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**WINGSPAN**  
 BIRDS OF PREY TRUST

Established for the research, captive management, rehabilitation, and public awareness of New Zealand birds of prey.

Registered Charitable Trust 1992

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**VOLUME 10, 2006**

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**LETTER FROM THE CHAIR**

Since formal registration as a Charitable Trust in 1992, Mac Stafford, as one of the first members of the Board of Trustees, followed in the footsteps of Paul Jansen (Department of Conservation) as Chairman in 1996. Mac has contributed much of his time in the development of the former breeding aviary and present bird of prey centre, along with its ongoing daily functions. After 10 years, Mac steps down as Chairman but continues as a Trustee and volunteer. He can be found most days, welcoming people to Wingspan, and along with other Wingspan volunteers assists with maintaining the facilities beautiful fresh appearance. Thank you Mac for your contributions and continued support.

As we begin another year, it is with pride we cast a glimpse back to 2005, and reflect on a successful year since the aviary opening in October 2004. It has been gratifying to see the response from the public for their support, sponsorship, membership, and contributions to the development of the facility, and ongoing care of the birds. One only needs to read the comments in the visitor's book to appreciate the impact the centre is having, and the higher profile of these magnificent birds. More and more visitors, particularly school groups, are taking advantage of this learning experience and we are particularly excited by the increased number of younger student visitors. They are indeed the conservationists of tomorrow.

We start the New Year with the aviaries overflowing! A temporary situation as juvenile falcons are taught to master the skies and hunt for prey in preparation for their life back into the wild. As we go to print three research volunteers are being schooled with falconry techniques before one of them heads off to Mongolia to further his studies with Saker Falcon. Good luck Shane!

Also, Richard Seaton, whose research for his PhD in the Kaingaroa Forest completes it's last season and he returns to Massey University. We wish him well, and have enjoyed, and appreciated, his time with Wingspan and look forward to a close association in the future.

It has often been said that the presence of raptors is an environmental barometer, indicating the health of ecosystems. It is of concern that raptor numbers worldwide are on the decline. Without human intervention in their favour, this trend will continue. Without a change in public attitude, and further study and research, the loss will be irreversible.

Wingspan is committed to education and research, supporting and valuing co-operative studies with other interest groups. Conservation requires intellectual vigour for passion to succeed. The passion is enhanced by commitment, communication, consultation, and co-operation, for conservation to succeed.

*In the end, we will conserve only what we love,  
 We will love only what we understand  
 We will understand only what we are taught  
 Baba Dioum, (Ecologist, Senegal)*

**Gloria Stafford**  
 Chairperson

## AWARDS

The headlines read "Wingspan swoops on Spirit Award".

A group caring for one of New Zealand's threatened species has 'flown' away with the overall prize at the Trustpower Spirit of Rotorua Awards 2005.

Wingspan Birds of Prey Trust won the Regional Supreme Award at a ceremony hosted by Trustpower. The annual awards, run in conjunction with the Rotorua District Council, recognise voluntary groups and organisations for outstanding contributions to the community.

The Trust received \$1500 and went on to represent Rotorua at Trustpower's National Community Awards in March 2006.

The national event held in Greymouth showcased the voluntary efforts of 22 different projects from throughout New Zealand.

Deputy Mayor Trevor Maxwell and his wife Aiarua Maxwell representing the Rotorua District Council, alongside Gloria Stafford and Debbie Stewart representing Wingspan completed a ten-minute presentation incorporating a PowerPoint photographic backdrop and DVD. The latter, included footage by TVNZ cameraman Zane Willis, and a special voiceover by local historian Don Stafford. The presentation was well received with Wingspan voted 4th equal by judges and participants. The overall award winner was presented to Kihikahi Waikato Eventing Inc.



Wingspan swoops on Spirit award

Daily Post, November 15, 2006



In September 2005, Wingspan Birds of Prey Trust was acknowledged in the annual Environment Bay of Plenty Environment Awards. Chairman John Cronin presented special awards to individuals, groups, and educational groups from all over the Bay of Plenty. Wingspan was Highly Recommended within the environmental education category.



Fraser Accounting of Taumanga hosted a Charity Movie Evening in Te Puke featuring the New Zealand film 'In My Fathers Den'. Proceeds were awarded to Wingspan, with \$1270 donations raised for the raptor programme.

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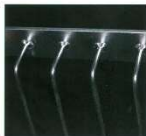


Ten couples of the Classic Motoring Society each donated the cost of materials for ten traps, while Graham Smith (Nelson) donated his time to make and assemble them. The traps are a clever 'two chambered' design with the latest DoC 150 springloaded trap. They are effective and deadly, already killing three adult ferrets and a number of rats.

Wingspan Birds of Prey Trust would like to acknowledge the following Nelson 'roadies' for their contributions; Adrienne and Geoff Chilton, Don Grant and Yoka De Houwer, Glenys and Frank Griffith, Pauline and Bill Osborne, Anne and Ross Atkinson, Ted and Heather Perry, Mel and Gil Peters, Anne and Russell Egan, Doug and Pam Frost, and Sue and Richard Horrell.

