



# COASTAL RAPTORS TIDEINGS

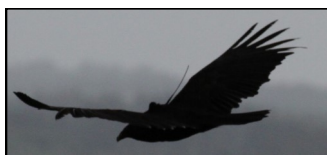
## Annual Newsletter of Coastal Raptors

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### Coastal Raptors goals:

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



**Coastal Raptors** monitors the long-term health and viability of raptors living along coastlines. Their risks are many, including exposure to contaminants, disease, wind turbines, oil spills, severe storms, and human disturbance (e.g., being shot, vehicle and powerline collision).

**Coastal Raptors** provides information to the general public and to scientists researching raptors of coastal environments.

Dear Friends of Coastal Raptors

December 5, 2022

Welcome to another edition of *Coastal Raptors TIDEINGS*, the annual newsletter of Coastal Raptors. As always, *TIDEINGS* provides me with an opportunity to share with you events from a year gone by. I begin our look back at 2022 with a report on a Peregrine Falcon with a unique plumage.

On October 13 Dave Murnen, Jake Burroughs, Tom Rowley and I did a raptor survey on the Ocean Shores beach that was marked by two firsts. It was our first time to band three Peregrine Falcons during the same survey. And, for first time, we captured and banded a peregrine showing leucism (a first-year female). It's a relatively common genetic condition in animals that results in partial loss of pigmentation. Leucism should not be confused with albinism, which is a total loss of pigmentation in skin, fur or feathers (all white animals, with eyes red).

Also notable here is that in September Ocean Shores photographer Skip Radcliffe photographed what in all likelihood was the same individual that we banded one month later. Skip texted me the photos below, simply adding "un-banded today." I was hoping we'd have a chance to band this falcon, and it appears that we did! She now wears visual identification band 32/B.

We hope to see her often in the months and years ahead!

*Dan Varland*

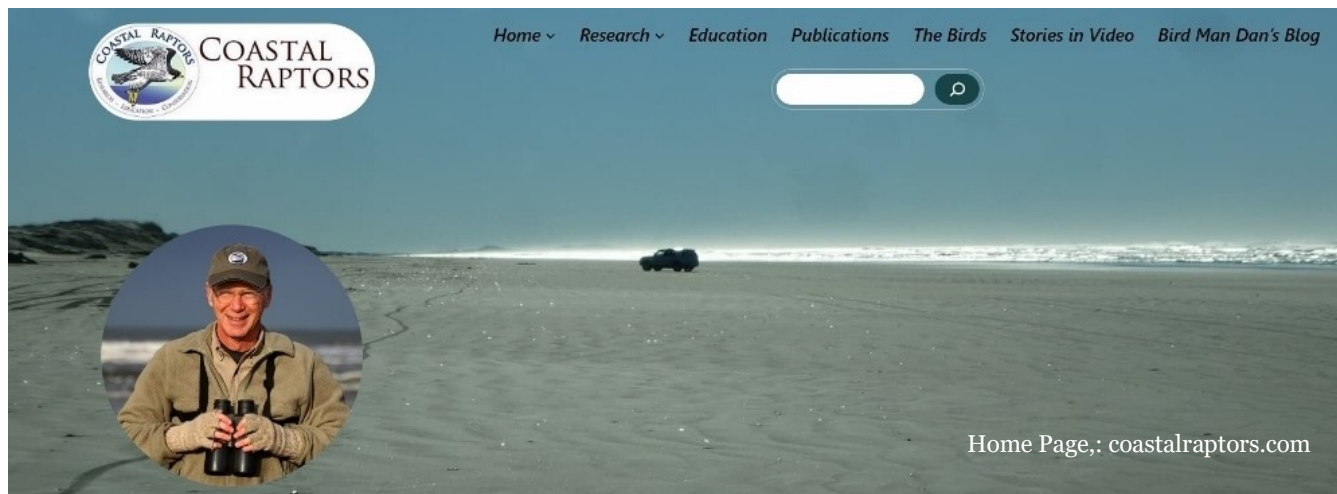


On September 15 Ocean Shores photographer Skip Radcliffe photographed this leucistic Peregrine Falcon on the beach at Ocean Shores.



On October 13 Dave Murnen hold what appears to be the same individual, captured and banded during a survey at Ocean Shores. Tom Rowley photos.

