



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

Number 3
December 2012

COASTAL RAPTORS TIDEINGS



Coastal Raptors is concerned about the long-term health and viability of raptors found along coastlines. Their risks are many, including exposure to contaminants, disease, 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 more on the non-profit Coastal Raptors, including new board member Kate Davis and new treasurer Dalene Edgar, see page 2.



Net launcher fires, capturing the bald eagle on the right under the net. Dalene Edgar photo.

In 2012, **Coastal Raptors**, the environmental consulting firm **Hamer Environmental**, and other partners started work on a multi-year study to examine contaminant and disease exposure in avian scavengers on coastal beaches of Washington and Oregon. The study goals are to: 1) assess the health of bald eagles, common ravens and turkey vultures, avian scavengers occupying key positions at the apex of the coastal food web, and 2) evaluate the risk of exposure to contaminated food sources in the critically endangered California condor, should they be reintroduced to the Pacific Northwest. Given current interest in reintroducing condors to the Pacific Northwest, the latter is extremely important. Thus, California sea lion and harbor seal carcasses, important food resources for condors on the Pacific coast, are also being sampled for contaminants.

For more on the avian scavenger study, see pages 4 and 5.



The captured eagle, wearing a falconer's hood. A hooded eagle is a calm eagle. Dalene Edgar photo.

AS OF JUNE 2012, THERE WERE ONLY 417 CALIFORNIA CONDORS IN EXISTENCE, WITH 233 LIVING IN THE WILD AND THE REST IN CAPTIVITY.



California Condor.

Board of Directors

Dan Varland -- Executive Director

Dave Murnen - President

Dianna Moore - Vice President

Dan Miller - Secretary

Kate Davis

Treasurer

Dalene Edgar

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.

NEW TREASURER, NEW BOARD MEMBER

DALENE EDGAR, TREASURER



This fall, **Dalene Edgar** of Ocean Shores, Washington replaced Jeannette Bruun as Coastal Raptors treasurer. Dalene and her husband Don, pictured here, have been regular participants in Coastal Raptors field adventures for the past few years. Dalene is a very fine photographer. Her photos are featured on the Coastal Raptors website, in the newsletters, and on pages 1 and 8 of this report. She's retired now, but during her working years, Dalene was in accounting and is a certified public accountant. Her interest and involvement in Coastal Raptors, together with her business background, make her a great fit for treasurer.

KATE DAVIS, BOARD MEMBER



Kate Davis joined the board last spring, replacing Libby Mojica. She is shown here at a falconry demonstration with Sibley the peregrine. Kate is executive director of the non-profit *Raptors of the Rockies* (www.raptorsoftherockies.org), based in Florence, Montana. Kate is an accomplished educator, photographer (see page 8), author, and artist. In March, Kate led the Special Raptor Program/fundraiser for Coastal Raptors at the Aberdeen Museum of History (see page 3). Kate and I first met at the Raptor Research Foundation annual conference in 2004, which was held in Bakersfield, California that year. We have been pals ever since.

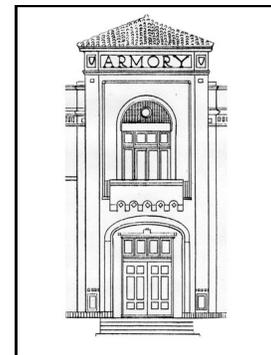
Education Programs 2012

Month	Topic	Group/Location
February	The Bald Eagle	Emerson Elementary School First Graders, Hoquiam, WA
March	Special Raptor Program (see below)	Aberdeen Museum of History, Aberdeen, WA
April	Monitoring Raptors on the Washington Coast	Severson Dells Nature Center, Rockford, Illinois
	Monitoring Avian Health and Disease on the Pacific Coast in Support of California Condor Reintroduction Planning	Rock Valley College, Rockford, Illinois (as part of an Earth Day program at the college)
May	Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival Field Trip: In Search of Coastal Raptors	Grays Harbor Audubon, Ocean Shores, WA
October	Monitoring Avian Health...see above	Friends of the Westport Library, Westport, WA
	Monitoring Avian Health...see above	Shoalwater Birders, Long Beach, WA