Another unexpected problem we encountered this year has been the wire netting used for the viewing windows of the display aviaries. Our concern in particular, is for the juvenile birds as they develop and mature. Two problems were identified, including beak damage caused by wedging the upper mandibles, but also the fraying and breaking of tail feathers. The best solution to reduce these problems was to fit barred windows, often a preferred barrier used in other raptor facilities around the world.

A timely visit from Scott and Karen Parker from Paekakariki, who own and operate Kapiti Fencing and Gate Services Ltd prompted a fresh look. They have extensive experience with barriers, fencing and gates, including research development for predator fencing. With plans designed to be custom fit in the aviaries, Scott and his team including Dion, Jason and Brian, pulled out all stops, with six barred window frames arriving at Wingspan, and donated to the programme.



## K.F.G.S

Kapiti Fencing & Gate Services Ltd  
kfgs@paradise.net.nz



With this year's journal we've also included the new Wingspan rack card. The card is designed as an easy reference for visitors about Wingspan and will be distributed at various promotional events and local outlets.

Wellington company Partisan who specialise in graphic art and design, and, web site design and development, generously provided their time to design the card. The graphic lay out is full of impact, its eye catching, with key points of information.

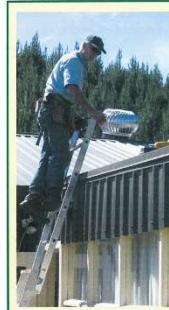
For copies of the rack card please write directly to Wingspan, P.O. Box 993 Rotorua.

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## LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Aside from the on-going maintenance of the raptor centre, there have been a number of new additions to the aviaries along with new equipment and services donated. The range is diverse; Eymard Bradley (Wellington) for legal advice on Health and Safety Planning, Simon and Debbie McIvor (Wainuiomata) for the emergency electric generator, Nigel Wadhams (Rotorua) contributing the new Wingspan photo board in the 'Barn' and along with canvas blinds on the aviaries bordering the flying paddocks, Ham Gifford (Rotorua) with stream planting and clearing, Urbanore Recycling Centre for the pest traps, Canon (Rotorua) for the photocopier and servicing, reams of copy A4 paper from Jeremy Douglas Rotorua Freight Brokerage Ltd, forest ferns by kind permission Awahou Hunting Club (Rotorua), and welding gloves from Chris and Maxine Fuller (Taupo).



The most notable new addition visitors will notice are the three new stainless steel ventilators atop the main atrium of the aviary. The purchase of these were the result of a generous donation by members Ron and Joan Couchman (Rotorua), and needed to address excessive heat build up within the aviaries. The effectiveness of the ventilators was remarkable as each was installed, instantly creating a better air flow and ambient temperature.



Mac Stafford and Nigel Wadhams installing the new ventilators.

In November 2005, a group of car enthusiasts from Nelson visited Wingspan for a tour of the facility and close encounter with our raptors. Led by Don Grant and Yoka De Houwer, the Classic Motoring Society of Nelson Inc spent some time at the Centre before continuing their journey back to Marlborough. On their return they offered further support to the Wingspan programme, organising specialised predator traps to assist with predator control.



Introduced pests are of constant concern for those involved in conservation programmes, whether in the wild or within captivity. Raptors are no exception, and while rodents such as rats and mice may occasionally be taken by our hawks and owls, the ground nesting habits of our breeding falcons makes them particularly vulnerable to mustelids such as ferrets, stoats, and weasels.

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## LANDSCAPE PLANTINGS

When the Wingspan Centre was first designed, the aim was to use native New Zealand plants extensively throughout the walkway area, and also within individual aviaries. Along the walkway, plants were chosen to reflect three main habitat types that New Zealand falcons might frequent, including a forest, riverbed, and high country themes.

As you enter the aviary complex, ferns of different species, including Crown Fern (*Blechnum* sp), and Prickly Shield Ferns, line the sides of the path, along with hebes, kanuka and libertia. In this area, a stand-out *Polystichum* sp and Tree Ferns (*Dicksonia*) There is also *Tecomna speciosa*, a woolly climber with large, glossy leaves and stunning cream coloured tubular flowers.



Moving through the middle stages of the walk, visitors will find yellow flowering 'Brachoglottis' (Otari Cloud), *Astelia chatamica* with it's striking silver, flax-like foliage, and jointed wire Rush (*Apodasmia* sp) - also, several mat forming ground covers, including *Coprosma taiko* and *Pratia angulata*.



Some artistic license was used in a group planting of Poor Knight's Lily (*Xeromenia callistemon*) and under planting with the ground cover, *Pratia angulata*. The Poor Knight's Lily is a dramatic foliage plant with a stunning crimson flower shaped like and inverted 'toothbrush'.

Towards the end of the walkway, high country plants, such as Marlborough Rock Daisy (*Pachystegia insignis*) and the smaller leaved '*Linum minor*', are planted amongst mountain daisy (*Celmisia* sp). There are also several species of grasses and tussocks.



Cabbage trees from the Three Kings Islands (*Cordylus kasparyi*) are dotted amongst the overall planting. One cabbage tree from Norfolk Island, although not a native, is planted near the morepork aviary, it's name '*Cordylus falcon*'.

The grape vines trailing over the Peregrine and Lake Chalice Wine's sponsored aviaries complete a visual pleasing, lush environment that adds to, and compliments, the Wingspan visitor experience.

