

Tracks



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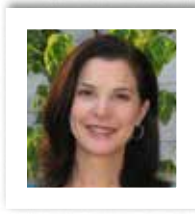
My last four years as Director of Operations has been a tremendous opportunity and true challenge to make the Center the very best it could be. We've

come far in 23 years. Taking a leap forward, as the newly appointed Director of Development, I'm very excited to be able to fully focus on fundraising—for an organization I've long been passionate about! I look forward to working toward a bright, promising future for WCSV by raising awareness of the plight of our local wildlife and ensuring that the Center is able to sustain and grow the level of care we provide by making sure we have sufficient funds to do so.

I'll be ambitiously building relationships with community partners and making sure we have the full support of those that work and reside in Silicon Valley. It's time to make a bigger difference for wildlife by being a champion of change! I hope I can count on your help. Each and every dollar counts toward achieving our mission. Here are a few suggestions:

- ♦ *A gift that keeps on giving:* Set up a monthly giving schedule. Once set up, you don't have to think about it again and the Center will benefit from your regular gift all year long.
- ♦ *Employer matching gifts:* What a wonderful way to double or even triple your gift. Check and see if your employer offers a matching gift program. If you volunteer at the Center, some companies will turn your volunteerism into cash for your nonprofit.
- ♦ *Wills and bequests:* A bequest or a gift through a living trust is another great way to invest in the future of WCSV and offers both state and federal tax savings when you gift through estate planning.

Janet Alexander, Director of Development



What a great opportunity I've gotten to join the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley! As the new Director of Operations, I've been given the chance to work

with an amazingly talented group of staff and volunteers.

So far, I've experienced the rehabilitation of many animals that would never have had a chance at a wild life without the hard work of our Center's entire team and your donations. Some of the highlights included the release of two coyotes that were brought to us after being hit by cars, the healing of a Peregrine Falcon who came in with an open wound on her wing and a Great Horned Owl that had a broken collarbone.

We've taken the winter to prep for the upcoming season and have made some great changes to our facilities. We remodeled the exam rooms so that staff can more efficiently care for the animals when they first come in, we've improved our existing enclosures so they're ready to go when the animals arrive, and staff and volunteers even gave the hospital a mini makeover by giving it a new coat of paint.

We also had our very first Winter Internship Program that was a great success. Never ones to rest on our laurels, our Summer Internship Program is in full swing with 19 recruits. This year, we received a record-breaking number of applicants, which, I think, is a testament to the amazing work WCSV does.

Laura Hawkins, Director of Operations

Tracks

The Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley is a California nonprofit organization that since 1993 has been committed to providing the highest quality care and rehabilitation to urban wildlife and to promoting a mutually beneficial and respectful coexistence between humans and wildlife in our communities.

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Tracks is a biannual publication of the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley.

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Tracks...across the backyard, along a wooded trail, meandering by a creek. Whose tracks are they? Are they coming or going? Perhaps they are the tracks of things past, or of visions to be revealed, and stories yet untold. Come join us as we explore different dimensions of wildlife rehabilitation and the special wild neighbors with whom we share our communities. It is the intention of this publication to investigate our dynamic relationship with wildlife within the greater context of our relationship with the earth and each other. The issues are many, as are the myths, feelings, and beliefs surrounding each one. Let's follow the tracks, wherever we may find them, and leave our own for those who may follow.



RUTH MCDUNN

Peregrine Falcon

CREATURE FEATURES

By Rachel Atkins, Photos by Ashley Kinney



Pacific Tree Frog

The *Pacific Tree Frog* is a small frog native to the West Coast. While the color of their bodies may vary between gray, green, brown or red, they almost always have a characteristic black eye stripe. They grow to about two inches in body length and can be found in both terrestrial and aquatic habitats. Although their name suggests that they live in trees, they are more commonly found on the ground. During breeding season, the males make a characteristic “ribbit ribbit” vocalization to attract females.

Arboreal Salamander

One of the most common but elusive salamanders in our area is the *Arboreal Salamander*. This lungless amphibian breathes through its skin, so it must stay in moist areas to survive. They have a large head and are usually a rusty-brown color with yellow dots. Adults will reach about six inches long from nose to tip of tail. They are aggressive and can pack a nasty bite with their powerful jaws!



INTERVIEW WITH A VOLUNTEER

 Featuring Jenny Liu

By Stephanie Foster



How did you hear about the Center?

