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AVIAN HAVEN

2004 Year End Report

"Eagles do not beget doves," according to a proverb. It's a good thing they don't, because our eagle

caseload doubled since 2003, and we already had plenty of doves! This first-year bird (who is not old enough to beget) was one of an even dozen eagles cared for here in 2004; for her story and others, read on!

Rehabilitation 2004: Overview

We admitted 927 wild birds (about 100 more than last year) from 104 species, the most prevalent native species were American robin (89), mourning dove (60), Eastern phoebe (54), American goldfinch (36), blue jay (28), cedar waxwing (25), chipping sparrow (24), American crow (23), and chimney swift (22). Nonnative species comprised about 13% of our admissions (66 rock doves, 34 European starlings and 18 English sparrows); we also admitted 13 domestic birds (mostly racing pigeons). Our raptor admissions again increased by about 16% from the previous year: of the 77 total, the most common were barred owls (14), bald eagles (12), American kestrels (12), broad-winged hawks (11), and ospreys (7).

As in previous years, orphaned birds accounted for just over half of the total admissions. Causes of injuries were reported for 233 birds; 79 (more than half of them babies) were caught by cats, 68 were hit by cars, and 49 struck windows. Various others were caught in leg-hold traps, flypaper, glue trap, trellis, netting, fishing rigs, etc., and one ring-billed gull was hit by a golf-ball! The pattern of injury to limbs was similar to last year's: 99 involved wings, 36 involved legs, and

38 involved both. We had confirmed lead toxicity in 2 bald eagles (1 survived) and 2 common loons.

Of the 927 total, we transferred 34 to colleagues who had more expertise or better facilities for a particular injury or species. Among the remainder, 471 were released, and 16 are still pending. Additionally, we cared for 36 reptiles: 21 baby turtles held over from 2003 were released, as were an additional 4 snappers, 3 painted turtles, 1 wood turtle (almost all which had been hit by cars) and a bullfrog. We also released one milk snake and placed another—see the story to follow!

Stretching our Wings

We finished the addition to the infirmary just in time for baby season, and made good use of a new office, library, darkroom, and indoor flight area. The aviary is about 8' x 10' with three walls being mostly windows; we were able to release birds who went to flight school there simply by removing the screens and net panels. Currently, it is filled with flowering tropical plants and serving as a wintering ground for several birds whose difficulties precluded migration. Once again, we thank Terry Heitz (designer and builder), Read &

On July 11, we admitted a grackle nestling on the verge of fledging. We still had two other young grackles at the time, and they all went out to a flight cage on the 16th. Almost from that moment, this nestling was in frequent vocal communication with two wild adults; they sat in a tree near the flight cage, and "talked" with the youngster for hours on end. The other young grackles in the cage did not participate in the conversation, however. On the 18th we decided to give the talkers an opportunity to get together: Diane sat in the foyer of the cage with the fledgling, and when the adults came to call, she quietly opened the door and the young bird walked out. At first, we thought we'd made a mistake, because the adults did not come down after the youngster. But they stayed in vocal contact, and we persuaded ourselves not to intervene as the juvenile flew from shrub to low tree branch to higher tree branch, always toward the persistently calling adults. Within half an hour, we saw the fledgling high in our tallest tree, perched close to one adult while the other fed it. This youngster had been brought to us from more than 100 miles away; although it was unlikely to have been the adults' natural offspring, they certainly seemed determined and delighted to adopt it.





