



# RAPTORS OF THE ROCKIES

P.O. BOX 250, FLORENCE, MONTANA

Education Programs since 1988

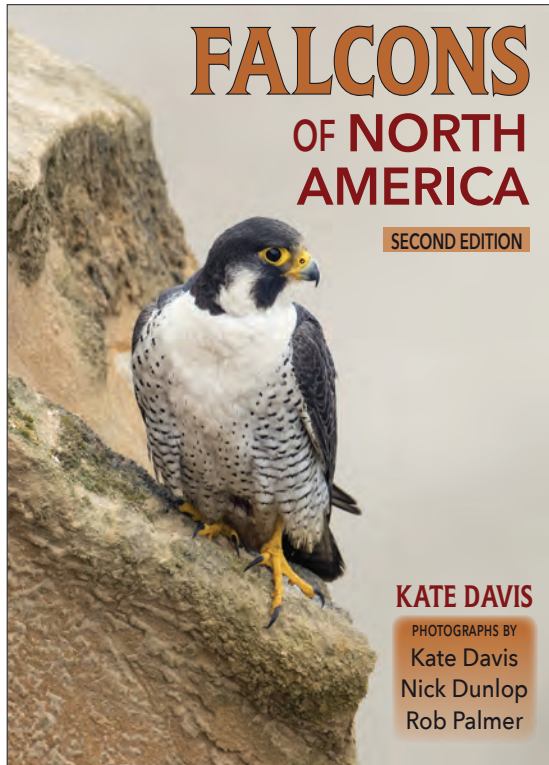
# Raptor Round-Up

[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 **59**, DECEMBER 2020

## Pandemic Project

The last hint of reality in 2020 for me was an assembly at Washington Middle School and the Five Valleys Audubon meeting with Dr. Bret Tobalske in March. Then the lockdown began and life took a big turn for all of us. I had a project on the back burner for years and knew that *Falcons of North America* was in need of updates (and some corrections!) At the twelve-year anniversary of its release in 2008, I got to work. There were major revisions and new science as falcons were “promoted” to their own order, right up there with parrots and songbirds, the Head of the Class! I also wanted to swap and add new photos from Rob, Nick, and me, a dozen years of falcon images to revisit. And *done!*



Cover of our new book from our pals at Mountain Press Publishing Company here in Missoula. Jeannie has finished layout and design, installing over 260 photographs, including this perfect Peregrine shot by Nick Dunlop. We'll have it in our hands in January, printing in the good ole USofA.

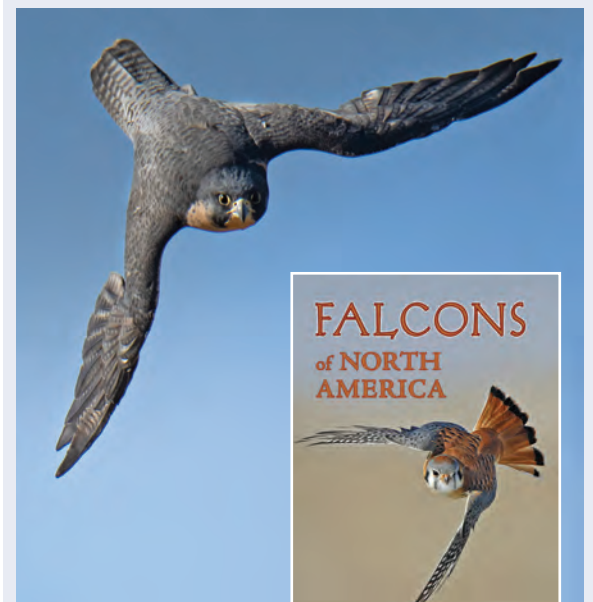


Newsletter Number 59 - I remember writing four of these a year, then we went 8 pages and three instead. This is just the second of this strange year and I thought we would not have enough to report with all of our programs cancelled and postponed, zero tours. Instead, all sorts of happenings at the Raptor Ranch, virtually and real-world. So much news that we might need a Raptor Round-Up Number 59 *SECOND EDITION*, a pattern developing...



