Avian Haven avianhaven 2014

Avian Haven

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/maine_env_organizations

Repository Citation
https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/maine_env_organizations/62

This Other is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Documents from Environmental Organizations by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.
An eagle does not catch flies, according to an ancient Roman proverb known today in many countries. True, eagles typically invest their energy in more substantial pursuits, but birds that are young or recovering from illness may understandably prefer leisurely activities. For stories of the birds shown above and others, read on!

Rehabilitation 2014 Overview

After two years of caring for about 1550 birds annually, 2014 saw another increase in case load: we cared for 1739 wild birds in all—1709 new admissions plus 30 carried over from 2013. Similar to past years, our species total was 124. Nearly half of the 2014 admissions were songbirds, most of them nestlings. Other than raptors, the native species admitted in highest numbers were American Robin (132), Mourning Dove (101), Eastern Phoebe (83), American Crow (62) – the same top four, and in the same order, as last year. Our 2014 raptor admissions broke our previous record, with 264 in all, nearly 50 more than our previous high. Separating them into broad groups, we had 104 owls (including 72 Barred Owls), 75 hawks (among them, 42 Broad-winged Hawks), 39 Bald Eagles, 23 falcons (including 12 American Kestrels), 16 Ospreys, and 7 Turkey Vultures.

Among the aquatic species, Common Loon once again took first place (39 birds), but Mallards (37) were close behind. Among other assorted water birds were Horned and Red-necked Grebes, Common and Thick-billed Murres, and Black Guillemots. Non-native admissions were about the same as in previous years (115 Rock Pigeons, 42 European Starlings, 31 English Sparrows). In addition to critters with feathers, we cared for 31 native reptiles, most of which were car-hit Painted and Snapping Turtles. A couple of oddballs were two Rat Snakes inadvertently brought to Maine from Virginia in a van hauling materials from a barn demolition. We were able to arrange not only for the snakes’ capture but also for their return to Virginia after a two-month stay here.

As in past years, collisions with cars and windows, along with cat predation, were the leading causes of reported injuries. We urge people who allow their cats to go outdoors to consider protecting birds via the cat bib (www.catgoods.com). A variety of window treatments are described in a recent article at www.birdwatchingdaily.com (enter “window strikes” in the search box). Despite recent legislation to limit lead fishing gear, we were brought one Common Loon that had ingested a lead sinker; the bird did not survive.

Early in May, we were contacted by a woman who was upset because a nest with eggs had been removed from a boat’s cubbyhole and discarded on the ground. The eggs’ rescuer had seen the parent birds and believed them to be Carolina Wrens. The location was two hours away from us, and we doubted that the eggs would be viable by the time they arrived, but we agreed to take them, made suggestions for keeping them warm, and set up a transportation relay that got them here safely. We put five tiny eggs in our incubator without much hope, but with willingness to wait and see. Two eggs hatched on May 18! Weighing only about 2 grams (a little less than a dime) each, raising them would be a challenge, but they appeared to thrive. Sadly, however, when they were about a week old, one died unexpectedly overnight, having seemed fine when fed and tucked in the previous evening. The survivor didn’t miss a beat, and as he matured, it became obvious that he was indeed a Carolina Wren—the first of that species in our practice, though we had raised House Wrens in the past. The Carolina was upgraded through our usual series of ever-larger habitats, and released on June 23.
Additionally four Bald Eagles were admitted in 2014 with acute, fatal lead exposures. Several additional eagles with sub-lethal lead exposures were injured as a result of impaired coordination. The extent to which lead bullets fragment in the flesh of game animals, providing the potential for unknowing ingestion in both people and scavengers like eagles, is well documented. WWW.huntingwithnonlead.org contains a wealth of information about the comparative performance and cost of lead vs. copper alternatives. Someday, all hunting will be done with nontoxic ammunition, but meanwhile, many eagle deaths could be prevented by proper disposal of waste meat from game hunted with lead, including carcasses and gut piles left in the field as well as butchers’ scraps.