Great-blue herons fledge at around 7-8 weeks of age, but have poor foraging skills and depend on their parents for food for several more weeks. "Teenagers" separated from (or disowned by) their parents before learning to find enough food on their own may have difficulty as the weather becomes colder, particularly if they wander into unsuitable habitat. Every fall, we admit starving juvenile great-blue herons (they comprise an unusual category of admissions in that their difficulties do not seem directly linked to human presence). Some do not survive, but others respond to an emergency protocol for emaciation that starts with fluids and gradually ramps up to liquid, then solid food. Our favorite release site for herons is a salt marsh estuary that borders the Weskeag River. So when the bird that was transferred to us on August 21 from Bill Arthurs up in Lee was ready to go on Sept. 1, one of our volunteers drove it there. Our next successful heron, brought to us on Sept. 14 by a physician in Norridgewock, was released at the same spot on Sept. 29. A third heron, admitted by veterinarian Frank Caputo in Belfast, was transferred to us on Sept. 27; it went to our favorite spot on Oct. 3, and the property owner, Ron, sent us this photo of the bird leaving the carrier for open water. He had been watching the previous two, and could recognize the large bird released on the 29th. After the third release, he stayed at the site, and later that afternoon saw the bird just released and the previous one fly toward each other from opposite directions. As they approached one another, they circled around each other before landing together, as if they recognized one another. But although they had both come from Avian Haven, Two was already in our flyway when Three was admitted; they had never seen each other until the day Three was released. GBH Four had been rescued by a trapper in a marsh near Skowhegan. This bird was released at Ron's marsh on Nov. 14, and we thought we had seen our last heron of the season. But late in the afternoon of Dec. 7, wildlife biologist Chuck Hulsey picked up one that had been found lying down in woods near Farmington. Our colleague Donna Bogardus warmed the bird, gave it fluids, and stabilized it overnight; Chuck brought it down the next day. Ron still had open water and herons when we checked with him on Dec. 14, but the bird was still not flying as well as we wanted it to, and a few days later, a cold snap throughout New England froze all the marshes. Luckily, however, one of our season interns, Meghan, was planning a trip home to New York for the holidays, and there was still open water that far south. Two days before Christmas, she released the bird at The Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, next door to The Raptor Trust, where another heron had been seen overhead that morning.

Heidi Brugger for start-up funding (in memory of John Brugger) and other donors who supported the project, and Norm Schultz & Ellsworth Building Supply for a discount on construction materials. Surrounding the addition, landscape designs and plantings were masterminded by Raelene Rogers (Dutton's Greenhouse & Nursery). More generally, Kathy Kandziolka was our garden and grounds genie.

Early in 2004, www.avianhaven.org "molted," with its beautiful new plumage created by James Skowbo (Diane's very talented brother, whose contact information for web design services can be found on our site). Toward the end of the summer, Terry built us a pool enclosure for turtles and swimming birds; we thank Jean Adamson and Caren Plank for donations that made it possible.

Helpers at the Nest

Once again, we were blessed with a terrific staff. Our Unity College interns, Kristin San Miguel and Meghan Sine, were both incredible. On-site volunteers were Dave Bailey, Bob Brooks, Amy Campbell, Natalie Crowley, Kathleen Hardy, Terry Heitz, Lise Herold, Katherine Jeschke, Kathy Kandziolka, Derek Lucas, Robin Perrault, Caren Plank, Sydney Thomas, Emma Veilleux, Shawn Weigelt, Paula Williamson, and Janet Wiseley. All of our regular staff helped with

occasional rescues and transports, but we were also most fortunate in having a group of volunteer drivers who helped get birds from surrounding towns here safely and quickly: Jean Adamson, Connie Bixby, Debbie & Fred Bryant, Christy Charters, Nat Clifford, Marge Cottle, Amy Dillon, Dan Elliot, Heather Fisher, Karla Gustafson-Getsadze, Ed Hinckley, Jessica Jackson, Carol Jones, Sharon LaVigne, Cheryl Lord, Charndra Michaud, Bob Morrisette, Linda Roinestad, Susan Smith Hudson, Gary Stimeling, Maureen Sugden, Robin Vedder, and Melanie West. Our thanks also go to Waterville-area ACO Pat Faucher for many transports to Avian Haven.

Veterinary Support

Wildlife rehabilitation would not be possible without the support of veterinarians – they are the wind beneath our wings. Locally, Dr. Judy Herman (Animal Wellness Center of Augusta) has given generously of her skills and time, especially in surgical repairs of fractures; she too has an awesome staff (thanks, Gina and Jamie!). Particularly challenging cases have also benefited from consultations with Drs. Mark Pokras and Flo Tseng (Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine in MA) and Dr. Richard Evans (Wildlife Pathology Services in CA). We are also grateful to local veterinary pathologists Drs. Russell Danner (Augusta) and Elizabeth Stone (Pownal).



Free-roaming cats are a significant and increasing threat to our native wildlife, including but not limited to birds. Each season we are repeatedly dismayed when

people arrive with barely-alive, badly-mangled birds, handing them over with apologetic smiles about their cats' damaged "play toys." This year, the number of cat-caught birds we admitted was nearly 40% higher than last year. Their injuries ranged from punctures and gashes to dismemberment and disembowelment. They were from 29 species that included not only familiar birds such as robins and mourning doves, but also less commonly-seen birds such as hermit and wood thrushes, indigo buntings, and various warbler species. This ovenbird survived, but many other cat victims did not. We urge—no, beg!—readers to support wildlife conservation by keeping their cats indoors (for more information about the American Bird Conservancy's Cats Indoors! campaign, visit www.abcbirds.org.)