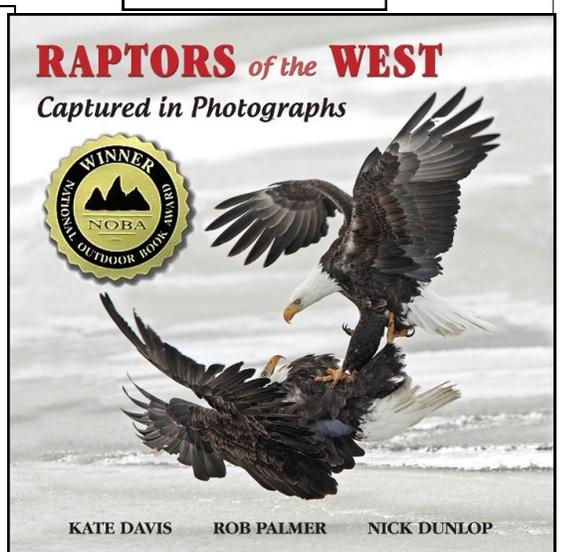


Dan V at Emerson Elementary School (Hoquiam, WA; Sue Varland photo) and Severson Dells Nature Center (Rockford, IL; Ariel Varland photo).

Aberdeen Museum of History, Special Raptor Program. This program included raptor presentations by **Kate Davis** (see page 2) and photographers **Nick Dunlop** and **Rob Palmer**. With Kate as author and all three providing photographs, they produced the book *Raptors of the West, Captured in Photographs*. Published by Mountain Press, their book was winner of two National Outdoor Book Awards and the Montana Book of the Year Award for 2011. Autographed copies were on sale, with profits generously donated to Coastal Raptors. Special thanks go out to Aberdeen History Museum Director **Dann Sears** and to **Kate, Rob and Nick** for their fundraising efforts for **Coastal Raptors**.



Rob Palmer addresses the audience. Kate Davis photo.



Award winning book.

MONITORING AVIAN HEALTH AND DISEASE ON THE PACIFIC COAST

When 2012 through 2015

Where Coastal Washington and Oregon

Who

Coastal Raptors and **Hamer Environmental** in collaboration with:

Avian Specialty Veterinary Services
US Fish and Wildlife Service
US Geological Survey
APHIS Wildlife Services
Marine Mammal Stranding Network
WA Department of Fish and Wildlife

What

Contaminants Monitoring in California sea lions, harbor seals and the bald eagles, turkey vultures and common ravens that feed on them for:

Lead and other heavy metals
Organochlorine pesticides, including DDT and PCBs

Infectious Disease Monitoring in bald eagles, turkey vultures and common ravens for:

Avian Influenza
Newcastle Disease
Adenovirus
Others...

Funding support from

US Fish and Wildlife Service, Migratory Birds, Avian Health and Disease Program; Oregon Zoo; Coastal Raptors; and the Puget Sound Chapter of the American Association of Zookeepers.

Why

Health monitoring serves as an early-warning system, helping to confirm that an avian community is free of disease and contaminants or to verify their presence. Avian scavengers occupy key positions at the apex of food webs. As such, they are vulnerable to disease and contaminant exposure. This research is important in understanding the risk to California condors, given an interest in re-introducing them to the Pacific Northwest. Moreover, some diseases, such as avian influenza, have acquired global significance and may affect the human population. Surveillance for these diseases is critical to monitoring human population health.

In 2012, we obtained tissue samples for the study from:

- 5 bald eagles
- 5 common ravens
- 7 turkey vultures
- 3 California sea lions
- 3 harbor seals



Turkey vultures at a California sea lion carcass.



Marine Mammal Stranding Network personnel **Jason Husen** (center), **Dalin D'Alessandra** (left), and **Corrie Rushford** conducted a necropsy on a male California sea lion at the mouth of the Columbia River in Oregon, January 2012. In partnership with our avian scavenger health and disease study, the team provided tissue samples from this sea lion carcass and others for contaminants analysis. Thanks go to the Stranding Network for their efforts.

