



# Boise Ridge Notes

A Publication of the Idaho Bird Observatory  
DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES, BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

The Idaho Bird Observatory's mission is to contribute to the conservation of western migratory landbirds and their habitats through cooperative research and public education.

Spring 2010 .....

## The Raptor Population Index Project

By Greg Kaltenecker

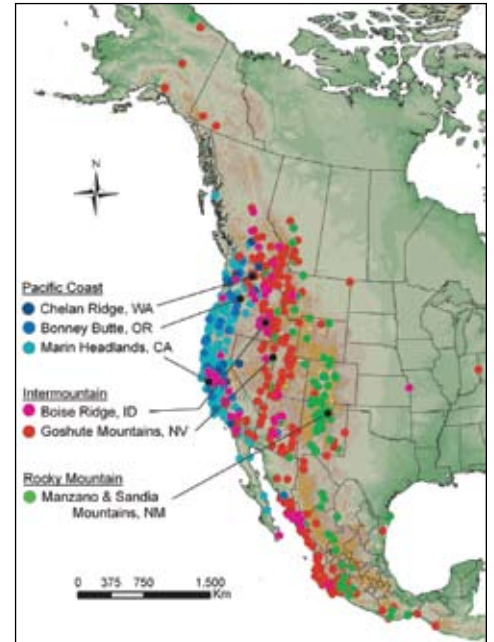
Why do we count raptors every fall from Lucky Peak? We have often been asked that question. For years we would respond by saying something like: "we are contributing to regional population monitoring", or something like that. Well, what exactly does that mean? Now IBO and dozens of other raptor migration monitoring stations can demonstrate to supporters exactly what they mean by this. We can now show them exactly how our long-term monitoring data is used and how it benefits conservation.

In 2008, a significant book was published titled *The State of North America's Birds of Prey*. This book was the result of a serious effort that compiled and analyzed decades of raptor migration counts from sites located all over

North America (<http://rpi-project.org/>). This work assesses migration patterns, population trends, and conservation status of North American raptors based on migration counts and banding. IBO contributed data to two of the chapters in this book. Chapter 6 titled *Trends in Migratory Counts of Raptors in Western North America* contains analyses of population trends based on counts from 10 different western watch sites, including the Boise Ridge. Based on these raptor migration counts, the majority of species are stable or show variable trends across the region. Turkey Vultures were found to be increasing at most watch sites. Definitely at our site, Turkey Vultures have increased significantly over the past 15 years. On the other hand, Northern Goshawks, Golden Eagles, Prairie Falcons, and American Kestrels were found to be

decreasing at most watch sites. There is also some evidence that prolonged drought in parts of the West has caused shifts in migration of many species to avoid drought-stressed regions.

Chapter 2 titled *Raptor Migration in North America*, in part, uses raptor banding data to piece together migration routes, breeding areas, and wintering areas of raptors throughout each region in North America. IBO banding data was combined with banding results from other western banding stations. This analysis identified three loose migration "flyways" within the western



Band recovery patterns for six western raptor migration banding stations (1980-2006; Goodrich and Smith 2008).



Locations of band encounters from raptors banded on the Boise Ridge, 1993-2009 (IBO 2009 annual Report).

U.S. used by migratory raptors. It was found that generally, raptors banded from the Cascade mountains west, stay west of the Cascades. Raptors banded at Intermountain sites such as the Boise Ridge generally stay within the intermountain region, between the Cascades and the Rockies. Raptors banded within or east of the Rocky Mountains generally stay to the east.

Never before has such a comprehensive approach been taken to assess raptor population status in North America. In my opinion, this work validates everything we do at IBO. Despite how difficult it is at times to fund, staff, and maintain our migration project year after year, this is exactly why we continue to count and band raptors each fall on the Boise Ridge.

# Feedback From Our Fans

"We would like you to know how deeply we appreciate our experience at the Bird Observatory on Friday October 3rd. The learning you facilitated and so kindly gave has already spurred many questions, individual curiosity and projects, further learning, and respect for nature more intent than ever. Many, many thanks!"

Brownie Troop 161

"On a scale of 1-10, I would rate IBO a 10. Your attitude and knowledge about birds is what really struck me when I visited the IBO. How many questions about birds do you know the answers to?"

Katrina, 5th Grade

"What I thought was super cool was going up the hill and seeing that AMAZING view! What is amazing about bird migration is that the birds can go so far in such a short time."

Gav, 5th Grade

"When I grow up I want to work at IBO just like you, Nathan, Caroline, and Jay."

Isabel, 5th Grade

"P.S. What type of degree do you need to work up there?"

Chase, 5th Grade

"Erin, Thanks so much for letting us see the Flammulated Owl. It was really great of you to wake us up at 2:30 in the morning to see the

## Greg, Jay, and all the other fantastic IBO staff,

*This is just a formal thanks tossed in to commend you all on a job well done. For the 10 years our class has been making the run up Highland Valley Rd., we have never had a disappointing experience. This year was no exception. The majority of our first-year kids never have seen these birds, or seen them this close, let alone holding them in their hands. The owls, hawks, and silver-haired bat were smash hits as well, and we still have kids talking about the experience four weeks later...*

*An ecologist by education, it's easy for me to get ramped up to visit you all each year. How you get the kids ensnared by the wonders and fascination of the natural world is the real trick of it. I think we know that experience/exposure is a huge chunk of their indoctrination. I would argue that a critical component is the delivery of those experiences. Here is where you all excel.*

*When you are passionate about your pursuits it does more than show. It often rubs off. "Enthusiasm is caught, not taught", is an accurate adage that you have repeatedly demonstrated. When the students share reflections post-trip, they often precede the bird story with a name-one of yours. "Jay said the amount of fat tells you how much energy they have", or "Heriberto let me hold my first bird!". "I liked how Kaia asked me questions..." You get the picture.*

*In a culture increasingly devoid of 'outdoor play' opportunities and emphases, its people like you, combined with great environments, that will make a difference. Who's to say how these kids will see the world in which they are so intricately woven in 20 years. But I'll bet that because of their experience with you, the odds just got a little better.*

Cheers~

Robbie Prokop, Intermediate Class Faculty  
Foothills School of Arts and Sciences

Golden-crowned Kinglet: Maddie M.