Rehab Education

An important part of our mission is training upcoming generations of rehabilitators. We gave our basic passerine rehab workshop twice in 2004 – for students at Unity College in March, and at the Chewonki Foundation (sponsored by ReMaine Wild) in November. Additionally we published an article describing our large raptor compound and flyway in the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association's *Wildlife Rehabilitation Bulletin*, and we continued to work with ME IF&W on a new study guide and examination for rehab permit applicants.

Recognition & Networks

We were deeply honored in April to receive an award from the Maine Chapter of The Wildlife Society "in recognition of extraordinary vision and tireless dedication in the care, rehabilitation and conservation of wild birds." For more information about the important work done by The Wildlife Society, visit its website at www.wildlife.org.

We maintain close ties with colleagues both in state and "from away," always with the goal of ensuring the best possible outcome for the animal. As mentioned above, after initial stabilization, we transferred about 3% of our admissions to other rehabilitators who, we thought, could offer better options for continued care. Most of the transfers were swimming birds such as loons and gulls; they went to Kappy Sprenger of Bridgeton (thanks, Kappy!), who specializes in shore and sea birds. 32% of our admissions came from other rehabilitators, wildlife biologists, wardens, and other animal professionals such as veterinarians.

We also work with agencies and institutions whose conservation focus is broader than rehabilitation per se, including Unity College (Dave Knupp, Jim Nelson), Mid-Coast

Audubon (Joe Gray), National Audubon's Seabird Restoration Project (Rose Borzik, Steve Kress), Maine's Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (Ken Elowe, Dave Phillips, Charlie Todd, plus numerous other biologists and wardens) and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (Dave Dobias, Eric Holmes, Mark McCollough). This year, Marc was a member of Maine's Bald and Golden Eagle Public Working Group. We submit all birds that do not survive to The Center for Wildlife Health Research in Pownal for its investigation of avian mortality events in Maine; additionally, we accept any birds found dead for inclusion in this project (for more information, see home.maine.rr.com/cwhr).

Fundraising & Finances

Several of our volunteers organized fund-raising events for us this year; we thank, in particular, Dave Bailey, Lise Herold, and Sydney Thomas for managing photo displays, raffles, and donation cans. We are also grateful to folks who donated goods, services, space, or other opportunities for fundraising, including Chase's Daily, Darby's, The Green Store, HairCut 100, Hannaford Brothers, Hanibals, Heron Dance Ltd., M & L Seafood, Pam McKeen, the Owl's Head Transportation Museum, PetCo, Cynthia Swan, and South by Southwest Java Co. Our thanks also go to Dog Days Café for hosting a matching donation event.

On Oct. 8, we were brought a fascinating biological anomaly—a small two-headed milk snake found a few days earlier by a young man named Glen Tricarico.

Glen's mother knew one of our volunteer drivers, who had suggested that the snake might benefit from Marc's reptile expertise. Two-headed snakes are quite uncommon and rarely survive in the wild; specimens in captivity need careful attention, because the two heads may compete for food. It was agreed that we would provide initial care and develop a long-term plan. Over the next couple of weeks, Marc was able to feed the snake once, and it shed its skin. Then on Oct. 21, as Marc was waiting in the cashier's line at a store, he noticed, in the magazine rack, a copy of *Reptile* magazine from the previous February—the cover story was about two-headed snakes! The author was Dr. Van Wallach, curator at Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology, and leading authority on the topic. Because so few specimens had ever been studied scientifically, Dr. Wallach asked readers to notify him of any that were known, dead or alive! Of course we contacted him right away and, with the Tricaricos' enthusiastic support, offered him the animal. He was delighted to accept, and drove to Maine personally on the 26th. A few weeks later, he told us that the snake had eaten several times, with both heads being able to swallow and the internal organs apparently in fine working order. There are definitive previous records of only 5 two-headed milk snakes; because so little is known of the behavior of dicephalic snakes, Dr. Wallach expects "Dubby" to become famous in the scientific literature on the topic.



