



Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue Inc.

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Barnell, the Burrowing Owl

No matter how many times I am blessed to see one, I always catch my breath, feel my heart beat begin to quicken. How can something so diminutive have such stature, such class, such PRESENCE? Here I was, belly to ground, practically eye to eye with the new second-in-command mascot of the Lindbergh Elementary School Eagles – Barnell the Burrowing Owl. Barnell seemed bored as he allowed me to snap his picture, somehow mocking my excitement. “He’s mad,” remarked my little one as I tried to remind him to stay back and not frighten the Burrowing Owl, who seemed about as frightened as my three year old.

Max Munoz of Mrs. Ponder’s third grade class at Lindbergh in El Paso’s Upper Valley first discovered Barnell early in the week of January 22, 2001. Max and his classmates were on their way to P.E. from their



portable class building when Max saw Barnell, who was quickly spotted by the other children in the class of twenty-two. The class researched Burrowing Owls on the Internet and named him Barnell, a play on “Barn Owl.” When asked what they felt when they first saw Barnell the kids said “happy”, “excited”, and “proud.” “It was

Mrs. Ponder’s 3rd Grade Class, Lindbergh Elementary

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The Purpose of CDWR

Wildlife rehabilitation is the care of injured or orphaned wildlife for return, where possible, to the wild. Successful rehabilitation takes a lot of time, a lot of effort and no small amount of money.

It is challenging work, done by special people. Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue is a nonprofit organization which exists to help the rehabilitators in the El Paso/Las Cruces area. Our purposes are to:

- ◆ provide a volunteer network to assist active rehabilitators in their work
- ◆ support wildlife rehabilitation programs financially
- ◆ provide education and instruction in wildlife rehabilitation
- ◆ educate the public about wildlife conservation problems
- ◆ work for the reduction of pressures on native wildlife from domestic animals and humans

Burrowing Owl Tidbits

Burrowing Owl - *Athene Cunicularia* - Length 9 1/2" (24 cm)

- ▶ Ground dweller of open country grass lands, especially in prairie dog towns
- ▶ Found in north, central and South America
- ▶ Migrant: returns to a specific place rather than to the same mate
- ▶ Nocturnal, but perches outside burrow during daylight at borrow entrance or on low post
- ▶ Nests in single pairs or small colonies
- ▶ Makes use of "satellite burrows," especially as young are growing up
- ▶ Male is slightly larger than female
- ▶ Long legged: will hunt on foot
- ▶ Burrow: dig own, or use prairie dog, skunk, ground squirrel, fox burrows; may use drain pipes or man-made burrows
- ▶ Burrow angles down 12 to 18" then runs parallel beneath the surface for 4' to 15'; 5" to 6" diameter; nesting chamber raised area and 18" across
- ▶ Entrance hole lined with cow, dog, or other dung as a scent screen for protection from predators
- ▶ Disturbed in its nest gives an alarm hiss that imitates the sound of a rattle snake
- ▶ Brood: usually 5 to 7 eggs laid in 24 to 72 hour intervals; incubated after first egg is laid; incubated by both parent owls; 3 weeks incubation; dramatic age difference between oldest and youngest in brood
- ▶ First three weeks of life spent underground in burrow: owlets fed by both parents (care and feeding requires hunting day and night); then spend more and more time at borrow entrance loafing, stretching, investigating, bowing and bobbing like dancers; dive for burrow if alarmed; curious and adventurous – seem as curious about us as we are about them; wait at entrance for a meal to be delivered: insects (locusts, grasshoppers, crickets, dragonflies, caterpillars...), mice and rats, ground squirrels, lizards, snakes, scorpions, frogs, toads and birds.
- ▶ Owlets fledge at about 6 weeks of age; after about a week above ground owlets often move to other nearby burrows; both adults alert and protective - fed by adults while they're learning to hunt
- ▶ In winter, over wintering owls may actually put a cache of food in their burrow and stay underground during severe weather; if owls are not seen it does not necessarily mean they have left or migrated; they may well be in their burrow
- ▶ Calls: soft coo-cooo, chattering series of chack notes, hiss
- ▶ Binary hearing and binary sight
- ▶ Coexist quite well with prairie dogs and ground squirrels
- ▶ Protected by state and federal regulations

Barnell (Continued from page 1) amazing,” one child remarked.