Cooper Dean and Liz Williams with a Coopers Hawk.

owl. It's really cool that you guys actually like to teach us about the owls. You were really nice and so much fun to meet. You are the best owl handler/researcher ever!"

Emily, 5th Grade

"That was my first time camping, I had so much fun! I'm going to come visit with my family! Thanks again!"

Anne Marie, 5th Grade

"Heriberto, Thanks to you, my favorite part of IBO was the songbirds. It's cool enough carrying them around in their little bags and letting them go, but it was really nice of you when you let me hold the little guy for a short while."

Brett, 5th Grade

-continued on last page



Western Tanager: Maddie B.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Brooklyn Williams



# Diane and Winston Moore Family Endowment

By Greg Kaltenecker

I met Winston Moore about 6 years ago when Dennis Fitzpatrick, a mutual friend, introduced us. Moore, founder of the W.H Moore Co., has been a local area businessman for decades. This meeting was the beginning of a great friendship. To say that Winston and I have a connection would be an understatement. An enthusiastic outdoorsman his whole life, we instantly hit it off. Not only do we share the same birthday, but also a passion for fishing, hunting, sporting dogs, and other outdoor endeavors. His love and lifelong pursuit of these activities has taken him all over the world, and he was one of the first to pioneer the sport of saltwater fly fishing in the tropics (also my favorite passion).

The first time Winston visited IBO, he was impressed with what the program offers kids. "Kids don't have good role models because too many parents are too busy to pay proper attention to them", according to Winston. He and his wife have supported many causes that offer children what he considers "good, clean, wholesome activities". He has mentioned to me many times how important it is to keep kids away from all of the alternatives that are so easy for them to find these days.

As an avid outdoorsman and nature lover, Winston also knows how important it is to involve kids in nature at a young age. This is one of the things that impressed him so much about the IBO. "When they hold a bird in their hands, they are just in awe", he says. "I think it's fantastic."

## First Official IBO Lifetime Membership

During September 2009, IBO hosted the annual conference of the Western Field Ornithologists (WFO) in Boise. The conference was held at the Oxford Suites Hotel. IBO helped plan the conference, participated in the scientific session, and of course, organized field trips to Lucky Peak and other local birding hotspots for conference attendees. The meeting was a huge success, and meeting participants loved Boise, and especially all the fantastic IBO activities ongoing at Lucky Peak! After the conference was over, WFO donated part of the proceeds to IBO to support the host organization. Their \$1000 gift came with only one string attached: they wanted to be acknowledged as the first official IBO Lifetime Member. Thanks WFO! You were all great, and we look forward to keeping in touch with many of you in the future.

Want to become an IBO Lifetime Member? Contact the Director.

[gregorykaltenecker@boisestate.edu](mailto:gregorykaltenecker@boisestate.edu)



Dennis Fitzpatrick photo

Winston Moore stares into a Merlin's eyes.

At IBO, we have recognized for some time that what the program really needs to be able to continue, to grow, and to prosper is stability. Thanks to Boise State President Dr. Robert Kustra and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Martin Schimpf, this message was successfully conveyed to Winston Moore. In 2009, Winston and his wife Diane pledged a \$1.5 million endowment for the Idaho Bird Observatory. Specifically, yearly earnings from this endowment will support the IBO Director position. Endowing the Directorship not only ensures a consistent driving force for the IBO, but it also allows more funds from grants and donations to be used for program activities because the Director's salary is covered by the endowment. The endowment has also committed Boise State to increased support for IBO. University policy dictates that when a faculty position is endowed by an outside donor, the university also contributes an amount equal to half of the endowment's yearly earnings. This increased university support will begin in four years when the endowment has been fully built, and will be used to expand IBO education programs.

In this age of economic downturn, dwindling state and university budgets, and future uncertainty, Winston and Diane's gift is greatly appreciated. It will provide the stability needed to ensure that IBO's work will continue and that the program will be able to grow indefinitely.

IBO has done a respectable job of maintaining and expanding its programs with annual grants, corporate sponsorships, and individual donations, but endowment is really the only way to guarantee that IBO can continue to do its important research, monitoring, and education work into the future. We also have plans for two more IBO endowments. One would ensure that IBO's fall migration project would continue, grow, and support and train Boise State students indefinitely. Another would allow IBO to develop, launch, and sustain forever a unique year-round outdoor education program that will serve area youth.

For more information about the Diane and Winston Moore Family Endowment or the other endowment opportunities mentioned above, please contact the Director.

[gregorykaltenecker@boisestate.edu](mailto:gregorykaltenecker@boisestate.edu)

# An IBO Volunteer Retrospective

By Dave Wike

It is an understatement to say that my wife, Carol, and I have enjoyed volunteering for the Idaho Bird Observatory (IBO). I am in my 15th and Carol her 11th years of participation in the growth of this Boise State University (BSU) program. I personally have learned a lot and have greatly enjoyed teaching others the excitement and skills in working with birds.

In 1996, I started volunteering with Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) on various projects. Mary Dudley, then and currently the Volunteer/Reservist Coordinator for IDFG as well as IBO Volunteer Coordinator (phone 327-7099), told me about this new great hands-on project with birds on Lucky Peak. In 1993, BSU Raptor Biology graduate students, including the current IBO Director, Greg Kaltenecker, discovered one of the largest raptor and songbird migration sites in the western U.S. on the Boise Ridge. My first volunteer day was in the fall of 1996 as crew



Dave and Carol Wike photo

Dave and Carol with Golden Eagle.

members and I enjoyed the stunning views as they drove me to the site at the top of Lucky Peak. I was a little apprehensive as I knew absolutely nothing about birds! However, the friendly staff immediately began teaching me the basics. On hawk watch, I could spot migrating raptors with naked eye and binoculars, but I did not yet have the skills to accurately identify them. I watched from the peak as hawk trappers in the blind below caught and banded hawks and falcons.

