prints available!

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# Raptors of the Rockies

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## Raptors of the Rockies

Educational Programs since 1988