Mrs. Ponder’s class, as well as all of Lindbergh Elementary, has adopted the little owl, protecting it fiercely. As Barnell calmly watches the children pass by several times a day, he seems to sense that they will not harm him. Orange cones and tape surround the entrance of the burrow, alerting everyone of Barnell’s existence and telling them to stay away. A sign was posted which read “Burrowing Nesting Mommy Owl, Please be Quiet and Please Leave Alone.” The school halls are adorned with beautiful artwork of Barnell



Beautiful artwork of Barnell drawn by various student at Lindbergh Elementary

and his activities reported daily with the morning announcements.

Principal Mitzi Bond, Vice Principal Haidi Appel, and Leslie Jones, Assistant to the Principal, were extremely



helpful and welcoming when I arrived to learn more about their “visitor.” Barnell is a joy to behold and all of Lindbergh Elementary should be commended for the enthusiasm in which they have embraced this wonderful creature.

Teaching is time never lost and Barnell is proof that the chance to educate our children about the beauty, magic and enchantment of nature is right outside our back door.

Barnell sits and watches the world go by...

- Susie Jensen

America's Symbol Inspires Awe - and Draws Tourists

by Craig Savoye

Virtually patriotism on wing, the majestic bald eagle swoops low over the Mississippi River, drops its talons below water line, then rises with a flopping fish in its grasp.

Most of the crowd gathered on the ramparts of Lock and Dam No. 19 and elsewhere around this river park barely notice the catch. They're too busy watching the rest of the record number of eagles - 730 by one count - that have showed up for this year's Keokuk Bald Eagle Appreciation Days.

Dozens of the white-crowned raptors are lined up like sentries where ice floes border open water. A score are aloft, fishing, and many more roost in cottonwoods along the riverbank.

"They're incredible - beautiful and graceful, but there's something more, too," says David Demarais, a retiree who, along with his wife, drove three hours to see the eagles. "They have a certain spirit that touches you."

Americans love a comeback, and the bald eagle has gone from being a monument atop a flagpole to a resurrected, living, national symbol. As a survivor, the bird is starting to take on cult status.

In the 1990s the nation's symbol saw a well-documented resurgence throughout the continental United States. On the brink of extinction in the 1960s, the number of wintering bald eagles in the lower 48 states has increased to between 10,000 and 16,000 last year, when the bird was almost taken off the endangered-species list. Concern over habitat protection delayed a decision.

Now, not only are bald eagles back, but drafting close behind are legions of grounded admirers - few of whom describe themselves as "bird watchers."

Their wonder is not lost on chambers of commerce, state parks departments, and resort hotels, which are all climbing on the bald-is-beautiful bandwagon:

* Up and down the Mississippi, there are at least nine Keokuk-like festivals, weekends, or appreciation days devoted to the bald eagle.

* In Oklahoma, before 1990 there were barely 25 bald eagles in the state. Today, 25 different parks, recreation areas, and wildlife refuges have bald-eagle-viewing events during the winter.

* Several resort hotels offer eagle-watching packages. At Land Between the Lakes in Kentucky, boat cruises take visitors to key roosting sites. The Villa Roma resort in New York's Catskill Mountains offers a naturalist-guided trip.



The Real Survivor

The lure of the bald eagle is something even the experts find difficult to articulate.

To be sure, songbirds are accorded a "Welcome Back Day" in three Florida cities, and swallows get a festival when they return to the San Juan Capistrano mission in California. Even the snow goose has a weekend in Smyrna, Del. But when it comes to avian obeisance, bald eagles are simply birds of a different feather.

Lori McKean, director of the Eagle Institute in Barryville, N.Y., says the birds hold special meaning for baby boomers. "A lot of people embracing [eagle watching] are people who, when they were a kid, never thought they would see an eagle - they were nearly extinct. [They] also feel like they had a role in creating the environmental consciousness that led to the eagle's recovery."

Still, Terrence Ingram, who heads the Eagle Nature Foundation in Apple River, Ill., worries that their recovery will be short-lived if adequate measures aren't taken to secure habitat. Eagles require sturdy, old-growth trees, like oaks, to support their enormous nests, but development threatens such trees.

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* CDWR DIRECTORY *

Whom can you call in the El Paso/Las Cruces area
when you find an injured/orphaned wild bird/animal?

EL PASO AREA CDWR CHIEF DISPATCHER

Helen Bigelow505-882-2910

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Anne Hussmann584-4081

REHABILITATORS

Central -

Bill Howe (turtles/snakes/lizards/small exotics)..... 772-0695
Dr. Gail Patrick (Animal Regs. & Disease Control)..... 532-5966
Amy Rembold (small birds) 566-8682
Gloria Villaverde (reptiles)..... 577-9505

East -

We need help!!!!