The following fall, 1997, IBO established its songbird banding project. Now I would be arriving much earlier in the day to enjoy the excitement of seeing these birds up close. The next fall, 1998, we added forest owl banding at night so that now, birds were being trapped and banded almost 24 hours a day! We caught Flammulated Owls, which had never been banded at

an owl migration station in the U.S. before! More enthusiastic volunteers were being added to the crews. Even though I was still working and had only a few days to spend on the peak each fall, by 1999 I was now involved in numerous aspects of the fall migration duties. One day that fall I had an opportunity to spend the day in the hawk trapping blind with the Director. What an exciting time I had! The first seven raptors that I saw caught were each a different species, including a rare Peregrine Falcon! In the spring of 2000, we started our first MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) bird banding operation on the peak. It is a nationwide effort, developed by the Institute for Bird Populations ([www.birdpop.org](http://www.birdpop.org)), to monitor breeding land-bird population dynamics in North America. It is still one of my favorite IBO studies as Lucky Peak has an abundance of beautiful blooming flowers rivaled only by the strikingly colorful plumage of the breeding male birds. I was now retired from my practice and, with more time available, was trained as a songbird and hawk bander. Carol also retired and had her first season on the peak in the volunteer crew. And the rest, as they say, was history.

In the years that Carol and I have been with IBO, there have been 16,000 diurnal raptors, almost 2,000 nocturnal raptors and almost 70,000 song birds trapped and banded. I do not know how many I have personally handled, but it is in the thousands. It has been a true privilege to carefully examine each, from the smallest (Calliope Hummingbirds) to the largest (Golden Eagles). Over the years IBO has had band returns on the diurnal raptors from as far north as British Columbia, Canada to as far south as the southernmost areas of Mexico. What a thrill to know that I have handled birds that have traveled that far...and some even much further! The research and monitoring study that IBO has developed along the Boise Ridge has led to the area being designated as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society. Much of the research at this site has been published in scientific journals and presented at conferences in the U.S. as well as internationally. Lucky Peak is one of the few sites in the world that simultaneously collects extensive and detailed information on both raptor and songbird migration in the same location.

As the work that IBO has done with fall migratory birds has expanded over the years, I have seen crews expand to meet the needs. These crews are made up of volunteers from the community, seasonal paid staff, graduate and undergraduate students from BSU, as well as staff from our international program. IBO volunteers are patiently and expertly trained by the crew to assist in all aspects of songbird mist netting, raptor migration counts, hawk and owl netting and banding, set up and take down of the facilities, equipment repair, etc. Each volunteer must commit to at least 3 days each fall, and generally begin with data recording. For those that show real interest, they can do more...much more. The paid seasonal staff (also volunteers as they receive only a small per diem) will be on the peak for 60 to 90 days, living in small tents in all kinds of weather, but are some of the most dedicated, bright and hard working people that I have had the privilege to work with. And they love to see Carol come on the days we volunteer. She brings her freshly-baked cookies which they devour! They also greatly appreciate donations of seasonal fresh vegetables and fruits August through October. So, if you have extra in your home garden, share some with them. Graduate and undergraduate students receive invaluable field knowledge and experience here versus classroom lectures and thesis work. Dr. Jay Carlisle, our IBO Research Director, did much of his



Dave and Carol with Red-tailed Hawk

Dave and Carol with Red-tailed Hawk.

research here in obtaining his PhD. “Dr. J” and I started with IBO the same season. Students interested in ornithology learn techniques, contribute to scientific knowledge, and assist in educating the public. Carol and I have greatly enjoyed assisting them in specimen and data collection for their studies. IBO has established an International Internship Program in which young and enthusiastic students from Belgium, Hungary, Columbia, Argentina, Venezuela, and Mexico have joined us to obtain training and experience. It has been exciting to see them return to their countries and pursue meaningful bird education and conservation projects.

Education programs have greatly expanded in the years that I have been a volunteer. We now have added an Education Director: Deniz Aygen (currently an unpaid position). These education programs are for the general public, K through 12th grade school classes, church and scout groups, birding associations and graduate and undergraduate students. The cordial and helpful IBO staff loves to teach others about what we do on Lucky Peak. Some groups schedule overnight camping trips so they can watch and learn as IBO staff are trapping and banding birds 24 hours a day. Well over 500 people visit the peak each fall. These visitors will carry with them a better understanding of birds and the natural world around them, and the importance of conservation. We now also participate in International Migratory Bird Day at the MK Nature Center in Boise where we set up a demonstration project for the day to show the public how we trap and band birds. For 10 years we have been an integral part of Bald Eagle Day at the Idaho Shakespeare Festival at Barber Pool. This activity includes 2 days of school children participating with a variety of

magnificent captive raptors and learning about their environment. This is followed by a Saturday open to the general public for an environmental education event to teach people about the 400 acre Barber Pool natural area and the numerous bird species and other wildlife that live so close to our large human population. Over 1,000 visitors attend this function each year. We love talking to the public and telling them what we and IBO do. In addition, I have given slide presentations to various church, scout and birding groups about what a rich and rewarding experience visiting IBO’s Lucky Peak site in the fall can be.

Education programs have not gone unrecognized. In 2004 the IBO Director, Greg Kaltenecker, was presented the Idaho Environmental Education Association’s award as *Environmental Educator of the Year*.

Financing for expanding IBO research, monitoring and educational activities has grown in recent years. IBO depends heavily on volunteer contribution of time, energy, expertise, materials and money, without which the 60 to 90 day fall migration studies and educational experiences would not happen. Mary Dudley, IDFG Volunteer/Reservist Coordinator has recently done a study adding up the approximately 8,000 hours of volunteer time, plus personal vehicle miles and materials that are contributed. The

estimated cash value of this volunteer time (not including personal miles and materials) was close to \$230,000! This endeavor would not occur without the many volunteers that cheerfully return every year. Grants, corporate and small business contributions as well as individual donations have helped with some of the costs. More recently, as the quality of IBO’s work has been more widely recognized, increased contract work has been obtained from the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, BLM, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Geological Survey, and U.S Fish and Wildlife. As part of the non-profit Boise State University Foundation, IBO can receive individual, corporate and foundation donations, critical for its long term mission.