Chris Gay  
Trustee



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## RECONSTRUCTION OF THE EXTINCT LAUGHING OWL



Noel Hyde, Trustee and Falconer for Wingspan, is also a specialist bird taxidermist, contrasting to museums and the Department of Conservation. His work includes the preservation of specimens for research and identification, also reconstructions of extinct birds, displays and exhibits. The following is a brief description about the reconstruction of the extinct Laughing Owl for an upcoming exhibition at Te Papa.

New Zealand had only two species of indigenous owls when Man first arrived - the Morepork, *Ninox novaezeelandiae*, and the Laughing owl *Sceloglaux albifacies*. The Laughing Owl is now considered extinct but only relatively recently so, with some quite convincing reported sightings into the late 1970's. However, the last positive evidence of the owl's existence dates back to 1914 when a dead specimen was found on the road at Blue Cliffs in Canterbury in the South Island.

To those familiar with hawk owls of the genus *Ninox*, the Laughing Owl looks very much like a medium sized species from this genus, but it is much larger than the New Zealand Morepork. It lived in holes and fissures of limestone cliffs and outcrops. There are a number of mounted specimens and skins still in existence as well as a few photographs of live specimens.



One of the last known photographs 1914



Specimens from the British Museum, 1845 - 1955

Weighing around 600gms, it had a broad head, slightly rounded tail and long legs. The dorsal surfaces were darkish brown, longitudinally banded with buff and ochre colours. The scapulars and wing coverts were dark brown, streaked and spotted yellowish white and the tail dark brown, barred with yellowish white. The facial disc was whitish grey and the ventral surfaces buff with darkish brown blotches. The leg feathers are buff, the toes light brown with light hairs and the talons are light. The irides are dark brown and the total length about 47cm.

Research for the project involved studying available literature, inspection of museum specimens - taking extensive measurements, and photographs of the two specimens held by Te Papa. It was agreed that the nearest plumage to the Laughing Owl - at least dorsally, was the European Short eared owl, *Asio flammeus*. I contacted European taxidermists, The World Owl Sanctuary, the British Museum at Tring, and the Australian Museum. I was able to procure 7 specimens, which were kindly skinned by various individuals and sent via the museums involved.

Because the Laughing Owl looks like a larger member of the genus *Ninox*, I modelled the head form in clay, based on the shape of a Morepork skull. This was then cast in epoxy resin. An estimate of body size was made, and again I used a Morepork body carcass as a guide to shape the manikins, these were then carved out of balsa wood.

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## THREE YEARS IN PINES WITH BUSH FALCONS

Over the past three years I have spent the last three summers living and breathing pine forests. Why you may ask? Why spend six to seven days a week for six months of the year, for three years in a pine forest? And in clear-cuts? Six months getting burnt, bitten and bleeding, clambering through what many see as a desolate and sterile industrial wasteland?

Well in a word, "Falcons". This is the simplest answer. But to explain a bit more, it is really all about falcons, pine forests and how the biodiversity in pine forests interacts to make pine forests an ideal habitat for falcons. It is about what we can learn from the falcons in Kaingaroa and how a pine forest can be best managed to encourage both falcons and wider biodiversity. And how all of this effects the overall survival of falcons nationally and in the long-term.



We have now found the highest known density of falcons in the country in Kaingaroa forest, with no less than 40 pairs being recorded this breeding season alone. And contrary to popular belief this has to be because of the high density of bird life within pine forests. Not all of this is native, but a large proportion is, and alongside falcons there are robins, tomtits, fantails, grey warblers, silvereyes, whiteheads and many more living in healthy numbers. This all supports the idea that pine forests rather than being a detrimental land use, can actually supplement populations of many native species and, in the case of the falcon, can certainly aid in their long-term conservation.

So after three long summers chasing falcons it is finally time to get back into the office and get some answers to those questions that we have all been dying to get the answers to. Why are they in pine forests? Why are they doing so well? And how can we ensure they continue to do so well?

Because of all the help of many people over the past three years I now have a huge amount of data to work with and support my conclusions. This data is essential to coming to the right conclusions and I cannot thank everybody enough for all of the support and encouragement you have given me over this time. I would especially like to thank everybody in Wingspan and my field staff, Matt, Dave and Shane who spent countless hours in the field often to go back home to nothing more than a tarpaulin and a can of "Big eats".

I look forward to presenting the results of my study to you soon. Happy falcon hunting (tip: try the pines!!!).

Richard Seaton

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I used the original Short eared owl legs and plucked the toes, and built up the toes to make them more like the heavier toes of the Laughing Owl. Because *Sceloglaux* had hairs on its toes, I skinned the toes of several moreporks and glued the skins to the toes of the models.

With my reference measurements, I set the eyes into the head form and pulled the Short eared owl head skin over the form. Taxidermists have to be resourceful, and whilst in a local fishing store, I saw a couple of bags of white fly tying feathers that had the fine structure of the facial disc feathers I was looking for. These were trimmed and set in place.

The Short eared Owl wings were wired and set into place on the body form, then the mantle and back feathers were adjusted to fit over the shoulders. I tried several dyes on different feather types for the breast but with little success. I settled on using the breast feathers off Australasian Harrier hawks, *Circus approximans*, that had the darker centres with the buff edges I was looking for.



