



NEWSLETTER

MAY 2016

• REHABILITATION • CONSERVATION • EDUCATION •

Society for the Preservation of Raptors Incorporated

raptor.org.au

New Tricks

Nearly seventeen years after joining the Society, I find myself learning more and more as I go along. Sometimes I wonder how I fit all the things I need to know in my head and then I realise that to make room for new information I've completely forgotten how to solve quadratic and simultaneous equations (which to be honest, doesn't bother me in the least.).

When a Peregrine tiercel was admitted with a shoulder injury, I learned how to assist my vet in taking coracoid x-rays. When the films showed no damage to the bones or any of the processes associated with the pectoral girdle, I learned how persistent a soft tissue injury can be. As luck would have it, Nick Stanton, a former falconer based in Capel, offered to try flying the bird to see if exercise would build up the musculature in and around the shoulder to the point where it would compensate for the injury.

Unfortunately, while I'd had the bird free-lofted, he had managed to damage the tips of all his wing and tail primaries on the shade cloth lining of the aviary and required extensive imping. Phil was kind enough to donate a cadaver which was fully flighted. The cadaver was a juvenile male (my tiercel is about four years old—he was in eclipse when admitted) so it had brown primaries which were slightly longer than those of an adult.

What we didn't realise until the imping process was underway was that the juvenile primaries weren't just longer than the adult primaries. The feather shafts were also appreciably larger in diameter than those of the adult bird! This made the imping process far more interesting than anticipated, but Nick, ably assisted by Domenic Auguste, managed to get all the feathers attached in an heroic effort. There's another thing learned about feathers!

The latest new thing I am learning now—from Marra, this time—is how to use Google Hangouts. Google Hangouts is an internet videoconferencing app, which sounds a bit scary but is actually very easy to use and doesn't drop out as much as Skype does. The plan is to test it out at our next Society meeting to allow members who can't make it to Perth to attend the meeting via conference. We will turn the video bit off to save on bandwidth and just use voice, but we won't be limited to two remote attendees the way we are when we use the teleconference facility on the phone.

Learning new things becomes more challenging the older we get. I think that if we push ourselves to keep learning, we keep our minds young. Pity about the rest of the body, though!

*“Those who wish
to pet and baby
wild animals
love them.”*

*But those who respect
their natures and
wish to let them
live normal lives,
love them more.”*

- Edwin Way Teale



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A Barn Owl returning to its soft release site in Jalbarragup, WA

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held at **Perth Raptor Care, 13 Lister Street, Swan View** on **Saturday, 18th June 2016 at 6:30 pm**. The meeting time has been chosen to allow as many office-bearers as possible to be present. If you cannot attend in person and would like to teleconference using Google Hangouts please send an e-mail to admin@raptor.org.au for instructions on how to be included.

In the Shops

We have a couple of members who regularly haunt the aisles of places like the Reject Shop looking for low-cost options for useful stuff. When shopping in discount outlets it's important to be very aware of quality, but we've found a few interesting things here and there.

- Reusable "instant" heat packs: little plastic pouches filled with a supersaturated sodium compound in solution. Snap the little metal disc and the liquid crystallizes, releasing heat to 50°C for up to 30 minutes. Great for transporting shocky animals or for an initial warm-up on admission. \$3 for a pack of 2.
- "Gentle Tape" is basically vetrap which is 24 mm wide and not quite as powerful as regular vetrap. Just the right size for small to medium raptors! \$2 a roll.

Thank You by Marra Apgar, Perth Raptor Care

A big, huge Thank-you to everyone who helped to complete the first aviaries at my new house in January and February. Dion, Renae, Lynn, Anna and Jacob, Jack and Sharon and Christina and Dennis (Dion's folks) all pitched in and wielded shovels and drills.

These brave souls dealt with 45 degree heat one weekend, followed by drizzle and rain the next. The last mew of "phase one" was completed mid-March, and all of my education birds now have outdoor accommodation. There are a couple more small mews to build before we tackle a bigger flight pen.

The eventual plan is to house education birds and have a couple of decent rehab aviaries on site, along with a temperature controlled hospital. This will allow me to provide a training environment for new (and not so new) wildlife rehabilitators and aspiring raptor handlers and conservation educators.

Thanks again everyone, for your contribution of hard work and fellowship in getting this massive project started.

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Contact Us

Coordinator:

Phil Pain 08 9757 2960

Secretary:

Noelene Jenkins 08 9453 6567

Treasurer / Editor / Web / Merchandise:

Nancy Tang 08 9756 0669

Rehabilitators

Perth:

Marra 08 6369 0705

Yvonne 0438 388 383

South West:

Phil 08 9757 2960

Nancy 08 9756 0669 / 0410 439 561

Mid West:

Janelle 08 9938 1447

Pilbara:

Rose 0438 924 842

Townsville:

Deb 0407 378 997