2014 was a record year for loon admissions with 39 Common Loons (plus one Red-throated Loon)! Among the adult birds, the most common source of difficulty was fishing gear. As noted above, we admitted a bird from Crystal Lake (Gray, ME) with a lead sinker in his gizzard and an off-the-scale blood lead level. We removed the sinker by gastric lavage, but too much damage had already been done, and the bird died the next day. Four other birds, two of which were rescued in NH by that state’s awesome conservation organization, the Loon Preservation Committee (WWW.loon.org), had tackle either in their GI tracts or on their bodies. In the latter category was an adult from Wilson Lake (Wilton) that was observed for about a week, during which several capture attempts failed. On August 3, Wdn. Dan Christiansen netted the loon from his boat as she started to dive beneath it; shortly thereafter, volunteer transporter Kate Weatherby brought her here. The photo above shows the line wrapped around the bird’s neck and beak. One of the two sinkers was lead, and fortunately, the bird had not swallowed it. We removed the line and tackle, but the bird’s blood work indicated a severe debilitation, most likely from her having been unable to feed for some time. A week later, she was very restless, and although we would have liked to build her up a bit more, we decided that getting her back home took precedence. Kate drove her back; she and Dan opened up the transport crate at the lake’s edge. The bird swam eagerly into the lake, and within a few minutes, had been joined by her mate.

Our last loon admission of 2014 was another victim of lost fishing gear. This bird had been seen on Annabessacook Lake (Winthrop) for a week tangled in gear that included a large lure; unfortunately, the loon was far out into the lake and could dive, making a rescue virtually impossible. But as the bird weakened, he ventured closer to shore, and on Dec. 19, he beached and was captured by our biologist friend Shearon Murphy. The lure had treble hooks at both ends; one was in the bird’s body just under the wing, and the other was in the bird’s foot. A large mass of tangled monofilament had been wrapped around the bird’s wing, badly lacerating the wrist. We tried many treatments in efforts to control infection and reduce scar tissue. For a time, we seemed to be making progress, but about a month after admission, an x-ray showing degeneration of bones in the wrist joint made it clear that the wing was beyond repair. With broken hearts, we euthanized him.

The Common Loon we found especially endearing was a chick with a perplexing history. On July 26, Gail and Larry Rector of Limestone were four-wheeling in the woods when they saw something swimming in a mud puddle. They were astonished to see a small bird pop its head up from the water! They cautiously went around the puddle and up the trail. When they turned around to come back, the bird was making its way toward them. At that point, they picked the poor creature up, took it home, and began making phone calls. Next morning, a relay involving Wdn. Alan Dudley and two of our volunteer transporters, Elizabeth Crawford and Mary Bird, made a journey of more than 200 miles with the bird—who arrived around 2 p.m. in remarkably good shape! Judging by weight, the bird was about two weeks old.

The Rectors could not imagine how the young loon had gotten into the woods, as the nearest lake was more than a mile away. They wondered if a fox or other predator might have taken it from the shore and carried it into the woods, but then how would the bird have escaped? We found no injuries whatsoever to suggest predator involvement. The young loon was an eager feeder and adept at diving almost from the get-go. His development was unremarkable, and as he grew, we upgraded him from smaller to larger pools. But we soon realized that the indoor pool environment, though fine for birds recovering from injuries, was rather sterile for a growing youngster. In August, we began taking him outdoors for enrichment sessions on a small pond. By the end of September, he was restless in our largest pool, and had demonstrated convincingly that he could capture live minnows. We took him for release in Penobscot Bay on October 5. He swam straight out into the bay without hesitating or looking back. As we watched through binoculars, another loon appeared, and the two birds approached each other. They were within the same field of view when it was time for us to leave.
Our Human Flock