I first heard about WCSV while looking for animal volunteering opportunities in my area. Most animal care positions require you to be 18, but WCSV’s age minimum was 16. I signed up as soon as I turned 16!

How long have you been volunteering?

I started volunteering in 2012, and [I’ve spent three summers] as an intern. I just can’t quit WCSV; the work we do is so rewarding. I’ve learned so much and I’m still learning every day!

Why were you interested in volunteering?

I didn’t know much about the Wildlife Center, I just knew that it was a place where people worked with wild animals hands-on and that I wanted to help and gain experience.

Do you plan to pursue studies or a career in the animal field?

Yes! I’m going to school at UC Davis for Animal Biology. I don’t really know exactly what I want to do after that but I do know I want to continue working with animals. I’m looking in to pursuing veterinary medicine or research. The Wildlife Center has given me a lot of experience with a wide variety of wild animals in a hospital environment.

What have you learned since being a volunteer?

Oh gosh, I’ve learned a lot of things. I’ve learned so much about wildlife, like bird ID, [...] and odd facts about the animals we work with. I’ve learned people skills, like teaching new volunteers the ropes and being patient with people who don’t understand our

goals. I’ve learned how humans have such a large impact on wildlife and that what we do—both rehab and release, and education and outreach—is important for maintaining a positive relationship between humans and the environment.

If you could grant one wish for the Center what would it be?

I’d wish for more granted wishes. Well, seriously, I wish that everyone would understand the importance of keeping wildlife wild. Wildlife can’t and shouldn’t become pets, and they make awful pets! Often, people who raise and keep wildlife realize that it’s too big of a commitment—the animal requires too much time and effort—and then surrender them, or release them in to the wild where they can no longer survive. And if they continue to keep the animal, it’s kept in far from optimal conditions, away from its native environment and not allowed to perform its natural instincts. Not to mention, it’s illegal.

Do you get to see wildlife released?

I’ve done a lot of releases in the years I’ve been here, and they were all awesome. It’s so satisfying and rewarding to set an animal free knowing that all our volunteers have put in time and effort into each individual’s recovery. My favorite one is the Barn Owl that was rescued by San Jose firefighters. I remember feeding her the first few weeks she was here, because she was too down and weak to eat by herself. Maybe I’m a little biased because I got to sit on top of the firetruck to watch her release. It was fantastic, I love that her rescuers were able to see her return back to the wild, healthy and completely recovered! ♫

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, register online: wcsv.org/how-to-help/volunteer



TRACI TSUKIDA

About 20% of the monitored egret population in the Bay Area resides on the Google campus in Mountain View where they nest together in a rookery of *Great Egrets* and *Snowy Egrets*. When one becomes injured or orphaned there, they come into the Center for rehabilitation.



ASHLEY KINNEY

This five-day-old *Striped Skunk* was rescued by a construction worker at Central Park Elementary School in Santa Clara. The skunk's den was destroyed and it was unable to be reunited with mom.



ALEX CLEMENTS

This infant female *Dusky-footed Woodrat* was found at a car dealership in San Jose. The mechanics uncovered both it and its mother inside an engine compartment. The mother was, unfortunately, deceased. Aside from a few minor abrasions, it is in good condition.



RUTH MCDUNN

There are blue-colored birds in our area, including Western Scrub-jays and Steller's Jays, but this is the only bluebird. The *Western Bluebird* is actually a colorful thrush.



TRACI TSUKIDA

Our first *Brush Rabbit* of 2016! This juvenile was brought into the Center after being caught by a cat.



RUTH MCDUNN

Several *Gopher Snakes* like this one are currently in care after they were caught in garden netting. Find helpful tips to keep snakes safe from netting in last year's issue of *Tracks* at wcsv.org/newsletters.



ASHLEY KINNEY

One of three types of tree squirrels that we find in this area, *Eastern Fox Squirrels* have a rusty color like you see here in these two orphaned juveniles.



ASHLEY KINNEY

This little plover's mother can fake a wing injury and walk away to lure potential predators away from her babies. Unfortunately, this *Killdeer* was truly separated from mom and required help at the Center.



ALEX CLEMENTS

Mistaken for a lost house cat, this *Bobcat* was taken to the local city shelter before it was identified as a wild species and treated at the Center.



