



Avian Conservation Center of Appalachia

Newsletter

Volume 5, Issue 3

Fall 2016

ACCA Admits More Than 320 Wild Birds in 2016

This year, the ACCA has admitted more than 320 wild bird patients into our rehabilitation program—that’s 85 MORE individuals than we admitted in 2015. We aren’t sure the cause for the increase; perhaps it is simply that more people have heard about us, or perhaps shifts in prey availability or habitat have contributed. Whatever the case – we’ve been busy!

Clutch of Eastern Phoebes RELEASED

Songbirds that eat on the wing can be difficult to raise successfully in captivity; however, this summer, because of the diligent work of our volunteers, and especially our two interns, Areil Harris and Julia Fregonara, we released a clutch of four Eastern phoebes. We admitted them to the ACCA, nest and all, after a cat had killed their parents. Despite their small size, these little flycatchers ate an enormous amount of soaked cat food kibble, mealworms, waxworms, and crickets. Once they were old enough to leave their nest, we moved them to a small, screened cage to allow them to practice catching crickets. Then we moved them outside to our big tent for flying practice. Once they excelled at “catching” food from forceps, we opened the tent but continued to support them for several weeks; they would wait in the trees to be fed, and swoop down for a meal (see the photo at the right, taken by Aaron New). Eventually, they found enough food on their own and stopped needing our support. Best of luck to them!



Our Mission:

To conserve wild birds through scientific research; education and public outreach; and rescue and rehabilitation

Red-tailed Hawk Patient with Two Broken Legs

For two days Matt drove past what he thought was a dead red-tailed hawk on a road near his home. Then, on the third day, the hawk picked up its head and looked at him. Matt was shocked that the hawk was alive; he picked it up and put it in a box, but quickly realized it was badly injured. The hawk couldn't stand up, and its legs were dangling at odd angles. Matt's friend works for the WV DNR, and she contacted the ACCA. One of our dedicated volunteers met her and picked up the hawk and transported it back to Morgantown.

Radiographs revealed that the tibiotarsus in each of the young hawk's legs were broken. The bird was unable to stand, perch, or grasp food. Despite the severity of the injuries, one of the ACCA's veterinarians, Jesse Fallon, decided to go ahead with the surgery. Veterinary student Rebecca Pollard assisted.

Intramedullary pins with external fixators were placed in both legs to encourage the bones to heal properly. The hawk spent several days in intensive care. After a week or so, it began gingerly standing, and finally perching. A few weeks later, the pins were removed from the bones. And now, we are pleased to report that the young hawk is in an outdoor enclosure, building up its strength for release, which should happen in the next few weeks. Matt will be able to release the hawk near where he found it. We can't wait for this bird to return to the wild!



This post-op radiograph shows the pins placed in the hawk's broken bones. We are very fortunate that we can offer injured wild birds this kind of advanced veterinary surgery. Now the young hawk (below, on the left) is almost ready for release!



Pied-billed Grebe

Every year the ACCA admits several obligate water birds that have landed on an inappropriate (non-water) surface. Some of these birds have specialized feet for swimming and diving but are unable to walk well on land. In addition to grebes, we often treat and release common loons that have become stranded on land. This pied-billed grebe was reportedly washed out of a river in a torrential rain, and then couldn't get back to the water. The bird was bleeding a little, so the finder brought it to the ACCA. Despite some minor abrasions, the grebe was in good body condition. We treated the wounds topically and released the grebe on Cheat Lake.

Meet Boris the Turkey Vulture

This past spring we received a call from a man near Buckhannon, WV, who had an injured turkey vulture behind his house. The bird had an injured wing but could still get around fairly well, and we weren't sure we'd be able to catch it. We were in the process of making plan when the finder let us know that he had stopped seeing the bird; perhaps it wandered off and died or flew away.



Months went by. Then, in July, the man called again and let us know that the vulture was back. It could still prove difficult to catch, so the man began to leave steak out for the bird at the same time every day. The vulture quickly learned the routine, which made it easy for our volunteers to capture it. The finder named the vulture "Boris"; even though a DNA test revealed she's female, we think the name suits her. She's been added to our education permit, and has already participated in several programs, including at Harper's Ferry Middle School (above, middle). We've all fallen in love with this beauty!



ACCA Celebrates IVAD



On September 5 we celebrated one of our favorite holidays, International Vulture Awareness Day, at Cooper's Rock State Forest. Participants were able to check their wingspans (as volunteers Hillary Shane and Crissa Cooley demonstrate above), make a vulture mobile (below), and meet Lew, one of the ACCA's non-releasable turkey vultures. We're already looking forward to next year!



ACCA Annual Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email Address _____

Please mail your membership application and your \$20 or more donation check made out to ACCA to:

286 Fairchance Road, Morgantown, WV 26508

Help Us Help the Birds

Running an avian conservation center is expensive! Costs include medicine, bird food, and more. We will accept monetary donations in any amount, and donating \$20 or more will make you an ACCA member for one year. Members will receive our quarterly newsletter and periodic email updates. We will also accept donations of gift cards and supplies--check out our Wish List on Amazon.com.

Volunteer and Spread the Word:

If you'd like to find out more about volunteering with the ACCA, email admin@accawv.org. Also, please spread the word about us! Pass on our contact information, suggest our Facebook page to your friends, and follow us on Twitter. And of course, if you find an injured bird, call (304) 906-5438.

Veterinary Student Lends a Hand

This fall veterinary student Rebecca Pollard completed one of her fourth-year externships at Cheat Lake Animal Hospital and the ACCA. Rebecca loves birds, and has experience working with wild birds previously. After graduation, she plans to practice in Michigan, but perhaps we can lure her back to West Virginia one day! We know she will be a wonderful veterinarian, and we wish her luck in the future.



Right: Vet student Rebecca Pollard and Dr. Jesse Fallon care for an injured tufted titmouse.

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286 Fairchance Road
Morgantown, WV 26508

(304) 906-5438

admin@accawv.org