

From: Audubon Center for Birds of Prey audubonconnect@audubon.org
Subject: Raptor News: Year in Review | Celebrating Volunteers | Holiday Hours | and more!
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Audubon

Center for
Birds of Prey

RAPTOR NEWS



The Holiday Season is Upon Us!

How do the holidays sneak up on us each year? The Center has been able to kick off the season with our Deck the Halls event in November, a Birds and Brews event in December, and most recently our volunteer celebration last week. We invite you to

celebrate with us! As you welcome family and friends during the holiday season, a great field trip idea is a stop at the Center. Bring a snack and enjoy some quality time at our gazebo; we have been lucky enough to view many bird species from our dock.

It's been a great year. Some stats to recap:

- **705** birds admitted, including **82 Bald Eagles**
- **225** birds released, including **31 Bald Eagles**
- **17** Bald Eagles banded as part of our auxiliary band and resight study for the 2023-2024 eagle nesting season
- **1,278** nests monitored through the Audubon EagleWatch program
- **9,568** visitors
- **115** programs delivered
- **8** interns hosted (clinic, education, and CLI)

...and a partridge in a pear tree! However and whatever you celebrate, we wish you a holiday season filled with birds and nature. Thank you for being part of our flock.

Sincerely,

Katie Gill Warner, Director

Alina the Merlin falcon wishes you and yours a happy holiday season.





Lisa Ferguson is the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey Volunteer of the Year

Each December we take a moment to recognize a volunteer who has gone above and beyond to support programs and operations at the Center. We would like to congratulate **Lisa Ferguson** as our Volunteer of the Year. Lisa started in October 2021, and while she has helped in many areas of the Center, most know her as our enrichment specialist and creative genius.

Every Friday Lisa takes time to make beautiful enrichment for our birds, adding novelty to their lives to keep them happy. She considers each bird's personality while creating enrichment for them, and shares her talents by training other volunteers on how to make successful enrichment. She has hosted an enrichment activity and station for numerous events including Talons and Tidings, Baby Owl Shower and Rainbow Raptors. She is always happy to share her enrichment knowledge with guests, explaining why there are pinwheels, puff balls, and other random objects in a given bird's habitat. Congratulations, and thank you, Lisa!

We announced Lisa's award at our annual volunteer appreciation event last week, and we're feeling extra thankful for this group of folks. The group continues to grow each year and is key to fulfilling our mission to protect birds and the places they need. Their commitment to conservation is staggering, whether it's donating their time and talents to support our raptor residents, Raptor Trauma Clinic (including rescue), rehabilitation patients, visitors, or program participants; keeping our site looking beautiful through landscape maintenance and improvements; and those who take on the myriad special projects that pop up. We also would like to thank and honor all of the EagleWatch volunteers (more than 700) who keep a close eye on our eagle population. Thank you for being part of our flock!

Lisa received her award at last week's volunteer appreciation celebration.



The Season of Giving

It's cool to gift green! "Gifting green" means giving gifts with minimal environmental impact: gifts with less packaging, handmade or secondhand, the gift of time, or experiences as gifts. These gifts are often more thoughtful and create more memories than a store-bought object would.

[An annual membership](#) to the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey is a great example of gifting green! For just \$50 for a family or \$30 for an individual, you can give a full year of raptor enjoyment, education, and programming.

If you want to give back to the Center this holiday season, our Giving Tree will remain up until the new year. Come visit us and choose an ornament to take home with you when you give a special gift to our birds. Ornaments include a special QR code to some of our basic needs from our [Amazon wish list](#) and items for the upcoming year. We appreciate it!

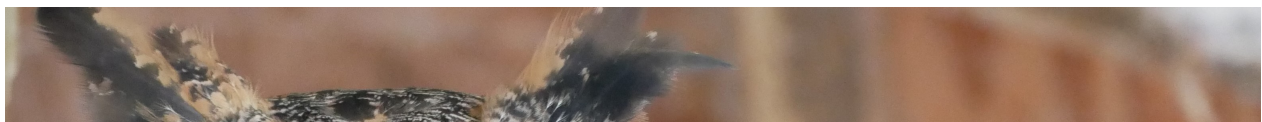
Choose an ornament, purchase the gift listed on it, and the ornament is yours to keep!



Holiday Hours

We invite you to visit and bring friends and family during the holiday season. Please take note of our holiday hours. We look forward to seeing you!

A visit to the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey is the perfect way to show out-of-town guests a unique side of Central Florida.