I used the falconry technique of 'imping' the cut down tail feathers of the Australian Powerful Owl, *Ninox strenua*, into the tail of the Short eared owl. Because the back needed some stripes, I inserted a few selected female Mallard feathers into the shoulder areas, as well as a few striped feathers from the powerful owl into the wing coverts. Finally the primaries were cut down, reshaped and the body gently airbrushed to darken the plumage and merge the feathers. The feet, back and bristles on either side of the beak between the eyes were also airbrushed. The juvenile Laughing owl was modelled on a Morepork that was plucked and covered with the downy belly feathers from Ring necked Pheasants, *Phasianus colchicus*.

## FALCON SIGHTINGS



Canmap Hawley  
Falcon sightings can now be reported online directly to [www.wingspan.co.nz](http://www.wingspan.co.nz)

Thank you to all those contributing falcon sightings over the year. The areas reported have been diverse, including further pine plantations, native stands of forest, coastal, residential, and, mountain ranges. North and South Island sightings have obviously been included however we were more than impressed with a report arriving from Detroit Michigan, USA of a NZ falcon nesting on the 17th floor of a high-rise apartment building!

Of particular note was Wingspan member Richmond Atkinson who was able to monitor a nesting pair of falcons in York Bay Wellington. From courtship through to the young fledging, Richmond was able to witness the entire nesting period, and was often entertained by the pair dive bombing unsuspecting walkers and trampers in the area.



Photo by Richmond Atkinson 2005

Other sightings of interest forwarded have included Maungatataru, Upper Motu by Phil Tucker, Tapanui by Dave Matthews, Wainuomata from the Surridge family and Chris Gay, Taihape from Melinda Mathewson, Te Aroha by Fleur Maysek, Fielding by Sav Saville, Lake Wakatipu from Campbell Weston, and Mt Hutt from Rob Teasdale.

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Rain, hail or shine the work must go on...

## A VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

The research in Kaingaroa draws to a close and I have been on the lookout for further opportunities to work with birds of prey. In March, immediately following this field season, Dave Brill and I will be volunteering our time at the Wingspan Centre and will be fortunate enough to be training Whaia and Blu (two orphaned juvenile falcons) for release back into Kaingaroa Forest. This will be an intense four weeks, an excellent opportunity to get hands-on experience with falcon training, and releasing these falcons will be an appropriate end to the field season.

As winter draws near, I will be skipping the country - to aid in the research and conservation of Saker falcon in Mongolia. The project, run in part by the National University of Mongolia, and International Wildlife Consultants, is investigating many aspects of Saker falcon conservation - surveying populations, monitoring nests and radiotracking juveniles as they fledge and disperse. Aspects I am familiar with having spent two seasons doing this with New Zealand falcon. The project includes quantifying prey availability, studying interrelationships between the many raptor species in the study area, and surveying powerlines for raptor deaths.

I believe the study area is in and around the eastern Steppes, but I am quick to acknowledge that I know little of what Mongolia will be like; climate, ecology and culture. Despite (or because of) this I am extremely excited about the upcoming experience and look forward to following up on this article with another update.

Shane McPherson

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## WHAIA AND BLU

Rescued from Kaingaroa Forest at the end of November 2005, 'Whaia' and 'Blu' were two of a clutch of four orphaned chicks brought to the Wingspan Centre, at an estimated age of just 8-10 days of age. Their time with Wingspan was an intensive four months - a collective effort pulled out all stops to see them survive and returned back into the wild.

On arrival, each of the chicks were fitted special colour bands for identification purposes, the two oldest females of the clutch given red and blue 'bracelets'. Then, placed with their siblings into the special care 'baby' unit donated from Whakatane hospital.



Aged 8-10 days

Whaia and Blu were lightweights - weighing in on the scales at just 278 and 266 grams respectively. Fed initially every few hours and monitored through the night, the young falcons showed the characteristic fast growth of raptors.

Falcon chicks hatch at around 30-40 grams in weight, it's hard to imagine that they are full adult weight, and making their first flying attempts at around 35 days old.

Whaia and Blu were expected to reach an average adult weight for females of around 470 gms. In just 10 days after arrival, their growth and development was well on target. They were able to thermoregulate, no longer requiring artificial brooding, and able to hold their food independently. Their weight gains nearly doubled to 440gms, almost their adult weight.



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In the course of rearing these falcon chicks they were regularly taken within the main atrium of the Wingspan aviaries. No longer requiring artificial brooding, they were placed into a larger enclosure to provide natural sunlight, safety, further sibling interaction, and outdoor stimulation.

Interestingly, the chicks attracted particular attention from one of the adult female falcons in an adjacent aviary. 'Ali', originally from Marlborough, remains in captivity due to permanent injuries to both wings (the result of deliberate shooting as a juvenile).

Stimulated by the presence of the chicks and hearing them whining and begging, she would fly up to the window with food in an effort to feed them.



Under careful observation, one of the falcon chicks was placed in a small cage within Ali's aviary. In a short time, Ali was feeding small morsels of meat, beak-to-beak, through the safety barrier. Over an extended time and constant observation, the cage could be removed, and all the chicks transferred.

