



P.O. Box 492, Hoquiam, WA 98550  
www.coastalraptors.org  
Monitoring Raptors on the Washington Coast Since 1995

Number 1

December 2010

# COASTAL RAPTORS TIDEINGS



## Coastal Raptors First Newsletter

**Coastal Raptors** is concerned about the long-term health and viability of raptors found along coastlines. Their risks are many, including exposure to wind turbines, oil spills, human disturbance (e.g., being shot, vehicle collision), and severe storms. Given such vulnerabilities, coastal raptors deserve serious study.

**Coastal Raptors** works tirelessly to provide information for the general public, scientists, land managers, and policy makers on raptors in coastal environments.

For background on Coastal Raptors, see page 2.



Dan Varland, Dianna Moore (middle) and Gretchen Albrecht process a Peregrine Falcon captured and banded at Long Beach in 2007. Kate Davis photo.

Dan Varland, working together with Joe Buchanan, Mary Kay Kenney, Tracy Fleming and Tom Loughin, wrote a research paper entitled *Peregrine Falcons on Coastal Beaches of Washington: Banding and Surveys 1995-2010*, presenting it in September at the annual meeting of the Raptor Research Foundation in Fort Collins, Colorado. The presentation was part of a symposium entitled *The Role of Banding in Raptor Conservation: Past, Present, and Future*. Our group's research paper, along with those of others who were part of the symposium, will be published as a special issue of *The Journal of Raptor Research* in 2011.



Rob Palmer photo.

## 15 YEARS OF RESEARCH:

- 841 SURVEYS
- 140 PEREGRINES CAPTURED AND Banded
- 417 RE-SIGHTINGS

## PEREGRINE FALCONS AS SCAVENGERS!

Believe it or not, the fastest animal alive is also a scavenger. Over the years, we've made many observations of peregrines eating bird carcasses washed up on the beach. One example is pictured at right. We banded R/2 on our northbound run at Long Beach. Going south down the beach, we saw her feeding on a Brown Pelican. Dan Varland is currently working on a research paper with Joe Buchanan, Tracy Fleming, Mary Kay Kenney and Tom Loughin on this behavior, which is not well documented in the Peregrine Falcon literature.



Dan Varland photo.

*Board of Directors**Dan Varland -- Executive Director**Dianna Moore - President**Dave Murnen - Vice President**Dan Miller - Secretary**Jeannette Bruun -Treasurer**Libby Mojica**Contact Dan at 360-591-5959 or danvarland@coastalraptors.org**or**Coastal Raptors**PO Box 492**Hoquiam, WA 98550*

**Coastal Raptors** is dedicated to providing research and education programs leading to better understanding and conservation of raptors in coastal environments. Active since 1995 and with non-profit 501(c)(3) status beginning in 2009, the **goals** are to:

- Conduct scientific research
- Provide education programs
- Train wildlife biologists
- Collaborate with experts in wildlife research and management

**Mission:** *Coastal Raptors* conducts research and education programs to provide better understanding of raptor ecology and conservation in coastal environments.

**Vision:** As people gain knowledge, they will achieve a deeper understanding of raptors in coastal environments. Their lives will be enriched, and their will to protect raptors in coastal environments will be strengthened.



Shorebirds at Long Beach, Washington. Dalene Edgar photo.

## Dan Varland Awarded for Exceptional Service

By Kate Davis, Raptors of the Rockies, Missoula, Montana

Coastal Raptors Director Dan Varland was the big winner at the Raptor Research Foundation Conference in Fort Collins in September. The banquet awards for student achievements were followed by a special announcement that an RRF member would be honored “in recognition and appreciation of exceptional service.” With Dan’s leadership role in organizing these annual conferences since 2003, he stepped up to receive his plaque to resounding applause and an ovation.

My first ever conference was the 2004 Raptor Research Foundation joint meeting with the California Hawking Club in Bakersfield. I presented my paper Friday afternoon and met Dan at the event’s evening picnic. With Dan’s contagious enthusiasm, the next thing I knew I was hooked on RRF. I have organized two Raptors in Education symposia, served as Chair of the Education Committee, and even hosted the 2008 conference in Missoula, all with Dan’s encouragement and guidance. I’d like to think that this leap from a local “bird lady” to a much higher profile with the international Raptor Research Foundation was the result of Dan’s relentless optimism, his high standards and attention to detail—esteemed qualities that will continue with Coastal Raptors and beyond.



Torgeir Nygard photo.