TRACI TSUKIDA

Nature's cleanup crew, *Turkey Vultures* may look like predatory birds, but instead of hunting, they eat what no other animal wants to: Carrion (animals that are already long deceased). This vulture showed signs of toxin exposure, possibly from a lead bullet.



ASHLEY KINNEY

Normally a statuesque shorebird with rich, vivid dark blue and white coloring, this *Great Blue Heron* was found in Milpitas unable to fly. During the exam, staff found two fractures to its right wing, but otherwise, it was in relatively healthy condition.

A FALCON RESTORED

By Alex Clements

We cannot get enough of Peregrine Falcons. It's understandable. They have been called the fastest fliers, the largest falcons and those with the greatest range. Their powerful hunting style is awe-inspiring: The way that they dive head-first from great heights, quickly reaching freeway speeds or even up to 200 mph before clinging onto an unsuspecting pigeon or waterfowl. Their powerful stature is unmistakable: The breadth of their long pointed wings as they maneuver swiftly in the sky; their noble posture as they lie in wait atop a tall cliff or building.

These strong, spectacular birds can be found all over the world, except Antarctica and oceanic islands, and are particularly prevalent in our area where climates are temperate and they can find plenty to eat year-round. We get the added pleasure of seeing even more Peregrine Falcons as those from further north migrate along the coast to South America during the winter.

Locally, giddy onlookers are sure to get a glimpse of these winged wanderers where they have taken residence in downtown San Jose. In fact, for almost a decade, the City of San Jose, in partnership with UC Santa Cruz, has maintained a FalconCam at City Hall that streams live panoramic views of a nestbox and a nearby ledge over the Internet so that you can spy on Peregrine Falcons from your home with the click of a button.

Some of us may remember that it was not always so easy to spot Peregrine Falcons. Between 1950 and 1970, they were on the Endangered Species list after their populations declined significantly with the widespread use of DDT, a pesticide that thinned their eggshells. It is one of the great successes of the wildlife conservation movement that Peregrine Falcon populations stabilized in the late 1960s. They were subsequently removed from the list in 1999 with the hard work of passionate conservationists, biologists, those involved in breeding programs, falconers and wildlife rehabilitators.

RUTH MCDUNN





A FALCON RESTORED, continued

While the Peregrine Falcon is no longer at risk of eradication, it is still important to continue to support these predators and counteract the negative impact of the dangers we put into the environment.

One such important bird was the 25th patient to arrive at the Center earlier this year. It was found on the ground in San Jose unable to fly with what appeared to the rescuer to be a leg injury. Upon further investigation by the hospital manager, it had a deep wound on its wing at the elbow, exposing its tendon, with significant bruising in addition to blood in its mouth. It is hard to know what caused such injuries. It is possible that the bird ran into a structure or was attacked by a predator.



ASHLEY KINNEY

A deep wound found under the falcon's wing.

Whatever the cause of the bird's debilitated state, staff jumped into action, making sure that the wound was clean and the animal was comfortable with pain and anti-inflammatory medications before putting it under anesthesia for a closer look. Once sedated, X-rays were taken to confirm that there were no broken bones and the falcon underwent minor surgery with the Center's veterinarian to stitch up the wing and begin the healing process.

The wing was stabilized with a special fabric wrap and the bird was started on antibiotics. Every day, the wound was cleaned and redressed and the bird's range of motion was gently tested. On day five, things took a turn for the worse and the bird became very weak, struggling to catch its breath. Staff did not give up. They put the falcon on oxygen therapy and let it



ASHLEY KINNEY

The falcon's wing was wrapped in two different ways to facilitate its flexibility over time.

spend comforting time in an incubator to recoup. Later, a diagnostic test revealed that it had internal parasites that required treatment as well.

Progress was still touch and go by early February when there was a concern that the wing was healing incorrectly and that a band of thick scar tissue might prevent the falcon from stretching its wings properly to fly again. Once again, staff did not give up and took a different approach to help heal this bird. New stitches were put in, a different style of wing wrap was used to increase mobility and a consulting veterinarian partnered with the Center to monitor its progress.

Luckily, after two months of treatment, the wound had fully healed and the falcon was able to be moved to an outdoor enclosure where it could begin to regain strength, hopping from one structure to another and taking short flights.