Among Avian Haven’s greatest strengths are the skills and dedication of its staff. Only two year-round staff are paid: Terry Heitz (Physical Plant Manager), and Glori Berry (Assistant Infirmary Manager). In addition to Diane and Marc, all-season weekly onsite volunteers in 2015 included Jane Brackett, Kyle Clark, and Jerry Stefansky. Our full-time summer interns this year were Kim Chavez (Unity College) and Abi Doty (Kansas State University)—both were sorely missed when their fall semesters took them away! Additional folks helping weekly with the season’s nestlings were Alanda Bowen, Nancy Carhart, Katelyn Chase, Amy Dillon, Abby Everleth, Rebecca Grant, Beth Henderson, Laura Lecker, Marilyn McClelland, Selkie O’Mira, Connie Moore, Janet Wiseley, and Tanna Witkin. Additional onsite assistance was provided by Kara Chester, Laura Graham, Lauren Gurney, Georgia Frizzell & Tug Kellough, Barbara Skapa, and Rose Zoller.

Avian Haven is unique among Maine rehabilitation centers in having a vast network of volunteer transporters; they ensure that patients arrive here safely when people reporting birds in difficulty are unable to travel. It is almost impossible to judge which among them deserve special mention; our records track the number of deliveries made by volunteers, but not the number of miles traveled. That said, we thank especially Lyn Adams, Mary Bird, Kim Bailey, Kathy Brownell, Deb Chaiken, Karen Dunbar, Carol & Bob Jones, Diane & Rob Jones, Carl Mahoney, Shari Mather, Jan MacInnes, Eleanor & Bill Murley, Kathy & David Stager, George Stone, Jenny Swing, and Charlene Turgeon—and in so doing, emphasize that these good people represent a much larger group deserving of equal thanks. One transporter who kept track of mileage in 2014 logged around 4,500 miles, which would be valued by IRS at about $2,500!

Many other individuals provided support of various kinds in 2014—contributions of goods, services, contacts, funds, and/or shared expertise. They include Louis Bevier, Amy & Bob Campbell, Jan Corning, Janika Eckert & Rob Johnston, Charlie Evans, Mark Finke, Geordie Hall, Peter Jenkins, Don Lecker, Darcy Mahoney, Mary Offutt, Judson Quaioit, Nancy & Charlie Shuman, Marge Sorenson, Nancy Spencer-Smith, Charley West, and John Winn. More specifically, for local veterinary/medical assistance, we are especially grateful to Dr. Judy Herman (Animal Wellness Center), Dr. Kate Pierce (PenBay Veterinary Associates), and Dr. Steve Witkin (Eye Care of Maine). Our longtime webmaster, James Skowbo, continues to keep avianhaven.org in top shape. For counsel and support, we also thank board members Judy Herman, George Matula, and Allen Stehle.

Other than quantity, our summer vireo guests were especially memorable because of two nestlings found on the ground in Baxter State Park on July 13. We had never seen anything like them before! Our only identification clue was the vireo-like food-begging vibration. But they were not Red-eyed Vireos, nor were they Blue-headed, another species we occasionally see. Their bright yellow coloring was the puzzle; no adult vireo has plumage resembling that of a canary! We sent photos to songbird specialists at MDIFW; on the basis of location, they suspected Philadelphia Vireos, but agreed that the coloration seemed too yellow. But in many species, nestlings bear little resemblance to adults; within a couple of weeks, these youngsters were already less yellow and looking more like Philadelphias. A week later, that identity was confirmed. We released them on August 9.