# COASTAL RAPTORS WEBSITE BEGINS ANEW!



This story begins with a little background about Coastal Raptors' original website. Thanks to the technical know-how of web manager Mark Schult, coastalraptors.com initially launched in 2005. Our site operated smoothly for 15 years, reaching raptor enthusiasts around the globe and allowing us to share Coastal Raptors research projects, field adventures, and stories of our volunteers and favorite raptors. Unfortunately, by 2020 problems uploading text and photos cropped up and, by May of 2021, we discovered that we were no longer able to upload any new information to the site. This meant no more sharing field adventures in *Notes from the Field*, something I love and had done faithfully since the website's inception.

It turned out that GoDaddy, the host of our website, had stopped updating the website's underlying content management system. This forced us to change systems. After 15 years, Mark was ready to step aside and let someone else take over. Understandable indeed!

Mark, thanks a million for 15 years of service to Coastal Raptors!



In stepped longtime Coastal Raptors volunteer and current Coastal Raptors Board President Dale Larson. Dale graciously offered to tend to the technical details of website design. "I like to look under the hood," said Dale as we began to plan our path forward. Dale had designed four websites from scratch and had "doctored others."

We decided to go with WordPress, a content management system that's been publically available since 2003. WordPress is the most popular system in use today, thanks to its user-friendliness. With a little practice, I've found that adding text, photos, and videos to the website is a breeze compared with the old system.

Dale, thanks a million for the many, many hours you spent bringing *coastalraptors.com* back to life!

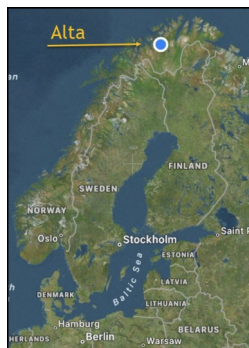
**Blog.** The new website features a blog, with yours truly as the blogger (it's called *Bird Man Dan's Blog*). The theme is *Understanding Coastal Raptors*. I've posted four blogs to date and plan to post 2-3 times each month beginning this December. To follow, go to <https://coastalraptors.com/blog/>



Date Posted	Blog Title
October 21	<i>Remembering Peregrine Falcon P/U</i>
Aug 31	<i>Monitoring Gyrfalcon Nesting in Norway</i>
Sept 24	<i>California Condors in the Pacific Northwest</i>
May 28	<i>Beginnings</i>



## SUPPORTING GYRFALCON RESEARCH IN NORWAY AND ALASKA



**Norway.** On June 3 good friend and long-time Coastal Raptors volunteer Dave Murnen and I departed Washington for an adventure that took us first to Iceland for several days of sightseeing, then on to Alta, Norway for fieldwork on a Gyr-falcon nest site monitoring project. Alta lies 250 miles north of the Arctic Circle, a city well within the nesting range of the arctic and subarctic nesting Gyr-falcon.

The monitoring effort has been ongoing for 35 years. Each year the members of the raptor monitoring group go by snowmobile to known Gyr-falcon nesting territories with the goal of determining nest site occupancy. When they see an incubating adult on a nest, they plan a return trip in June to collect data on nesting success. The June site visit includes accessing the nests and banding the young before they reach fledging age.



*Left: Norway Gyr-falcon monitoring project co-leader Kenneth Johansen and his son Olaf with a banded nestling Gyr-falcon.*

We visited five Gyr-falcon nests, banding eight nestlings and collecting blood samples from four birds. I provided vials for the blood samples; they had been provided to me by Robin Radcliffe, a veterinarian and professor of wildlife medicine at Cornell University. The samples we collected in June will be sent to Cornell, then tested for disease agents in a project also involving the non-profit Peregrine Fund and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.



**Alaska.** The overall goal of the collaborative effort in Alaska, which to date also includes three Gyr-falcon blood samples collected by Coastal Raptors, is to evaluate the connection between climate change and the emergence of disease in Gyr-falcons. Pathogens are expanding northward to the Arctic due to climate change. Most Gyr-falcons are year-round residents of the Far North. Consequently they have not built up immunities to fight emerging disease agents such as avian malaria. The study areas are the Seward Peninsula and Izembek National Wildlife Refuge east of the Aleutian Island chain (map below).

While Dave Murnen and I covered all expenses for our visit to Norway without help from Coastal Raptors, Coastal Raptors made a financial donation to Cornell University/Robin Radcliffe to go toward costs of the research effort in Alaska.