Unfortunately, a bird like this cannot get everything it needs to learn how to fly again from a rehabilitation enclosure. A strong, long-distance flier like the Peregrine Falcon needs to practice flight in the open air, so, along with a partnering falconer, staff began the process of creance flying the falcon. A creance, similar to a leash, is a long, thin, light cord, designed to be of little inconvenience to the bird while it attempts flight in open air.

With such a rocky beginning, it was miraculous and relieving to see this falcon take its first creance flights outside of the hospital walls. Finally, there was real hope that this incredible bird would fly free again.

Its recovery journey is not over yet. This falcon has feathers to grow in and needs plenty more flight practice before it is ready to go, but staff will not give up. The Center will be partnering with an organization in northern California for the continuation of the birds' physical therapy until its release back into the wild, estimated for next year. ♡♡



ASHLEY KINNEY

The bird is still in the process of learning how to fly again in the open air.

SAVING SONGBIRDS

By Makda Asrat

You are out for a morning walk and stumble across a baby bird on the ground. You step closer and it doesn't fly away...that can't be normal, can it? There must be something wrong and you should pick it up, right? Or maybe there is a nest in your yard and you just saw the parents fly off. Are the newly hatched babies now orphaned? Should you rescue them?

To help answer these questions, it might be useful to know a bit more about the lifecycle of a typical songbird. When songbirds first hatch, they are pink, unfeathered and their eyes are closed. They look completely helpless – and they are. Over the next several days, their feathers start to come in. Birds that have few feathers but should still be in the nest are called nestlings.

The next part of their development cycle is the fledgling stage. It is during this period that young birds are particularly vulnerable. Fledglings are baby birds that are covered in feathers and are old enough to have left the nest, but they cannot yet fly. They spend a few days hopping around on the ground, building up the strength they need to fly in their legs and wings. Birds at this age might move more slowly than we expect them to, or not move away when approached, but even if you can approach or pick up a fledgling, it is best to leave them alone unless they have been injured.

Remember: Every adult bird we see went through its own fledgling stage and survived the days it had to spend on the ground before it could fly.

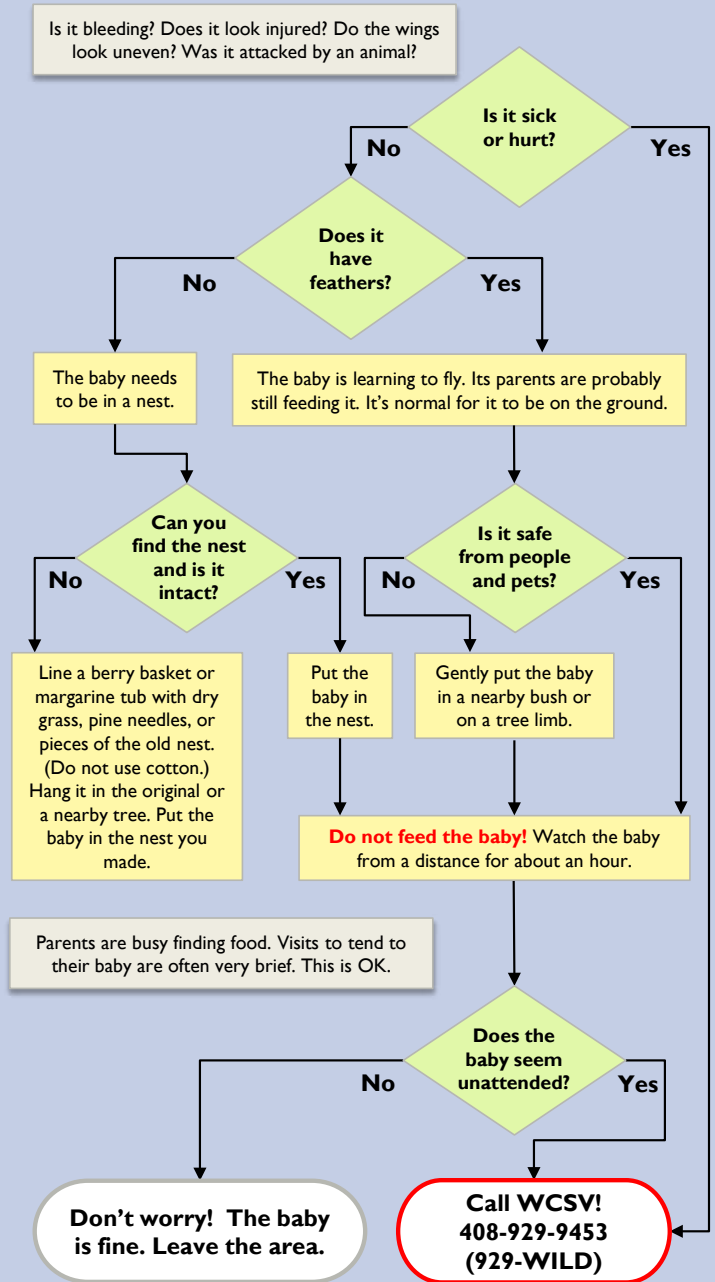
Even living in areas that have cats and dogs roaming around, baby birds truly do have the best chance of survival when they can stay with and be raised by their parents. The Center's staff do their best to prevent the unnecessary separation of healthy baby birds from their moms or dads (accidental kidnapping!).