---

Other than quantity, our summer vireo guests were especially memorable because of two nestlings found on the ground in Baxter State Park on July 13. We had never seen anything like them before! Our only identification clue was the vireo-like food-begging vibration. But they were not Red-eyed Vireos, nor were they Blue-headed, another species we occasionally see. Their bright yellow coloring was the puzzle; no adult vireo has plumage resembling that of a canary! We sent photos to songbird specialists at MDIFW; on the basis of location, they suspected Philadelphia Vireos, but agreed that the coloration seemed too yellow. But in many species, nestlings bear little resemblance to adults; within a couple of weeks, these youngsters were already less yellow and looking more like Philadelphias. A week later, that identity was confirmed. We released them on August 9.
2014 was also a record year for Bald Eagles; we had 39 admissions during the calendar year, and also cared for an additional four held over from 2013. A fifth eagle spanning the calendar years was the Golden Eagle mentioned briefly in last year’s report, and whose photo graces this report’s cover page. The story of her recovery from lead poisoning and release, illustrated with some breath-taking photos, has been told in detail in a slide show available on our website (click the Slide Shows button on our home page). She was the first of her species in our practice, and the Bald Eagles on the other side of the cover banner were the first of their age—fuzz-ball nestlings, when we got them! For those of you who did not follow their story on our Facebook page, here is the abridged version: On May 11, a disoriented and weak adult female eagle was rescued from a Bangor sidewalk. She appeared to have ingested a toxin that similarly affected her mate, who later that day tumbled onto a power line and was killed. The adults were the resident birds at a well-known nest on Kenduskeag Avenue. The female had a good chance of recovery, but it would take time, and meanwhile, the nestlings were orphaned. A plan to rescue them was quickly implemented; on the following day, Unity College’s Brent Bibles, a raptor biologist with extensive climbing experience, made a 90-foot ascent to the nest, and safely lowered two downy eaglets. Their mother recovered, but did not attend her offspring; she was released near her old neighborhood on June 3. The eaglets grew up here, and were released on September 5. Their releases were followed in close succession by six others in the “Class of 2014”—one of which is shown here on his way to the Great Blue Yonder.

The Roost

We decided not to tackle any new building projects in 2014, but to concentrate instead on renovations to some of our older habitats. Over the summer, Terry rebuilt parts of our first raptor flight cage in such a way as to make it especially suited for Ospreys. The location of this habitat had made it susceptible to run-off from an adjacent hillside; while Terry was busy with hammer and nails, distance of approximately 500 miles in one month’s time. On admission to a rehab center a few days later, she was found to have lost significant weight since her release in Maine, but she was uninjured and flew well in the center’s flight pen. She was released in Saint-Jude, province of Quebec, on Nov. 13.

Among other eagle cases was an unusual group of three whose stories began late in the evening of April 5, when we admitted a comatose adult. Reportedly, the bird had been feeding on a euthanized calf left out in a field, possibly as coyote bait. Suspecting a secondary barbiturate exposure, we treated her with charcoal slurry to absorb any toxin. The following morning, she was struggling to get up on her feet, and by the end of the day was standing, though unsteady. By her bands, we were able to identify her as a 10-year old hatched in a nest near Plymouth Pond. She remained somewhat clumsy for a couple days, but recovered rapidly, and was released on the 10th. But meanwhile, on the 6th, we’d been brought a second bird from the same area, and with a similar presentation. Her treatment and recovery were like those of the previous bird, and she was released on the 11th.

The calf had been removed from the field, so we were not expecting any similar cases from this area. We were therefore nonplussed when a third eagle was recovered there on April 15. This bird was banded, and later identified as one of a set of triplets originally from a nest near Richmond in 1992. Like her predecessors, this bird arrived weak and woozy, but unlike the first two, she was injured. The right wrist had deep puncture wounds that were swollen and infected, and we immediately began to treat them with antibiotics and salves. Management of the wrist wounds (which can be seen in this photo taken May 2) was still in progress when we moved her to an outdoor cage. A few days later, she was upgraded to a larger habitat, where she began a slow recovery of flight and stamina. On June 26, she made 3 laps around the flyway, and by a couple weeks later was flying beautifully. We released her on July 17 on Augusta-area property overlooking the Kennebec.

Tug Kellough created an awesome stonework support and drainage system in the grounds around the building. Everything was finished just in time for the young Ospreys of the season to move in for their final flight conditioning prior to release. We thank the Elsie & William Viles Foundation for support of this project in 2014.