MONITORING AVIAN HEALTH AND DISEASE ON THE PACIFIC COAST

Coastal Raptors provided financial support for development of the project database, equipment, and hundreds of hours of volunteer time to the field effort in 2012. Lab test results from tissue samples collected to date show that the avian scavengers and marine mammals examined had low to moderate exposure to contaminants and disease overall. All of the bald eagles tested had moderately high blood levels of mercury, and one of the vultures had a high blood level of lead. A full report on the first year of the study may be found at www.coastalraptors.org under *Publications*.



David Ness holding a bald eagle for the first time - David first learned about Coastal Raptors and the avian scavenger study by attending the Special Raptor Program at the Aberdeen Museum in March (see page 3). Last spring David graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree from The Evergreen State College. Thanks to the connection between Hamer Environmental and Coastal Raptors, David found paid employment with Hamer Environmental after working as a volunteer with the avian scavenger study.



Our youngest volunteer, **Autumn Hankins** of Tokeland, Washington, took a day off school to help us catch and process this turkey vulture. Dan Varland photo.



Ocean Shores veterinarian **Stacy Steele** measures the head of a bald eagle – with hood removed - while **Dan Varland** (left), **Sandra Miller** (center), and **Mark Wilhyde** hang on to the bird!

For more photos and text, go to www.coastalraptors.org, select *Notes from the Field*, then, under *Field Notes by Season*, select *Winter 2012*, *Spring 2012* or *Summer 2012*.



Scott Ford and **Larry Warwick** pose with an eagle before release. Scott is project veterinarian and owner/operator of Avian Veterinary Specialty Services. Larry volunteered countless hours of field work in 2012.

Thanks to Coastal Raptors volunteers who helped with the Avian Health and Disease study in 2012. They put in many long hours, including times when few birds were caught and the weather was less than desirable! A sincere thanks - in alphabetical order - to **Jerry Broadus, Susan Burchardt, Don and Dalene Edgar, Autumn Hankins, John Korvell, Dale Larson, Aaron Louchs, Sandra Miller, Dianna Moore, Dave Murnen, David Ness, Tom Rowley, Stacy Steele, Carole Styner, Mike Walker, Larry Warwick, Suzy Whittey, and Mark Wilhyde.**

JANUARY 7, 2012 A DAY WITH PEREGRINES



Coastal Raptors documents raptor use of Washington beaches, using a four-wheel-drive vehicle to cover ground. As part of this, we attempt to capture and band peregrine falcons observed along the way. Since 1995 when the project started, 156 peregrines have been banded. One of the more memorable surveys of 2012 happened at Long Beach on January 7. We captured four falcons that day, two for the first time and two as re-captures of already-banded birds. **Dan Miller, Suzy Whittey, Scott Ford** and **John Korvell** were along with me on that adventure. John, pictured at right, is an especially good photographer. All of the photos displayed for this story are his. In a letter to me after the survey, John wrote, *What I experienced and learned was far beyond my anticipation. Looking at the photos of these birds, I see even more what magnificent creatures they are.*



John Korvell.



Scott Ford with D/5, a 2-year-old female peregrine re-captured on January 7. D/5 was captured and banded on February 25, 2010. We make an effort to re-capture birds each year following banding, in order to obtain blood and feather samples for contaminants analysis



Feet and bands showing wear on peregrine falcon V/V. It would be fascinating to know all the places this female peregrine has been since we banded her at Long Beach on January 19, 2003. She was eight months old at the time. Over the years we've re-sighted her 14 times, recapturing her for blood and feather samples on six of these encounters. V/V holds the record in our study for the longest span from capture to re-sighting, at 3,275 days or 8.9 years! The maximum longevity records for banded peregrines range from 16 to 20 years, according to the national database maintained by the federal Bird Banding Lab.

A DAY WITH PEREGRINES CONTINUED...



On January 7 we captured and banded two first-year peregrine falcons, one male and one female. Here **Dan Miller** shows and then releases the female. She was given visual identification band Y/6.

PUBs and Reports in 2012

Publication

Varland, D.E., J. Buchanan, T.L. Fleming, M.K. Kenney, and T.M. Loughin. 2012. Peregrine Falcons on Coastal Beaches of Washington: Fifteen Years of Banding and Surveys. *Journal of Raptor Research* 46: 57-74.