People are often afraid to put a bird that has fallen from its nest back, thinking that if they touch it the parents will reject the baby. But, unlike mammals, which rely extensively on their incredibly sensitive olfactory senses, most birds do not have a particularly well-developed sense of smell, so for many songbirds it is perfectly safe to reunite babies with their parents when possible.

While reuniting a baby bird with its parents is the best possible outcome, there are some situations in which this is not possible. The Center has taken in over 750 orphaned birds so far this year, and nesting season is not over yet!

If you see a baby bird and are not sure what to do, check the Center's website, call in or use this handy chart as a guide to become a resource for friends and family the next time they are the ones to find a bird on the ground. ♪♪

I found a baby bird on the ground. Does it need help?



THE SONGBIRD PROJECT



The Center launched an online-only fundraiser called the Songbird Project in February. Thanks to generous donors on and offline, the Center was able to purchase brand-new incubators, nutritious food, medical supplies and storage shelves that are currently being used to care for hundreds of birds.

RELEASE HIGHLIGHTS

By Alex Clements



TRACI TSUKIDA

Most animals that are stuck in glue traps injure themselves by panicking, struggling, becoming exhausted, dehydrated or suffocating. Often times, insect-eaters, like chickadees, will see insects stuck on the glue and unsuspectingly land on the glue for a snack. Miraculously, this *Chestnut-backed Chickadee* recovered and was able to be released in about a month. To remove animals from these traps safely, it takes a skilled hand, small instruments, special solvent, special baths and medications to keep them calm. It is recommended to avoid use of sticky or glue traps, especially outside, and if an animal does become stuck, to place the whole trap in a well-ventilated container with a lid and bring it directly to your nearest wildlife rehabilitation center for proper removal to increase its chances of survival. Even after it was unstuck, it took time for this chickadee to regrow its feathers and heal from its wounds, but returning it to the wild was worth every minute.

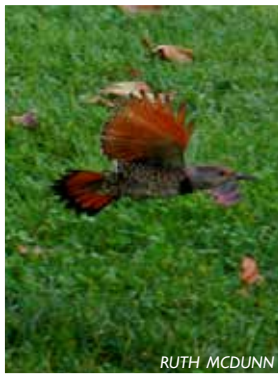
This *Western Fence Lizard's* rehabilitation was likely the shortest in the Center's 23-year history! A concerned citizen in Los Gatos walked out of his front door to find this native reptile struggling on the ground. The lizard had, of all things, an acorn stuck to its head. The rescuer attempted to free it with a gentle tug, but found that the nut was firmly stuck with the narrow edge contoured around its neck. He did not want to injure the lizard further, but did not want to leave it struggling either, so he called the Center for help, brought the animal in, and within minutes the Fence Lizard was free. It turned out that the Center's hospital manager had encountered this once before in the last decade and knew just how to dislodge the lizard without harming it.



ASHLEY KINNEY



ASHLEY KINNEY



RUTH MCDUNN



CHAD ALVES, DVM



ASHLEY KINNEY

This beautiful *Northern Flicker*, a type of woodpecker, was found on the ground unable to fly in San Jose. An exam at the Center showed that it was roused, dehydrated and unresponsive. An X-ray confirmed that it had a broken shoulder and other tests showed that it had internal parasites. Staff gave the bird courses of medication, stabilized its wing and monitored it closely as it healed over several weeks. You cannot always see the vibrant orange feathers under the flicker's wings, but when this one was released, it spread its wings wide to take off. Another great success!

