



## 2018 WINTER BULLETIN

### **Falcon Research Group**

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### **Annual Skagit Flats Hawk Census**

The hawk census will be held on Saturday, 10 February from 9-11 am. Please contact Ed Deal regarding any questions that you might have at (206) 723-4742. Team leaders should be receiving their census packets soon. Let Ed know if you have any openings on your team and he will try to fill them. We also welcome new people that you might include.

### **Census Speaker**

This year, Kate Davis, director of **Raptors of the Rockies** near Florence, Montana, will be our featured speaker. If you don't know her, you are in for a treat. Kate is a superb photographer, author of several books on birds of prey, a welder, a falconer and a regular RRF conference organizer. But those are just things she does on the side. First and foremost, she is one of the premier raptor education specialists in America. She is also a raptor rehabilitation expert. She is a lively speaker so expect to be entertained as well as educated during her presentation.

### **Condors breeding in Washington Historically?**

One of the first California condor specimens was collected by Lewis and Clark in the Columbia River Gorge on 17 February 1806. That means it was taken during the winter, confirming that Condors were year round residents in our state. Other records extend north into British Columbia, including a Condor bone discovered on South Pender Island in the Canadian Gulf Islands quite near the San Juan Islands. This suggests that Condors may have bred in Washington, most likely in the Columbia Gorge, but there is no solid evidence as yet.

Then we got to thinking about the dry, sunny San Juan Islands.

During the many years that we banded peregrines there, we got to know all of the cliffs quite well. Each summer, one particular cliff usually had breeding Turkey Vultures that used a deep cave for nesting high on the face.

This past summer, after obtaining permission from the DNR, Gavin Brady, Aaron Allred and I visited this island along with Condor biologist Lloyd Kiff. Aaron rappelled into the cave and found it "big enough to park a VW bus". He then found a small side opening just large enough for Gavin and Lloyd to enter the cave. Although it was perfect for Condors in most respects and there was abundant evidence of vultures nesting, the substrate was just too rocky for Condor eggs and, unfortunately, we did not find any ancient eggshell fragments as we had hoped.

We encourage others to expand this effort, especially in the sunny, California-like habitat of the San Juan Islands.

### **Hawk Watching in Western Washington Classes**

This is the original hawk watching class that covers our local raptors, where to look for them, how to tell them apart, and how they hunt and live.

Please note that all classes will be delayed until February this year due to the FRG South Africa Raptor Tour.

**Bellingham** - Thursday nights, 1 February through 1 March, 7-9pm at Bellingham Central Library, [210 Central Ave.](#)

**Mount Vernon** - Tuesday nights, 6 February through 6 March, at Padilla Bay Breazeale Interpretive Center, [10441 Bayview Edison Rd.](#)

Cost is still just \$175.00 for five classes and an all day field trip.

To register, please send a check to FRG, Box 248, Bow, WA 98232.

### **Wing-tagged Red-tails**

We have now trans-located and wing-tagged 283 Red tails away from the runways at Sea-Tac so that they are not struck by aircraft. We mark juvenile hawks with numbered light blue tags and adults with numbered yellow tags.

Our colleagues at Portland and Vancouver BC airports are doing the same. Portland (PDX) uses orange tags and Vancouver (YVR) uses white tags. If you observe any of these birds, we would appreciate your sightings to help us track them. Please email me at [falconresearch@gmail.com](mailto:falconresearch@gmail.com) to learn more.

**Annual Dues**

Annual dues are still just \$25.00 per year. Please send them in to support our work. FRG, Box 248, Bow, WA 98232. And thank you.