On May 11, Mary Fournier of West Bath was enjoying a cup of coffee on her porch. Looking across the bay she noticed movement high in a large dead pine tree; through binoculars, she was dismayed to see an osprey hanging upside down, caught by a foot in what turned out to be a poly bait bag. She tried to contact appropriate authorities, but no one was available. Her husband Paul grabbed their canoe and paddled across the bay for a closer look. He returned with bad news — the tree could not be climbed. Paul's plan was to cut the tree and land the top over the large branch of a nearby tree. Taking careful sight, he made his cut. The tree landed across the branch as planned, but the top broke free and the osprey flew off with the bait bag still attached. She landed clumsily on a branch near her nest, then stumbled into it, disappearing from sight. The Fourniers knew they had done all they could, and hoped that the bird would be able to bite the bag free of her leg. Meanwhile, their local ACO and friend Ann Harford returned Mary's call, and told her about Avian Haven.

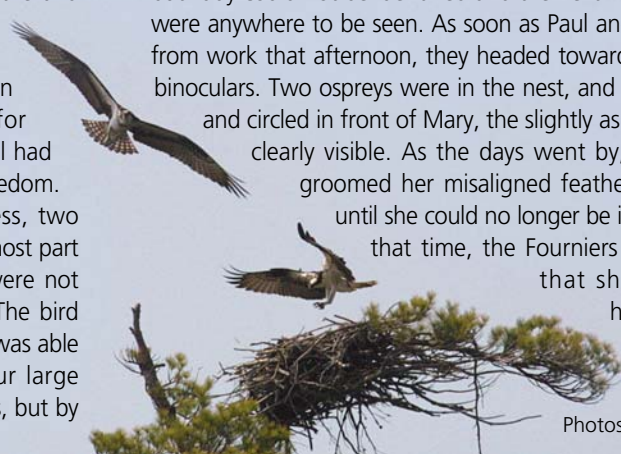
The next morning, Mary's visiting mother noticed a movement near the shore; through binoculars, Mary saw the osprey tangled again by the bait bag in a tree, but this time close to the ground. Mary and her brother Maurice quickly gathered gloves and scissors, ran for the water with the canoe, and paddled as fast as they could to the opposite shore. Mary approached the bird, speaking softly and trying not to frighten her. She gently folded the bird's wings and held her while Maurice first cut the bag from her foot, and then cut the strings wrapped around her toes. Finally she was free, but her legs hung straight down, unmoving. Mary carefully set the bird on the ground, but she could only take a few lurching steps before stumbling and falling, so Mary gathered her up again and carried her to the canoe. Paul drove in just as they returned to the shore, and called us for directions while Mary settled the bird into a crate. Paul had to return to work, so Mary and Maurice headed for Freedom.

When the bird arrived, our concerns were stress, two broken primaries (the long flight feathers on the outermost part of the wing), and of course her legs. Luckily, they were not fractured, though obviously were strained and sore. The bird the Fourniers had already begun to call "Lady Osprey" was able to perch, but did so leaning against the wall of our large hospital cage. Lady was also thin; we started with fluids, but by



the end of the day felt comfortable giving her a fish, which she ate with gusto. We wanted to get her back to her mate as soon as possible, and tested her flight the next morning. She flew but not strongly, so we opted for another day to recuperate. Meanwhile, Mary and Paul reported that an osprey presumed to be her mate was flying low over the bay and calling. On the 14th, Lady easily made it up to the high perch in the flight cage; we decided to imp the broken primaries (repair by splinting a donor feather) and get her back home. On arrival, Paul set the crate on the lawn facing the water. When he opened the door, she spread her wings too soon, and one of her wing feathers caught in the gate and twisted slightly. But she recovered quickly, stepped out of the crate, opened her wings and flew gracefully toward the water, landing in a tree near the nest. The male immediately flew to her side, and in a few minutes they both flew to the nest, as you see in this photo.

But the Fourniers' excitement turned to dismay when two other ospreys began to swoop over the nest, and Lady was chased away. That evening, three ospreys were near the nest, but Lady could not be identified and the next morning, no birds were anywhere to be seen. As soon as Paul and Mary returned from work that afternoon, they headed toward the shore with binoculars. Two ospreys were in the nest, and when one left it and circled in front of Mary, the slightly askew feather was clearly visible. As the days went by, Lady gradually groomed her misaligned feather into the wing until she could no longer be identified. But by that time, the Fourniers were confident that she had secured her rightful place as the Lady of the Nest.



Photos by Mary Fournier

Over 90% of our cash income in 2004 was from donations (with 22% of that income contributed by Diane and Marc personally); a modest grant and income from securities comprised the remainder. For financial support, we are especially grateful to Alice & Frank Puleo, Nancy & Charlie Shuman, the Winn Foundation Trust, and other donors who prefer to remain anonymous.

