

**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 63, NOVEMBER 2024**

email Kate Davis - [raptors@montana.com](mailto:raptors@montana.com)



## New Years Day at the Raptor Ranch

A fine first photo and the "malady" from the last newsletter persists - botched knee replacement surgery a year and a half later, **NO** fun. I am keeping up with duties and my PT is the daily walk to the river with Mose and Nico, constant companions. 30 Raptor programs this year and one more at the Radius Gallery in Missoula, December 7th, **YES** fun!

## Time Flies... Especially 2024

**O**ur one Raptor Round-Up Newsletter each year and much thanks to our Raptor Backers, old friends and new ones alike. We have enjoyed your sponsorship since we started this little outfit originally called "Birds of Prey on Display" in 1988, then changed the title thanks to our pal Bob Petty! He was on our Board, plus Fred Luety who helped us get the non-profit 501(c)(3) and doing very well now, thank you. We have enjoyed 1915 programs for 140,000 audience participants, plus programs around the country with PowerPoints from Boston to Seattle, with Chicago, Salt Lake City and Detroit in between. We are so lucky to share the ranch with the best birds ever - Our *feathered* family.



## Cover story for the Ravalli Republic Newspaper **Birdy, It's Cold Outside**

Reporter Jessica Abell contacted us about a cheerful story on our birds indoors, and four were in here for a week in January with nearly 30-below-temps. Sibley in because she's 21 years old, Sonora the Aplomado is a desert bird, Little Billie the Saw-whet Owl in a kennel for safety, and Mischa the Peregrine because she's spoiled. They have been enjoying the warmth, a nice selection of jazz on the stereo, and we've gone through a stack of Wall Street Journals, if you know what I mean.

Kate Davis photos ©



**New Calendars** thanks Minuteman Press  
12 months of our favorite photos page 3



## 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 - "Nature Therapy!"



## Loss of Simone the Red-tail

I always dread to report each year in this spot of the newsletter the demise of one of our raptors. Our Red-tailed Hawk passed away suddenly in May at 9 years of age. She had quite the story, picked up off the road by an elderly woman who had to have the hawk's talons removed from her hand at the hospital ER. That was 2017 and Simone was a bit bi-polar, like her namesake, musician Nina Simone. Let's just say she had her days and sometimes just would rather be at home than a classroom. R.I.P. Friend.



Worthy of The Darwin Award, several Columbian ground squirrels have ventured into her building, not a good idea for the rodents.

Dry-point etching portraits of Simone and Max the Golden Eagle.



## MTPR's Pea Green Boat Hosts Reunite at Bill Harley Concert

Mid-May was a Milestone - 50 years of Children's programming on Montana Public Radio. A half-century ago, the Pea Green Boat launched an hour of stories, songs, silliness every weekday at 4 p.m. Germaine Conrad started the show with Jazz Sessions host Terry Conrad, then awesome skipper Marcia Dunn for 23 years, Annie Garde just retired. Singer, songwriter, author, artist Bill Harley filled the Missoula Children's Theater for a show in May, Children's Programming Week on public radio. The packed house included families from all over plus all of the PGB hosts. Bill Harley has been a Missoula favorite for 40 years, with plentiful airplay and a Grammy-winning recording at our University Theater in 2007 - everyone singing along with wondrous melodies and stories like "Zanzibar."

It has been an honor to be the guest on 100 Pea Green Boat excursions over the years, and each of the Teaching Team birds had their debut programs on the air. Below is Sonora's first with Annie, Joan Richarde and Cherie Newman. Happily all went well with great chats across the glass in the KUFM studios starting with Marcia. Now Vicki has taken over the helm and who knows? Another 50 years.

At the concert, it was Marcia's birthday and I handed her a "Birds Are People, Too" book with Bill Harley's wonderful review on the back cover - he wrote, "it's a riot."



This was a great surprise and thanks for the photo Deb Gosland. Germaine, Marcia, Annie and me at the Montana Children's Theater.



