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RAPTOR

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only given to recuperating birds to test their hunting skills as they recover.

Shimmel hopes to ultimately turn her property on Fox Hollow Road into a combined care facility and nature center, where injured birds can be healed and the public can come to visit the resident raptors in natural settings.

"My goal is to have an opportunity to give Lane County residents the chance to see these magnificent animals close up and appreciate them, and give the ones I'm keeping really quality housing," she said.

But changing 100 acres into an educational and rehabilitation center takes not only time, but money. Shimmel said the facility will probably cost several thousand dollars and take nearly five years to complete.

Shimmel hopes to raise most of the money through corporate contributions and grants as well as individuals who might want to sponsor specific habitats or enclosures.

"I would like to make this a real community effort with school kids setting up blinds or planting hummingbird gardens," she said. "I want to give visitors a really firsthand chance to see the birds."

Community effort has already helped the center: a group of Eagle Scouts helped build some cages and have volunteered to help build trails.

Shimmel also relies on volunteers to help her with her work.

"I have six or seven animal care volunteers, some people who just volunteer to transport animals, the vets are all volunteers and there are just some people who are on call," she said.

"Sometimes when volunteers call, they have the really bizarre idea that they'll be walking around with a hawk on their fist all day, and they don't know they'll be scrubbing cages," Shimmel said.

Her volunteer information packet provides a healthy dose of reality for people who envision hobnobbing with owls on a daily basis.

Most of the volunteer work is cleaning — cleaning rodent cages,



Louise Shimmel holds Tomahawk, a red-tailed hawk permanently at the center.

cleaning bird cages, cleaning counters, cleaning dishes or cleaning floors. She asks for at least one four-hour shift each week and prefers people with some rehabilitation or animal care experience.

Since Shimmel began rehabilitating raptors in 1987, she has worked with nearly 650 birds, more than half of which were owls. Most of the birds were found outside of the Eugene-Springfield area.

Most of the injured birds Shimmel sees collided with a vehicle like a car or truck. Other birds, particularly smaller owls and sharp-shinned hawks, which weigh less than a half-pound, fly into windows.

Some raptors escape windows and trucks and manage to reach adulthood without falling out of their nests only to be shot, caught in traps or poisoned.

Once these birds are rehabilitated, 45 percent, on average, successfully return to the wild. The remaining birds either die from their injuries, are euthanized or are placed in other educational facilities.

"Anything that would prohibit release could result in euthanasia," Shimmel said. Birds with serious leg injuries aren't even a candidate for captivity, she said, because those birds are unable to stand.

Shimmel said release rates vary greatly from species to species.

"Ospreys are really hard to get to eat in captivity," she said, "and there's a low release rate on crows as with jays or robins."

To ensure a good chance for release, she limits the injured birds' contact with humans, both physical and visual. The birds recover in covered cages so they can't see the people who feed and care for them.

Furthermore, birds that are recovering are never used for public display.

In the case of baby birds that have fallen from their nests, the educational birds are often used as surrogate parents to feed the young, said Jean Besson, another wildlife rehabilitator who works with Shimmel.

These even-tempered educational birds not only help with younger birds, but make appearances at schools and in front of other groups.

Burwell and Sedgewick are two of the center's eight resident owls, and both are human imprints, meaning they were raised by humans early in their life and do not identify with their own species.

Owls are generally independent but territorial, which is no problem in the wild. However, instead of protecting their territory from other owls, imprinted owls protect their territory from humans.

Since Burwell lives in a cage, this is usually not a problem, although she hoots loudly at visitors.

But Sedgewick, a screech owl that could fit neatly into a coffee can, has the run of the house.

"His idea of a normal life is to have me as a mate and defend his territory," Shimmel said.

A loose owl presents some problems, she said. She often has to confine Sedgewick when visitors come because he has a tendency to attack them.

"He's not housetrained; there're feathers everywhere and chick parts. But it's his only way of socializing and he can't help it if he's screwed up," Shimmel said.

But chick parts and shed feathers aside, Shimmel finds working with raptors fulfilling.

"Having a bird in the hand is a personal form of meditation," Shimmel said.

SENATOR

Continued from Page 1

Allied Arts faculty meeting to learn what members are doing in their academic work and to become a better, more knowledgeable advocate.

Also a member of the Senate's Committee for Transportation, Sorenson spoke of the connection between transportation and education. He said programs such as Lane County's mass-transit systems could be improved upon through research and development conducted at the university level.

Sorenson also spoke of the connection between all levels

of education. Education in all areas of discipline, from kindergarten to post graduate, is important, he said, "and should not be heard from as several voices, but as one harmonious voice."

Sorenson noted a decline in resident participation in higher education.

"It is my goal and responsibility to convince people that money spent on education is money well spent," he said. "I don't want to see educational opportunities taken away, I want to see them extended."

The public's view of the initiative, such as Measure 5, has been distorted from its original concept, he said.



Sen. Peter Sorenson told University faculty Tuesday that tax reform may be necessary to save higher education.

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