## PEREGRINE V/V: 7 YEARS FROM BANDING TO RECAPTURE

We try to re-capture peregrines we have banded once each year to obtain blood and feather samples; such samples can tell us about exposure to contaminants, species' genetics and natal origins. During a survey at Long Beach on February 25, 2010, Jo Westcott, Brian Sterling, Dick Brower and Dan Varland were very pleased to re-capture V/V, a female peregrine banded by Dianna Moore, Mary Kay Kenney, Tom Rowley and Dan at Long Beach on January 19, 2003. We had recaptured V/V twice and had eleven re-sightings altogether over the years. V/V was age seven when we saw her last. She is the second oldest known-age peregrine in our banding study. The record for the oldest banded peregrine among the 140 we have banded goes to a nine-year-old male with band 8/7, a bird last seen at Ocean Shores in 2006. How long can peregrines live in the wild? Nineteen years, according to the federal Bird Banding Lab in Laurel, Maryland. It is keeper of bird banding records from banders across the USA.



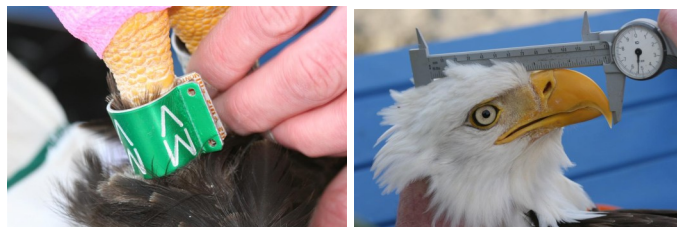
V/V at banding on January 19, 2003. Tom Rowley photo.



V/V re-captured on February 25, 2010. Brian Sterling photo.

## BALD EAGLE Banded WITH 'M/V' AT OCEAN SHORES

We have captured and banded nine Bald Eagles since 2005 in research to document beach use and lead exposure. Bald Eagles can ingest lead as they scavenge deer and elk carcasses left by hunters in the fall or by feeding on waterfowl that have ingested lead shot. While the federal government banned use of lead shotgun pellets for waterfowl hunting in 1991, waterfowl may still ingest this harmful metal as they forage for grit on pond, lake and marsh bottoms. We captured this adult male on March 24, 2010 using a net launcher baited with salmon carcasses (see p. 4).



Brian Sterling photos.

## GYRFALCON #8 AT HOQUIAM AIRPORT, GRAYS HARBOR

The Gyrfalcon is the largest of 39 species of falcons. They nest in Arctic and Subarctic zones around the World. In North America, some individuals migrate south of Canada in winter to the lower 48. Over 15 years we have banded five of these rare falcons on the Washington coast, all females. We banded the one pictured at right with colored leg band #8. Last January she was sighted on several occasions by birders at the Hoquiam Airport on Grays Harbor. Pictured (from left) are Scott Horton, Dan Varland and Dave Murnen when #8 was banded at one year of age on March 3, 2006.



Dianna Moore photo.

## Education Programs

2010 Presentations on Coastal Raptors  
by Dan Varland

- Lake Quinalt Lodge—January
- Hoquiam Lions Club—May
- Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival—May
- Women Helping Women—May
- St. Mark's Lutheran Church—June
- Westport Winery—October

## Internship Program

Coastal Raptors provided Grays Harbor College wildlife student Chris Galligan an internship during the summer of 2010. Chris conducted raptor surveys at Ocean Shores and Grayland beaches, worked with Dan and the net launcher and remodeled the pigeon coop.



Chris Galligan with his son Gage. Dan Varland photo

### Net Launcher in Action on the Washington Coast



Left: Bald Eagle feeding at bait site on a salmon carcass with our net launcher hidden away in driftwood-disguised box. Right: The net flies from the box and narrowly misses capturing the eagle. The net is propelled by three 22-caliber blanks and is triggered remotely at a distance. Tom Rowley photos.

## Training Program

**Net launcher Training.** Dan Varland spent time in October near Arcata, California training Yurok Tribe biologists Chris West and Tiana Williams on the use of net launchers for capturing Common Ravens. Chris and Tiana are assessing lead levels in Common Ravens and Turkey Vultures in a study to determine the feasibility of reintroducing the critically endangered California Condors to northern California. California Condors and other avian scavengers are susceptible to lead poisoning, which can happen as they ingest lead from bullets and bullet fragments in deer and Elk carcass remains left by hunters. The tribe had recently purchased a net launcher from Bryan Bedrosian ([www.trappinginnovations.com](http://www.trappinginnovations.com)). Having developed expertise on net launchers by working with Bryan over the past several years, Dan was able to provide the training Chris and Tiana needed to begin work on their own with their new trap.