It is amazing to look back and see what has resulted from that conversation with Mary Dudley so long ago. I do not know how many thousands of hours Carol and I have enthusiastically volunteered for IBO. I feel that I have received more than I have given: an even greater appreciation for birds and their amazing migrations and struggle to survive and reproduce; meeting many visitors and crew members from all over this country as well as foreign nations; learning to extend my public speaking skills; possibly touching the lives of others in such a way that they now are contributing to IBO; and last, assisting with research projects that not only help undergraduate and graduate students, but expand our knowledge and IBO’s reach in the scientific community. We have witnessed and have been a small part of the great changes and growth of IBO. I look forward to seeing even more growth in the future. Even more, I would like to see increased funding of IBO to add greater stability to its future. Finally, more work on the IBO web site also requires more time and funds.

At the Idaho Bird Observatory, we have a very welcoming, unique, and easily-visited opportunity to connect and reconnect to the natural world around us. Carol and I look forward to many more years of volunteering!

## Volunteers Needed!

To volunteer for IBO during the fall, contact Mary Dudley (IDFG) at 208-327-7099. We also need help maintaining our mailing lists, data bases, newsletter, fundraising, and many other tasks. Can you help? Contact the director.

[gregorykaltenecker@boisestate.edu](mailto:gregorykaltenecker@boisestate.edu)

Do you want to receive the IBO Newsletter and other updates electronically? Contact the Director. [gregorykaltenecker@boisestate.edu](mailto:gregorykaltenecker@boisestate.edu)

## New Raptor Field Techniques Course

IBO Director, Greg Kaltenecker, will teach a new raptor field techniques course for graduate students during fall 2010. A different form of this course has been taught in the past, but always during the spring semester. Starting fall 2010, thanks to some changes in the Raptor Research graduate program's curriculum, raptor students will be required to take the techniques course during their graduate career at Boise State.

IBO is a perfect project around which to structure this course. Students will learn basic raptor identification, as well as capture, handling, and banding techniques. Other important research methods can be taught at IBO including disease and contaminant sampling, radio telemetry, feather sampling, and many others. Students will be required to volunteer a minimum number of hours during the semester, so will help IBO maintain its long-term monitoring projects. Prominent scientists current in the field will guest lecture to round out the students' introduction to raptor research techniques. This will be a welcomed addition to IBO's educational activities.

## Follow IBO Online!

For updates on IBO, Bald Eagle Days, links to our publication, or for current banding and monitoring totals, check out our websites:

- <http://www.idahobirdobservatory.org/>
- <http://idahobirdobservatory.blogspot.com/>
- <http://baldeagledays.blogspot.com/>

Also, become a fan of IBO on Facebook!



Jane Fink with Liberty, the Bald Eagle.

IBO photo

## Bald Eagle Days Update

By Deniz Aygen, IBO Education Director

January 30th, 2010 marked the 11th annual Bald Eagle Days event held in Boise. IBO is the main organizer of this event that showcases the Boise River. The event's purpose is to draw attention to the river and its wildlife to increase public awareness of and help foster an ethic of community stewardship for this incredible natural resource.

Bald Eagle Days has grown from a one-day public event attended by just a few hundred people, to a three-day extravaganza that attracts well over 1000 people each year. A few years ago, we expanded the event to include activities for organized student visits from local schools. In 2010, nearly 500 3rd and 4th grade students from Boise and Meridian attended these programs on the two days before the public event. While IBO coordinated the event, we could not have done it without our partners' help. Idaho Department of Fish and Game, The MK Nature Center, Boise State University, the Foothills Learning Center, Birds of Prey Northwest, and U.S. Bureau of Land Management all participated in Bald Eagle Days 2010.

The Saturday event was attended by over 1000 people. A great lineup of speakers, many bringing live raptors, captivated audiences throughout the day. Talks by Birds of Prey Northwest's Jane Fink and U.S. Bureau of Land Management's Larry Ridenhour packed the Idaho Shakespeare Festival's interpretive center. Unfortunately, we had to turn some fans away because the room was too full! Luckily, many of the guest speakers and bird handlers from the Idaho Falconer's Association displayed their raptors to the public throughout the day on the Festival's comfortable outside patios.

Because of the economic downturn, we have not held our IBO Bald Eagle Days fundraiser event for two years now. Thankfully, donations received at past fundraisers have allowed the Bald Eagle Days event to continue and grow. Look for us again next year, as we hope to bring you an even better event. Special thanks to the Idaho Shakespeare Festival for hosting Bald Eagle Days each year. It is the perfect place to hold the event!



# The Gyr

by Jay Carlisle, IBO Research Director

The first bird that really caught my attention was a **Red-tailed Hawk** and that species will always hold its place in my bird-brain *and* have my thanks for getting me hooked on nature, birds, and conservation. BUT, as soon as I began devouring books and other materials on birds of prey, I became especially fascinated by two raptor species: the **Northern Goshawk** and the **Gyrfalcon**. I'm sure part of my initial interest had much to do with the fact that raptor enthusiasts spoke with a certain awe about these species in particular. As I got to know more about these species, I saw why such awe existed: their size, their flying abilities, the habitats in which they occur, and their physical beauty.

By the time I finished high school, I'd seen my first adult **goshawk**. Then, a dream came true when after my junior year of college I took an internship studying **goshawks** with the US Forest Service in northern California (my first bird job) and loved it. I was able to find active nests and was pinned to the ground by aggressive females defending their nests a couple times that summer – needless to say, my respect for **goshawks** only increased.

It took several more years before I finally saw my first **Gyrfalcon** – a gray morph bird that frequented an area near Gannet, ID for several winters in the mid-1990s. Even though it wasn't a white morph (something I'm still waiting for), it was pretty awesome to see. During my years in South Dakota at grad school, I saw four or five others in the north-central part of the state – a relative hotspot for wintering Gyrs in the lower 48.

We're fortunate in Idaho to have pretty good numbers of **Northern Goshawks** – including birds that migrate past Lucky Peak in the fall. Thus, in my ten years or so of raptor banding with IBO, I've been fortunate to see, capture, and band numerous **goshawks**. In contrast, though they likely reach the state in most winters, **Gyrfalcons** are quite rare in Idaho and during 14+ seasons of raptor migration study in the Boise Foothills we had never seen one.



Jay Carlisle photo

Jay with young Gryfalcon.

