



HAWKS ALOFT, Inc.

Conservation, Avian
Research & Education

The HAI Flier

August 2021



Those Crazy Days of Summer

**by Gail Garber,
Executive Director**

Perhaps the sun and the planet know that we crazy humans need a break from those lusciously-long, delicious days of summer and, thus, created fall and winter. It forces us to step

back and catch up on rest during the longer periods of dark, along with the sometimes dank, disagreeable weather. Just how crazy can it be, you ask! Well . . .

Trevor, for instance, gets the prize for the most insane, sleep-deprived field season, followed closely by Maggie Stein and Brian Dykstra! A typical week might begin with owl surveys on the Valles Caldera where calling begins post-dark and continues until 1 am or so. Trevor then catches some ZZZZs in his vehicle and is at it again before 4 am to catch the pre-dawn owl survey period that ends at sunrise. He then continues on to a songbird point count survey, finishing up around 11 am, naps for a few hours and returns for more perverse owl monitoring pleasure. Then, if they do get a response from a Mexican Spotted Owl, a federally listed threatened species, they triangulate the location of the call, and

return at first light to search for the actual owl (FYI, those canyons are STEEP!) He says he likes it too. He loves being on the Valles Caldera at night, all alone other than his survey partners, to take in the heavens above and the owls below (read his article for the backstory!).

Meanwhile, the rest of us lightweights are at our designated transects at first light to begin surveys. For some of us, like Larry Rimer, Tom Mayer, and Maggie Stein, that might mean leaving home by 4 am to monitor nesting raptors in far-flung places. They drive and hike the rugged backcountry, searching for elusive raptor nests and copious Common Raven nests, often logging 15-hour days. But, these folks do get to sleep in beds at night, either their own or a hotel. Whew!

Monitoring songbirds in the Middle Rio Grande Bosque is relatively tame, also beginning at first light. That is, except for those transects located within the expansive willow swales, a US Army Corps of Engineers restoration project to restore hydrology to portions of the bosque. They lowered the banks to restore water flow and planted willows and other riparian vegetation. These have mostly thrived in less than xeric conditions along with the exotic plants like Russian olive and the ever-present clover -- seeded from horse droppings. Dense stands of willow, clover, and thorny Russian olive tower overhead, eliminating all vestiges of a path so we surveyors 'swim' through the swales. Think "African Queen", the movie starring Kathryn Hepburn and Humphrey Bogart, sans the deep water and machete! Sometimes I do wish I had a machete, but then that would not be good for bird habitat.

We thank all of the hearty surveyors who monitor bosque nesting raptors and those that survey the 20 mile-long transects in the Rio Grande and Estancia Valleys. These amazing folks are volunteers, one and all. True citizen science projects, they are unfunded by anyone except for your time and donations! Thank you all for being such an important part of Hawks Aloft.

After months in front of our computers, writing, analyzing data, making maps, and grousing about the boredom of winter and office, we will anxiously await spring, when we get to do it all over again!

Within a few short weeks, all N.A. Swainson's Hawks will be on the move, some 7000 miles to the grasslands of Argentina, with this year's babies preceding their parents in migration, one of the many miracles of evolution. Above, a parent Swainson's Hawk watches over her newly fledged youngster - images by Gail Garber. A young Swainson's Hawk in flight - image by Larry Rimer.

Hawks Aloft International Tours

Announcing Iceland 2023!

June 1 - June 11, 2023

Hawks Aloft and Holbrook Travel
Explore Iceland: Birding in the Land of Fire and Ice

In the land of fire and ice, massive ice-blue glaciers contrast sharply with bright green meadows, black lava fields, and geothermal lagoons to create dramatic, captivating landscapes. The country's avifauna is equally impressive: located at the junction of two oceans, it hosts a unique mix of vagrant and migratory birds from both Europe and North America. This adventure with Hawks Aloft offers a look at Icelandic breeding and non-breeding bird populations, from the waterfowl of Lake Mývatn to the iconic Atlantic Puffins. Seek out auks, petrels, cormorants, gannets, gulls, terns, waders, stilts, and birds of prey while enjoying hikes, boat trips, and a bird museum to enrich your understanding of the



island's natural history.

[Learn more here!](#)

Images: Atlantic Puffins in Iceland (above); Goðafoss waterfall in northern Iceland (below).



Ecuador 2022!