Early in the fall, Tug went on to fashioning new well-drained pathways to other habitats, while Terry concentrated on renovations...
But the surprises associated with this bird were not over! On August 2, we received a call from a group of fishermen who had seen an eagle repeatedly jumping into the Kennebec River, then “swimming” ashore. After watching several such episodes, and doubting the bird’s ability to make it out of the water another time, the men maneuvered their craft toward her, reached over the side and pulled her up into the boat. Once back on land, they secured the wet eagle and made the phone calls that led them to us. Her band identified her as the Richmond native we’d released two weeks earlier. Although her wrist had remained well-healed, the bird did not try to fly for the first few days of her second stay here. Flight resumed shortly thereafter, however, and was once again strong in another two weeks. We released her again on August 19 (and have not seen her since!).

One of our other interesting eagle cases was a 2-year-old admitted on July 16. Over the previous several days, this juvenile had become something of a public nuisance in Dixfield, where he’d been perching on woodpiles, rooftops and vehicles. MDIFW personnel captured the bird easily by offering food. He was thin and limping heavily, favoring his right leg, which had an old, healed fracture. His behavior in Dixfield suggested a comfort with people that did not bode well for survival in the wild; if this bird had some history of human contact, its effects needed to be overpowered by exposure to other eagles. So we housed him with other young of his kind, and made a point of paying little attention to him other than to monitor his leg use, which did recover. We released him on October 5 along with a first-year bird that had been among his companions during his stay here.

So what is so interesting about this case? Many banded eagles wear not only the silver band issued by USFWS but also a color band. The engraved characters on the silver band can only be read with the bird in hand, but those on the color band can often be discerned from a distance, using a spotting scope, binoculars, or a photograph. Different states use different colors, so the color alone can often reveal the area in which the bird was banded. The Dixfield bird wore two leg bands, with the color band gold, rather than the red used in Maine. We therefore knew he was “from away,” and were fairly confident of a Massachusetts origin. However, we did not learn the details of his history until after he’d been released. M/D had been admitted to the Tufts Wildlife Clinic on May 1, having been rescued under circumstances similar to those in Dixfield. The leg injury had been treated at Tufts, and the bird eventually released in MA on June 30 – only two weeks before appearing in Dixfield, having traveled a straight-line distance of 137 miles. As we suspected, the bird DID have a history of human contact, though it may have predated his stay at Tufts. By the time we released him in October, we were confident that he had regained his eagle self-image. But there was to be yet another chapter in this bird’s story.

M/D was readmitted on Dec. 6 from Friendship; a concerned citizen had seen the bird standing motionless on a roadside, soaking wet in the day’s freezing rain storm. Contact was made with the warden service, and Wdn. Chris Dyer brought the bird here that evening. He’d had an exposure to lead—though unlike several other lead-poisoned eagles admitted in this same time frame, his was not fatal. However, several broken flight feathers might have been related to coordination impairment associated with lead. A round of chelation therapy lowered the lead level to nearly zero around mid-December. We moved him into a small outdoor cage on Dec. 15, then into our eagle recovery habitat on the 22nd. As this report goes to press, he is flying fairly well and appears to have rebounded. We will repair the broken feathers before releasing him in the spring.

Most of you will remember our resident Bald Eagle, “Bart,” once known as the Maine State Eagle. Bart celebrated his 30th birthday in 2012, and despite his being elderly, we’d hoped to have him with us for more than a few years to come. But on April 21, as one of his regular caretakers was tidying up his habitat in preparation for bringing the fresh meal of the day, Bart suddenly collapsed. As best we could determine, he died almost instantaneously, presumably from a sudden and massive cardiac or brain event. Bart would have just been turning 32. His 30th Birthday Tribute remains on the Slide Shows page of our website; we still miss him terribly.

to a smaller circular habitat designed for aerial insectivores such as swifts and swallows, an endeavor funded by the Adelard A. Roy & Valdea Lea Roy Foundation. In between, Terry worked on some extra features for our aquatic bird habitat, courtesy of the Hochgraf Foundation.