That was until Saturday, October 11, 2008. Lucky Peak had received 4" of snow on Friday as part of a strong cold front and the road was impassable by Saturday morning so we had to walk the final mile to reach the peak in order to trap. After removing snow from all the nets and traps, we were finally up and going by 12:20 pm – and looking straight out into a north wind gusting past 30 mph. It was looking to be a brutally cold day that could only be 'warmed' by glamour birds such as **Merlins** or **goshawks**! About 20 minutes after starting, Heidi spotted a bird out to our NW and soon there were two **Sharp-shins** circling within 150 yards. I started pulling on the bow-net dove but, and as *Accipiters* often do when they're flying together, they were too interested in each other and did not look our way. But, pretty quickly a larger, grayish raptor rose up below them and the dove got its attention right away. As I saw it coming in, I thought, "Sweet, this could be my first '**Gos**' of the season."

I thought **goshawk** at first because it was big and grayish but then it banked above the dove and I saw the tapered wings. My eyes got big, thinking, "huge falcon – not a Peregrine, not a Prairie ... holy crap, this is a **Gyr**!!!!" It made a few pretty-low passes over the dove but I wasn't sure it would stick to it so I then tried the pigeon (moderate interest) and mist-net dove (it saw the

nets easily since the wind was blowing about 30 mph). Soon it started circling up and I figured I'd lost its interest... BUT, I got it to come back for another pass at the mist-net dove and then I pulled on the bow-net dove again and the **Gyr** seemed to have renewed interest so I stuck with that dove. It made another five or six passes at the dove (in between some awesome-looking turns!) before finally coming low

enough to hit it. It landed on the dove and, after centering the bird within the trap, I pulled the trigger but the bow-net wouldn't go (!!!! – the trigger line was loose/wet from all the snow) and the **Gyr** tried to take off with the dove and dragged it a couple feet outside of the bow (once again, I thought I'd lost it). By pulling on the dove, I was able to reel the **Gyr** and dove back in to the center of the trap. It stayed on the dove and I pulled as hard as I could on the trigger and the trap flew! Needless to say, we ran out of the blind as fast as we could in order to keep it from getting out of the trap. Aside from losing my mind with excitement at catching a **Gyrfalcon**, my first thought upon arriving at the trap was that this was a huge bird!

We banded the bird and took all the measurements (it weighed 1670 grams!) and then Kyle took the bird up top so that other hawk and songbird crew members could see the bird. Then Kyle called down to the blind to let us know they'd released the **Gyr** so we stepped out to watch it fly away. Once it got far enough away, we sat back inside the blind and on my first pull of the pigeon, an immature male **Northern Goshawk** appeared from the trees and came straight for the pigeon! Thus, not just a **Gyrfalcon**... but a **goshawk** and a **Gyrfalcon** in the same day! An adult **Cooper's Hawk** about an hour later rounded out the day's tally... just your basic trapping day in the snow at Lucky Peak!

# Lucky Peak Site Improvements?

By Greg Kaltenecker

Idaho Bird Observatory's (IBO) Lucky Peak research site has always been rustic at best. Although the station sits just a few miles from the capital city, the rugged access, lack of power or running water, and seasonal nature of the camp have always resulted in a true "wild" experience for visitors. While some love the unimproved nature of the site, our ability to engage the public is certainly limited by the mountain top's rugged nature. In addition, our continued use of the site is likely having long-term impacts on its vegetation.

As IBO's popularity has grown within the community and more public visit us each fall, it has become obvious that we are limited by a few important things: restroom facilities, parking, adequate level camping sites for visitors and crew members, and a clean, level, and protected place to engage visitors while banding. For years now, Boise State University's President Bob Kustra has suggested that a permanent building might be the best thing for IBO and the site. When both Dr. Kustra and Winston Moore, major donor and friend to IBO, urged me to research and pursue an IBO

structure at Lucky Peak, I listened.

In Spring of 2009, local architect Cornel Larson agreed to help get the project off the ground. Cornel and I visited the site, taking measurements and photos. Cornel quickly drew up plans for a structure that would suit both IBO's and the public's needs. Since Lucky Peak is within the state's Boise River Wildlife Management Area (WMA), we soon presented the ideas to Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) employees for review, and began researching county building requirements. Herein lies the dilemma: the WMA's main purpose is to provide quality winter range for big game and hunting opportunity to the general public. Would major site improvements for IBO and a permanent structure be compatible with these goals of the WMA?

After soliciting the help of IDFG Director Cal Groen and Bruce Newcomb, former Idaho Speaker of the House and now Boise State's Director of Government Relations, we struck a compromise for improving the site. It was agreed that site improvements including permanent restroom facilities, leveling camping

pads, creating a natural "amphitheater" for presentations and banding demonstrations, and improving parking would not deter from the WMA's main purpose. However, instead of a permanent building, it was agreed that the use of non-permanent structures, such as wall tents or a yurt, were the way to go.

We are currently researching costs and building a base of support for these site improvements. Much of the work will involve relatively simple excavating and leveling, and we hope that this will be donated by the project's partners and supporters. However, hard costs will be associated with construction of permanent restroom facilities, purchasing of wall tents and a yurt, and rehabilitation of vegetation after construction. We have started a fund for site improvement cash donations.

Can you donate cash? An in-kind donation of excavation? Landscaping? Construction Management? Please contact the Director with your questions or if you can help support this campaign in any way.  
[gregorykaltenecker@boisestate.edu](mailto:gregorykaltenecker@boisestate.edu)

## IBO Wish List

In addition to funding, IBO requires other types of support to continue its yearly programs. Can you donate a lap-top computer, or do you work for a company that can? Do you have an ATV you need to get rid of? Do you own a restaurant or other food service business? Can you make a donation of gift certificates, day-olds, or coupons?

We have compiled a list of our most-needed items:

- ▶ All-terrain Vehicles
- ▶ Lap-top computers
- ▶ Wall Tents and Accessories
- ▶ Digital Projector
- ▶ Spotting Scope
- ▶ Tripod
- ▶ Binoculars
- ▶ Camping Gear
- ▶ Food for Field Crews

If you wish to donate any of the above items, or anything else you think we can use, your tax-deductible donation can be made directly to IBO. Appraisals and receipts for tax purposes can be provided for more valuable donations. Please contact the Director if you are considering an in-kind donation.

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## IBO and the Boise State University Foundation—What is the Connection?