October 1 to October 17, 2022

*Join us for a birding and
photography trip through one of
the world's most biodiverse
countries*

Despite its small size—that is, roughly the size of Pennsylvania—Ecuador offers a fabulous amount of biodiversity. Despite having just 0.2% of the planet's physical landmass, it is home to 16% of the world's bird species (not to mention 8% of amphibians, 5% of reptiles, and an incredible 25,000 different species of plants). This has led to the small country being classified as “mega diverse” by Conservation International, along with only 16 other countries the world over.

Join Hawks Aloft, Foto Verde Tours, and experienced guide Paulo Valerio on a trip through the country, from coastal mangroves to mountain cloud forests and everything in-between. This all-inclusive tour offers members the opportunities to spot once-in-a-lifetime species, as well as capture each breathtaking moment on film.



Find the full itinerary and reserve your spot here!

*Andean Emerald Hummingbird, found in the cloud forests of the Andes.
Photographed in Ecuador by Greg Basco.*



Collaboration with Others... In Action!

**By Maggie Stein, Education &
Outreach Coordinator**

As we all know, Hawks Aloft works to conserve indigenous wild birds and their habitats through avian research, conservation education, raptor rescue, and cooperation with other organizations. This past month, our education program has been given great opportunities to appreciate and focus on our cooperation with others. We have had the privilege to work with some really awesome groups!

First, we had three education programs with campers from the Conservation Camp at Shady Lakes Trout Fishing, a gorgeous facility located in Sandia Valley with water lily gardens and naturally beautiful spaces. Shady Lakes Conservation Camp is also made possible through cooperation of organizations, and is created through the partnership of Shady Lakes Bass & Trout Fishing, the US Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station, and Nature Niños New Mexico. Their camp days are filled with conservation activities and education, promoting environmental stewardship in campers through their actions. Amelia and I had such a lovely time with these campers and we felt so welcomed by the staff. We are excited to return to Shady Lakes for an additional program in September.



We have also teamed up with Talking Talons Youth Leadership to bring our Avian Ambassadors to summer programs in community centers across Albuquerque. These grant-funded programs are geared towards teaching kids the importance of taking leadership roles in environmental conservation efforts. Their mission is to elevate youth and the community to become effective advocates and ethical stewards of themselves, wildlife, habitats and the environment. The team at Talking Talons are so welcoming and appreciative of our work!

Do you know an organization or a school that would benefit from a program from the Hawks Aloft educators and education birds? Email education@hawksaloft.org for more information!



© Larry Rimer 2016



© Larry Rimer 2016

Wrapping Up the Owl Survey Season

**By Trevor Fetz, Ph.D.,
Research Director**

In late July, we finished up the final surveys of the year for the Valles Caldera Owl Community Study. Although Mexican Spotted Owl surveys were completed by the end of June, it took until late July to

finish the Multiple Species Inventory and Monitoring (MSIM or general owl) Surveys.

We were only able to complete two rounds of MSIM surveys in 2020, but by starting six weeks earlier in 2021, we were able to complete four rounds of MSIM surveys. I still need to proof and edit the data before conducting any formal analyses, but I did pull together a few preliminary numbers for this article.

We documented seven owl species during 2021 surveys. Flammulated Owl (125 detections) was the most frequently documented species in 2021, followed by Great Horned Owl (63 detections), Long-eared Owl (46 detections), Northern Saw-whet Owl (40 detections), Northern Pygmy-Owl (24 detections), Mexican Spotted Owl (5 detections), and Western Screech-Owl (4 detections). Total detections in 2021 were higher than 2020 for six of the seven species, including two species we didn't detect at all in 2020 (Mexican Spotted Owl and Western Screech-Owl).

The increase in detections this year was primarily due to two factors: 1) the increased number of surveys conducted in 2021 and 2) the earlier start to surveys in 2021, which increased our likelihood of documenting certain species that are more vocal earlier in the breeding season. Additionally, we conducted a lower percentage of MSIM surveys during July (when all owl species tend to become less vocal) in 2021 than in 2020.

Great Horned Owl was the only species that we detected fewer times in 2021 than 2020. But, Northern Saw-whet Owl detections per survey also were lower in 2021 (0.125 detections/survey) than 2020 (0.144 detections/survey). The exceptional drought conditions present at Valles Caldera for much of the breeding season likely had a substantial impact on owl behavior and numbers in 2021, but I need to thoroughly analyze the data in order to get a better feel for what those impacts were.