Ali was the perfect mother and very attentive to their needs, rearing them as her own, through to the young falcons fledging.

Fostering of chicks by unrelated adults is well known for many raptors, the technique has real benefits, allowing an opportunity for 'natural rearing'. But the risks can be high, and fatalities not unknown. Fostering of falcon chicks in this manner, within New Zealand, hadn't been attempted before.

Once fledged and fully feathered, Whaia and Blu were transferred to the larger flight aviary, but by the end of February, the next chapter of their journey was about to begin.



Having finished six months field research in Kaingaroa, Wingspan volunteers Shane McPherson and David Brill, with support from the Raptor Association of New Zealand, started training the two falcons using falconry techniques. The age-old falconry methods used, would provide the birds fitness and hunting skills for their release back into the wild.



The training was an intense time, a concentrated effort taking several hours every day. The young birds learned quickly and within just weeks of training, were able to be flown free. They delighted in their new freedom - experiencing longer flights, climbing, stooping to the lure, and chasing prey. With their fitness improved, and both Whaia and Blu making their first kills, they were ready to be returned to the wild.

With approvals from the Department of Conservation and Kaingaroa Timberlands in place, the birds were given their final health screening. They were fitted with metal numbered bands as permanent identification; before tail mounted transmitters were attached so they could be monitored by telemetry after release.



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A suitable compartment within Kaingaroa Forest was selected as the release site. Previous research in the area suggested a low breeding density; with no breeding adults recorded within the compartment, the nearest several kilometres from the area. The compartment also appears as the most northern range of falcon populations within Kaingaroa Forest. Typically a cutter, clear felled area, that was also readily accessible for post release monitoring.



For the first few days familiarisation of the area was important for the young falcons - this was their introduction to their new territory; they needed to recognise 'home base', along with the special food platform that would offer supplementary feeding if required. The birds also required close monitoring after their release, and for this, support was enlisted from Mike Jones, the Principal of Kaingaroa Forest School.



The staff and students of the school embraced the project entirely, and have been incredibly supportive of this falcon release project. On-going post monitoring was confirmed, and a commitment by the school to visit the area on a daily basis, record the falcons presence and activity, and leave fresh prey items.

The 24th March, 2006, was a special day in Kaingaroa Forest, and with a karakia, a prayer and a song, the training anklets were cut through. Whaia and Blu were free.



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## MEAN BUSINESS

*"We applaud their hunting of rodents such as rats and mice, yet condemn them as predators when they take birds. Falcons simply do not make the distinction. They hunt to live, and live to hunt".*

You might consider the nature of being a predator as 'mean' business, and indeed it is. It's serious; the aggression of a raptor is a matter of survival.

Of the 38 species of falcons found worldwide, the New Zealand falcon, our own Karearea, is regarded as one of the most bold and aggressive. They evolved without competitors or natural predators; they ruled the skies.

These birds are capable of taking prey up to six times their own bodyweight - without doubt this is a remarkable effort. Their prey might include mallard duck, pheasant, rabbit, and even large brown hare.

In the captive situation, females can be particularly aggressive and occasionally kill their smaller mates. Particular care and attention needs to be paid to pairing suitable birds to 'avoid' aggression issues.

Wild breeding birds are the most to be feared and respected. According to Dr Nick Fox "the New Zealand falcons defend their territories more strenuously than any other raptor". Their aggression during the nesting season towards prey or intruders, big or small, in their territory, is legendary.

Karearea are speedsters, and efficient in aerial tactical manoeuvres. They hit hard, with surprise attacks, out of the sun, (often in pairs), stooping down to hit and snatch with their feet. The females in particular, attack repeatedly, their talons raking their target. The shyer males making unerringly close dives and passes.

These birds are fearless. They mean business.



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## FALCON PROJECT TAKES OFF

The Falcons for Grapes Project has now successfully completed its first season in Marlborough, New Zealand. The four-man team, with the assistance of volunteers, surveyed old and new falcon sites in the Wairau, Waihopai and Awatere catchments. They have followed the fortunes of some of these sites since 1974. Signs of falcons were seen at 40 sites, and of these 18 sites had pairs attempting to breed. But only 10 of these pairs successfully raised young and productivity was low.

Dr Nick Fox, Project Leader, said, "Ground predators, such as cats, ferrets and possums, are still a major issue for our native falcon. To some extent they are managing to adapt by nesting in hollows on the bluffs and 46% of falcons did this. Of the 54% that nested on the ground, only 43% successfully reared young and averaged 0.7 chicks, whereas 100% of the cliff nesters succeeded and averaged 2.0 chicks. A noticeable exception was a successful ground-nesting pair on an island in the Sounds where all ground predators had been removed. Another problem this year has been the hot dry spring that seemed to knock back the first broods of the small birds such as yellowhammers and chaffinches, which the falcons prey on. As a result, many falcon pairs only succeeded in rearing one or two chicks. Very few had three chicks and none raised four. Of the chicks that survived, females (which are larger) outnumbered males 4.3 to one"

Now that predated occupied sites have been identified, the project is moving onto its winter schedule: erecting predator-proof nest barrels on bluffs or trees so that the falcons have a chance to nest off the ground. Landowners or volunteers interested in supporting falcons in this way are welcome to contact the team.