Selkie O’Mira assumed management of Avian Haven’s Facebook page in the fall of 2013; she continued her outstanding job throughout 2014. Judging from the number of “likes” and “shares,” we have an extraordinarily successful page; Selkie not only reports our current activities but also responds to comments and questions, thus helping to educate fans regarding natural history plus matters such as the cause and prevention of various bird predicaments. The page may be viewed by anyone—not just Facebook members. To find it, click the blue “F” icon on our home page.
Our operating expenses are funded primarily by private donations (whether cash or in-kind) and unrestricted foundation grants. In the latter category, we gratefully acknowledge support from the American Foundation, Baker Street Trust, the Susan & George Craig Featherng the Nest Family Foundation, the Conger Family Foundation, the Island Foundation, the Martha Morse Foundation, and the Stifler Family Foundation. Other sources of funds for operating expenses include investment earnings and honoraria; the left side of the chart shows the proportions in each category of income. On the right, operating expenses are shown in three general categories: Program Services (costs that directly support our mission, such as veterinary and food supplies, payroll, small equipment, etc.); Management & General (business supplies, insurance costs, etc.); and Fund Raising.

As noted in other sections, some foundation grants were given in support of specific capital projects. In 2014, we also were awarded a grant from the Next Generation Foundation for endowment purposes. A major goal over the next few years is building our endowment to support salaries for personnel that will replace Marc and Diane when they retire, thereby ensuring a smooth transition to our next generation of directors.

Looking ahead in the shorter term, we have plans for two capital projects in 2015. One was inspired by the young Common Loon whose story is told on page 2. Our Pool Hall works beautifully as a hospital for recovering water birds, but growing juveniles benefit from the natural ambiance of the outdoors. Our youngster clearly enjoyed excursions in our small pond, but it was neither escape- nor predator-proof, so constant monitoring was necessary. The overflow from our second well could easily feed a larger pond that could be made secure with netting on greenhouse hoops. The site was prepared in the fall, and we’ll move ahead with the remainder in the spring. As our case load has grown, so has our need for additional housing, so another project for 2015 is a medium-size modular habitat that can be used for a variety of species, most likely small raptors and large corvids.

In the morning of April 1, we got a call about a Great Horned Owl found chest-deep in a water treatment tank in Camden. Local volunteers Selkie O’Mira and Abe Baggins responded quickly and the bird was soon on her way here. She was thin, had hemorrhages in both eyes, lacerations on several toes, and a scapula fracture. The bird also was missing one of her “horns”—feather tufts on the top of the head. Over the next couple of weeks, the scapula fracture made good progress toward mending, but one of the toe wounds developed an infection, so we started her on antibiotics. On the 12th, consulting ophthalmologist Steve Witkin pronounced the left eye healed, but thought the right eye would have permanent scarring. Meanwhile, antibiotics had done their job, and on April 27, with the toe significantly improved, we moved her to a small outdoor cage. After another week, the toe had completely healed, and she graduated to a large flight cage, where she flew like a champ. Owls rely on hearing at least as much as vision for hunting, and this bird was an adult with plenty of experience at making a living; we therefore did not consider the eye damage a reason not to release, given that everything else looked good. On May 14, Selkie took the bird back to Camden for release. The missing feather tuft did not regrow in the time we had her, but hopefully did not diminish her attractiveness to her mate!

Barred Owls have always been our most common raptor, but our total for 2014 was well ahead of that species’ admissions in previous years. We also saw car-hit birds earlier in the fall than typical—starting with #1500, admitted Oct. 8, another 27 had arrived by the end of the calendar year, all but a few of them hatch-year birds. Another oddity is that, in past years, surges in car casualties have occurred in winters with heavy snow cover, under which mice can remain safely hidden in their tunnels. Food litter thrown from vehicles attracts rodents to plowed roads, where they are easier prey for nocturnal predators, some of which are youngsters lacking “street smarts.” But in the milder conditions Maine had through December, hunting should have been promising in safer locations. The blinking bird shown above is one of those already released; 14 were still pending as of end of year.