Reports

Varland, D.E., S. Ford, G. Johnson and T. Hamer. 2012. Monitoring the Health of Avian Scavengers on the Pacific Coast: FY2011 Final Draft Report to the US Fish and Wildlife Service Avian Health and Disease Program. Hoquiam, WA 57 pp.

Varland, D.E. 2012. Examining the Risk of Contaminant Exposure for the Feasibility of California Condor Re-introduction in the Pacific Northwest: 2012 Report to the Oregon Zoo. 20 pp.

Varland, D.E. 2012. Coastal Raptor Monitoring: 2007-2012 Report to the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. 13 pp.

YOU CAN HELP SUPPORT COASTAL RAPTORS BY CONTRIBUTING TOWARD OPERATING EXPENSES. PLEASE CONSIDER SENDING A CONTRIBUTION FOR 2012 IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY (SEE PAGE 8).

It takes quite a lot to run Coastal Raptors. Below are listed some of our annual operating expenses.

Insurance: \$400 (non-profit liability)

Training and development: \$2,000

Office Supplies: \$900

Website maintenance: \$175

Vehicle mileage: \$1,500 - \$2,000



Dan Varland photo.

Many Thanks to Coastal Raptors Supporters!



Shorebirds at Long Beach. Dalene Edgar photo

2011 Donations

Chris Altwegg, Julia Bent, Brad and Julie Bitar, Ellen Blackstone, Jerry Broadus and Clarice Clark, Jeanette and Al Bruun, John Connor and Julie Cohn, Dave and Mary Daniels-Lee, Kate Davis, Will Dixon, Barbara Dolan, Jeff Dunn, Durney Agency, Bill and Melinda Dyer, Don and Dalene Edgar, Janie Fink, Scott Ford, Terry Gibson, Grays Harbor Audubon Society, Steve Hallstrom, David Hancock, Chuck Henny, HP Company Foundation, Scott Horton, Stan and Bonnie Johannes, Mary Kay and David Kenney, Tracey and Jeff Kidston, Dale and Ingrid Larson, John and Carrie Larson, Glenn Marquardt, Wayne McCleskey, Brian and Marsha McKinley, Jan and Ron Miller, Libby Mojica, Dan and Elise Miller, Sandra Miller, Kara Mortimer, Dave and Connie Murnen, Torgeir Nygard, Mary O'Neil, Arthur Grunbaum and Linda Orgel, Del Pelan, Tim Pitz, Bill and Mary Richardson, Tom and Nancy Rowley, Scott and Amie Rowley, Phil and Melissa Seu, Betsy Seidel and Bob Martin, Jerry Smith, Cameron and Christina Snyder, Armor Swanson, Bob Schwartzberg, Ellen Sweetin, Suzanne and Marc Tomlinson, Bryan and Rosey Toney, Anneka and Wolter Van Doornick, Andy and Cheryl Varland, Charlie and Ariel Varland, Dave and Pat Varland, Dan and Sue Varland, and Kathleen Wolgemuth.

2012 Donations through November

Dorothy Adkins, Joyce and Jack Armstrong, Javan Bauder, Julia Bent, Kate Davis, Jane Dobbs, Barbara Dolan, Becky Durr, Don and Dalene Edgar, John Hermanson, Lloyd Kiff, Erv and Janet Klaas, John and Donna Korvell, Jean Kyle, John and Carrie Larson, Brian and Marsha McKinley, Diann MacRae, Dan and Elise Miller, Sandra Miller, Libby Mojica, Dianna Moore, Renee and Ann Morris, Dave and Connie Murnen, John Nelson and Anne Brannon, John and Lynn Ogren, Dale and Mary Olsen, Mary O'Neil, Hans and Ellen Running, Marina Scarr, Ellen Sweetin, Sandra and David Tellvik, Suzanne and Marc Tomlinson, Andy and Cheryl Varland, Dan and Sue Varland, Harold Gunnar and Solveig Varland, Mike Walker, Larry and Patti Warwick, Suzy Whittey, and Kathleen Wolgemuth.

COASTAL RAPTORS
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Peregrine Falcon on the Long Beach Peninsula.

Kate Davis photo.