Four young falcons have been reared in artificial nests in the vineyards in the western end of the Wairau wine region. These have been flying now since early December and are monitored by radio tracking.

Colin Wynn, Project Manager, said, "We feed the young falcons daily and they stay within about 2km of their release sites. They can fly flat out across the rows below the vines and are very playful. We are not encouraging them to hunt this year because our first priority is their survival and welfare. We have also seen wild falcons here with our youngsters. We tagged one wild youngster near Tuarua but we have not had contact with him now since the end of December. About two thirds of the young falcons die in their first year, mainly through starvation, so we want to ensure that our birds have everything they need."

The project team would like to thank the many landowners who have shown interest in the project and allowed their land to be surveyed. The vineyard owners too have been very supportive, one even providing a smoko room on wheels for the team doing 24/7 radio monitoring. Talks are now underway to enable local conservation volunteers and bird-enthusiasts to participate in the programme. A 25-minute film is being made of the project and should be available in a few months time.

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## ON THE WING - RELEASES FOR 2005-2006



Wingspan 2005

Neil Harrison (Harry) of Hawkeye Scenics, Waitkeke Island, started training his first Australasian harrier, a juvenile female he named Hera.

Hera, originally from Havelock North, was found with a broken wing. This was subsequently set with external pinning. Progress was slow however she recovered sufficiently to be released in November 2005.

As we go to print, Harry and partner Pam Finkle are training 'Zeus' another harrier, originally delivered for care and rehabilitation from the Rotorua SPCA.

Two morepork owls were able to be released after arriving at Wingspan with suspected concussions. One of the Ruru was forwarded by Andy and Diane Garrick of Tarawera and released August, the other from Carmel Richardson of Hamurana, released in October.



Te Awamutu Courier, February 06

The name 'Killer' was a reference name for a female falcon held at the Wingspan Centre 2004-2005.

Originally bred at Otorohanga she was first paired with an older male, who she subsequently killed within the aviary.

This is not an uncommon experience - the female falcons, as the larger of the sexes, are particularly dominant. Combined with their natural raptor aggression, this makes them formidable partners.

Killer clearly demonstrated her natural aggression - basic instincts that would be an advantage for her successful release into the wild.

Subsequently trained by Noel Hyde during 2005 for fitness and hunting skills, Killer was able to be released in February of 2006.

The photograph above features Laurie Hovered (Te Awamutu) releasing 'Killer', watched on by Jordan Wallis of Bayer Industries at Kakepuku, Te Awamutu.



Whakatane Beacon Mar 15 2006

When Lesley Barlow and Rod Farrow of Whakatane, heard a loud bang from the direction of their lounge, the last thing they expected to find was a New Zealand falcon in their backyard!

The young male bird was found unconscious after hitting a window while in hunting pursuit of prey.

With concussion and temporary paralysis, he was lucky to have been found, and with prompt attention from Matt Cook of DOC Whakatane, the falcon was delivered for care to Wingspan volunteers.

In March 2006, after just 10 days recovery, the falcon's condition was reassessed and then banded for identification purposes, before being released back to his original area.



Whaia and Blu were another two falcons released this year. Pictured here with Wingspan members Shane McPherson (Mongolia) and David Brill (England). Their stories featured on Page 12 in this issue.

## Back to the future



Daily Post Weekender Mar 31 2006

We are constantly amazed at the efforts people make to help sick and injured raptors, not least the delivery of the many harrier hawks that arrive at the Wingspan Centre. These are large birds - incredibly strong, with sharp beaks, strong talons, and a foot grip that feels like putting your hand in a vice. They can be intimidating to say the least.

In early September 2005 we received a call from Arjan De Wilde of Landmark Vets in Matamata regarding a harrier hawk that had been hit by a truck and found on the roadside. Now I'm not too good at maths, and physics was never a strong subject, but it doesn't take much imagination to figure a 470gm hawk being hit by an 11 tonne truck at 100km an hour isn't going to be very well.

With a mercy dash to Wingspan, Arjan delivered the bird - confirmed as an adult male harrier. On investigation, we found fractures to both wings, but miraculously no significant breaks of any of the main bones or joints.

The recovery of the bird was slow but improvement noticeable as each week passed, and then after some six weeks care we considered the hawk ready for a short test flight to prepare for release. Even his weight had improved, and at 526gms he had sufficient fat and muscle reserves to be set free.

On October 28th, the hawk was banded and released in Paradise Valley, north of Rotorua. The release was an easy one, and as he climbed into the wind and got into a soar, he circled the paddock twice before flying out of view. The bird may very well return to his original territory in Matamata, we hope this time having learned a valuable lesson about playing on the road!

### Freedom

Freedom is light green  
It tastes like lemonade and  
smells like fresh water.  
Freedom is the smell of the breeze  
In the trees  
And  
Feels like the breeze at Wingspan.

Written by Creaty Allen-Jennings of Rotorua, aged 7 years



## GALLERY



For this issue we interviewed Jason Searle of Whangaparaoa and feature some of his favourite images of the raptors held at Wingspan.

Jason's photos appeared front cover of the 2005 newsletter, and some are available for purchase at the Wingspan Centre.