52% of our expenses involved construction: the addition (plus furnishings) and the pool cage mentioned above. Corporate costs (e.g., telephone, insurance, state registrations, year-end report, postage, etc.) accounted for another 23%, with the remaining 25% spent primarily in the categories of veterinary equipment and supplies, food, and internship stipends (Marc and Diane derive no income from Avian Haven).

Thanks

A number of local businesses have given us outright donations of or discounts on supplies or services. We thank Chase's Home Furnishings, Dutton's Greenhouse & Nursery, Ellsworth Building Supply, Finest Kind Fish Market, Hamilton Marine, Lightnin' Lumber, Renny's of Belfast, and Stetson X-Ray. Individuals who donated supplies or services include Jean Adamson, Dave Bailey, Kathryn Jeschke, Jo Lanyi, Allan Lord, Phyllis Pottle, Raelene Rogers, Cynthia Swan, Sydney Thomas, and Paula Williamson. For keeping our freezers full of food for various species, we thank the Belfast Cooperative, Scott Brown, Rick Gray, Alan Marchese, Ann Rivers, Sand Hill Strawberry Farm, Robin Shearer, Len Soucy,



This season as in past years, we received a number of injured or orphaned birds from members of the public who had tried to provide care and treatment themselves. Though often well-meaning, these individuals were not well-informed about the nutritional needs of wild birds or how to treat their injuries. One person kept a robin for 6 weeks without realizing that a fractured femur was protruding from the bird's hip. Additionally, the poor bird had metabolic bone disease from dietary calcium deficiency (it had been fed raw hamburger). This case was particularly troubling because the person knew it was illegal for her to have kept the bird, which died a week after we received it. Other sad cases included an indigo bunting with an eye infection and a wing fracture; we were horrified to hear that the rescuers had been advised by someone with a rehabilitation permit to "get on the internet" to learn how to secure a fractured wing. Their attempts were unsuccessful; after 3 weeks, the rescuers sought different advice and brought the bird to us. By then, the wing was not fixable, but the cause of death in this case was related to the untreated eye injury. We also were brought a goldfinch that had been given only sunflower seeds to eat for the year (!) it was kept in captivity. This bird had multiple untreated fractures; severely emaciated and too weak to stand, it died within a few hours of intake.

Wildlife rehabilitation permits are issued to people who can demonstrate basic knowledge pertaining to nutrition, husbandry, treatment of injuries, etc. and who have appropriate housing facilities. It is illegal at both state and federal levels to keep native wild birds without a permit. People interested in rehabilitation should contact ReMaine Wild (www.remainewild.org) about training opportunities and Dave Phillips at ME IF&W (Dave.Phillips@maine.gov) for information about acquiring permits.

and Frank Waltz. We also thank ME IF&W's Fish Health Lab and Hatchery Division and Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery. To Read Brugger and his staff at the Freedom Post Office: thank you for taking such good care of our incoming insect shipments! Last by no means least, we are extremely grateful to Dog Days Café for helping to feed US during baby season.

We are very grateful to Dr. Susan Giglia, who provided chiropractic treatments for a back-injured patient. For spiritually-focused healing efforts, we thank Nan Moss, Carolyn Horn (plus other members of "the Tuesday-night circle") and also Natalie Rapp. The talented photography of Caren Plank and Amy Campbell portrayed some of our patients in particularly inspiring ways; we also thank Meghan Sine for painting landscape scenes on some of our hospital cages. For entomological and nutritional counsel, we are indebted to Dr. Mark Finke. Colleen Burnham and Amy Campbell helped graciously with computer tasks beyond our skills. Last but not least, we thank our board members for their ongoing guidance and support: Dr. Henrietta Beaufait (who retired from the board this January), Dick Hansen, Dr. Judy Herman, and Allen Stehle.

Planning for Next Year

In November, we were delighted to learn that we would receive a grant from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund; the award will partially fund a housing and flight-conditioning compound for small raptors such as kestrels and saw-whet owls. Modeled after a design by Canada's Kay McKeever, the compound will contain three housing areas connected by flight corridors and tunnels. Terry Heitz, who designed and built the cages at Avian Haven, has added a number of special features: housing in a roosting area plus in two 12'-square territories facing a planted courtyard of similar size. The territories are connected by a floor-to-ceiling flight corridor at one set of corners and by an elevated flight tunnel at another. Continuous flight is available through the compound

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On July 26, Unity College professor Doug Van Horn brought us an adult broad-winged hawk that he had rescued from Rt. 1 near Renny's Plaza in Belfast. Presumed hit by a car, it had an open humerus fracture. Marc took the hawk to Dr. Herman the next day, but the fracture could not be surgically repaired, and, on Dr. Herman's recommendation, the bird was euthanized.