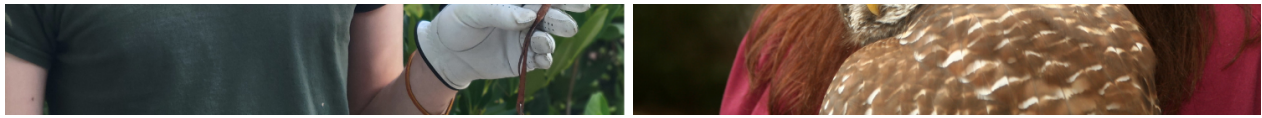


Staff Member Attends Animal Wellbeing Summit

Senior Coordinator of Education Dr. Daisy Fiore attended the Association of Zoos and Aquariums first-ever Animal Wellbeing Summit last month. The summit, held in New Orleans, brought together staff from zoos, aquariums, rescues, and non-profits to share ideas and brainstorm new ways to ensure animals under human care thrive in optimal conditions. She's excited to share what she learned with the Center's staff and volunteers.

Daisy brings back knowledge that will help us ensure our resident birds, like Charley the Great Horned Owl, thrive in our care.





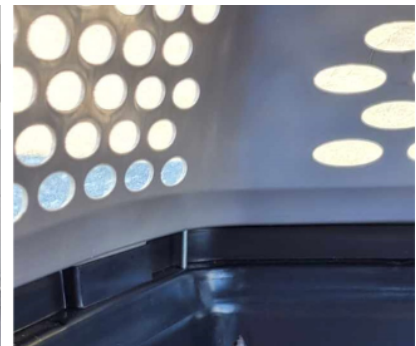
Celebrating Staff Anniversaries

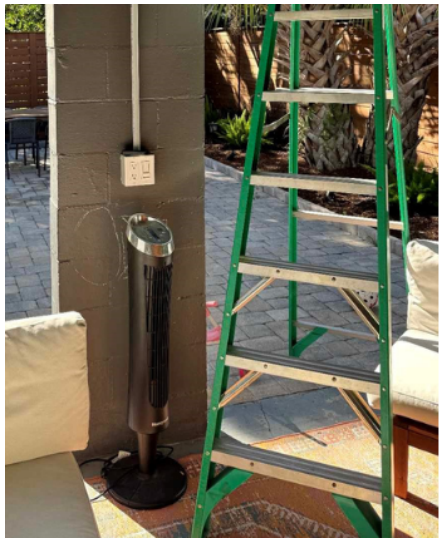
December marks work anniversaries for two of our staff members: Cameron Couvillon celebrates one year as our senior raptor care assistant, and Beth Lott celebrates 22 years as our raptor specialist.

Beth is celebrating 22 years this week. Her institutional knowledge and expertise in treating Florida's raptors can be seen on a daily basis. As a Clinic leader, she works with staff, interns, and volunteers to tirelessly care for the many birds that come through our doors. Beth is also our permit holder for all resident birds, including the Center's ambassadors and those placed at other zoos, educational institutions, and sanctuaries—a process that can be tricky and time-consuming. Her commitment to conservation and her contributions to the Center is greatly appreciated. Congratulations, Beth!

While Cameron is celebrating a year as a full-time team member, his time here at the Center began in 2021 when he was a Clinic intern. From there, he stayed on as a volunteer and then a seasonal staff member, until we were able to offer him a full-time role in the Raptor Trauma Clinic last year. Not only is Cameron gifted when it comes to working with birds, but he is also a computer whiz, and has become an expert in managing our medical database. He frequently uses the database to draw conclusions about the types of care that would be most helpful for a given patient, creating better outcomes for the birds. Congratulations on one year, Cameron!

From left to right: Cameron (with Billie the Eastern Screech-Owl), Beth (with Merlin the Barred Owl).





Volunteers Get Creative During Harrowing Rescue

Rescuing raptors is never exactly easy, but last week we had a particularly tricky situation on our hands. We received a call from a homeowner who saw an Eastern Screech-Owl fall into a nine-foot concrete column on their back patio. The owl had been in the area for a few days, perching on top of the column, and it was by a stroke of luck that the homeowner saw the moment it fell in. With a width of about four inches, the hole was not wide enough for the owl to spread its wings and fly out.

Volunteers Maggie Haynes and Noah Hoffner-O'Connor met at the home and immediately began trying a variety of rescue methods. Finally, they found something that worked: A soup ladle with two cords attached provided a little scoop for the owl to rest in while they raised it up. Once at the top of the column, Noah quickly grabbed the owl before it could jump down again.

Here at the Raptor Trauma Clinic, we gave the owl a quick exam and it passed with flying colors—it was released later that same day. Noah and Maggie discussed with the grateful homeowner the possibility of installing a screech-owl nest box, and the necessity of covering the openings at the top of those columns. Cheers to Noah, Maggie, the conscientious homeowner, and the little screech-owl, flying free once again!

Noah worked for hours, trying many different ways to get the little owl out. Finally, a soup ladle did the trick, and the owl was safely delivered to the Raptor Trauma Clinic for an exam.

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