## Missoula the Ghost Town

A photo taken at 2 pm Easter Sunday looking south, the middle of Missoula's main downtown drag Higgins Avenue and not a soul in sight. Spooky.



The First Edition came out in 2008, two years in the works, and the new edition is larger in size, page count, with more than 150 new photos, over 260 total.



## MISSION STATEMENT

*Raptors of the Rockies* is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) raptor education project located in Western Montana. Four Federal and State Permits are required. Since 1988, our mission has been:

- \* To educate schools and the public through the use of live birds - the falcons, hawks, eagles 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;
- \* To encourage everyone to go outdoors.

**PANDEMIC TIMES** The program cancellations began in March and continue today. Even outdoor, socially distant gatherings that were scheduled have been delayed, playing it safe and rightly so. Our keynote address in Utah was postponed a year and even April may be too soon. Instead, we have been invited to visit children and adults on their computer screens, a surreal experience in my new Zoom world. Absolutely not the same, but better than nothing. I present a PowerPoint then three birds here at my desk: Sonora, Sibley and Owen the Owl.



ZOOM for 100 4th graders in Wausau, Wisconsin, hooting like an owl

### RAPTORS OF THE ROCKIES

Wednesday, September 2nd, 6:30 PM



Please join us for a virtual presentation with Kate Davis, founder and Director at Raptors of the Rockies.

She will not only share photos and stories from her 32 years of experience in raptor ecology, conservation, and education, but she will also introduce you to Sibley the Peregrine Falcon, Sonora the Aplomado Falcon, and Owen the Saw-whet Owl!

© Rob Palmer, Phoenix  
www.falconphotos.com

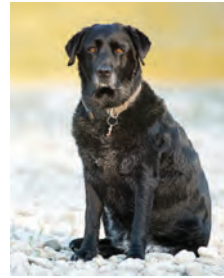
**ZOOM LINK**  
[HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/J/84581190934](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84581190934)  
VISIT SWANVALLEYCONNECTIONS.ORG FOR DETAILS OR CALL 406-754-3137

A September "gig" for Swan Valley Connections, another ZOOM for people all over Montana (and Canada, apparently.)

## Mookie Is Missed

Mookie our best pal passed away in September, our family. She suffered a stroke about a month prior and was on pain medication, then appetite meds, then she just gave up. It was a very rough last night and she died here at home with Tom at her side. Not fair as she wasn't even ten years old, so sad.

Mook joined us when our friend Peter Fredricksen bought her from a breeder, an English Black Lab, and their older dog did not get along with the new puppy. She joined us at 7 months old, most bad habits already gone and a sweetheart. Thanks, Peter, the best gift of all time. She was our constant companion, hikes and hunting with the Peregrine. She would always find the falcon and sit next to her, perhaps guarding her from any harm while she plucked her quarry, duck or pheasant. Her most endearing habit was always laying down in any body of water she came across, river or irrigation ditch. RIP Mook, very much missed by us and by Nico the pup, her best buddy.



Kate Davis photos ©

Bitterroot Peregrine fledgling



Our 6th grade friends from Washington Middle School help load up the car. Our last assembly, for a long time anyway.



# Little Jake Update

Jake the Peregrine is loving his new home at Cascades Raptor Center in Eugene, Oregon. He joined us at 19 days of age from a breeder, Sibley's sort-of cousin. Kit Lacy, Bird Curator gave us a Little Jake update and included a few photos. If you recall, Jake was given to our friends at Cascades when we found he had some health issues and couldn't be trained for falconry. They tended to a sore foot for months and now he has completely healed, and check out



his new digs, 12 by 12 feet and the center of attention. Kit wrote, "As would be expected people are just loving being able to get up close to him and watch him. He plays all day long. He has fallen in love with these canvas fish toys that he carries around his space all day long. Yesterday, I heard two different sets of guests say as they were leaving, let's go and say goodbye to Jake before we leave. What a fan favorite."