Northeast -

Charles/Carroll Bella (raptors/reptiles/mammals) 751-4711
Marcia Wheatley (birds/small mammals) 821-9374
Sheila Barnes (birds/small mammals) 566-5719

West -

Peggy Kirk (birds) 584-5553
Carol Miller (waterbirds)..... 584-7088

COOPERATING VETERINARIANS

Central -

El Paso Veterinary Hospital, 4101 Montana..... 566-7887
Montana Animal Clinic, 1015 Chelsea 778-9588
El Paso Animal Emergency Center, 2101 Texas 545-1148
Dog, Cat, Bird Hospital, 3233 N. Mesa 533-9070

East -

Johnsen Animal Hospital, 1851 N. Lee Trevino..... 592-6200
Desert East Animal Hospital, 11635 Pelicano 855-4100
Eastwood Animal Clinic, 9509 Montana..... 593-0713
Animal Clinic, 7184 Alameda 778-5355

Northeast -

Skyline Veterinary Hospital, 4424 Titanic 755-7647
Northeast Veterinary Clinic, 9405 Dyer 755-2231
Bridges Animal Hospital, 3410 Hondo Pass..... 755-8314
Fairbanks Animal Hospital, 5320-C Fairbanks..... 757-8387
Harwood Veterinary Clinic, 4404-A Edgar Park..... 755-5653

West -

Crossroads Animal Hospital, 4910 Crossroads..... 584-3459
Country Club Animal Clinic, 5470 Doniphan 833-0645
Anthony Animal Clinic, 901 Franklin, Anthony TX..... 886-4558

TRANSPORTERS/TROUBLESHOOTERS

Northeast - (other areas also)

Joe/Inga Groff 755-2957
Charlene Ruddock 755-5575

West -

John/Jane White..... 505-589-3320
Phyllis McCarthy 581-1063
Anne Hussmann 584-4081
Susie Jensen 877-4036

East -

Phyllis/Jim Harris

Chaparral, NM -

Jochen Lange..... 824-3090
Jim/Linda McDowell..... 824-4333

LAS CRUCES AREA EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Geri Tillett 522-4966

REHABILITATORS

Geri Tillett (birds)..... 522-4966
Belinda Dayley (mammals, bats, turtles, iguanas) 382-3736

ELEPHANT BUTTE

Roberta Hirschhorn (birds, etc.)..... 505-894-9420

SILVER CITY

Margaret Cejka (birds, excluding raptors)..... 505-537-6624

COOPERATING VETERINARIANS

Dr. Calista, 162 Wyatt Drive 525-1000
Jornada Vet Clinic, 2399 Saturn Circle 382-1710
East Lohman Vet. Clinic, 1700 E. Lohman..... 523-5654

TRANSPORTERS/TROUBLESHOOTERS

David/Sherri Byrd (raptors)..... 524-2314

CDWR would like to wish Godspeed
to Heidi and Don O'Neill. Thank
you for all your help – you will
be sorely missed!

Plea for Help!!

Baby bird season will be upon us soon.
We have no rehabilitators on the
eastside. Please help us and the
wildlife in our care.

**If man is not to stifle human feelings, he
must practice human kindness toward
animals, for he who is cruel to animals
becomes hard also in his dealings with men.
We can judge the heart of a man by his
treatment of animals. ...I mmanuel Kent**



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 difference for wildlife!**

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Americas Symbol *(Continued from page 4)*

Here in Keokuk, the corridors of the small town's only mall have practically been converted into a shrine. Booths offer paintings, photos, moldings, mugs, pins, and puzzles. All seven live eagle shows were full on Saturday.

The crowds by the river build at midday, watching the birds treat Big Muddy like a big smorgasbord. Fish passing over spillways are stunned or killed and float to the surface, and the eagles toss back herring like popcorn.

Five of the charismatic birds roosting in a tree have caused drivers to stop their cars and gawk, creating a Yellowstone Park-like jam. "Whoa, look at that," says a man wearing a weather-beaten tractor-logged cap, as one bald eagle almost inverts himself to flash his talons at another bird. "Doesn't get any better than that." Maybe not: the symbol of America, once more aloft over America's largest river.



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CHIHUAHUAN DESERT WILDLIFE RESCUE, INC.
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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I hereby apply for membership in the Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue as a/an:

INDIVIDUAL.....\$10.00 FAMILY.....\$15.00 CONTRIBUTOR.....\$25.00

Enclosed is my contribution for \$ _____ in addition to my membership

NAME _____ **PHONE** _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ **STATE** _____ **ZIP** _____

Membership gives you the opportunity to help orphaned and injured wildlife and to support the efforts of the CDWR volunteer rehabilitators. Membership includes a yearly subscription (4 issues) of the newsletter .