

Rockfish Wildlife Sanctuary



A Semi-Annual Newsletter

Fall 2010

It's all in the eyes!

Raptors have amazing eyes. They rely on them to spot prey, maneuver in flight and avoid predators. In fact, raptors can generally see eight times better than humans!



All birds of prey have excellent eyesight. Their eyes are very large, taking up most of the space in their skulls. This allows them to see images with a lot more detail than humans. Simply put, the picture they see in their heads is larger, crisper and more detailed than the one we see. They need these giant pictures—their prey is very small, very far away and on the move.

Most raptors have binocular vision—like us. This means that the field of vision for each eye overlaps. For humans, it overlaps about 70%, for many raptors, like owls, it overlaps by 120%. This allows them, and us, to accurately judge distances. The image from one eye is compared to the other to form a true understanding of how far away an object is. Many raptors also have telescopic sight, a feature that allows them to focus in on a tiny object from a great distance. Some hawks can spot a mouse from *2 miles away!*

Smaller hawks hunt in the forest. This means they must pay attention to two different things at one time. One eye must stay locked on the prey, most often at a long distance. The other eye must keep track of all the obstacles at close range—like trees. Larger hawks hunt in open fields, most of the time, and don't need this tool.

Some raptors only need one eye to hunt successfully, and others need both. Owls can survive with one eye quite well because of their super-binocular vision while some hawks cannot. These hawks would only be able to see far away or close-up. As a result, hawks with only functioning eye may not be released.

New RWS website

Rockfish Wildlife Sanctuary board member, Dede Smith, has created a new website for RWS! Next time you are online, surf on over for a look. The website contains a wealth of information including RWS news & events, a featured rescue story, advice on how and when to rescue a wild animal, internships at RWS and lots of stories about the animals of RWS. The site also showcases many wonderful photographs of RWS in action. It is hard to resist the faces of RWS orphaned and injured animals! And, of course, there is an opportunity to donate to RWS on every page. Online giving is fast and easy. Check us out. Many thanks to Dede for giving RWS this new way to reach our supporters.

www.rockfishsanctuary.org

Make way for a lot of ducklings!

When you read the census numbers on the next page, you may notice that **RWS took in 172 ducklings this year!** These ducklings came to us from a rehabber in Northern VA who was caring for too many. After growing up in Schuyler, most were released on the Rockfish River and at local reservoirs. Quack!

Established in 2004, Rockfish Wildlife Sanctuary is a wildlife rehabilitation sanctuary in Central Virginia providing care for orphaned and injured wildlife from anywhere in Virginia. www.rockfishsanctuary.org

Sanctuary News News

Animal Stories

Animal Census: January 1, 2010— September 15, 2010

Barn swallow	3	Bat, Brown	
Beaver		Bluebird	9
Bluejay	14	Canada Goose	31
Cardinal	6	Carolina Wren	31
Catbird	6	Cedar waxwing	1
Chimney swift	8	Cowbird	1
Crow	5	Deer	4
Duck, Mallard	162	Duck, Wood	10
Finch	2	Goose	1
Grackle	3	Hawk, Broadwing	1
Hawk, Coopers	3	Hummingbird	1
King Bird	1	Mockingbird	13
Mouse	1	Opossum	8
Owl, Screech	5	Phoebe	21
Pigeon	2	Rabbit, domestic	
Rabbit	16	Raccoon	33
Robin	14	Sapsucker	1
Skunk	21	Sparrow	3
Squirrel, Grey	13	Sparrow	3
Swallow	4	Thrush	3
Turtle, Box	7	Turkey	5
Vole	1	Vulture	1
Warbler	1	Woodpecker,	1
Woodpecker,	1	Downy	
Hairy		Woodpecker,	1
Woodpecker,	1	Pileated	
Red-Headed		Wren	3
TOTAL	495		

Cooper's Hawk Update



As many of you will remember, we had some wicked weather this spring & summer—microburst pulled up trees and sent nests flying. These three baby Cooper's Hawks were rescued from a downed tree and delivered to RWS.

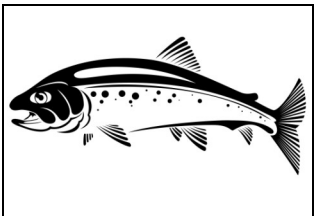
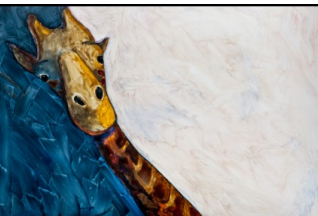
The picture below shows how well they grew up. They are gorgeous and fierce hawks ready for life on their own! Two of the hawks were released in the Blue Ridge Mountains, while the third remains at RWS.

The third one will overwinter with us because of a minor deformity in his beak. He will be healed and ready for release in early spring.



RWS IS WILD ABOUT ART!

The RWS board is busy planning a fundraiser for late winter 2011. Our theme is wildlife art. Wildlife art can be serious, silly, beautiful, deep and moving. We hope to have the full spectrum represented. Contact us if you know someone with some interesting wildlife art or you'd like volunteer. Stay tuned for details soon!



RWS Babies on Parade!



CRAZY
CUTE!



Wise Words

Animals are reliable, many full of love, true in their affections, predictable in their actions, grateful and loyal. Difficult standards for people to live up to.
-Alfred A. Montapert

It takes two days to learn everything about a man; to know **animals** you will need more time.
-Iranian Proverb

A Great Wildlife Rescuer ...