We had a virtual program/tour for 100 3rd graders in Wisconsin, and way better than I even imagined, thanks to Dave Oberbillig's nice comments, and "filming" by son Ian on his iPhone. We met all the birds, had a chat with an irate-for-some-reason Sibley, checked out the sculptures in the yard, then hooted up some owls, little faces filling the computer screen. Here is Ian about 18 years ago with Gunnar the Gyr. What a smile, thanks Oberbilligs.



## Swan Valley Connections

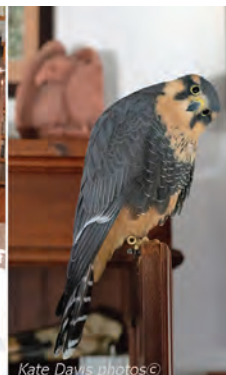
Zoom Programs are the new norm, and I am not the savviest computer person, still have an old flip phone. But Rob Rich made this sound irresistible and we were joined by bird enthusiasts from around their home base of Condon and beyond. Rob sent me this thoughtful thank-you card, and sure made me proud.

Dear Kate,  
8 September 2020  
Thank you so much for sharing your knowledge, passion and time with SVC last week (and your live birds, too!) If there is one kind of contagion we need today, it's a sense of wonder for the natural world, and that is something you effectively spread. Although hard to see through the distance of cyberspace on Zoom, I'm sure the viewers of that presentation had plenty of dropped jaws and wide eyes. In these bewildering times, your devotion to raptors, deep experiences with education, and attitude of fun gives people a reason to look up in so many ways. I appreciate all you do, and look forward to seeing you down the trail!  
Best,  
Rob



Kate Davis photo ©

My Mom's Missoula fawn friend



Kate Davis photos ©



Zoom Stars -Sib, Sonora, and Owen



# Raptor Blogs

Entries several times a week posted on our web site.

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

SUNDAY, MARCH 25, 2020

## It's Official

"Our" Bald Eagle nest that we watch through a scope in the living room is housing Canada Geese, again. The eagles successfully fledged between one and three young for six consecutive years, me and the dogs on the beach photographing away. Then an empty nest in 2018 with geese the last two years. Eagles should be incubating by mid March, instead a twisting up goose head right now. Oh well, and a photo from last year:



Kate Davis photo ©

TUESDAY, MAY 12

## The Unluckiest Squirrel of All

I just went out to feed Simone the Red-tail and look what she caught- a young Columbian Ground Squirrel that picked the WRONG place to wander. A Darwin Award, for sure. I remember when the Prairie Falcon caught a snake in there once and she carried it around for days, so very proud.

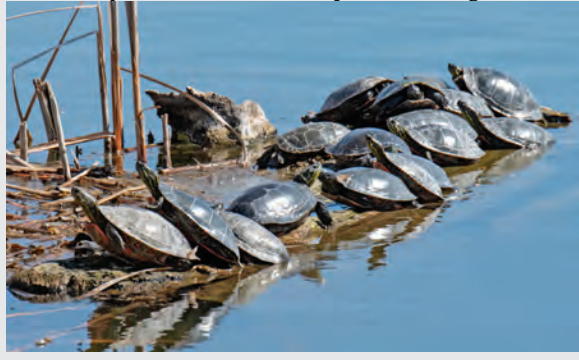


FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2020

## Frat Party

Tom and I just saw these Painted Turtles at Lee Metcalf Refuge, and he informed me that they were all males, as a joke. Looking at this

photo, they might be! Remember the carapace is flatter on the boys? Just a guess here, and didn't need to photograph at 3500th of a second, like Peregrines.



SUNDAY, AUGUST 30, 2020

## Aircrane Pays a Visit

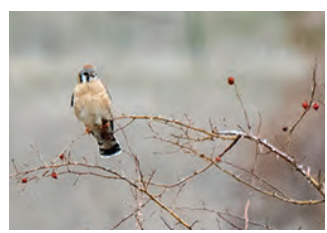
The biggest bird of all, an Aircrane was sucking water out of the Bitterroot River next to the eagle enclosure yesterday afternoon, and Nigel the Golden Eagle didn't budge. That neighbor taking pictures by the fence on the left sure did. They were battling the Cinnabar blaze in the Sapphires. LOUD!



MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2020

## Kestrel Box

Kestrel nest box built by Tom 16 years ago and FINALLY installed, on our favorite family's property, the Snowdens here in Florence. Jake, Luke, and Andy, Alissa (at work,) with Blue the dog. Jake spotted two kestrels flying up the road as it was installed! Fingers crossed. ps: *Nope but always next year, as a great spot!*



SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 2020

## Sandpiper Gallery Opening in Polson

Bev Glueckert and I, plus about 50 art lovers attended the Opening at the Sandpiper Gallery in Polson last night, their Avian Art Show. This was my second attempt at wearing a mask and talking for two hours, after our Missoula Art Museum class Monday. Bev and I had our printmaking pieces there for two months, now galleries are open. I met Margery Christensen on a flight back from the Raptor Conference last fall, and before you knew it, we had agreed on a gig at her gallery! The joke is that I told her, "Only if there's no pandemic."







Kate Davis photo ©

Cranky Kestrel mobbing a young Bald Eagle

I got an email from Wildlife Biologist and artist Scot Franklin, and my eyes popped when I saw the attachment. A mahogany Bald Eagle/Kestrel, WOW. He writes, "I do woodcarvings, and when I saw the kestrel attacking eagle photo in the 2017 MT Outdoors photo issue, I pretty much instantly knew that was going to be my next carving. How in the world did you get that shot?? I mostly need a good scene with a straight on side view to carve and there it was." It took him three years, 18" x 13" x 1 3/4" and now graces his wall (or his girlfriend's, can't decide!) Scot is a fellow 1980's U of M Grad and works for the BLM in Butte, and this made my day. No, year.

ps, Scot wrote: "Glad I could make your day. Doesn't take much to make somebody's year in 2020. Credit yourself for giving me the inspiration!"



facebook post!



# Missoula Art Museum



For 20 years, Bev Beck Glueckert and I have taught the Raptors and Art Week at the Missoula Art Museum, and this one was a doozy. We were the first summer camp of the season and how to do it safely with COVID-19? We had filled our class of 16 spots and knew that was impossible, so half the kids opted out (well, their Mom's did.) Then our remaining 8 had to be socially distant, masks, hand washing, you know the routine. I did my instruction and drawing day with live models and Bev finished the week with the paper mache bird construction and printmaking. This was five days of heroics from everyone involved. We thought about holding another one in their fall, "after the pandemic" and now we'll even see about next June. And not a complaint in the house, just me with glasses fogging up, mask in place. How do you all do it?



Hamilton High School Seniors Science Class visit, just in the nick of time, February 25th, Vanessa Haflich teacher extraordinaire.



## Ring-necked Pheasant Resident

"Hip-Hop" or "Hop-along" has been here in our yard for at least three years, identified by a very bad limp. It doesn't seem to bother him though, as he brought the wife and kids over all summer, chowing down below the bird feeder. Nico the lab pays no attention, but flushes pheasants when we are hunting, weird.



**Talk about One Cool Camper!** A way-too-brief visit from dear friends Dan and Sue Varland of Hoquiam, Washington. Dan is director of Coastal Raptors and he and I tried not to talk about Peregrines too much, for Tom and Sue's sake. This was their maiden voyage in this awesome camper, off to the Midwest.



# Peregrine Activity 2020



Falcon-watching can be a family affair and warning: could be habit-forming. You may find yourself parked in a lawn chair by the river, soaking in the sun, binoculars and scope pointing at a cliff, watching baby Peregrines scamper about or engage in aerial mock-battles, or chasing their parents, acoustic clues a-plenty. Yep, habits are hard to break.



A favorite ledge on a cliff up the Blackfoot had been vacant for about six years, falcons instead choosing a more distant location high above the river. Not this year and they were back on that spot, fledging three young in July. Incredibly, the female's plumage was about half juvenal brown-colored, half adult-colored. This was a one-year old Peregrine, and she pulled off a successful breeding season! They nearly always wait a few years before they attempt that chore. We might see these two for some years to come, hallelujah.