*Alaska study areas.*



*Cornell's Robin Radcliffe with a captured Gyr-falcon and a falcon decoy he had made to lure Gyr-falcons. The use of such lures is an ancient falconry practice.*



*Alaska Fish and Game's Travis Booms releases a Gyr-falcon after banding and sampling in Alaska.*

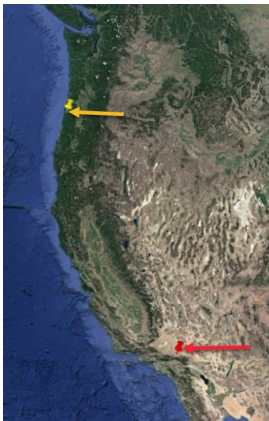
# TURKEY VULTURE TRACKING

**Tracking Through Tagging.** In 2012, Coastal Raptors began a scavenger monitoring study that included capturing and wing tagging Turkey Vultures for individual identification with letter-letter identification codes. We collect blood and feather samples from the birds, sending them to labs for contaminants testing and testing for pathogens. The wing tags have allowed us to avoid sampling the same birds more than once, a goal of the research effort. Having the vultures tagged also allows us to learn about Turkey Vulture migration and site fidelity, thanks to the re-sightings we get on these marked individuals.



Since 2012, we've tagged 61 vultures, seven of which have also received transmitters (see facing page). As of December 6, 2022, 31 of our wing-tagged only vultures have been re-sighted at least once, with 295 re-sightings in all. Some re-sightings are made by the public who report their resightings directly to me. Other reports come to me from people who report their observations online to the USGS Bird Banding Lab (BBL). The BBL provides observers with information on the tagged birds (i.e., who tagged it, when and where). For each re-sighting received by the BBL, I'm sent a re-sighting report. Afterwards, I email observers to learn more about their re-sightings.

In 2022, I received re-sighting reports on 13 Turkey Vultures that we had tagged over the years. Below I share two of my favorites, both for Turkey Vulture ES who was tagged on July 24, 2014.



Date: March 12, 2022  
Observer: Candice Szymborski  
Re-sight location: Hesperia, California (red arrow)  
Tagging location: Near Toledo, Oregon (yellow arrow)



Candice Szymborski.



ES at an overnight roost site during spring migration. Candice Szymborski photo.

Quoting Candice —On March 11th, shortly before sunset, my husband and I were in the back yard when we heard a loud noise in the top of a pine tree. We looked up to find several Turkey Vultures perching near the top and additional birds incoming. Because it was nearing darkness it was difficult to get good photos so I vowed to wake up early the next morning and get some photos of our visitors before they flew away.

I was rewarded the next morning with the treetops full of Turkey Vultures greeting the morning sun. Better still was when my husband pointed out that one of the birds in the photo had a tag. Now thanks to you and the USGS, I am the proud holder of a Certificate of Appreciation for reporting my encounter and much more knowledgeable about bird migration and banding efforts. Thank you!

Email on July 21, 2022



Turkey Vulture ES feeding on a marine mammal carcass. Jacklyn Larsen photo.

Date: June 19, 2022  
Observer: Jacklyn Larsen  
Re-sight location: 5 miles north of Newport, Oregon at Beverly Beach; 9 miles northwest of the tagging location (yellow arrow, map above left)

Quoting Jacklyn— I am an avid birdwatcher and photographer and rarely travel without my camera. I had stopped with my husband and son at Beverly Beach ...and was excited to spot the birds on the south end of the beach on what appeared to be a sea lion. I adore Turkey Vultures, and so was happy to see such a large gathering of them. ...there were at least 20 on several occasions feeding at the same time, along with ES.

Email on July 19, 2022



**Tracking Through Telemetry.** To get a year-round picture of Turkey Vulture movements, in 2018 Coastal Raptors and the non-profit Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association tagged four Turkey Vultures with solar-powered, back-pack-mounted GPS satellite transmitters.

We named them **Airy**, **Artful Dodger**, **Grayland** and **Coy**. We stopped receiving data from Airy's transmitter in 2018 and from Artful Dodger's in 2020. Grayland and Coy power on, having made four round-trip migrations between Mexico and the Pacific Northwest. This fall both vultures traveled to Mexico for winter, their fifth since they received transmitters.