What is the connection between IBO and the Boise State University Foundation? The Idaho Bird Observatory is a Boise State University Academic Research Program. It is a mutually beneficial relationship as IBO provides training and research opportunities for university students and provides quality environmental education and outreach within the local community, which brings attention and positive press to the university. Meanwhile, the university provides IBO with a 'home', contributing office space, computers, and other infrastructural needs, and administers grants and contracts which are awarded to IBO.

The Boise State University Foundation, as the fundraising arm for the university, provides IBO with 501(c)(3) non-profit status in order to accept individual, corporate, and foundation donations. The funds raised are then transferred to university accounts and expensed for our respective programs. That is why if you make a donation to IBO, you usually receive a thank-you letter and receipt from the Boise State University Foundation. They also conduct a telethon each year to solicit gifts from past donors. Don't be alarmed or suspicious—your donation went to the IBO and will be spent how you intended: **to further our research and education programs!**

# Thank You!

The IBO is truly a cooperative project. The following organizations provide funding, in-kind support, and guidance each year. Without their contributions, the IBO could not continue its research, monitoring, and education programs.

- Boise State University
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game
- U.S. Forest Service
- Golden Eagle Chapter, Audubon Society
- Boise State University Raptor Research Center
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Bureau of Land management
- Potlatch Corporation

We are grateful to the following individuals, businesses, and organizations that have made much-needed cash or in-kind donations to IBO. Without these contributions, IBO could not continue to its research, monitoring, and education programs.

Bruce Ackerman Ada County Auditor's Office John Alexander Anna Marie Anderson Anser of Idaho, Inc. Toni Anthony Richard F. Ashford Sumer Aygen Charles W. Baker Kenneth Barker Larry Barnes Gina Barton Camille Beaubien John A. Beckwith Shelly Ann Bedke Horace William Belknap Don Belts Kenneth V. Benson Emil Berg Biosage Consulting Bittercreek Red Feather, LLC Boise Co-op Stephen H. Bouffard Donald K. Brandt Brighton Corporation Mowbray Brown Reesa J. Brown Sandra L. Bruggemann Roberta Lynne Buchanan Nancy Budge Felicia A. Burkhalter Russ Buschert Kathleen Cameron Tamara A. Cameron Cameron Multimedia, LLC Holley W. Carlisle Jonathan D. Carlisle Kecia Marie Carlson Carol K. Casler Jeanne M. Chamberlain Cherry Gulch Christensen Family Foundation Liese Clebsch-Dean Nancy K. Cole Jerry Conley Kerry Cooke Brian P. Cooper Jillian A. Cooper R. Douglas Copsey Richard Cornwall Nathan Darnall Peter Davidson Jack L. Davis Steven G. Davis Glenn DeVoe Nancy DeWitt Margaret M. Dougherty Mary Anne Dudley Elizabeth Duesman Alfred M. Dufty Jane C. Dunbar Jennifer L. Dunn Fiona Durcan David R. Eagleton Marilyn J. Eagleton Susan Earnst Shirley Ann Eastlick Phyllis J. Edmundson	Karen Ellis Robert W. Ellis Environmental Conservation Services Stephany A. Erwin Richard Ferguson Yvonne Ferrell Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund Janie P. Fink Dennis B. Fitzpatrick Linda Flesner Sara B. Focht Doug Fowler Holly Funk Jessica L. Fusek Amanda Gailbreath Ruth Garcia Deborah Garton Robin R. Garwood David L. Genter Golden Eagle Audubon Society Good Girls and Friends William E. Gray Great Harvest Bakery Dave Gregor Sonya E. Greemor Burton H. Greenberg Faleena Ann Greer Gina Gregerson Gary J. Griffin Henrietta Gunn H.F. Magnuson Family Foundation Habiscapes Mark Hannuksela Ruth N. Harris Harris Ranch Leslie Harrison Kristin W. Hasselblad Anne M. Hay Robert Russell Hay David C. Hazelton Susan G. Hazelton Yvonne Headlee Merine Heberger Matthew Henderson Paul A. Hilding	David and Jill Hitchin Trevor Hitchin Kate Hoffhine Mark Hofflund Muriel K. Horacek Eric Howard Rich P. Howard Jyl Hoyt Sharon Hubler Idaho Conservation League Idaho Pacific Lumber Company, Inc. Idaho Park Foundation Idaho River United Infinity Wellness Center Paul G. James Daryl E. Jones James Judd Gregory S. Kaltenecker Marylyn L. Kaltenecker Mike Kaltenecker Lisa M. Kern Lloyd F. Kiff Jodi L. Kilroy Steven T. Knick Phyllis K. Kochert David Koga Laurie L. Koga Donald Kroodsma Davie J. Krueper Kathy Kustra Robert W. Kustra Ted G. Lane Chris Lark Le Nir, Ltd. Larry H. Leasure Greg Leatherman Connie M. Leavitt Leroy Fink Construction Kurt Leuschner Lightfoot Foundation Melinda Lindsey Patrick Little Sherrill Livingston Jane A. Lloyd Paul MacDonald Meggan L. Mackey	Ronald Maclay Leslie Judd MacNeill Dorothy Lyster Mattise Barbara Mattison-Tonkin Nancy Maxwell Thomas J. McCabe Michael John McCarthy McDaniel Land Foundation Brian McDevitt Charles F. McDevitt Virginia L. McDevitt Robert J. McDonagh Kathleen McIntosh Carol L. McIntyre Roger Michener Micron Technology Foundation, Inc. Beverly A. Miller Donald Emmett Miller Elizabeth Montgomery Karen H. Montgomery Paul G. Montgomery Jonna Moore Winston and Diane Moore Michael D. Morrison Vicki Murphy Jennifer H. Murray Gene S. Mussler Dennis Nicholls Susan Joan Norton Terry G. Nyborg Catherine M. Pannell Joseph L. Parkinson John R. Patey Letty Percifield Maryann Perez Lynelle M. Perry-Kolsky Gary R. Pfiefler Portneuf Valley Audubon Society Potlatch Corporation David Glen Powell Pat Provonsha Kenneth Pursley C. John Ralph REI Judith C. Reppell Barbara J. Roberts	Peter Roberts Frank P. Robertson Gary G.W. Robinson Kenneth Rodgers RRC Contractors Inc. Victoria Runnoe Richard Rusnack Rex Sallabanks Robert Salter Alan R. Sands Greg Satz Shannon E. Satz Nancy Schauer Martin E. Schimpf Ferdinand J. Schlapper Paul J. Schneider Bruce C. Schoeberl Alan Dirk Scott William J. Sedivy John Seidl Jean Seymour Skyline Companies Jeremy Smith Mary C. Smith Snake River Audubon Society Southwestern Idaho Birders Association Kamille R. Spelman Elke P. Stava Karen Steenhof Carl Bernard Stiefel Brain W. Sturges Mark E. Sutherland Swarovski Optik North America Limited Charles Swift Sam Clayton Taylor The Flicks The Waldo Trust The Wetlands Group Walther Thode Carmen Thomas Valerie Jean Thompson Cyndi Thornton George William Tonkin Tyrel Trainor Michael Treshow Charles H. Trost Allyson L. Turner University of Oklahoma Robert E. Vestal Kenneth W. Voget Sunny Wallace Harold Ward James Ware Don K. Weilmunster Susan M. Werner Western Field Ornithologists Kathleen A. Whitacre Carol A. Wike David A. Wike Lori M. Williams Kathryn J. Wright-Pulliam Cecil J. York Thomas J. Zariello Fred C. Zeillemaker
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## Donate to IBO!