Left: A baby on the ledge begging Above: the male delivers a nice starling to his daughter.



This young Red-tailed Hawk was struck by a car in September, and was reported, "still alive," miraculous. Her head was poking out of the grill of a Subaru, extracted after breaking the rest of the plastic. She was then delivered to our pal Becky Kean from the Raptor Conservation Center in Bozeman, meeting half-way at Garrison for the exchange - Subaru on either side, coincidence?

The ulna was broken in two spots mid-wing, and was pinned in surgery at the center, the pin recently removed. Commonly they see problems with feather loss at the site of a fracture and she has some molting to do. Becky reports that "Number 167" is flying the length of the 40 foot enclosure, great news. I am not involved with rehabilitation but was convinced by the driver who told me on the phone, "She's looking right at me." A quick drive to Stevensville and the only car in the lot with a hawk poking out the front.



## October Snows

*We will miss our dear friend, Adrian Caddy, like a brother these twenty years. I treasure every moment spent with him, visits from his home in the UK filled with stories, humour and big plans for the future, optimism that had no bounds. He was tragically killed in March, as we made plans for his next stay at the Raptor Ranch. Condolences to you, Alex. All our love.*



Osprey nest on a platform on a cell phone tower and on a real tree

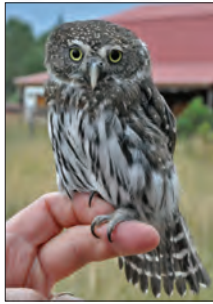


# Holiday Cheer from Our Teaching Team

with the years  
they joined us



Sonora the Aplomado Falcon 2013



iPod the Northern Pygmy-Owl 2010



Owen the Northern Saw-whet Owl 2012



Sonny the Bald Eagle 2011



Jillian the Great Horned Owl 2003



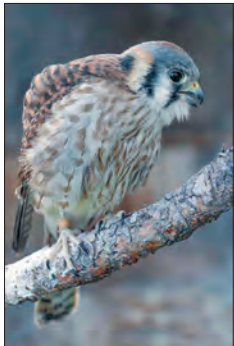
Simone the Red-tailed Hawk 2017



Sibley the Peregrine Falcon 2003



Nigel the Golden Eagle 1999



Ella and Wes the American Kestrels 2013 sister & brother



Simon the Great Horned Owl 2017



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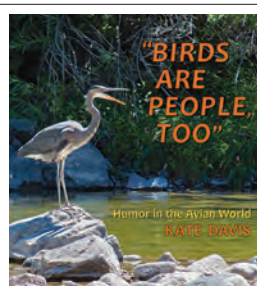
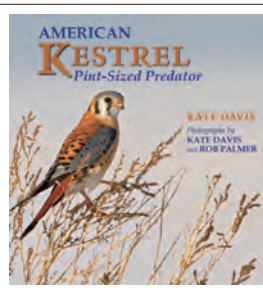
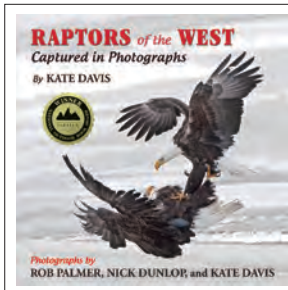


Subaru number seven, maybe eight. Our first car was a blue '74 Datsun wagon, and now finally - automatic transmission!

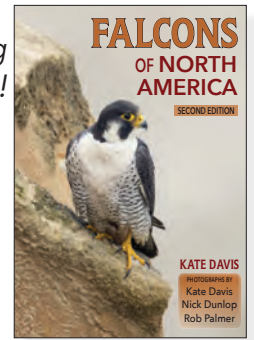
Feeding the troops  
and yes, we have  
another freezer for  
human food.



We are hanging in there, thanks to our loyal Raptor Backers!



Coming  
Soon!



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Kate Davis photo ©

### Bitterroot Bears

Bob and Deb - Thanks for 20 years of hospitality at One Horse Creek. We will sure miss you and good luck !

# Raptors of the Rockies

P.O. Box 250, Florence, MT 59833

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