I am grateful for all of the help provided by Brian Dykstra, Maggie Stein, Brent Thompson, Sue Harrelson, and Roger Grimshaw with surveys this year.

Mexican Spotted Owl and Flammulated Owl - images by Larry Rimer.



Mews Building

By Amelia Thompson, Educator

The time has finally come for the construction of 12-foot by 8-foot mews at my house! Plans had begun last year, and I was originally going to begin the build in May but had a family issue that meant I needed to postpone until July. But now the mews building is in full swing! (For those who may not be familiar with this, a mews is a flight cage designed to house one or more birds of prey.)

The second weekend in July, my husband Ethan and I bought and transported all the lumber to my house. The following weekend, volunteers Mary Bruesch and Dianne Rossbach, along with fellow educator Maggie Stein, helped me to paint all that lumber. Ethan and I leveled out the ground in the space where we plan to place the cage in our yard. On the third weekend, volunteer Larry Rimer, my two friends Yvette and John Johnson-Rodgers, and Maggie began to construct the panels that will be the sides and the roof of the cages, as well as laying out the cinder block foundation where the cage will sit.

Laying out the cinder blocks is painstaking work, as each one needs to be perfectly level on all sides and the measurements must be perfect for the cage to fit on it. Larry, John, and my husband were able to get that done as well as installing chicken wire to prevent predators from digging under the cage. While that was happening, Maggie, Yvette, and I were able to build 5 out of 13 of the cage panels.

A special thanks to our friend John for bringing his miter saw to cut the wood. We will be spending at least another weekend building more panels, and then one more weekend putting the cage together. All this work must be done on the weekends because my

husband works from home, so we can't be drilling and sawing while he is trying to work. Fingers crossed that in the next newsletter you will see pictures of the finished mews!

Images by Amelia and Ethan Thompson.



The Inevitable Cooper's Hawk Rush

**by Lisa Morgan,
Raptor Rescue
Coordinator**

Have you ever been sailing along in life, but you know in your gut something big is about to happen? You know it's going to be rather unpleasant, and you're just not sure when it's going to hit or how immense it's going to be. Well, that sums up the last 7-10 days.

Every year, just about all of the New Mexico rehabilitators have the dreaded Cooper's Hawk nestling/fledgling rush in which these youngsters arrive by the handful. Most are "bird-napped" when well-meaning citizens insist on interfering with nature after they see these youngsters on the ground unable to fly quite yet. Human interference is probably the biggest cause for Cooper's Hawk youngster intake. Yes, it's a scary time, and many things can happen along the way. However, it is also a perfectly natural part of their life cycle when they are learning to fly. Their parents are caring for them and teaching them how to be Cooper's Hawks. The idea behind wildlife rehabilitation is to help the ill, injured, and orphaned. If a young bird does not fit into any of these categories then technically it does not need rehabilitation and it is actually against US Fish and Wildlife law to snatch them from their parents



Every year we try to be more and more creative with how we raise these young birds; however, there is simply no way a human can teach a Cooper's Hawk how to properly be a Cooper's Hawk. Any time a citizen insists on snatching a healthy youngster from its parents they are not doing that youngster any favors. It also taxes an already over-burdened, under-staffed, and under-funded rehabilitation system that includes food (currently running at \$900 per month for Cooper's Hawks alone), veterinarian time (of which they have little of), and staff time (who already have other jobs that need to be done). The non-profit rehabilitation system always runs low on money and time and the Cooper's Hawks are always doing what nature intended. This not only applies to Cooper's Hawks, but all young birds fledging.

It is impossible to properly grasp the amazing way our staff, veterinarians, and volunteers have come together in recent days to manage the influx of these youngsters. We are still attempting to sort out who has what bird, what bird has "issues" if any, and where/when to send these birds next. Luckily, we have our wonderful falconer/wildlife rehabilitator, Matt Mitchell. Although Matt is seriously overtaxed right now, he has a system in place in which he can "hack" young birds. Hacking allows the young Cooper's Hawks to come and go for food until they are hunting on their own. However, Matt currently has almost triple the amount of Cooper's Hawks than we had originally planned for him with several more awaiting space.

We will not be able to compare true analytics with previous years until 2021 is over, however, I have a feeling this is going to be our biggest year for Cooper's Hawks yet!

Images by Chellye Porter, Amelia Porter, and Maggie Stein.