Then on August 10, Kim and Bill Sanderson rescued a broad-winged hawk fledgling found by the side of Rt. 1 near the Belfast Armory – close enough to where the now dead adult had been found to have been its offspring. The fledgling had been on the ground next to a dead sibling for several hours. It was in rough shape; it was quite thin and also had a leg fracture close to the knee. The prognosis was not hopeful, but we stabilized the bird and began our emaciation protocol. The fracture was too close to the joint for Dr. Herman to pin, so, on the 13th, a decision was made to cast the leg. It was a very long shot, but we had to try, especially given the deaths of the bird's sibling and presumed parent. When Marc removed the cast on the 26th, to his surprise the leg was "not bad!" The bird seemed to have about 25% of normal joint movement, and we knew it would improve. Marc began physical therapy, and within just a few days, the leg was in good enough shape for the bird to try an outdoor flight cage. Within a week, we had decided to go for a release. It was late in the season by that time; most of the broad-wings had left Maine. So on Sept. 10, this bird was packed up along with late-season swifts and swallows on their way south for release. The hawk and the swallows were released in MA, and the swifts went on to CT for release that evening at a roost near the home of our friend and colleague Jayne Amico.

Of course “bald” eagles are not really bald! This term (a shortening of the seemingly inappropriate “bald-headed”) derives from a 17th-century use of the word “bald” to signify “white.” Three of the eagles we cared for this year were first-year birds — easily distinguished from adults (though sometimes mistaken for golden eagles) by their brown heads and black beaks, which change over to the familiar white heads and yellow beaks around the 5th year. Among these three was our cover girl, who came from a township north of Rumford. A trapper had seen her on the ground for several days, eating at a bait pile; wildlife biologist Chuck Hulsey was able to capture her on Oct. 21. The bird did have a fracture of the ulna, one of the bones in the part of the wing analogous to the human forearm. She was in good weight, but had a glassy stare we have learned to associate with lead poisoning, which eagles may acquire after scavenging shot carcasses. Sure enough; our test results revealed lead in the blood stream, though our radiograph showed no lead still in the GI tract. In consultation with Dr. Pokras and Dr. Tseng at Tufts, we wrapped the wing and started chelation therapy (administering substances that combine with and sequester metallic ions). A week later, the lead level was down to a sub-clinical level, and it remained there on a re-check a week after that. The other good news was that the fracture was healing nicely; we removed the wing wrap on Nov. 14. But on the 20th, primaries started to drop from the area of the injury, and over the next month, the bird lost almost all of the flight feathers from the injured wing. In time, new ones replaced them, and on January 5, the bird flew to a high perch for the first time. With the blessing of state and federal officials who oversee Maine’s eagles, we are holding her through the coldest part of the winter for release in milder weather.