### When and how did you discover Wingspan?

I was searching the internet for pictures of falcons etc and came across one that said that it was taken at Wingspan in Rotorua and no other information. I ended up doing a further search online for Wingspan, which lead me to the website. The programme put in place interested me, along with being able to get so close to falcons and to be able to photograph them. After finding the website it was not long till I had organised with my parents a trip down to see the Centre. I have been coming back ever since to see the progress made.

### What initiated your interest in photography?

I have always had a passing interest in photography, but I guess when my father took up motor sport it really hooked my interest and I invested in a camera and have been doing it for about 3 years now. I do a fair bit of motor sport photography following my father and mother around when they race, however wildlife/bird photography is what I enjoying doing most.

### What is your most favoured camera and lens?

Currently I am using a Canon 20D and a Canon EF 100-400mm f4.5-5.6L IS USM for my wildlife photography, until I can afford to upgrade to a longer and better lens. To date my favourite photo would be the one I got of Sky, as I have never been that close to a wild Hawk in my life.



'Sky', Australasian Harrier, by Jason Searle www.omakiwi.co.nz

## HERE and THERE

The Raptor Association of New Zealand (RANZ) celebrated their 30th anniversary meeting in December. The meeting was held at the 'Falcons for Grapes' project base in the Upper Waihopai Valley in Marlborough and hosted by RANZ foundation member Dr Nick Fox.

With three original members in attendance, and a great turnout of present members including Wingspan Trustees and RANZ members Noel Hyde and Chris Gay, an excellent weekend was had by all. The weekend commemoration included camping beside the Waihopai River, seeing local falcons in spectacular country, and an excellent barbeque celebration.



Happy Birthday RANZ!

A number of falcons in training at the Wingspan Centre has given new meaning to 'air traffic control'.

Each of the falcons and trainers were tightly scheduled for reserved 'air space' during their daily free flights in Paradise Valley, Rotorua.



Pictured here (from left) is Debbie and Dimond, Nigel and Tah, Shane and Blu, Noel and Jeti, and Dave and Whaia.

The Wingspan Trustees are supportive in extending opportunities to assist and offer help with other conservation and volunteer initiatives.

- In association with the Tauranga Department of Conservation, a special opportunity provided Tauranga Moana Trust Board with special Karearea feathers to feature on a rakau korero (carved ceremonial walking stick).
- Poppy Miller of Rotorua Girls High School, volunteered her time as part of her Bronze Service Medal for the Young New Zealanders Challenge (Duke of Edinburgh)
- Wingspan joined as members of the Mount Ngongotaha Bush Restoration Trust. For more information about this incredible project we recommend a visit to [www.ngongotaha.org](http://www.ngongotaha.org).
- In association with Whakatane Radio 1XX 'Bird Name Competition' supporting the 2005 Birdsaplenty Festival, special family visitor passes to Wingspan were issued as prizes.
- Family prizes were also presented to the Lakes District Board Rescue Helicopter Campaign Event of 2005.
- In August 2005, Wingspan, in association with the Department of Conservation hosted the Kiwi Conservation Club (KCC) - a national club for children 5-12 years. For more information contact Dawn Angove KCC Co-ordinator or for more info check the website [www.kcc.org.nz](http://www.kcc.org.nz)

## RAPTOR SHOPPING



New Zealand Post, on behalf of the Reserve Bank of New Zealand, has an annual tradition to issue a coin set (\$5 legal tender) that features an endangered species. Last years issue was the Fiordland Crested Penguin, while this years issue is the New Zealand falcon, modeled on the Wingspan raptors. Orders can be placed through Wingspan or NZ Post.



Uncirculated \$5 falcon coin  
\$29.00

Uncirculated \$5 silver proof falcon coin  
\$79.00

Coin sets also available.



Wingspan Special Members Pin  
\$10.00

(only available to members)

Limited Edition artwork from Pauline Morse, Janet Marshall, Jeanette Blackburn, available at the Wingspan Centre. Visit the 'Barn' for any enquiries, or visit e-shop for online purchases.

### Bronze sculptures by Mike Norris

**NZ Falcon bust**  
Solid bronze sculpture with dark brown patina.

Limited Edition #2 of 24,  
\$500

**Life size New Zealand Falcon**  
47cm x 16cm X 22 cm. Solid bronze on granite base, with dark brown patina.

Limited Edition #2 of 9,  
\$6,500

Commissions also welcomed  
mike@chevne.co.nz  
(04) 236 8091



Visit the Barn at the Wingspan Centre. An informal gallery - raptor themed, with products available for purchase, selected gifts, artwork and ThermalArt souvenir products.

Enquiries as a meeting venue and specific events welcomed.

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## IN THE NEWS SPONSORS AND MEMBERS DIRECTORY



**'Ozzy'** - Male (tiercel) NZ falcon, sponsored by Wolfgang Keller, Herborn, Germany, since 2004. Arrived at just 10 days of age from Upper Hutt in November 2004. Named after 'Ozzy Osborne' because he has an attitude! Ozzy is one of the main display falcons at the Centre.

