

# On the Horizon



Horizon Wings Newsletter – Summer 2016

[www.horizonwings.org](http://www.horizonwings.org)

Welcome to Horizon Wings' semi-annual newsletter – On the Horizon. We would like to keep you informed of happenings, events, and news going on at Horizon Wings.

Our mission at Horizon Wings is to rehabilitate birds of prey for release into the wild, in order to maintain their population and to educate the community to enhance awareness of the environment. It is our hope by doing this that we reach people of all ages and create the desire in them to help preserve our natural world.

## Earth Day 2016

Once again we have the utmost pleasure in sharing that our 6th annual Earth Day Event was a huge success! With every passing year we have seen amazing turnouts for our largest event of the year – and that is all due to our amazing volunteers and wonderful guests!

This year the rainy start to the day quickly gave way to sunshine and warmth, welcoming guests to see two formal programs, various bird stations, guest animals, and more. From our two eagles, Atka and Chrysos, our Bald and Golden Eagle, to birds easily spotted if one pays attention, like the Red-Tailed Hawk, visitors got to tour and hear their stories and facts.

Even further than sharing information on our twenty different resident educational ambassadors, we spoke about the environment and how we can help protect it – it is an Earth Day even after all! Beyond just touring our aviaries and seeing all of our birds, visitors got to: get face paintings by Adria Mecca; visit our educational stations and dissect owl pellets; visit the sheep with The Bourkes from Cairn O'Mahr Farm in Ashford; see a wonderful falconry demonstration with Christine Peyreigne and her Red-Tailed Hawk; and see and hold various snakes – including pythons and boa constrictors – from Christine's Critters!



Beyond the sites to see, there were donated baked goods, chili, and beverages for snacking fun, along with a kid's craft table. There were various raffle items with quite a few pieces donated by amazing volunteers and talented artists (who also volunteer with us!). And to top all that off, there was an art booth with inspirational wildlife based art with the incredibly talented artists Pat Morris and Brenda Lyons! A day that started with pouring rain turned into a beautiful spring day that made way for eager footsteps to encounter amazing animals! This year's fundraiser was wonderful and beyond appreciated. Thank you again for everyone who came out to visit – your generosity and support makes our mission possible!

Thank you to all of the volunteers that gave their time, resources, and efforts to make this even a huge success! We couldn't do this without you!

*Written by Colleen Backman  
Photos by Brian Zoldak*

# Fianna's Story



On Friday July 10, 2015 I received a call from Tom Sayers of Northeast Connecticut Kestrel Project. Earlier in the day Tom was checking the kestrel boxes intending to band the young when he came across a nestling with a serious leg deformity. At this time she was the only chick left in the box as three weeks earlier there had been five. Something had gotten into the box, and preyed upon the chicks leaving only one survivor. The chicks leg had been broken in the attack and had already begun to set, but in a backwards position.

Despite her injury she was active and well fed. She continued to thrive with hand feedings as she could not grasp and tear even the smallest of items. The decision was made to try and re-set the leg hoping it would be strong enough to eventually one day hunt with. Dr. Ann Bourke from Northeast Bird Clinic undertook the task of surgery. The kestrel handled the surgery very well, and the leg was broken and re-set. With time the leg healed, but

unfortunately the foot never regained the strength needed for hunting. As a result, the young kestrel could never be released into the wild. The decision was made to add this kestrel, now named Fianna, to our team of educational ambassadors.

American kestrels are the smallest falcons in North America. they are on a Special Concern list in Connecticut due in part to loss of habitat and pesticide use. They nest in tree cavities, barns and other building crevices and will also nest in man-made boxes. Until recently these birds had been listed as threatened but due in large part to conservation efforts such as the one provided by Northeast CT Kestrel Project, their numbers are rising in the state.