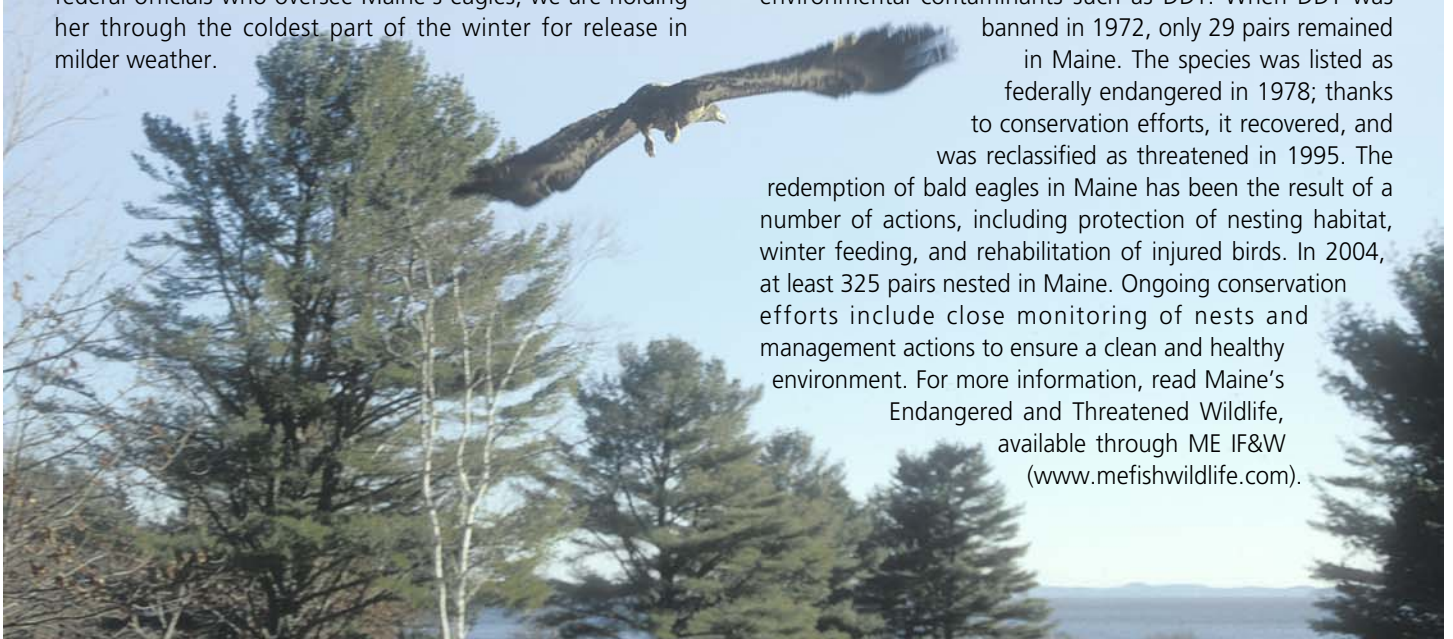
Lise Herold

Oh: were you wondering about the other two first-year birds? One had been seen in an apparently weakened state along Rt. 116 in Medway. The following day, wildlife biologist Buster Carter was able to capture him. Lead levels were negligible and we found no indication of fractures or injuries. But, mysteriously, the bird was missing several primaries on both wings. Replacements were already beginning to come in, but some were of poor quality – again, for unknown reasons. Although the bird began to fly in mid-December, we will imp a few feathers before releasing him in milder weather.

The third juvenile had been feeding on a car-hit deer carcass on Rt. 11 near Masardis; she was literally run over by a vehicle (a Hundai) whose driver did not see it in time to stop. Wildlife biologist Arlen Lovewell retrieved the bird later that day, Nov. 10. She spent the night with area rehabilitator Art Howell, and came here via a transportation relay on the following day. Miraculously, we could detect no broken bones; however the bird did not attempt to fly, and after a week on the ground, we decided to send radiographs to Dr. Pokras. His “eagle eye”

spotted a possible hairline fracture near the wrist, but when Marc went to the flight cage to wrap the wing, the bird flew away from him! For a while, we kept her in our 40’ cage with the two other juveniles; when she seemed restless in that space, we moved her down to the flyway compound. By the 10th of December, she was cranking laps around the “race track.” She was banded and released on Dec. 15. This photo shows her aloft, seconds after release.

Historically plentiful in the Northeast, bald eagles were almost extirpated because of widespread use of environmental contaminants such as DDT. When DDT was banned in 1972, only 29 pairs remained in Maine. The species was listed as federally endangered in 1978; thanks to conservation efforts, it recovered, and was reclassified as threatened in 1995. The redemption of bald eagles in Maine has been the result of a number of actions, including protection of nesting habitat, winter feeding, and rehabilitation of injured birds. In 2004, at least 325 pairs nested in Maine. Ongoing conservation efforts include close monitoring of nests and management actions to ensure a clean and healthy environment. For more information, read Maine’s Endangered and Threatened Wildlife, available through ME IF&W (www.mefishwildlife.com).



From the air, loons sometimes mistake wet pavement for water; once grounded, they cannot take off. On the afternoon of July 17, our colleague Art Howell in North Amity admitted an adult loon found on a highway not long after a rainstorm. He dropped everything and personally drove the bird to Orono, where one of our volunteer drivers, Karla, met him to bring the bird the rest of the way. As soon as the bird arrived, we did a lead test and took an x-ray; both were normal, and the bird seemed frantic to get out of our pool; most likely, we decided, it had been a “wet-road” bird. Karla had already left for home by this time, but another of our volunteers, Lise, had just arrived with an injured gannet. She was headed for Belfast and there was still at least an hour of daylight remaining. We quickly packed up the bird and said “GO!” without having time to tell her anything about the bird. While Lise drove toward the coast, she considered several possible release sites, and as she thought of an area near her friend Barbara Maria’s



