The Avian Reconditioning Center
WILDLIFE EDUCATION • FALCONRY • RAPTOR REHABILITATION

Branching Out

Fall 2021

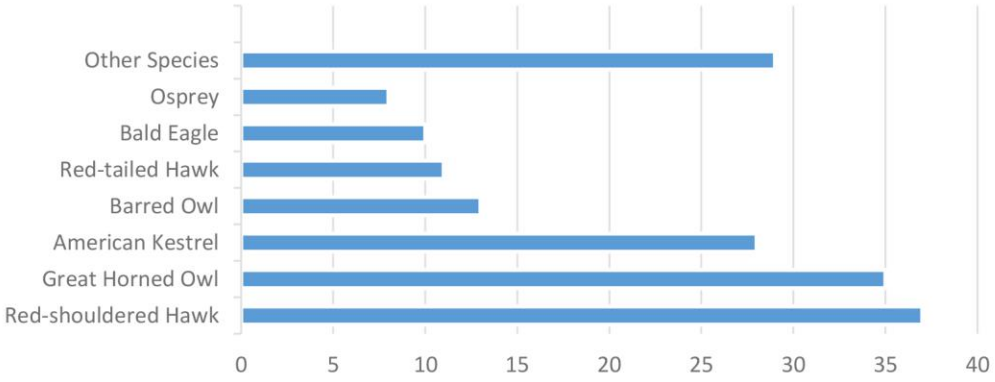
Come Have a Personal Raptor Experience!

September 4th marks the beginning of our 2021-22 education program season and we look forward to welcoming visitors to ARC on Saturdays as well as resuming our education program schedule for both on-site field trips and off-site programs. We will continue to observe recommended COVID protocols and ask that non-vaccinated visitors wear a mask and observe social-distancing. We are also planning to offer more virtual program options for classrooms and other groups.

Beginning October 2nd we will be adding a **Personal Raptor Experience (PRE)** option for visitors on Saturdays! For an additional donation of $25, (normal admission is $5 per person with children under the age of five free) your group of up to 4 people can have a private 30-minute visit with three of our amazing resident raptors at our covered picnic pavilion. See your favorite birds up-close on the handler's glove, take photos with them and learn about their life behind the scenes here at the Center. Our expert handlers will share interesting details and stories and answer all your questions.

The loss of nearly all our 2020 program revenue hit us hard and those losses have continued through this current summer of 2021 as all but 2 of the summer camps we normally provide programs for were forced to cancel our sessions due to city and/or county funding issues. Our celebrations for Sir Henry's Valentine Party and World Migratory Bird Day were small ticked events that allowed a limited number of visitors to safely enjoy time learning about our work and visiting with our resident raptors. These ticketed events were so well-received that we've had numerous requests to continue them going forward and we're planning to do just that – starting with our children's Owl at the Moon celebration on October 30th! Tickets will be available at ARC4raptors.org beginning on October 1st.

Although we had fewer visitors and did fewer programs than normal, we admitted more birds than ever before so we've stayed very busy! As of August 28, 171 raptors of 14 different species have been admitted, 110 have been released with 8 cases still pending and 5 transferred to other facilities. This chart shows our admits by species through August 28th. Other species include Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Barn Owl, Cooper's Hawk, Eastern Screech-owl, Mississippi Kite and Swallow-tailed Kite.



Henry Loved Being a Dad

Father's Day arrived early for Henry when we admitted an orphaned Barn Owl nestling on March 2, 2021. The little ball of fluff weighed only 168g, less than 6 ounces! On admission, the owlet was examined and no trauma was noted. Having no injuries greatly increases the chance of survival and eventually being returned to the wild.

When a baby bird hatches from its egg, it is called a nestling. At this point in its life, a young owlet is defenseless and depends on its parents for warmth and food. Its eyes are not even open yet! It will be called as a nestling until it learns how to fly and then it will be referred to as a fledgling.

Being so young and vulnerable, it is very important that the nestling does not become imprinted on humans. We take careful measures with all young raptors in our care here at ARC to ensure that they grow up developing the wild instincts that are necessary for survival when they are released to the wild.

This is where Henry, our surrogate Dad, takes over. Although, at 14 years old, Henry has never had an owlet of his own to care for, he knew exactly what to do and took this little abandoned nestling under his wing and treated it like it was his own. Isn't nature amazing! He fed the owlet with tender care, protected it, taught it crucial skills and encouraged it to develop instinctual behaviors. Henry's constant presence and guidance helped this owlet understand that it was a Barn Owl, fostered communication among its own species, helped it identify prey and develop flight and hunting skills.

In a few weeks, the young owlet was ready to test its wings and become a fledgling. By April 10th, the fledgling weighed 580g (nearly 3.5 times what it weighed when admitted) and the fluffy natal down had been replaced with beautiful feathers. With practice, it soon perfected its flying technique and on May 2nd was ready to be released to the wild. As wildlife rehabilitators, release is always our number one goal. It's so gratifying to see orphaned raptors flying free and thriving in the wild where they belong!

Did You Know…

Many species of raptors nest in tree cavities. The advantages of cavity nesting include protection from weather conditions, concealment and protection from certain predators. Raptors do not excavate cavities and are dependent on naturally-occurring cavities that result from decay or those created by primary excavators such as woodpeckers. Many species will use man-made nest boxes when natural cavities are not available. Such nest boxes have specific size and other requirements for each species. Our student volunteer, Rachel Snell, researched and built the beautiful Barn Owl nest box pictured on the back of this newsletter.

Eastern Screech-owls

Student volunteer, Megan Sorbo pictured on the back with Barred Owl "Patch" found inspiration for her school paper at ARC. Read Megan's paper online at ARC4raptors.org under the education tab to learn other interesting facts about these tiny owls!

- Wild populations number about 900,000
- Favorite food is the cockroach
- They use a passive hunting technique
- They are known to cache prey
- Their eyes are asymmetrical
- They will mimic a broken branch to evade predators
- Both genders perform courtship behaviors
- The male protects the nest cavity and will act as a decoy for predators

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

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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 to learn about our work and visit with our resident Florida raptors. We're located at 323 West Lester Road, Apopka, FL 32712. Visit ARC4raptors.org for a map.

Owl at the Moon – October 30, 2021
A fun day for children to celebrate Halloween with ARC's resident owls. Come make an owl mask and enter the hooting contest. This is a ticked event and two sessions will be available.

Holiday Raptor Mingle – December 11, 2021, 4-6p
Enjoy a festive evening with tapas, wine and beer while you chat with our volunteers and visit with our resident raptors. Attendance is limited. Tickets will be available at ARC4raptors.org in early November.

Sir Henry's Valentine Party – February 12, 2022 Ticketed Event

Spring Affaire Renaissance Festival – March 2022– date TBA

World Migratory Bird Day – May 14, 2022 Ticketed Event

American Eagle Day – June 18, 2022 – 10a-12:30p

Roaming Raptors

Roaming Raptors programs are available to come to your 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_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____STATE_____ZIP_____

EMAIL_____

_____ $25.00 Wings of Copper

_____ $50.00 Wings of Bronze

_____ $100.00 Wings of Silver

_____ $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.

P.O. Box 296
Apopka, FL 32704

Rachel with the Barn Owl
box she built

Volunteer Nicole Jones is our
Swallow-tailed Kite expert.
The DNA results are in.
Neo is a boy!

Megan with “Patch”