

Raptor Rescue Newsletter

December 2014



Greetings!

And so ends another year... Going through the records, in total Raptor Rescue had 99 admissions during 2014. This is less than previous years. December/January is usually our busiest time of year, but so far it has been reasonably quiet in the clinic. On the plus side it has allowed us to take some time off for a change!

Admissions:

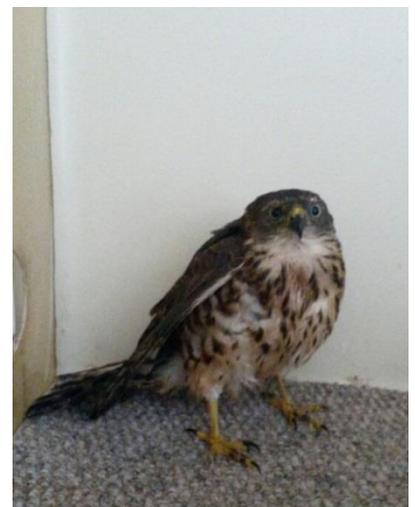
During December we had 8 new admissions: 2 Yellow-billed Kites, 1 Little Sparrowhawk, 1 Red-breasted Sparrowhawk, 1 Steppe Buzzard, 1 Spotted Eagle Owl, 1 Wahlberg's Eagle and 1 Barn Owl.



The Little Sparrowhawk's story just impressed on us how important it is to hand sick, injured or orphaned wildlife in to the right individuals or organisations dedicated to their rehabilitation. As much as kind hearted people want to help, without the right knowledge and skill, far more harm can be done than good. In this case, the people who picked up this fledgling not only misidentified it, but had no idea of how to take care of it. Thinking it to be a 'baby' Yellow-billed Kite, they picked it up, but since they could not find a Yellow-billed Kite nest in the garden, assumed it had been abandoned. They then fed it on a diet of the cereal Future Life! This was totally the wrong thing to do.

The bird had been in perfect health when it was picked up, but by the time it reached us, we had a very sick individual on our hands, and we very nearly lost it.

The Little Sparrowhawk has made a full recovery, but its feather and bone growth has been affected by the improper diet, and it will be a while before it is in good enough condition to release. We appeal to everyone who picks up a baby bird not to try and feed it unless you are experienced and are absolutely sure of what it eats. If not, please hand the bird in to your closest vet, SPCA or registered rehabilitation centre.



Releases:

3 Spotted Eagle Owls, 2 Yellow-billed Kites and 2 Black-shouldered Kites went out for release this month.



Possibly the most epic of our releases this year involved the 3 Spotted Eagle Owls. All three owls had come from the Kokstad/Matatiele area and as far as is possible, we prefer sending birds back to the areas they came from. We needed a safe release site and an enclosure to be set up. Not an easy thing to accomplish considering the distance! The McLeod clan of Spurwing Farm in Cedarville responded to our need. Nicky McLeod had brought the first of the 3 owls to us after it had been caught in a veld fire in the area and suffered burn damage.

In record time before the festive season, the release enclosure was up and transport was arranged for the owls to Cedarville.

Thank you to Nicky, Mark, Angus, Liam and Toni McLeod, as well as Gerry and Rob Folker, John Poni and Johan van Jaarsveld. Mark from TWK in Cedarville kindly donated shade-cloth, and kind neighbours contributed other materials to the construction of the enclosure. All three owls were released successfully, and are presently out at 'hack'; flying free but returning for food until they are self-sufficient.



Research:

Thank you to all the researchers involved with our work at the clinic. Our ongoing relationship with the University of Kwazulu-Natal means that we have the opportunity of being involved and assisting with research projects conducted by students from the university, as well as having students on hand to help us with some of our work. A special thank you this year to: [Lindy Thompson](#), [Shane McPherson](#), [Lorinda Hart](#) and [Morgan Pfeiffer](#).



Donations/funding:

We are very grateful to all the people who contributed to the running of the clinic this year.

Thank you to [Stihl](#), [Davidson's Boards](#) and [Container Consumables](#) for their kind donations of equipment and materials.

Thank you to the [Camelot Conservancy](#), [Securelink](#), [Open Gardens](#) and [Birdlife Port Natal](#) for financial support.

Thank you to all the individual people that contributed financially to the running costs of the clinic. Some of you I know personally, some I have never had the pleasure of meeting. We are grateful to each and every one of you for your generosity and support.

Thank you to the people who have set up release enclosures on their properties at their own expense, and given of their time to help facilitate the release of raptors.

Thank you to [Stonor Hatchery](#) for donating food for the birds.

Thank you [Vet House](#) for your ongoing veterinary support.

Thank you to our volunteer, [Josh Kleyn](#), who is consistently on hand to help.

And thank you to the [Eskom/EWT](#) partnership that has done a great job this year of contributing towards raptor conservation by making electricity lines and transformers safe for our birds.

Forgive me if I have left anyone out!

We hope to carry on the good work in 2015. Without your help, what we do would not be possible.

Kind regards,

Tammy

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