



Branching Out

Fall 2020

P.O. Box 296
Apopka, FL 32704



We admitted our first of 27 nestlings, a Great Horned Owl on February 26 and our last of 57 fledglings, a Mississippi Kite on July 18 making the 2020 baby season a long one. Nestlings are unable to take care of themselves and require hand-feeding or the care of a surrogate parent. We are fortunate to have a Great Horned Owl and two Kestrels who will act as surrogates. Fledglings are somewhat self-sufficient and will generally eat cut food on their own; they need to see and hear a member of their own species for normal development so we place them with adults of the same species.



American Kestrel nestlings,
approximately 12 days old



Newly-hatched Great Horned Owlet
under Nonamé's wing



Red-shouldered Hawk nestling,
approximately 25 days old

ARC Living through COVID

2020 started with lots of activity and many exciting plans for the coming year. We were already busy with both on-site and off-site programs and looking forward to another great year of sharing our raptors at our usual array of spring festivals and summer camps. Saturdays at ARC saw us welcoming regular visitors and many newcomers as well. Sir Henry's Valentine Party was a lot of fun and plans were well underway for our Spring Affaire Renaissance Festival. We began admitting our first fledgling Great Horned Owlets in February and it was already shaping up to be a busier-than-usual baby season.



Everything changed on March 19th with the mandatory quarantine order. Since we care for wild birds, we are considered an essential business and as such were able to have staff and seasoned volunteers continue to come to ARC to provide care for our resident birds and the many injured and orphaned birds receiving treatment/care at our center. We are so grateful to those long-term volunteers who continued to give of their time and resources during this difficult period as this has been our busiest year to date, with 181 birds admitted as of September 15th. That's a lot of cleaning and feeding to do!

The quarantine order and subsequent limit on the size of gatherings meant we had to cancel our Renaissance Festival and also resulted in the loss of revenue from field trips, school and summer camp program fees as well as the many nature festivals we participate with during the spring and summer.

Without the ability to fund our work through traditional channels, we had to think of new ideas for fund-raising. We are blessed to have dedicated Friends of ARC who immediately sent donations to help and we are forever grateful for their generosity in this time of need. We also qualified for a small Payroll Protection Plan grant that enabled us to cover staff salaries for nearly three months.

In May, we were allowed to reopen on Saturdays and were able to accommodate a few on-site programs for home school groups and we provided summer programs for one private camp. Several of our creative volunteers began hosting live feeds on our Facebook page which was a great way to bring awareness to our center, share how we were managing through the pandemic and bring in some much-needed donations.

As we continue to navigate through these difficult times, we are keenly aware of how important it is to remain cautious. We had to postpone our fall opening for a few weeks, but are now open again on Saturdays and will be offering on-site programs for small groups and off-site programs in *outdoor* settings while following all recommended CDC safety guidelines. We will soon be offering virtual classroom programs. We are excited to be able to continue to share our birds through our outreach programs this fall and look forward to getting back to normal soon.

ARC's Busiest Year Ever

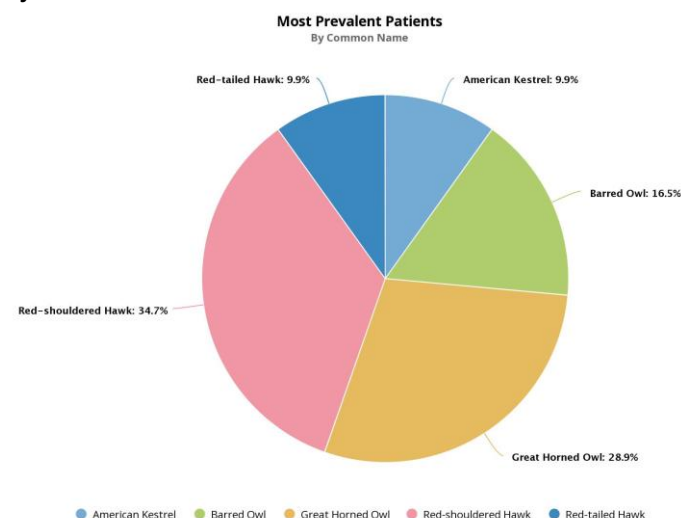
We admitted our first bird on New Year's Day, an immature Peregrine Falcon! Gem was a local falconry bird that sustained an eye injury while hunting. When the injury resulted in the loss of vision in her left eye, Gem joined our family of resident Ambassadors. Sparky is definitely smitten with this big beautiful girl and does the "falcon bow" whenever he sees her.

Great Horned Owlets are usually the first babies of the season and began coming in the end of February and numbered over 20 by the end of April. Nonamé was a very busy surrogate Mama during these months, nurturing these owlets and providing expert guidance to prepare them for life in the wild.

We have been seeing more Mississippi Kites in the Central Florida area as they expand their range due to changes in habitat and admitted 3 juveniles this year. Kites are somewhat social and we often house them with Swallow-tailed Kites while they are here at our center, decorating the mew with branches and live greenery to provide more of a natural experience for these species who spend most of their time foraging aloft.