At the other end of the frequency spectrum was a species rarely seen in Maine—a nestling Screech Owl admitted from Saco on August 8. The youngster’s right wing had a large hole seething with maggots that had done extensive soft-tissue damage. Despite careful wound management, the wing deteriorated to a point at which placement could not be considered and euthanasia was the only humane outcome. Even though this bird’s story had a sad ending, the confirmation of Screech Owls breeding in Maine was noteworthy; we may see more of them in years to come.
Seven Belted Kingfishers came through our doors in 2014, most of them victims of window collisions. The first two among them were admitted in close succession, on July 12 and 14. Both had signs of head trauma, including eye injuries. Due in part to vision impairments, they were slow to take fish on their own, and had to be force-fed for the first few days. But they were housed together, and soon were comfortable in close proximity to one another, as shown in this photo. Once they began to feed themselves, we moved them to an outside habitat equipped with plenty of handicap access. Their first flight attempts were clumsy, again most likely because of limited perceptual abilities. Occasionally, we would observe one of them flying into the netting that lined the window areas, or missing a perch and landing on the ground. Slowly but surely, however, their flight skills improved; by the end of the month, they were flying strongly and landing accurately. We released them together on August 1.

Another two birds believed by the rescuer to be nestling kingfishers turned out to be Eastern Kingbirds—a large flycatcher species! Having been given a confident identification by a friend, the person who sent them to us had looked up the natural diet and had been diligently hand-feeding the youngsters smelt. The birds appeared to have fared well enough after a few days on an unusual diet. They were released on July 24, while the real kingfishers were just starting their final round of flight conditioning.

In Closing...

Although there are many birds whose stories had happy endings, as is evident in this year’s report, there are others that we cannot save. Some tragic cases remain vivid in our memories, haunting us over long periods of time. We are sometimes asked whether we’ve gotten to a point where we are no longer troubled by the deaths we encounter. We answer: “No, and if we ever do, we’ll know it’s time to quit.” It comforts us to imagine the spirit of a dying bird liberated from its damaged body, not unlike a living bird healed and flying free after a period in captivity. Watching the release of a young eagle inspired the volunteer who’d brought the bird here to write the poem in the box to the right. No matter how many times we read it, the images lift our spirits, even when our hearts are laden with grief. May they sustain each of you in troubled times, as well. Until next year—

Diane & Marc

Diane Winn and Marc Payne, Co-Directors

All photography is by Giori Berry unless otherwise credited.

AVIAN HAVEN

is a nonprofit wild bird rehabilitation center dedicated to the return of injured and orphaned birds of all species to their natural roles in the wild.

Your tax-deductible donations enable the success of this mission; please help us continue providing top-quality care for Maine’s wild birds by making an annual individual or business contribution.

Gifts via credit card or PayPal may be given through our website, www.avianhaven.org, or checks may be sent to 418 N. Palermo Rd., Freedom, ME 04941. We can be reached by phone at 207-382-6761 or by e-mail at dwmp@avianhaven.org

Thank you for your support!

Kennebec Release

September’s stained glass cathedral of maple, oak, and birch shimmers in the midday sun.

Below, hidden by the trees, the river races toward a distant sea, and above, the sky is empty of all but expectation.

Into this silence the eagle turns, settles its feathers, and takes a step. Unblinking, it considers the call of the woods, the water, the sky. Its shoulders lift. The powerful wings unfold, reach up, press down upon the air. The great bird rises bronze against green and scarlet and gold and blue.

In southward arc it sweeps, until absorbed at last into the waiting world.

Mary Dickinson Bird September 27, 2014
Modular Habitat/Flight Cage
Planned for 2015

Design and drawings by Terry Heitz

To help us reduce our use of forest resources, let us know by e-mail info@avianhaven.org if we may send future issues of this report to you electronically. Folks on our e-mailing list also receive notices of newly posted slide shows.