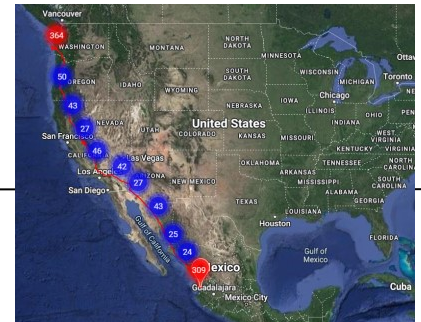
In 2022 Coastal Raptors fitted transmitters to three more Turkey Vultures and named them **Walter**, **Don** and **Amelia**. Purchased from Cellular Tracking Technologies, these transmitters send GPS locations to cell phone networks rather than to satellites (as did our 2018 transmitters).

We trapped them in July and August at the airport in Ocean Shores, Washington. (Special thanks to Jake Burroughs who volunteered for every day of vulture trapping. As Jake knows all too well, some days were more fun than others!) Within days of release, we were concerned about the status of Walter and Amelia since the tracking data we were receiving indicated that they were not moving. Sadly, we found Walter dead two miles from his release location; we have not been able to determine the cause.

We followed Amelia's last known location to a vacant lot a half-mile from where she was released. The lot is highly vegetated and includes many tall conifer trees. We've searched the property thoroughly—on foot and using a drone—and have been unable to locate the transmitter/Amelia.



*Dan Varland photo.*



*Don's path to Mexico this fall.*

**Don** is the bright spot in our 2022 Turkey Vulture tracking initiative. Don made his way to Mexico this fall, following the migratory pathways of **Artful Dodger**, **Grayland** and **Coy**.

### The Story Behind Turkey Vulture Don's Name

Having flown to Ocean Shores with his wife Tammy for an overnight, CJ Johnson happened upon Jake Burroughs, Alex Lauber and me a few hours before the Turkey Vulture who would be Don was trapped, wing-tagged and fitted with a transmitter. CJ saw the logo on our trailer and struck up a conversation with us. We soon learned that CJ's grandfather was Don Hunter, co-founder of the Raptor Research Foundation. Jake, Alex and I are members of RRF, with my membership going back 43 years! We trapped a vulture later that day and could not think of a better name for him than Don.



*Dan Varland photo.*

*CJ's airplane at the Ocean Shores airport. Dan Varland photo.*



*CJ Johnson and me.*

*AnnMarie Ridling.*



*AnnMarie Ridling photo.*

*Alex Lauber and me with the Turkey Vulture Don.*



*Don Hunter: Turkey Vulture Don's namesake.*



*Don Hunter co-founded the Raptor Research Foundation in 1966. It's no surprise that Coastal Raptors' mission mirrors RRF's: to advance the science, conservation and understanding of birds of prey.*

# EDUCATION 2022

**Presentations.** There were 10 presentations in 2022, nine by yours truly and one by long-time volunteer and good friend Glenn Marquardt. Thanks Glenn!

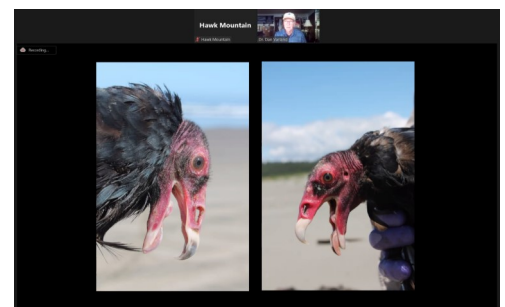
Date	Title	Audience/Location
January 8	<i>Birds of the Long Beach Peninsula</i>	Coastal Raptors Retreat, Ocean Park, WA
January 19	<i>Peregrine Falcon Survival Rates Derived from a Long-term Study</i>	Asian Raptor Research and Conservation Network Conference (Zoom)
February 11	<i>Hancock Wildlife Foundation Bald Eagle Research</i>	Coastal Raptors Retreat, Ocean Park, WA
March 5	<i>A Bird in the Hand is Worth Two on the Beach</i>	Beach Combers Fun Fair, Ocean Shores, WA
August 3	<i>Peregrine Falcon Survival Rates Derived from a Long-term Study</i>	Early Career Raptor Researchers group (affiliated with the Raptor Research Foundation — Zoom)
August 6	<i>Get to Know the Peregrine Falcon</i>	Campers at Grayland Beach State Park
October 8	<i>Techniques for Marking, Handling and Measuring Raptors After Capture</i>	Raptor Research Foundation Conference, Fort Lauderdale, FL
September 24	<i>Get to Know the Peregrine Falcon</i>	Wings Over Willapa Bird Festival, Long Beach, WA
November 10	<i>The Turkey Vulture: Love at Second Sight!</i>	White Rock and Surrey Naturalist Society, White Rock, British Columbia (Zoom)
December 1	<i>The Turkey Vulture: Love at Second Sight!</i>	Stay at Home Lecture Series, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association, Orwigsburg, PA (Zoom)



Dan Varland, August 6. Lisa Whalen photo.