While *Red-winged Blackbirds* are one of the most abundant birds in North America, the Center has only taken in five in the last three years. They are remarkable birds whose lovely song heralds spring and whose distinctive red and yellow shoulder markings are a sign of prowess—though California is the one place where you can find bicolor blackbirds that just have red on their wings and no yellow. This young male was found unable to fly near Live Oak Park in Santa Clara at the beginning of the year. As it was very down and breathing heavily at intake, staff put the bird on oxygen and a couple of medications to stabilize it. They also found that it was not standing properly, so they fashioned a brace for its foot. It gradually recovered and was able to be released where it was found in February.



TRACI TSUKIDA



ASHLEY KINNEY



One from Pacifica. One from Santa Cruz. These ailing *Coyotes* came into the Center within a couple days of one another after they were both hit by cars. The first had blood in its mouth and a hemorrhage in its eye, it was unresponsive and needed some medication and a lot of R&R before it was ready to stretch its legs again in an outdoor enclosure. The second had scrapes and scratches all over its body and swelling to one of its arms. Both recovered completely and were able to be released in less than three weeks.

BIRD SEARCH WORD SEARCH

Find the words that answer the questions below. Words may be found in any direction, even backwards and diagonally.

H	D	D	P	R	P	C	F	F	P	F	S	X	J	W
C	R	R	D	O	E	A	E	D	E	S	L	T	T	O
N	I	I	T	T	L	L	A	R	R	R	G	Y	G	O
I	B	B	A	P	I	I	T	A	E	A	C	E	M	D
F	G	G	L	A	C	F	H	L	G	L	R	H	T	P
D	N	N	O	R	A	O	E	L	R	U	O	F	A	E
L	I	I	N	Z	N	R	R	A	I	C	W	C	I	C
O	K	M	S	O	S	N	S	M	N	O	B	S	B	K
G	C	M	Z	F	L	I	B	R	E	N	G	C	B	E
G	O	U	V	F	H	A	G	B	F	I	G	R	F	R
Q	M	H	M	P	V	G	E	F	A	B	E	U	W	T
L	I	A	U	Q	V	U	B	A	L	F	V	B	R	N
O	W	L	S	B	D	L	X	W	C	R	E	E	E	F
B	D	Z	P	B	Z	L	L	N	O	Y	E	S	Q	U
F	L	E	D	G	L	I	N	G	N	S	T	K	W	N

- Birds have hollow bones that allow them to be light enough to _____.
- Hawks have sharp _____ on their feet to be able to catch prey.
- Our state bird is the California _____.
- Hawks, Eagles and Falcons are this type of bird: _____.
- Birds are covered with _____, not fur.
- This bird's call often mimics car alarms and other birds: _____.
- This type of bird can flap its wings over 50 beats per second: _____.
- This bird is commonly seen foraging around parking lots, high schools and landfills, as well as lakes.: _____ (2 words)
- Birders use these to see birds that are far away: _____.
- This bird can fly over 200 mph and was once critically endangered: _____ (2 words)
- This type of bird communicates by drumming its beak against a tree: _____.
- American or Russel _____.
- You shouldn't trim these during nesting season: _____.
- A young bird on the ground that is still learning to fly is called a _____.
- All birds hatch out of an _____.
- These large brown sea birds can be seen gracefully plunge-diving for fish along the coast: _____.
- This common duck must lead its young to water when they hatch: _____.
- The Lesser _____ is a common backyard visitor that eats nyjer seed.
- It is illegal to disturb an active bird's _____.
- These types of birds are usually nocturnal and help control rodent populations: _____.
- The Western _____-jay is a corvid that is often mistaken for a blue jay.

THANK YOU!



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In Memoriam

Cory Barfield
Larry Krikava

Answers: to puzzle - 1. Fly; 2. Talons; 3. Quail; 4. Raptor; 5. Feathers; 6. Mockingbird; 7. Hummingbird; 8. California Gull; 9. Binoculars; 10. Peregrine Falcon; 11. Woodpecker; 12. Crow; 13. Trees; 14. Fledgling; 15. Egg; 16. Pelicans; 17. Mallard; 18. Goldfinch; 19. Nest; 20. Owls; 21. Scrub


Tracks


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owl release* • silent & live auction • exceptional wine • live music & more

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