## Bill Harley Fan Club



Bill's 2008 tour of the Raptor Ranch and stroll on the riverbank with PBS's Danny Dauterive. We sure shared some animated accounts there on the Bitterroot River. Here he is in his Falconer Outfit with Sib. XXOO



Bill's 2012 visit to Bonner School after his concert in Missoula. He told me he had visited over 2500 schools across the U.S. and a hero. Here he is the Skunk Chief of Police telling Charlene the Skunk in the Middle that she has to set the table. The entire school was singing, "you're not the boss of me" in the cafeteria line afterwards.



# MAM Camp 2024 Missoula Art Museum



In June Bev Glueckert and I celebrated year 21 of "Raptors And Art Camp" at the Missoula Art Museum. Two days of drawing our models, then paper mache raptors then printmaking Friday. Plus this was program number 1900 for me since Raptors of the Rockies was invented. Camp concluded with the students making portfolios of all of their drawings and paintings, and group shot with the paper mache creations. Great Horned and Snowy Owls, an Aplomado Falcon, two Turkey Vultures and a bunch of Saw-whet Owl Little Billy's. Oh, and one Little Lilly. The best kids ever this year, and we mean it!



Kate Davis photos ©

My daily river trip cheers me up, especially when birds are present (or a muskrat in the slough.) These eagles were in the same spot the day before so I went back to the house for the camera and muck boots. I waded out in the shallow water and got several nice shots from the river, no freaking these guys out. She was still in the same spot the following day, hiding from the offspring, the attacking Ospreys gone for the year.



Office View March 2001



Office View August 2024!

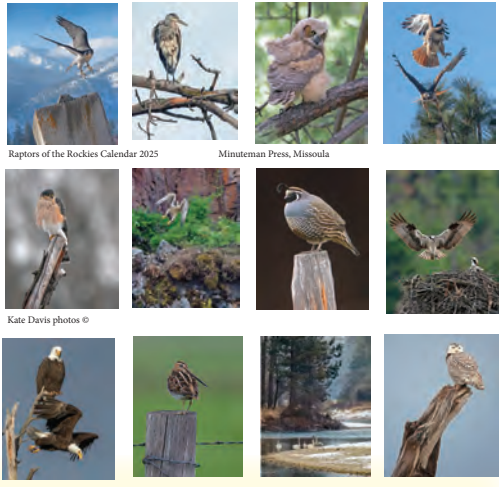
Another comparison side-by-side, top photo before we bought the house. Bottom -now. I planted all those trees and I wondered why the internet went out one day. The technician took me outside and pointed at the dish on the roof, then over to the cell phone towers in the distance. "Ever notice that tree in between?" Now a different system and this view is often distracting, in a good way. Office/Desk/Window and have seen some cool stuff, cameras at the ready on the couch nearby. "Hey, is that a Northern Shrike? I'll call you back." [click](#)

## Calendars



Rebecca Treece

Thanks to our pals, Minuteman Press in Missoula, Raptors of the Rockies 2025 Calendars! You may pick them up at Rockin Rudy's or let us know - \$25 with postage. Or have a pile in my car! Photos from here in the neighborhood and one from Washington, a Snowy Owl. All proceeds to benefit our program (and buy mice for the owls and one hawk...)



## Art Inertia - Etchings In the Office



A year ago I began an obsession that makes me so happy - creating art, and on a roll. I moved the printing press into the office, inking on the glass table after I move the falcon perch. With paintings and etchings, 18 pieces and one in the works. Cards available at Rockin Rudy's.



drypoint etching of Portia



At first I thought a pair of adult Red-tails were fighting over a snake, then the male left the scene. It turned out to be a stick that she dropped and caught, then finally discarded and flew away. I have seen Peregrines doing this, usually fledglings - siblings and parents. Bonner on the Blackfoot is a great place to watch this in June. A first time for an adult hawk for me, cool birds and a bit of play? Must be.



# 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

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2023

## Warmy Toasty

This is what "a load of firewood" looks like if you are an ex-timber faller like Tom. Thanks to friend John Ottman for the fine delivery this week. That last load kept us warm for 4 years, and so grateful for all the help by Pat Johnson, Ryan Hollingsworth and John "Hoeman." Sawing and splitting and stacking next....whew.



THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 2024

## For Comparison's Sake

Look what I just found on an old disk in the bottom drawer - a photo of our soon-to-be-home taken in March 2001, and one I took a few minutes ago. Those are tomatoes growing on the fence, flowers from Brown's Greenhouse, and Tom the horticulturist in the family. A few improvements...HA!



WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2024

## Florence Kids

Yesterday we had a fun program for the kindergarten kids here at Florence Elementary. Our favorite teacher Julia White got this snapshot of students with Portia hooting up an owl, and promising they will go outside this spring and summer. Big day for young Bodie the American Kestrel - her first program and a Superstar, plus she didn't mind Mischa the Peregrine watching from behind, also on her best behavior.



THURSDAY, AUGUST 15, 2024

## Mixed Flock

I heard a strident series of Sandhill Crane calls this morning so checked out right across our little street to find parent cranes mingling with cows and two youngsters. More on the way and what fun. Could never have done this in the old film days, 300+ snapshots through the grass so most not even downloaded, or uploaded, or whatever it is.

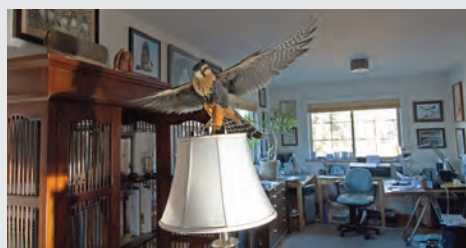


THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2024

## Sonora Day

Sonora the Aplomado Falcon gets a beak-trim twice a year, called "coping" in the falconry world. Raptor beaks tend to overgrow in captive situations for some unknown reason, and coping takes a minute, maybe two, toenail clippers, fingernail file, and round chainsaw file and done! Might take a bit longer for a Bald Eagle, same thing. Here she is right this minute with the new art on the wall, photo of her flying on the top right.

(She joined us as a downy in 2003, a gift from the Peregrine Fund's breeding program.)



SUNDAY, APRIL 14, 2024

## More Hammering Woodpeckers

This week the migrating Red-naped Sapsuckers returned with their signature tapping signaling his territory - on my metal sculptures all over the yard. Sapsuckers drum beats start fast then slow down, signature.

Resident flickers are in abundance and it seems like someone is always tapping away. No insects inside these creatures, just a cool sound.







I hand off cards with eagle and other photos all over the place: friends, stores, doctors, our bank... and this seemed to be a favorite, male landing.

**FAR RIGHT:** Three chicks. **BELOW:** The male brought in a muskrat. Before that a squirrel, questionable chunks of meat, and even a fish or two.

## The Nest Nearby

It takes 6 1/2 minutes to walk to the riverbank for shooting range. Photography at the eagle nest that is. Three chicks this year and incubation starting on March 4th, earliest yet by one day. We watch the nest from the living room scope and that's how we know, so lucky. Nest built in 2011 so a huge distraction. Buddy Barry Gordon has asked me more than once, "How many Bald Eagle photos do you need?" Apparently 10,956. I added 'em up, no kidding.



When I went down to the beach with the dogs, the female eagle was perched at the top of the nest tree. I settled down to wait for her departure and just after she split (nice photos), a HUGE splash of whitewash (poop) in the river right in front of me. I looked up and the male had been spying on us the whole time, about 40 minutes! Still there when I left. In April he landed right over our heads. Curious (fearless) bird.

**W**ild Turkey Family at the bird feeder where I scatter seed from the pigeon building on the ground. Starting with 12 "poults" or youngsters, one week later 10, then 8. Youngsters have been seen as late as mid-October in Montana, eggs numbering 8-15, often 11-13. Turkeys are a wild native bird that was domesticated and reintroduced in the state. Funny as the bird feeder also supplies California Quail, Eurasian Collared Doves, and Chinese Ring-necked Pheasants.



Kate Davis photos ©

Who doesn't love a hummingbird and the most Rufous and Black-chinned (here a female) we have ever had at our feeders and flowers, especially the Salvia on the deck.



Florence elk the morning after hunting season. Smart.



**H**ands down my favorite hawks are Northern Harriers and I was fortunate to find a nest of just-fledged birds here in the Bitterroot, immaculate brown plumage. Four youngsters left the ground nest and were flying around dropping and catching clumps of grass like the hawk on page 3. Parent birds are recognizable as brown and white female (mom above) and grey and black male, here carrying a young Meadowlark!