Thank you Tom Sayers and Dr. Ann Bourke for helping us save the life of this magnificent bird! To learn more about conservation efforts and the Northeast Ct Kestrel Project visit the link below:

<http://www.nectkestrels.com/>

*Written by Mary-Beth Kaeser*



## Horizon Wings Celebrates 15 Years!

It's hard to believe that so much time has passed since Horizon Wings was officially incorporated. It all began with Mary-Beth, a dream, and a little American Kestrel named Kisra. Since then, each year has been filled with unique challenges and rewards. Due in large part to the support of like-minded individuals and the community at large, we have been able to expand both our rehabilitation capabilities and our environmental educational outreach programs. Thank you to all whose efforts, large and small, continue to help make our mission possible.



Please join us at our 15th Anniversary Party:

**Date:** Sunday, July 17th

**Time:** 1:00 – 4:00

**Place:** Pomfret Audubon  
218 Day Road  
Pomfret Center, CT

Admission is free  
Donations appreciated



There will be cake and lemonade, a slideshow, raffle, face painting, hands-on educational activities for the children, and of course, personal appearances by the magnificent raptors in our care. Hope to see you there!

# Owlets Re-nesting May 2016

Although we started off the baby season slowly without getting in any young Great-horned owls, it certainly picked up in May. As of June 1st, we have gotten in four Eastern Screech owlets and six Barred Owlets. Once we have determined that the owlets are healthy, they will go in with our program adult owls of the same species. This is to prevent the owlets from imprinting on us; we don't want the owlets to think they are people and not owls. If this happens, we wouldn't be able to release them to the wild. If we have all of the information as to where they were found, we try to put the babies back with the parents. They are best raised by their parents back in the wild.

We were able to re-nest two of the Eastern Screech owls to two separate nests in Somers. One was a pretty easy task since there was an owl box on the property with an active nest. Little owlet faces could be seen during the day peeking out of the hole. We were able to climb up a ladder and place the little one back in the nest. Success!



The other Eastern Screech owl re-nesting was more difficult. This little one was found in someone's yard under a bunch of trees after one of the rainy wind storms we had. After spending several days in rehab he was ready to be reunited with his siblings. When we went to the address we spent a lot of time with the help of the ACO of Somers trying to find the nest. Since they nest in cavities in wasn't easy to locate the nest. Rocko from Mountain Tree Service volunteered his time to come and help us. He went up in a bucket truck to start looking in all of the holes in the trees near where the baby was found. After the bucket truck couldn't reach anymore, Rocko put on the climbing equipment and went up the tree. Finally a little screech head popped up in one of the holes. Rocko was able to place the baby back in with it's siblings.

We were very lucky with one re-nesting of the barred owlets. With just had a vague description of where it was found in the road near a very wooded area, we went one morning with the owl call and owlet. The hope was that if we played the barred owl call then we would get the adult to call back or to fly in. After searching on one side of the road and playing the call all was quiet. Then we went on the other

side of the road and continued hiking and playing the barred owl call. Finally MB spotted an adult barred owl. It must have come flying in to investigate the call that we were playing. MB quickly placed the owlet on the trunk of a tree near the adult. We wanted to make sure we didn't scare off the adult so we slowly backed away and watched for a couple of seconds. The adult began to call to the owlet immediately and the owlet began to use it's beak and talons to make it's way up the tree! Whenever the youngster stopped the adults began to call to it again and further up the tree the little one went. We certainly didn't want to be too close so we gave them space and took a couple of quick photos and left them! What a magical morning being able to witness this reunion!



*Written by Jeanne Wadsworth*

## Wish List

- Lumber (Plywood, 2x4s, 2x6s)
- Roofing material
- Hardware (deck screws, rafter hangers, hinges, hasps)
- Pea stone for aviary flooring
- Zip-Loc freezer bags
- Cleaning supplies (paper towels, bleach, Simple Green)
- Office supplies (Postage stamps, paper, envelopes, card stock)
- Gift cards for building supplies
- Hardware cloth
- Disposable vinyl cleaning gloves

*Thank you to Dave Stevens for his generous donation of a PA system!*

***Please support your local merchants whenever possible!***

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860-429-2181

Fill out and mail this form to be added to our mailing list, for information, and our end-of-the-year letter, featuring a photo of a raptor. You can also help Horizon Wings by including a donation.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City, State, Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Mail to:**

Horizon Wings Raptor Rehabilitation and Education  
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Visit us for current news, photos, and information on upcoming programs.**