Wildlife Biologists Tiana Williams and Chris West with a Turkey Vulture captured using a walk-in trap. Given adult Common Ravens' wary nature, their efforts to capture them using this type of trap were not successful. Happily, after training with their new net launcher, they captured eight ravens during the fall 2010 hunting season. "We count it as a successful season now," wrote Tiana.



# WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHERS VISIT THE WASHINGTON COAST

## ROB PALMER AND NICK DUNLOP

In 2010 as in 2009, Rob Palmer (<http://www.falconphotos.com>) and Nick Dunlop (<http://www.nickdunlop.com>) stopped in to photograph raptors on the Washington coast. Together with friend and colleague Kate Davis (Raptors of the Rockies), Rob and Nick have been working on a book, *Raptors of Western North America*. Due out in 2011, the book will include many photos from time spent in Washington. Nick took the peregrine photo below, which was used by University of Washington PhD student and graphic artist Jack DeLap ([www.biotadesign.com](http://www.biotadesign.com)) to create the Coastal Raptors logo (right).



Dan Varland photo.



Nick Dunlop photo.



## Phil Seu

Wildlife photographer Phil Seu (<http://www.philseu.com>) emerged on the Coastal Raptors scene in 2010. Phil is pictured here with a Peregrine Falcon that we captured and banded shortly after he finished photographing it feeding on a sparrow (right). Phil has generously dedicated 50% of all profits from the sale of prints from his website to Coastal Raptors.



Dan Varland photo.



Phil Seu photos.





Rob Palmer (left) and Nick Dunlop get down to business photographing a Peregrine Falcon on the beach at Ocean Shores. Dan Varland photo.



An example of one of Rob's photos of the speck below the arrow at left.



Four-year-old Bald Eagle. Rob Palmer photo.



First-year Peregrine Falcon with colored leg band K/2. Rob Palmer photo.



First-year Peregrine Falcon with colored leg band H/4. Nick Dunlop photo.



Two-year-old and four-year old Bald Eagles. Nick Dunlop photo.



Rob Palmer photo.

## YOU CAN HELP SUPPORT COASTAL RAPTORS BY CONTRIBUTING TOWARD OPERATING EXPENSES

It takes quite a lot to run Coastal Raptors. Below are listed some of our annual operating expenses, but not all.

Insurance: \$400 (non-profit liability)

Database Consulting: \$2,000

Office Supplies: \$900

Vehicle: \$6,000; survey costs shown below

Ocean Shores: \$1,750 (50 surveys, \$35 per survey)

Grayland: \$320 (8 surveys, \$40 per survey)

Long Beach: \$1,200 (12 surveys, \$100 per survey)



Colored leg bands for Peregrine Falcons cost \$10 each and for Bald Eagles, \$25 each.

YES, I WANT TO SPONSOR COASTAL RAPTORS WITH THIS TAX-DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION (PLEASE MAKE CHECKS OUT TO COASTAL RAPTORS, SEND TO: PO BOX 492, HOQUIAM, WA 98550).

Name

Address (street and email)

Contribution Amount



## Many Thanks to Coastal Raptors Backers!



Rob Palmer photo.

### Donations 2009

Chris Altwegg, Javan Bauder, Julia Bent, Ellen Blackstone, Bob and Sally Brennand, Dennis and Dotty Colwell, Kate Davis, Discovery Coast Audubon, Jeff Dunn, Bill and Melinda Dyer, Getty Images, Bruce Haak, Scott Horton, Rick Johns, Dan and Susan Kemp, Dale Larson, Ethel Liston, Dan and Elise Miller, Libby Mojica, Dianna Moore, Dave and Connie Murnen, North Coast Community Action, The Olympians, Mary O'Neil, Ellen and Bill Pickell, Bill and Mary Richardson, Scott and Amy Rowley, Tom and Nancy Rowley, Hans and Ellen Running, Brian Sterling, Jay Sumner, Ruth Taylor, Suzanne and Marc Tomlinson, Andy and Cheryl Varland, Dan and Sue Varland, and Mike Walker.

### Donations through November 2010

Julia Bent, Judy Clarke, Denise Coats, Kate Davis, Rod Haenke, Mary Kay and David Kenney, Dale and Ingrid Larson, Ernie and Shirley Lysen, Hewlett Packard, Bill Mayne, Ron and Jan Miller, Brian and Marsha McKinley, Dianna Moore, Dave and Connie Murnen, Tom and Carole Root, Philip Seu, Betsy Siedel, Brian Sterling, Charlie and Ariel Varland, Dave and Pat Varland, Dan and Sue Varland.

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Merlin with Dungeness Crab shell. Rob Palmer photo.