LWL Returns

by Maggie Stein

Education & Outreach Coordinator

Thanks to the generosity of the PNM Foundation, along with the full reopening of New Mexico, our Living with the Landscape education program is now ready to resume in-person programming during the 2021-2022 school year.

Living with the Landscape (LWL) is designed to foster a deeper appreciation for our natural world in elementary level students. This is achieved by connecting our educators with schools in the Albuquerque area for a year-long relationship; allowing Hawks Aloft to connect with each classroom of every grade level. This program is offered free of charge to Title-1 or low-income schools and brings raptors into the classrooms, along with conservation projects, hands-on activities, and year-end field trips. Curriculum is designed to complete at least one teaching standard at each grade level and can be tailored to the specific needs of each classroom.

Is your school interested in participating in our Living with the Landscape program? Teachers or principals can apply for this program by emailing [education\[at\]hawksaloft.org](mailto:education[at]hawksaloft.org) for a copy of the application. Schools will be selected for the 2021-2022 school year near the end of the summer.

Celeste, the Barn Owl, is one of our most popular avian ambassadors! Photo by Doug Brown.



The Complicated Topic of Bosque Trash: What Can We Do?

**By Melody Mock,
Associate Administrator**

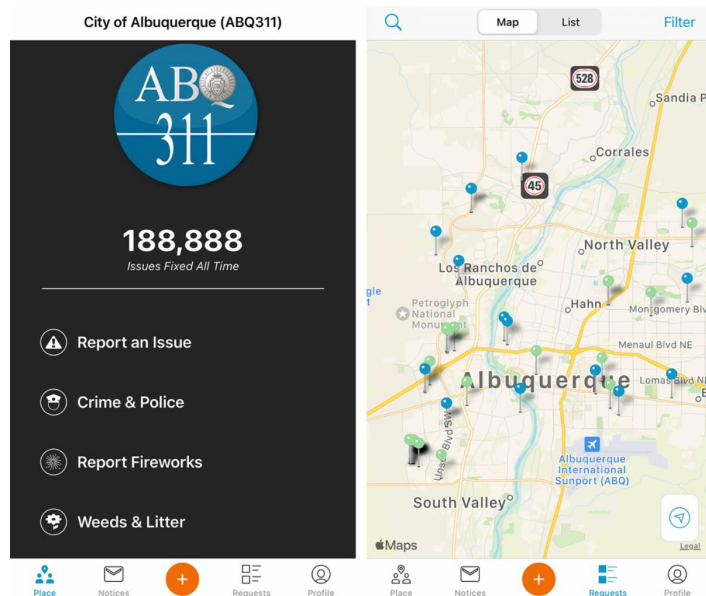
Many of the Hawks Aloft study areas are located in Albuquerque's Rio Grande Bosque, which is part of the City of Albuquerque Open Space Division. So when one of our volunteers, Vicki Dern, emailed us photos of the area where she

has been working on the Raptor Nest Monitoring study, we contacted Open Space to see what can be done.

Vicki has conducted raptor surveys in this area for the past eight years. She wrote, "Sadly, that area is getting trashed. There have been two good-sized fires and several spot fires. I saw several homeless encampments, big piles of garbage and abandoned shopping carts, and the trees themselves are slowly dying due to drought. Not sure what its future holds, and it really breaks my heart. It was one of the most beautiful stretches of Bosque in Albuquerque."

The Open Space Division manages close to 30,000 acres with a limited staff. They used to have a larger staff that included Albuquerque Police Department to help monitor the area but, unfortunately, these resources have declined over the years. When there are encampments of unsheltered people living on public land, the Department of Family and Community Services becomes involved. Other problems may be referred to other City or

governmental departments or organizations.



The first thing that we can do is to use Albuquerque's 311 system to report problems in Open Space areas. You can call 311 to be connected to an operator who will contact the proper division. There is also an [ABQ311 app](#) that you can download to your cell phone. With the app, you can send photos along with a description of the location and a map. The more detail you share about location and problems, the better. The best reason to use 311 is that there is a system of accountability in place and you can check back with your reference number to find out

what actions have been taken. The departments also pull reports from 311 calls to find out what issues come up frequently.

The impact on wildlife and our fragile ecosystem due to land misuse and climate change is distressing. There are many folks concerned about these complicated issues, and we need to continue our conversations about solutions.

Link to ABQ311 app info: <https://www.cabq.gov/abq-apps/city-apps-listing/abq311>

Screenshot of app above; Bosque photos by Vicki Dern.



