



Letter to the Editor

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Dear Editor:

I was very pleased to accept an invitation to speak and present awards to the following recipients recently honored by the Wild Bird Sanctuary (WBS) on October 6th : Kimberly Rea for the U.S. Corps of Engineers, Dr. Patricia Hagen of the Audubon Center at Riverlands, Leslie Franklin from Pere Marquette Lodge, Amy Curry from Lewis & Clark Confluence Tower, and Brett Stawar who accepted two awards on behalf of the meeting of the Rivers Foundation and Alton Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The WBS possesses goals to aid in preserving the biological diversity of the planet while focusing on the future of threatened bird species in their natural environment. All of their goals are mission focused, providing people with the knowledge and tools necessary to preserve the world's ecosystems. These goals cannot be accomplished without access to the correct information, enabling people to make informed decisions regarding their impact on the environment.

In 2010, more than 191,000 people attended over 910 environmental education programs presented by the WBS. Over 13,000 people attended free educational programs including, World Eagle Day, Amazing Animal Encounters, Birds in Concert, and an annual open house.

In 2010, 393 birds of 43 different species were captured, banded, and released. Data regarding species, size, age & sex of each bird is recorded before its release. This aids in the tracking the health, movements, migration, breeding, and numbers for wildlife organizations.

Some of WBS' accomplishments included the release of 7 American Barn Owls in Missouri in 2010 and over 800 barn owls since the program's inception in the 1980s, and the bald eagle's removal from the Endangered Species List. These activities resulted in the barn owl being downgraded from Endangered to Threatened in Missouri

and represented a testament to the work of the WBS and others protecting our earth's biodiversity and the strength of conservation in action.

In 2010, the WBS successfully treated and released 107 of 211 birds admitted to the Favre Wildlife Hospital. The WBS Favre Wildlife Hospital has been serving Missouri for over 30 years providing, medical care and rehab to approximately 250 to 400 sick and injured birds of prey each year. Most of these birds received an injury or were poisoned as a consequence of direct or indirect human encounter.

The WBS Propagation Department also breeds non-native birds of prey for use in educational programs at institutions around the country. This provides a source of captive-bred exotic animals without the need to capture wild animals in their native habitats. The WBS programs focus on delivering high-quality rehabilitation services enabling us to better understand the problems in the modern world.

The Field Studies and Habitat Management Teams have conducted site visits to high land use corporations and provided them with recommendations to ensure that the land use was compliant with state and federal environmental management laws and regulations.

The City of Alton, the Cool Cities Committee, and several outside organizations have taken great strides in green initiatives and the management of all aspects of our environment. It is the responsibility of every citizen of this country to be good stewards of our environment.

A huge thank you to all for a job well done!

Sincerely,

Tom Hoechst, Mayor

City of Alton, Illinois

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