IBO's research and education programs are supported almost entirely through small grants, contributions from corporations and local businesses, and donations from private individuals and foundations. We can't continue without support from people like you!

Contributions can be made directly to the IBO through the Boise State University Foundation, Inc., a 501(c)(3) organization. Your donation is a tax-deductible gift to a state educational institution. Please make a contribution to the IBO using the self-addressed envelope provided in this newsletter, or mail your gift to the address listed below. Thank you!

### Idaho Bird Observatory

Department of Biological Sciences, Boise State University  
1910 University Dr., Boise, ID 83725

## Volunteer Spotlight: Randy Lancaster

In 2009, after 25 years as a professional gardener and landscape designer, I had an opportunity to take a year off between career chapters. I could finally do all of those things I fantasized about doing: riding my bike, teaching myself to be a better carpenter, raising a flock of chickens, embracing new-found cooking skills—I jumped in with gusto! By late July however, it was becoming clear to me (and to my wife Christine!) that I didn't make a very good "retiree". With my next career chapter just 6 months away and no jobs available, volunteering was my next option. Later that week I was lucky enough to bump into my friend and fellow bird watcher Dannette Henderson at the Boise Co-op. She was raving about the great bird trips she had been on with local bird guru Dr. Jay Carlisle, and she said "you know, the guy up at the IBO". Well, a light went off in my head. I had been to Lucky Peak summit many times on my mountain bike, and had always admired the biologists doing bird work, sometimes stopping and checking out what they were doing.

The following week I contacted Greg

Kaltenecker to see if they needed volunteers. Greg and Jay invited me to come on board straight-away! Thinking my car wouldn't make it, I decided I would ride up on my bike. By the time I got up there I was trashed, and they were on their last net run. I had already blown my first day! I made some quick changes. Net runs start ½ hour after the sun comes up, so if I was going to be of any help at all I had to be there very early. I sold the Volvo and bought a used Jeep.

Learning to extract songbirds from mist nets takes an incredible amount of skill. With most things I have done in my life, I tend to devote myself fully, with enthusiasm, and usually learn quickly. Not this. These guys were good, and I had a lot to learn! I want to thank everybody who had so much patience with me: Nathan, Caroline, Stephanie, Jay, and Gary. The IBO crew is incredibly cohesive. The camaraderie and professionalism is amazing.

It was a week before I extracted my first songbird, and that was with intense supervision. There were lots of setbacks, and although I improved every day, after 8 weeks I was still being tutored. It wasn't until the last week that Jay had

me do a net run all on my own. It was a successful run because there were only 2 birds, but it was a milestone

for me. For most people, there are few times in your life when you feel like you are a part of something that is really important, and for me, this was one of those times.

I am looking forward to the upcoming season at IBO. I am sure I will be busy in my own life, but I can't wait to fill some of my spare time working with the IBO. Greg is currently on a mission to improve the field station with some exciting ideas (see Lucky Peak Site Improvements), and I have signed on to help in any way that I can. To anyone who has a passion for birds and some spare time, please give Greg or Jay a call.



Nathan Banfield photo  
Randy Lancaster at Lucky Peak.

## New Research and Monitoring Directions for the IBO

by Jay Carlisle

In the last few years, we have worked hard to establish partnerships with numerous organizations in order to achieve the complementary goals of building IBO's capacity while contributing our expertise in bird identification and research/monitoring techniques to the conservation and/or management goals of our partners. For example, in 2009 we conducted spring and summer fieldwork all over southern Idaho for agencies including Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the US Forest Service (USFS). We are excited about these recent developments and look forward to sustaining these efforts long into the future. Below I highlight the key goals of two of these emerging partnerships that focus mostly

on species of concern.

We began discussions with Rex Sallabanks and Colleen Moulton of IDFG in 2008 about how IBO could assist the state with implementation of Idaho's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS). We signed a cooperative agreement in early 2009 in order to facilitate research on Idaho's Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) – those species identified in the CWCS as most warranting further research and/or conservation action. In 2009, we initiated a study of nesting Long-billed Curlews on BLM land in southwestern Idaho and a distributional study of Flammulated Owls across a number of mountain ranges in southern Idaho; the latter study is being conducted in cooperation with other states under the guidance of the Western Working Group of Partners in Flight (PIF

WWG). Both of these efforts will continue in 2010-11 and we anticipate that in future years we will shift the species we study in order to meet IDFG needs.

Another exciting development is the work we've begun to do on the Shoshone Field Office of BLM in southcentral Idaho. Work in 2008-09 consisted of surveys for a variety of species including target surveys for Burrowing Owls and point count surveys for landbirds of shrub-steppe, riparian, and aspen habitats throughout the Shoshone Field Office. In 2010, we will expand this work to include searching for nests of several raptor species of BLM concern (Prairie Falcon, Ferruginous Hawk, and Northern Goshawk) and target surveys for the elusive Yellow-billed Cuckoo (we found one in 2009!).