Glenn Marquardt, September 24. Pat Tollefson photo.



Dan Varland, December 1. Riley Dav-enport screen shot (Zoom program).

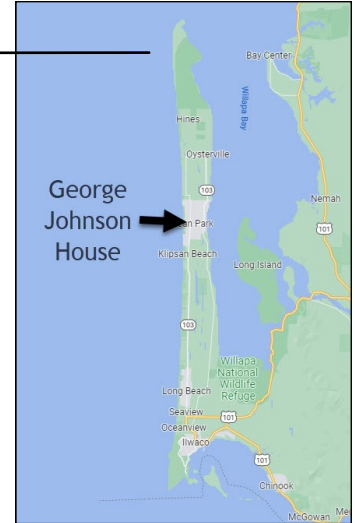
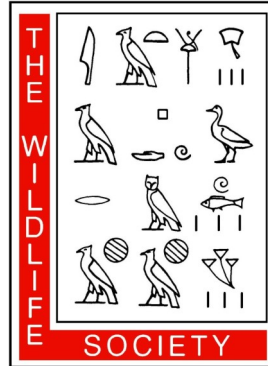


In 2022, Charlotte Killien graciously hosted four Coastal Raptors groups for overnights at the George Johnson House, her Bed and Breakfast in Ocean Park, Washington. Ocean Park is conveniently located half-way up the Long Beach Peninsula. From there it's short drive to the beach for raptor surveys, our focus between meals!

An overnight on November 4 included three biologists from California (photo below). After a survey on November 5 they turned their Tesla toward Spokane, Washington in order to attend The Wildlife Society's 2022 annual conference. It was great spending time with them—in the field and around the table.



L to R: Allie Sennett, Carolyn Buesch, Lizzi Meisman and Dan V.



Carolyn (left) and Lizzi (right) posing at The Wildlife Society conference in Spokane. Between them is Sarah Trautman, who was attending her first wildlife conference. Sarah, a Coastal Raptors volunteer, is working toward a degree in Wildlife Conservation at Unity College. Coastal Raptors covered her registration and lodging costs. Thanks Allie, Carolyn and Lizzi for mentoring Sarah at the conference!

In a 'thank you' to note to me afterward, Sarah wrote *This experience & TWS2022 has been truly life changing. Thank you for making it possible!*



## Financial Support for Coastal Raptors

Support from individual donors like you is important. Please consider helping us move forward by making a tax-deductible contribution toward operating expenses.

Examples of operating expenses in 2022 include:

Data entry and analysis - \$1,000

Vehicle mileage - \$2,000

Website maintenance - \$1,000

Conferences - \$1,200

Mailing and office supplies - \$500

Field supplies - \$500

Data acquisition (from satellites and cell phone towers for vulture tracking) - \$1,500

Honoraria (student support) - \$2,000

Please Consider a Donation for this year or next if you have not already (see page 8 for a list of donors, 2021 and 2022. Your contribution is Tax Deductible. You may donate by check (payable to Coastal Raptors; send to 90 Westview Drive, Hoquiam, WA 98550) or online at [www.coastalraptors.com](http://www.coastalraptors.com). THANKS for your support!

## Many Thanks to **Coastal Raptors** Supporters

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**Donations Made in Memory of:** Blondie, Mr. David Cambridge, Gva Hanke, Lucinda, Paul A. Pickhinke, Arnold Samuels, Mary Torfin, and Mark Wilhyde.

**Coastal Raptors**  
90 Westview Drive  
Hoquiam, WA 98550



*Dan Varland with a juvenile male Peregrine Falcon banded and tissue-sampled on the beach north of Ocean Shores, Washington on October 13. This falcon has the brown plumage typical of our coastal peregrines in their first year. That day we also banded a one-of-a-kind light-colored peregrine (see page 1 for details!). Tom Rowley photo.*