- ◆ Keeps orphaned or injured wild animal warm—baby birds maintain a body temperature of 104 degrees!
- ◆ Wears gloves when handling wild animals—they are scared and will defend themselves with claws, beaks and teeth.
- ◆ Provides rescued animals with a dark, safe and protected place to await a wildlife rehabilitator—cover boxes with pillow cases or napkins.
- ◆ Reduces stress on the animal by keeping voices and gawking to a minimum and keeping family pets away.
- ◆ Doesn't feed or provide water to an animal without advice from an expert—most baby birds don't drink water and can get water in their lungs easily.
- ◆ Calls a wildlife rehabilitator for help immediately!

Packing Up & Heading Out

by Samantha Masone

As humans, most of us mark the advent of the fall season with rituals of one sort or another: Shopping for school supplies and preparing for the next grade level, gathering and canning the last of the garden's bounty, integrating long pants and sweaters back into our wardrobes.

Our avian companions have rituals, as well, although theirs are driven by instinct and are far more formalized than our own. As the light period of each day (not the day length itself, as previously thought) begins to change, birds begin to prepare for their migratory journeys south. It's important to note that each species has a different threshold of acceptable light length, so some birds begin their preparations in late July while others may not undertake their journeys until much later in the year. Regardless of when the stimulus occurs, the first step is the same: The birds' brains release hormones that allow it to gain and retain the weight needed for sustenance during the long flight south.

In the two weeks prior to migration, birds are able to consume up to 40% more food than usual, resulting in increased fat stores under the skin, greater musculature in the areas needed for flight, and larger storages of fuel in the abdominal cavities. Birds that travel short distances may gain approximately 15% of their body weight in fat to fuel their efforts, while those that travel long distances typically see a gain of 30-50%, making them literally obese.

Let me give you an example. The ruby-throated hummingbird travels approximately 2000 miles to get from its breeding grounds to its wintering grounds. To fuel the journey, which includes a nonstop 500-mile flight over the Gulf of Mexico, these tiny creatures usually increase their body weight by 50%, all of which is fat. This is analogous to a 170-pound man packing on enough fat to increase his weight to 255 pounds in just a few short weeks.

Taking things a step further, if this 170-pound man had an energy output the same as that of a hummingbird, who weighs a mere eighth of an ounce, he'd need to consume - and burn off - around 155,000 calories per day.

Sort of brings a new perspective to the old phrase *eats like a bird*, doesn't it?

Just as each species is stimulated to travel at different times of the season, they each choose different times of the day for their flights, as well. Many of the smaller birds, such as warblers, sparrows, thrushes, vireos and orioles, travel at night despite the fact they are typically active during daylight.

Researchers hypothesize that, in addition to providing a measure of protection from predators, night-time travel has a couple of other advantages. One, the temperatures are cooler. All that flying generates a lot of heat and birds can get dehydrated if they fly in hotter temperatures. Flying at night means the birds can cover greater distances before becoming exhausted. And, two, feeding takes place during daylight hours. Arriving at a stopping point just before dawn allows the birds to rest before resuming their normal feeding schedule, thus replenishing their fuel stores for the next leg of their journeys.

Soaring birds like vultures and Broad-Wing hawks have to travel during the day because of their dependence on updrafts caused by either wind or thermal convection. Other day travelers include swifts and swallows, who feast on diurnal insects, and certain waterfowl whose diet relies on insects that get caught in thermal updrafts.

If you're interested in migration, there's a wealth of information available on the Internet. There was, however, no mention of whether birds have to deal with the same question humans do whenever we set out on a long trip with our kids: *Are we there yet?*

Gum Spring
Opossum



One sunny September morning, a smart rescuer in Gum Spring found this sweet opossum on its side on her back porch. He had four wounds from the four teeth that had moments earlier clutched his body. She scooped him up and called RWS. A volunteer transporter met her in Zion Crossroads and brought him to Schuyler. There, he got the medication and food he needed to gain strength for eventual release!

How You Can
Help RWS

We need a lot of things to keep Rockfish Sanctuary humming. Please let us know if you can help with any of the following:

- Paper towels
- Kleenex
- Animal transport
- Hay
- Blue pads from the drugstore
- Cash donations—most of Rockfish Sanctuary's funding comes from donors, animal-lovers just like you. **Help us take advantage of Perry Foundation's gift! Donate to our capital campaign!**
- Please contact us if you can help! 434-962-7429 or 434-831-2900

Hugs & Roses: Our Gratitude

Wildlife Rehabilitator

Nathou Attinger, Founder

Wildlife Staff

Jessie Cole—lead

Sanctuary Board Members

Nathou Attinger	Erla Hagan
Becky Allen	Mary Huey
Beverley Butler	Dede Smith
Kaki Dimock	Patty Wallens

Rockfish Sanctuary Supporters

Patient Transporters

*Robin Ashcroft
Cindy Davis
Ron Fanditti
Susan Hastings
Bonnie Sheppard
Bill Spurgin
Nancy Uvanitte*

Accounting services

Huey & Bjorn

Payroll & tax services

Huey & Bjorn

Legal Services

Edward Bain

Financial Support

*Perry Foundation
Bama Works Fund of CACF
Pajeau Wildlife Foundation
TJMC Children's Worship Collection
Bonner Family Foundation
Friends of the Jefferson Memorial Regional Library
The Kingfisher Foundation*

Generous Amounts of Paper Goods & Baby Food

*Cindy Snyder
A.T. Stevens, III*

Membership list

Judy Heyde

Room & board

Erla Hagan (interns)

Animal care

*Danielle Berry
Kristen Cole
Susan Hastings
Erin Plews-Ogan*

Newsletter

*Kaki Dimock
Sam Masone*

Website

Dede Smith



**Many thanks to the Rockfish
Wildlife Sanctuary Interns!**

**Lisa Kleinschmidt
Sarah Petri
Ryan Shaw
Laura York**