We celebrated April Fool's Day by releasing a Bald Eagle! Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission brought us this beautiful bird on March 3rd after finding her near the turnpike with a leg injury. She received treatment and, after nearly a month recuperating in our large flight barn, was released back to the wild.

181 raptors (over 70% were first-year birds) of 16 different species have been admitted for treatment as of September 15th making this our busiest year ever! 2018 was our previous high with a total of 170 birds admitted for the entire year. As habitat degradation becomes more prevalent, we sadly expect these numbers to continue to climb and we are dedicated to meeting the challenge of caring for Florida's amazing raptors. We hope you will join us!



Did You Know...

Apopka, the rehabilitated Swallow-tailed Kite that ARC released in July of 2017, has now completed three successful migrations and is once again wintering in South America. This amazing bird has now logged more than 100,000 miles after his rehabilitation for a shoulder injury! You can follow the journeys of several tagged Swallow-tailed Kites by visiting <http://arcinst.org/arc-tracking-studies>.

We wish Apopka well on his spring 2021 return to Central Florida!

Save the Date

Raptors in a Pine Tree

Who wants a partridge, turtle doves or French hens in a Pear Tree when you can have a hawk or an owl? We are planning a very special event for December 12, 2020. An evening of hors d'oeuvres and cocktails with ARC's resident raptor ambassadors under the stars at the pavilion at ARC. There will be a limited number of tickets for sale on our website starting the middle of November.



Ruby hanging out on the back of the property during a free flight session.

Staying Connected

For more information about our facility and available education programs, visit our website. Follow us on social media for up-to-date information about our birds, upcoming events and behind-the-scenes photographs.

www.arc4raptors.org
www.facebook.com/arc4raptors
www.instagram.com/arc4raptors
www.youtube.com/user/arc4raptorsorg

When you do your online shopping at Amazon, you can also help ARC by clicking on our link arc4raptors.org/amazon and following the prompts. Through our partnership with Amazon.com, ARC will receive a 6% donation on all purchases made by shoppers using this link.

Sponsor the care of your favorite resident bird with ARC's Adopt-a-Bird sponsorship program. www.arc4raptors.org/adopt-a-bird.html

The Nest Box Resource Shop is open on Saturday from 10a to 4p (1p during June & July). We have a large selection of raptor-themed items. All proceeds benefit bird care at ARC.

As ARC continues to grow, we need your help! We are looking for volunteers on Saturdays from 9:30a to 4p and on Wednesdays and Fridays from 9:30a to 1:00p. We request a minimum of 3 hours. No animal experience is necessary, only a desire to learn and assist. You must be 14 years or older. Soar with us and join the ARC family today! Call 407-461-1056 to learn how a few hours of your time can make a big difference.



Upcoming Events

We're open to the public on Saturdays from 10a-4p (weather permitting). Stop by for a visit with your favorite Florida raptor. We're located at 323 West Lester Road, Apopka, FL 32712. Visit ARC4raptors.org for a map.

Social Distancing Saturdays – 10a-4p

Join us on Saturdays for an ongoing education presentation at the open-air pavilion and flight demonstrations throughout the day. Birds are on display until 2:30p and then go home so we can do our last flight demo. We will be following all CDC safety protocols. Bring your camera for some fabulous photo opportunities.

Fall Hootenanny – October 31, 2020, 11a-noon or noon-2p

A 2-hour event for children to celebrate Halloween with ARC's resident owls. Tickets will be on sale in early October. Check website for more information and instructions to purchase. Everyone makes an owl mask and other crafts are available.

Raptors in a Pine Tree – December 12, 2020, 4-6p

Tickets will be on sale on our website the middle of November. Join us for a Holiday Celebration under the evening stars. Hors d'oeuvres and cash bar with cocktails, beer and wine. Meet Ruby, the Hawk in a Pine Tree, and many of our other resident raptors.

Roaming Raptors

Roaming Raptors programs are available to come to your outdoor location or you can choose to bring your group to our center for a field trip.

Dates are booking quickly, so schedule your program today! Get more information and submit your program request online at ARC4raptors.org under the education tab.



The Avian Reconditioning Center is a specialized raptor rehabilitation facility where large outdoor enclosures and the use of falconry techniques provide a more natural environment for physical conditioning and weather proofing of orphaned and recuperating raptors.

State and Federal Wildlife Permits; 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation

Patron Reply Form – Please consider becoming a "Patron of the ARC." All monies donated are used entirely for the birds' welfare.

NAME _____

_____ \$25.00 Wings of Copper

ADDRESS _____

_____ \$50.00 Wings of Bronze

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

_____ \$100.00 Wings of Silver

EMAIL _____

_____ \$250.00 Wings of Gold

_____ \$500.00+ Wings of Platinum

The Avian Reconditioning Center is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization. Donors may deduct all contributions as provided in section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code, A. Copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the division of consumer services by calling toll free (800)435-7352. State Registration does not imply endorsement, approval or recommendations by the state.