# What IBO Means for Boise State Students

By Matt Stuber

Every aspiring wildlife biologist understands the value of research experience on their resume. Diverse and abundant experience puts one in an elite class of applicants – applicants who have demonstrated their knowledge of and passion for wildlife biology by implementing their education in a research setting. Little, and possibly nothing else, is more valuable than this.

Throughout my development as a wildlife biologist, I have acquired research experience from various field jobs. But none has added more value to my resume than my employment and volunteer work with the Idaho Bird Observatory (IBO). This fact is true for every biology student at Boise State University who finds the time to take advantage of all that IBO has to offer.

For students IBO provides opportunities to get hands-on research experience in avian biology. Students can get involved in any of four projects that take place every fall at the Lucky Peak Research Station. Located along a major migratory flyway, this research station is an oasis to countless migratory birds as they pass through each fall. So great are the research opportunities at Lucky Peak, that during any given 24 hour period, approximately 22 of these hours are spent conducting avian research. Within this 22 hour period, students can participate in: 1) passerine mist netting and banding ; 2) diurnal raptor migration counts; 3) diurnal raptor trapping and banding; and 4) owl trapping and banding.

Though I participated in every area of research, the majority of my experience at Lucky Peak came from diurnal raptor trapping and banding. For three consecutive fall seasons, I trapped and banded migrating raptors for several days each week. With every new season, I was able to dedicate more and more hours to this research, gaining extremely valuable experience in standard trapping methods, species identification (including aging and sex determination), standard banding procedures, and public education. This experience not only molded me into a more confident raptor biologist, but also added unique and valuable experience to my resume. And did I mention it was fun? It is no exaggeration to say that some of the greatest moments of my last few years have taken place while watching and trapping migrating raptors.

At other times of the year, other research opportunities exist for students through the IBO. IBO has contracted with Idaho Department of Fish and Game and is conducting ongoing summer research on two sensitive bird species in Idaho – Long-billed Curlews and Flammulated Owls. This research focuses on these birds during the breeding season. Students at Boise State can become involved with this research conducted by experienced IBO biologists.

I was lucky enough to be able to participate in the Flammulated Owl research in the summer of 2009. I not only conducted nightly surveys, but also assisted the lead biologist and IBO Research Director, Jay Carlisle, in study design. This allowed me to apply my recently-learned raptor biology skills to develop field methods, select study sites, conduct GIS mapping, and summarize and analyze the data collected. Additionally, I was given the opportunity to present the study's findings at a professional conference, further developing my oral speaking skills.

Today I carry my IBO experience with me on the job, where I am often required to utilize my knowledge of and experience with raptor surveys, raptor ID, raptor trapping and banding, and raptor life history. And the IBO influence doesn't just end there. Not only has this organization shaped my marketability as a biologist and, thus, my career in wildlife biology, it has also cemented



Matt Stuber with his first Golden Eagle.

my life-long passion for avian biology.

It is not only Boise State students that benefit from the existence of the IBO. Everyone can benefit. Last year alone, the Lucky Peak Research Station hosted hundreds of visitors, all of whom were able to take part in research and witness nature in a way few humans ever do – up close and personal. Adults, children, school groups, boy/girl scout groups, outdoor educators, and biologists are entertained by the IBO staff with interesting facts about the captured birds, their identification, their biology, and even their history. Indeed, it is difficult to leave the Lucky Peak Research Station without taking with you some unique experience or bit of knowledge that you didn't have when you arrived. It is for this reason that visitors who come to Lucky Peak once almost always come again in following years (or even several times in the same year). Like me, many of them are hooked on the experience.

To put it bluntly, I will always remember and cherish my experiences with the IBO. The research allowed me to contribute to the collection of valuable biological data. It is a good feeling to know that now and in the future, data I collected will serve to expand existing knowledge of avian breeding and migration in the western United States. In addition to this, there is little doubt that my experience at IBO was a major contributing factor in securing my first professional job. In an increasingly competitive field of applicants, a degree and good grades are half the battle. Many job offers are issued to those with the most valuable hands-on experience. The IBO provides this and more to all who are interested.

If you have never taken the opportunity, come visit us this fall. Whether you are an aspiring biologist, a student, a teacher, a wildlife professional, a nature lover, or just someone looking for a unique experience for yourself or your children, the IBO and Lucky Peak have something that will interest you. Through this great research organization, everyone has the opportunity to practice hands-on avian science and interact with nature and wildlife in a way few people have experienced. We are lucky here at Boise State and in the Treasure Valley... few universities or communities can boast such a feature.



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Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Carly Liebich

*continued from page 2*

“Dear Emily, Thank you for letting me release the Saw-whet Owl. You made me feel confident about birds. That was the most exciting experience that could possibly happen to me on the trip. If I could do it every day I would, just like you. You were a big influence to me.”

Kenzie, 5th Grade

“Dear Emily, I really enjoyed seeing an owl for the first time. It was so much fun learning about owls. Thank you very much. Your friend, Logan”

Logan, 5th Grade

“Thank you bird people, I had a great time because I got to let a bird go and we went

on a lot of really fun hikes. If you had poured all that fun on me I'd probably drown. You were really nice to let us do all of that. Thanks again!”

John, 5th Grade

“.....We had so much fun. I learned so much.....It would be so cool to work up there with you guys....”

Kate, 5th Grade

“Dear Stephanie, Your name is really pretty. I loved watching the songbirds. I think you're a very good researcher. The songbirds are so beautiful. You were really nice to me!”

Jenna, 5th Grade

## FOR SALE ▶▶▶ IBO Shirts, Hats, and Sweatshirts

The following t-shirt designs are currently available. We have an assortment of sizes and colors in stock. We can special order and embroider the IBO logo on almost any article of clothing. Check with us for availability of shirts, hats, or for special-order items. Allow up to 6 weeks for delivery of out-of-stock items.

- ▶ T-shirts (100% cotton).....\$20.00
- ▶ Hats (Navy, Tan, Grey; Cooper's Hawk Embroidered on Front) .....\$20.00
- ▶ Zip-up Sweatshirts (Grey; Cooper's Hawk and Warbler Designs).....\$40.00

Mail your order and check to (*plus \$5.00 postage/handling per order*):

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