

Wild At Heart's (May 2015 Notes)



April Showers Bring...Baby Owls



Since our last newsletter, the month of April proved to be a very busy month for young owls and hawks that needed rescue. During April, Wild At Heart received 75 nestlings, raising the year's total to 101. If that number seems high, it is! This April alone equaled 40% of the entire count of nestlings rescued last year.

Here are some common questions we receive about these young birds that are beyond the diligent help of their parents and need our assistance....

Why has there been a dramatic increase this year?

One notable reason is due to several windy days in April. Wind inevitably dislodges young hawks and owls from their nests. Owls are even more prone to having their young dislodged by the wind since they do not build nests and, often simply raise their young on small flat areas.

A second reason for the increase is more people know who to call when an owl or hawk is in need of rescue. Our thanks go to all of you who take the time and care to call for a rescue and, who spread the word about Wild At Heart. Your help has not simply created a record number of raptors to be cared for, it has created a record number of raptors that have been saved.

Why can't the young owls be left where they are?

Quite frequently, the larger and older nestlings can remain on the ground after leaving the nest, which is a natural part of their life history. The young (9-10 weeks) owl shown to the right is a perfect example of "leave them be." The parents are very protective of the young on the ground for many weeks. The parents sit from a distance (not near the young as to avoid drawing attention to them) and protect them from predators. They also follow the young wherever they may wander and bring them food at night. Seeing a young owl like this one without parents is NORMAL.



However, the very small nestlings still covered in white down are very susceptible to harm. Unable to move far, these young need protection from the sun, from ants, and from a myriad of other dangers such as cats, dogs, and wildlife. If you see a down-covered owl or hawk on the ground, be sure to call Wild At Heart (480-595-5047).



How are the rescued young cared for?

After the young are examined for any signs of injury and found to be free of harm, they are placed with foster owls or hawks. Wild At Heart has a foster parent program where permanently injured adults serve a most critical purpose, which is to care after the nestlings placed with them. Not only does this enrich the lives of the adults, it provides natural feeding of the young along with allowing the young to imprint onto their fellow species – instead of onto humans.

For more information on when you should – and should not – provide assistance to an injured raptor, take a look at our rescue page at this link... <http://wildatheartaptors.org/rescue/>

Good News!



The ultimate goal of Wild At Heart's mission is to return injured or young birds back into the wild so they can live a natural and independent life. So far this year, we have released nearly 100 birds back to their natural habitats. This is 100 birds that would have had a very different ending had it not been for people like you who care enough to call for help. Thank you for caring!

The Great Horned Owl, released on April 30th, 2015, is just one of the 100 returned to the wilds of Arizona this year!

More Good News!

One other happy story involves a bridge and a family of Barn Owls. Sometimes, construction might seem to compete with wildlife. However, this is not always true. In this instance, a caring construction crew found a family of Barn Owls while doing maintenance on a bridge. One of them knew to call Wild At Heart and arranged for us to temporarily relocate the mother and chicks to WAH before construction continued. After several weeks, we are happy to say the family of Barn Owls has been safely returned to their original home under the bridge!

What Kinds of Injuries Do We See?

A common and important question people ask when they hear about the hundreds of birds we care for (currently, there are over 230 raptors with us) is, *“What are the typical causes of their injuries?”*

There are a few familiar themes for injuries. By far, the most common injury is due to impact with a car or from colliding with other manmade structures. Excluding the nestlings, half of the injured birds received so far this year were from wing and leg injuries that occurred due to cars or other impact.

A few other common injuries include the following::

- ☀ Gunshots: Yes, this sadly still occurs. It is also highly illegal.
- ☀ Poisoning: Hawks and owls will happily consume dead mice and rats – unknowingly eating those that have been poisoned people trying to eliminate the rodents.
- ☀ Electrocution: The larger hawks can be severely zapped around power poles and other electrical gear.
- ☀ Dogs and Cats: The smaller species of owls and the unfortunate young of others often encounter pets.
- ☀ Trichomoniasis: This protozoan parasite is passed between raptors, pigeons, doves, and game birds. It causes lesions in the throat and mouth that swell until the bird can no longer swallow food, drink water or, even breath. You can help curtail this disease by routinely cleaning your bird baths and feeders



If you found this newsletter to be informative and of interest, please feel free to share it with others who may want know how they can help our birds of prey!

Thank you for helping us care for our Arizona raptors!

Wild At Heart is a 501(c)3, non-profit organization. We are volunteer organization dedicated to the conservation and preservation of Arizona's native wildlife through the rescue and rehabilitation of injured and orphaned birds of prey. Our birds and our operations rely on volunteers and your tax deductible donations.