Barbara Maria

house, a rainbow appeared—a sign, she thought, that it was the right place. Lise called Barbara Maria on her cell phone to see if it would be all right—it was, and she arrived shortly thereafter. The bird did not object to being lifted from the box and carried into shallow water. As the loon swam from Lise’s arms, it preened and flapped, as you see in this photo. Another loon called and this bird answered. As the newly-released bird swam out toward the one calling, Lise thought that perhaps we’d given it to her for release in Belfast because this is where it had come from; she wondered if this other bird might possibly be its mate. The story was not what she and Barbara Maria imagined at that moment, but whatever their previous acquaintance or non-acquaintance, the birds swam toward one another until they met, and, as Lise and Barbara Maria watched teary-eyed, the loons swam side-by-side toward the horizon in the fading light. As you’ve read our other featured cases, you’ve seen that this release was not the only one involving apparent albeit unlikely “reunions.”

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perimeter at about 70’ per lap. The back page features Terry’s rendering of an exterior view plus a photo of our surrogate kestrel mom Gracie feeding one of the 11 orphaned kestrels she raised this past season. We’ll start construction as early in the spring as weather and funding permit.

In Closing . . .

Seventy years ago, in his *The American Eagle*, F.H. Herrick wrote: “Strong, swift, majestic, making his playground in the clouds and defying the storm, no wonder the glamour of legend has crowned the eagle ‘King of Birds,’ the undisputed ruler of the sky, and made him the emblem of freedom, the incentive to valor, and the pledge of victory.” As our national bird, the bald eagle captures our attention as perhaps no other, yet this species is far from being the only one whose existence has faltered because of human presence on our planet. Many important national and international causes support wildlife conservation; we hope that you will choose to act locally as well as globally, and take the birds of Maine’s Avian Haven under your wing. Please help us help them return to their natural roles in the wild.

Until next year —
Diane & Marc

Diane Winn & Marc Payne
Avian Haven
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Photography by Marc Payne unless otherwise noted.

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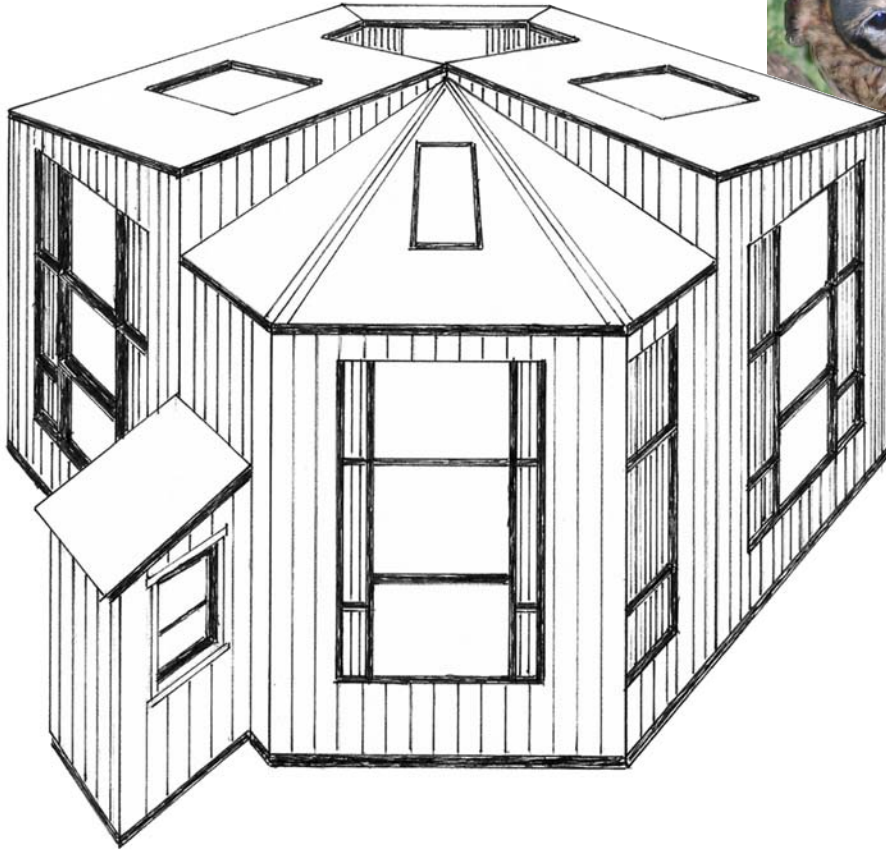
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