

Raptor Rescue Newsletter

June 2016



Greetings

After yet another phone call from a concerned member of the public wanting to know how to take care of a bird of prey that they were 'rehabilitating', I felt the need to make a public appeal. There have been situations where people who live in very remote areas, and do not have access to a vet or rehabilitation centre, have been given help telephonically or via email as how best to care for an injured bird of prey they have in their possession. We will never turn anyone away who wants to know how to take care of an injured raptor, but wherever possible, the bird should be taken to a vet first, and then handed on to a *registered* rehabilitation centre. The simple fact is that vets spend years studying their profession, and rehabilitation centres go to a lot of trouble and expense to make sure they have trained, experienced people working for them, as well as facilities that meet the minimum norms and standards required for the animals they care for. None of this wealth of knowledge can adequately be imparted over the phone or via email, and because of this, the treatment and subsequent chance of survival for a bird of prey in inexperienced hands, is severely compromised. Further to this is the small issue of legalities. Wild animals, be they birds of prey or other, belong to the wild. To have any wild animal in your possession requires a permit, and to obtain that permit you need to validate why that animal is in captivity, whether it is temporary or permanent. You also need to motivate why you personally have the best facility on offer to care for that animal. These measures are in place for the protection of wild creatures. We strongly encourage people to do what is right, and not jeopardise the survival of our wild birds of prey by denying them the very best treatment and care available.

Admissions:

During June we had 20 admissions: 8 Barn Owl chicks, 2 adult Barn Owls, 1 Crowned Eagle, 1 Fish Eagle, 4 Jackal Buzzards, 1 African Goshawk, 1 Spotted Eagle Owl, 1 Cape Vulture, and 1 Yellow-billed Kite.

We had two separate incidents of Barn Owl chicks having to be rescued this month. In both cases owl boxes were installed and most of the chicks were able to be returned to the boxes and continued to be cared for by their parents. We often get concerns expressed over whether moving the chicks to a box is successful, and the answer is that we have yet to experience a move that has not been successful. As long as the box is located close to the original nest site, and the chicks have not been away for longer than a day or two, the parent birds remain faithful to their territory and nest area, and instinctively resume their parental duties when they locate their offspring once more.

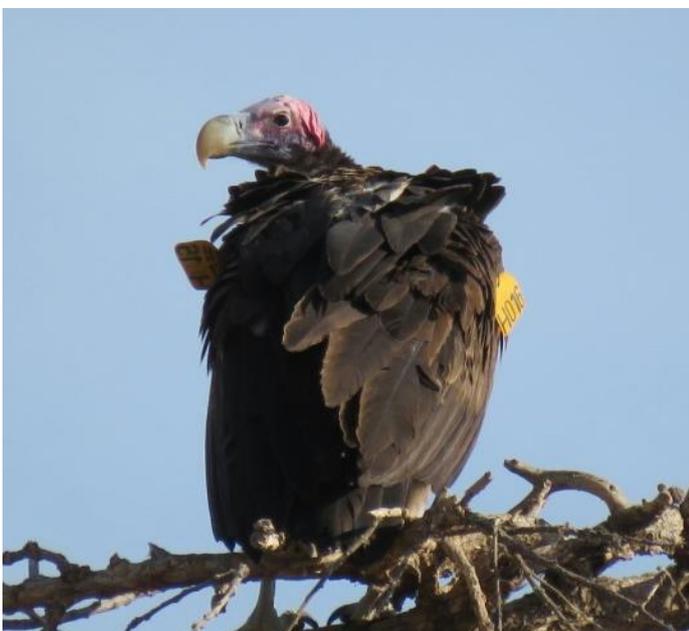
We received our first chick of the season from FreeMe rehab in Howick. The chick was the only survivor out of three that had fallen from a nest at Midmar Dam Head Office. Our team headed up there to discover another two grounded chicks. The top of the beam where the nest was located was simply not wide enough to accommodate the growing brood. We removed the remaining chicks from the nest and installed an owl box. Three of the chicks were healthy and strong and were ringed and put into the box. The other three chicks which had fallen were weak, malnourished and injured. These were taken back to the clinic for treatment.

Not long after this, we were brought three Barn Owl chicks from a damaged nest. The Barn Owl family had taken up residence in an old Hammerkop nest, which had been discovered by a pair of African Harrier Hawks. The diurnal raptors set about pulling the nest to pieces and unceremoniously dumping the inhabitants onto the ground. One of the Harrier Hawks did try to fly off with a Barn Owl chick, but dropped it. The chick was badly injured, having been grabbed on the head. Our team installed a box and returned the two stronger chicks. The injured chick remained at the clinic to be treated.



Releases:

Apart from the Barn Owl chicks which were returned to nesting boxes, 1 Lappet-faced, and 1 White-backed Vulture were released this month.



Both vultures were originally recovered from a suspected poisoning incident in the Colenso area three months ago. They had fully recovered from their ordeal and were fit for release into the wild once more. Thanks to the efforts of Wildlife Act, we were able to get transmitters funded and a safe release site arranged at Nambiti Game Reserve near Ladysmith. As with all of our vulture rehabilitation and conservation efforts, we are grateful for the support and collaboration of organisations like Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, the Endangered Wildlife Trust and Wildlife Act.

Donations/funding:

We received some great support this month from the Waterproofs; aka Stefan Jordaan and Megan Timmer. The couple entered the 2016 Win a pool with Slimline competition, in which teams competed to see who could remain in a pool for the longest time, winning the grand prize of a swimming pool. Unfortunately our duo did not win, but put in a valiant effort of over 50 hours in the pool and were able to raise funds and awareness for Raptor Rescue as their chosen charity to support for the event. All funds raised will go to cover the costs of a transmitter to be fitted onto the male Fish Eagle recently sent out for release, subsequently named 'Inkosi' by Keiran King, our most generous sponsor for the event.

And to end:



Kind regards,

Tammy

Contact details:

Raptor Rescue Rehabilitation Centre
kznraptorrescue@gmail.com
www.raptorrescue.org.za
Ben: 082 359 0900
Tammy: 076 724 6846
Find us on Facebook!

Banking details:

Predatory Bird Projects
Standard Bank
Account no: 037530224
Branch code: 040727
Reference: Raptor Rescue/Research