Introducing Melody Mock, our

Newest Staff Member

Melody joins us this month as the new associate administrator. She brings a background of working in nonprofits and the arts in Albuquerque for the past 25 years. Most recently, she coordinated educational programs at Oasis, an organization providing classes and other opportunities for older adults.



Over the years, Melody has designed websites, curated art exhibits, edited and written for publications, played fiddle and guitar in musical groups, and worked with many community folks and organizations. Always on the lookout for interesting birds, she's thrilled to join the team.

New Pressure Washer Needed!

The pressure's on for Hawks Aloft to obtain a new pressure washer! Birds of prey are very messy by nature, and each week the flight cages, otherwise known as mews, require cleaning. We use a pressure washer to clean bird waste and leftover bits of food off the AstroTurf mats that cover perches and shelves inside each mews. Sean Geary so generously donated our last power washer, but after two years of heavy use every week, it is now on the way to Power Washer Heaven. If you have a power washer to donate, or you would like to contribute funds towards a new one, email Maggie at education@hawksaloft.org.



Owls of New Mexico!

Owls of New Mexico features images of our Avian Ambassadors and nearly every single species of owl that might be found in our state. Designed by Scott Lowry, this unique design can now be yours in both short and long-sleeved T-shirts. After all, *whooooo* doesn't love owls?!

T-shirts (both long and short-sleeved) are \$30 and can be ordered on our website or can be picked up at the office. Ladies sizes are available in short sleeves; all long-sleeved shirts are unisex, and we also have youth sizes in short sleeves.



[Order yours today!](#)

Donate Your Old Car to



Hawks Aloft! Thank you One Community Auto

Your old car might just be taking up space in your garage--but it could make a huge difference in the lives of New Mexico's native birds, natural landscapes, and the many people who delight in these things.

Car donation is simple. And in fact, it

might just make your life *easier*.

[Here's the link to donate your old vehicle!](#)

Call our office if you still have questions: 505-828-9455.



Check Out our Weekly Video!

**It posts every other
Monday Morning on our
Facebook and YouTube
pages.**

Join staff educators Maggie Stein and Amelia Thompson as they present different Avian Ambassadors and educational concepts:

Our next video will cover
Cooper's Hawks.

Find us on [Facebook](#)
Find us on [YouTube](#)

*Image of a nesting Violet-headed
Hummingbird, photographed near Arenal Volcano, Costa Rica by Keith Bauer.*



The Hawks Aloft Raffle Quilt!

90" x 90"

Get your tickets now! \$1 each or 6/\$5.

We'll draw the winning ticket in December 2021

[Click here to purchase tickets](#)

Thank you to everyone who worked on this year's quilt!

Adopt-A-Raptor Today!

**Meet
Jamaica,**



the Red-tailed Hawk

[Click here to Adopt-a- Raptor](#) At age 33, Jamaica is the oldest bird among the avian ambassadors of Hawks Aloft. Hatched in 1989 or earlier, she suffered a gunshot injury to her head and wing, is blind in one eye and has a partial wing amputation. She was one of the first birds that came to Hawks Aloft from our friends at Wildlife Rescue of New Mexico. Fully retired now, she shares a flight cage with Quemado, a male red-tail where they keep each other company. She even lays infertile eggs every year and she and Que take turns incubating them. She is

surely among the most elderly of living Red-tailed Hawks.

Photographed here by Gail Garber.

When you adopt a Hawks Aloft raptor you will receive:

- A one-year Hawks Aloft membership
- An adoption certificate
- An information sheet about the individual bird you have adopted
- Exclusive access to video updates about your bird
- Your choice of:
 1. A professional 8×10 photo of your bird, or
 2. A stuffed Audubon Bird with realistic vocalizations (if available for that species)

[Click here to learn more about our Avian Ambassadors](#)

Support Hawks Aloft by Shopping at Smith's!

Many of you have long been Hawks Aloft supporters, and a good number of you have also been longtime Smith's shoppers. For those not in the know, the grocery chain has a program that provides a small kick-back quarterly to nonprofits when their supporters link their shopper's cards to the organization.



The company recently changed their policies regarding the program—so even if you've signed up in the past, you may need to do it again! The good news is that it is easy to do.

- 1) Go to [Smith's Foods](#)
- 2) Either create an account or sign-in to an existing one
- 3) Once logged in, click on "Account Summary" on the left sidebar
- 4) From there, scroll down to "Inspiring Donations Program" and click "Enroll"
- 5) A searchable list will come up, you can either search for "Hawks Aloft" or enter our ID number for the program, GL430
- 6) Shop using your card and now that every time you do so, you help out Hawks Aloft!

