



With Halloween just around the corner, we take a minute to celebrate our wise, mysterious owls. Pictured is Skuya, one of the education birds under our care at Alaska WildBird.



The owl has become a big part of our Halloween traditions. Throughout history owls

would often be seen near the Halloween bonfires swooping through the night air searching for food. Owls frequently scared nighttime travelers as they flew silently and often lived in the hollows of trees where they could not be easily seen. Their proud, melodious "hoot" became a symbol of the night. It naturally followed that the owl became associated with Halloween. Its wise, luminous eyes, its concentration on its prey, its hooked bill and powerful claws make them a bird to truly haunt, and to celebrate. During this Halloween season, think of the variety of wonderful owls that you help to survive through your support of Alaska WildBird Rehabilitation Center.



Alaska State Fair

Another major fall highlight was our participation in the Alaska State Fair. Our birds are truly stellar. With a big part of our mission being to motivate individuals to care about our avian neighbors, and support rehabilitation and care of at-risk birds, our participation in the Fair truly reached out to our community. The day was perfect, and our 4 avian ambassadors were real troopers. Each of them did 3 programs with barely a cry, hoot or chitter. We had lots of visitors (too many to count). Thank you!

Our highlighted bird this month - Goldie



One of the most vibrant birds under our care, loaded with energy, wits, and character, is our senior citizen, Goldie. Goldie is a Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk, the sub-species of red-tailed hawk most often found in mainland Alaska.

She was taken legally from a nest near Delta Junction in the fall of 1990 as an eyas, or chick, by a falconer from Valdez. For 15 years she flew and hunted for him. At that age in the wild she would have been a fairly elderly bird, and he noticed that her flight skills were declining. She was retired from falconry, but continued to live with her keeper in Valdez, educating and delighting children in the local schools.

In 2010 the falconer transferred Goldie's permit to Alaska WildBird Rehabilitation Center. Goldie, at the advanced age of 20-years-old, became a majestic and mellow member of our avian education ambassador team. Her gentle and inquisitive demeanor immediately made her a popular bird both with our volunteers and program audiences. She is now retired from her program commitments, and lives at the Center, where she continues to enjoy the human contact that has been so much of her history, interacting with the volunteers, and observing our daily activities.

The Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk does not have the same appearance as the commonly seen Eastern Red-tailed Hawk of the lower 48 states. The body feathers are usually a dark, chocolate brown, but a small percentage of birds are also mostly white. The tail may or may not have the namesake reddish feathers; colors can vary from white to tan to rusty to dark brown, or any combination. The Harlan's Hawk is migratory, needing to travel south in search of food for the winter. Most migrate to the southern great plains of the US, where they can hunt for their preferred food of small rodents in relative

snow-free ease. Migration is a difficult activity, many birds do not survive the thousands of miles needed to travel each year. In Southcentral Alaska these birds migrate north in mid-April, and are the most common species seen at local hawk watches.



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