## June Ranch and Tree Swallow



Nigel and Sonny on the right, house/studio/garage on the left, and Tree Swallow flying by front and center towards the Kootenai Crags, Bitterroot Range in the background.





Bev Glueckert pulls a print off the press for the enrapt artists, (below) painting on plates with Simon perched in the background. Along with Little Billie and Sibley (right) the best models ever!

## Open AIR at Travelers' Rest

Bev arranged this sweet Saturday at our favorite state park, birds and printmaking for the afternoon. She was the artist-in-residence with Open AIR at Travelers' Rest for a month this spring and this workshop was a perfect follow-up, thanks program director Kelli Sinner. Twenty artists tested their skills from novice to the pros and unique as we created monotypes - paintings on plexiglass run through a printing press, a wonderful experience for all.



### Newest Teaching Team Member

Our female Rough-legged Hawk came from the Great Falls area, not quite a year old and unfortunate automobile calamity. With a non-functioning left wing, she will not be releasable. Such a sweetie, and delighted that she loves the plentiful chicken as part of her diet. **Mice are harder and harder to come by. If you are a trapper, let us know, like our friend Dave Amish. - a barn load of rodents given to us.**

## Board Members Spotlight



We are honored to have Dale and Jenny Manning on our Board of Directors, the Voice of Reason, and to know their son Owen since a tot, even named a bird after him. He is pursuing a career in aviation now, and a pilot! News is Dale and Jenny have closed Custom Birdworks & The Big Game Connection, his extraordinary taxidermy business since 1988 (what a year!) I have known him as my taxidermy hero for forty years when that was my occupation. We took young Owen duck hunting with Sibley, and Dale agreed to join our board. That was right before the Harris's Hawk swooped on him in the yard. Jen joined a bit later and such a privilege. Dale was named Best Taxidermist In the World in many competitions, and always will be in my book. He is still working with Habitat Rock, finishing the last bird mounts, then off on new adventures. I love our board meetings with Kathy Heffernan and Bev Glueckert, always lots of catching up to do. Plus I have that duck that Sibley caught mounted on my wall in the living room, Dale's mastery in a place of honor and much treasured. And Sonora the Aplomado can't land on it in there as her perch is in the office.



ZACC artists with Patricia Thornton, and MCAT filmmakers with Scott Ranf



Another retro-shot. Carpenters Dave Plummer and Mike Hupe, enclosures constructed in just a week. The neighbors thought it might be a puppy mill.



# Best Wishes From Our Teaching Team

plus the years  
they joined us



Sonora the Aplomado Falcon 2013



Little Billie the Northern Saw-whet Owl 2023



Mischa the Peregrine Falcon 2022



Red-tail at Metcalf NWR



Sonny the Bald Eagle 2011



Jillian the Great Horned Owl 2003



kate davis photos ©



Nigel the Golden Eagle 1999



Sibley the Peregrine Falcon 2003



the Rough-legged Hawk 2024



Bodie 2023



Wes the American Kestrels 2013



Simon the Great Horned Owl 2017



Portia the Barred Owl 2023



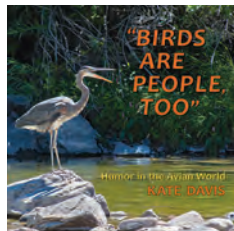
Moose painting 2024



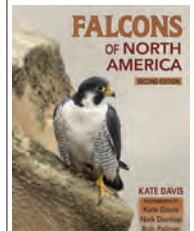
\$18



\$19



\$18



\$28

## Books available

Signed and just add \$5 postage

Checks work nicely, to Kate Davis, please.

A portion of proceeds to benefit our education program.



Nigel On the  
Air, Montana  
Public Radio  
with Annie.





## Thank you Raptor Backers

*sponsors since last newsletter, many several times - !*

**Steve & Mindy Palmer, Rock Stars!**

Larry Weeks - *special thanks from our eagles*

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U of M Laboratory Animal Resources

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Carol Goodsole - every month on PayPal

Candace Klein-Loetterle - every month on PayPal

Sharon DiBrito - every month on PayPal

Cathy Scholtens- monthly

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Mary "Kit" Stevens

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*Minuteman Press in Missoula, their generosity for RRU's in living color!*

# Raptors of the Rockies

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*Education*

*Photography*



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