We appreciate your ongoing support in this, and so many other capacities!

Support Hawks Aloft with every

It's simple and makes a huge impact! Just go to smile.amazon.com and log into your existing

Amazon account. Then under the search bar you can select your charity--find us by searching for "Hawks Aloft Inc." ... Save your account settings and shop away!



Photographers Monthly Gallery Featuring: Doug Brown

Doug Brown is an internationally renowned professional bird photographer and BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year award-winner. His work has been displayed at the British Natural History Museum and a number of other museums around the world. Doug's images can be found in a variety of digital

and printed field guides and textbooks. Doug has a particular interest in photographing birds in flight.

Doug has donated photos to the Hawks Aloft digital library for more than 10 years as well as contributing his expertise for HAI workshops, and other efforts. You can view more of his stunning images at his [website](#).

Doug is teaming up with Greg Basco to offer a [Tropical Bird Photography workshop in Ecuador](#) from February 6-18, 2022. They've designed the trip to visit Ecuador's most amazing places for bird photography and help you take your bird photography to the next level.

1. [Violet-tailed Sylph](#)
2. [Hoatzin](#)
3. [Velvet-purple Coronet](#)
4. [Plate-billed Mountain Toucan](#)
5. [Sword-billed Hummingbird](#)



DOUG BROWN
PHOTOGRAPHY



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Thank You to our July Donors!

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Tim Fitzpatrick, DVM

High Desert Veterinary Care

Ray Hudgell, DVM

Daniel Levenson, DVM

Sherry McDaniels

Mike Melloy, DVM

July Log & Intakes

Total Calls: 90

Total Cases: 30

Cooper's Hawk: illness
Turkey Vulture: spinal
trauma
Cooper's Hawk: spinal
trauma
Cooper's Hawk: wing
injury
Cooper's Hawk: healthy
fledgling
Cooper's Hawk: wing
injury, illness
Cooper's Hawk:
emaciation
Cooper's Hawk: leg injury
Greater Roadrunner:
seizure activity
Greater Roadrunner: wing
injury
Hawk species: DOA
Greater Roadrunner: leg
injury
Cooper's Hawk: imprinted
fledgling
Cooper's Hawk: healthy
fledgling
Swainson's Hawk: wing &
leg injuries
Cooper's Hawk: illness
Common Raven: leg injury
Western Screech Owl:
neurological
Ferruginous Hawk:
digestive issues, possible

Matt Mitchell	Lisa Morgan	poisoning
Jenee Moore		Cooper's Hawk: spinal trauma
Julie Morales	New Mexico Wildlife Center	Great Horned Owl: wing injuries
Eliane Notah		Cooper's Hawk: healthy fledgling
Amanda Rael	Petroglyph Animal Hospital	Cooper's Hawk: spinal trauma
Larry Rimer		Cooper's Hawk: wing injury
Patti Rosin	Chellye Porter	Cooper's Hawk: healthy fledgling
Dianne Rossbach		Western Screech Owl: soft tissue damage
Anthony Sarica	Larry Rimer	Cooper's Hawk: healthy fledgling
Kris Thackrah		Cooper's Hawk: imprinted fledgling
Davedda Thomas	San Juan Animal Hospital	Great Horned Owl: spinal trauma
Tony Thomas		Cooper's Hawk: spinal trauma
Frank Wilson	Santa Fe Raptor Center	
	Anthony Sarica	
	Southwest Veterinary Medical Center	
	Samantha Uhrig, DVM	
	VCA West Side	
	Ventana Animal Clinic	
	Wildlife Rescue of New Mexico	

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Taos Gorge Raptor Study
Jerry Hobart, *Project Manager,*
Raptor Driving Surveys
Thomas Mayer, *Raptor Surveys*
Evelyn McGarry, *East Mountain*
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Arlette Miller, *Raptor Rescue*
Dispatcher
Melody Mock, *Associate*
Administrator
Lisa Morgan, *Raptor Rescue*
Coordinator
Larry Rimer, *Project Manager,*
El Segundo Raptor Study
Maggie Stein, *Education and*
Outreach Coordinator; Project Leader
for McKinley Mine Study
Amelia Thompson,

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Educator/Administrative Assistant
Brent Thompson, *Biologist*