**'Sloan'** - adult male NZ falcon. Sloan arrived injured from Opotiki in 1994, and has been part of the main captive pair, breeding since 1996. Sloan's name recognises the contributions by Bill Sloan. Bill and his wife Rachel, were the first members to register as Wingspan members in 1996. Sadly, Bill passed away in May 2005, but will be remembered fondly for his conservation efforts. Pictured here is Rachel during a visit in 2006.



**'Ali'** - Adult female NZ falcon from Marlborough. Permanently injured as a result of deliberate illegal shooting. Ali is featured on page 12 of this issue.

Ali has been gift sponsored to Noel and Ali Lamberton of Rotorua, and Villa Productions of Rotorua, in recognition of their support.

**'Jeit'** - immature male NZ falcon.

One of four falcon chicks orphaned from the Kaingaroa Forest in November 2005. Jeit is sponsored by Nigel Wadhwa, Gayle Newman, and their children Jeff, Emily, Isaac, and Tiara.



**'Tuhoe'**, adult male NZ falcon, and part of the Wingspan captive breeding programme. Sponsored by Chris and Maxine Fuller of Taupo. Tuhoe is named after the Maori tribe, a warrior of strength.



**'Kaitiaki'**, adult female NZ falcon, kindly sponsored by Rona Larsen of Hamilton. Kaitiaki is the Maori word for guardian or curer, she is paired with 'Tarawera' as part of the 2006-2007 breeding programme.



**Dimond** - adult female NZ falcon, captive bred in 2002. Originally named 'Dimond' acknowledging Dimond Industries, Rotorua, for assistance with the roofing of the Wingspan facility. Dimond is now sponsored by the Rajasingham and Mayclair family of Rotorua.

Dimond is most often seen during the daily flying displays and is pictured here with Dilan Rajasingham, a regular visitor to Wingspan when he can 'escape' from Sydney, Australia.



**'Tarawera'** - adult male NZ falcon, and paired with 'Kaitiaki' as part of the 2006-2007 breeding programme.

Tarawera is formerly sponsored by Mt Tarawera NZ Ltd in support of the conservation and breeding programme.



**Fovea** is an adult female NZ falcon, paired with 'Tuhoe' for the 2006-2007 breeding programme.

Fovea is named after part of the eye, in recognition of the remarkable eyesight of birds of prey.

The large eyes have colour vision, and are forward facing for binocular and telescopic sight - eight times better than humans.

Fovea is kindly gift sponsored by Mark McKenna of Rotorua December 2005.

**Pirua** - immature female NZ falcon. Currently being trained for fitness and hunting skills so that she can be returned to the wild in the 2006 spring/summer.



She is pictured here in training with volunteer Nigel Wadhwa, and is formerly sponsored by Andrew Wilkins of Bellbird Backpackers in Turangaki.

**Whaia** - juvenile female NZ falcon, was one of four orphaned and rescued falcon chicks from Kaingaroa Forest in November 2005. The oldest of the clutch, she was often referred to as 'big red', and her story of being released back into the wild is featured on page 12 of this issue. Whaia is pictured here at just two weeks of age.

Whaia was named and sponsored by David, Karyn and Cambell Morris of Wellington, in association with Petone Plumbing and Building Supplies.



**Blu** - juvenile female NZ falcon, sister of 'Whaia', (and Jeit), also featured on Page 12. Blu was reared at the Wingspan Centre from just 10 days of age, until her release back into Kaingaroa Forest in March 2006.

Blu is kindly sponsored by Jim and Kathy Stevens of Auckland in support of the raptor conservation and rehabilitation programme. Blu is pictured here the day of her release back into the wild.



**Mohawk** - juvenile Australasian harrier. Found in Hamilton as a young chick (eyass) at an estimated 15 days of age. Mo was rescued, and is kindly sponsored, by Reg and Gael Salter of Hamilton.



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**ASHBURTON**  
Derek and Helen Binmie 2003

**ASHHURST**  
Arthur Anyon 2006  
Debbie Hewison 2006

**AUCKLAND**  
Grant & Sarah Abbot 2001  
Anderson Family 2006  
Ashleigh Anderson 2003  
Courtney Anderson 2003  
David Baker 1998  
Russell Balmforth 1996  
Peter Baillies 2001  
Robin Bash 2005  
Ann Collins 2004  
Martin Dixon 2001  
Eleanor Duff 1996  
Robert Dyalball 2003  
Amanda Fowler 2003  
Phil and Margaret Fry 1997  
Hon. George Gair 2003  
Peter Glanuzina 2005  
Mike and Sharon Graham 2002  
Jeremy Green 2004  
Betsy Griffiths 2005  
Andrew Hales 2006  
Steven Hayes 2005  
Alistair Harlow 2001  
Katie Henderson 2003  
Nick Hesson 2005  
Victor Hepwood 2004  
Penny Hunt 2002  
Richard & Maggie Jakob-Hoff 06  
Brita Jacobson 2002  
Andrew James 2001  
Allan MacGillivray 2002  
Jill Marchant 2004  
Daniel Margot 2005  
Stephanie Martin 2004  
Mathew & Jonathan Mason 2005  
Brendan McMahon 2005  
Geoff and Lynette Moon 1992  
Nigel Nausham 2004  
Patricia Nazzari 2004  
Ruth Nisbet 2005  
Murray Pedersen 2002  
Kevin Philpot 2004  
Jillian Potter 2004  
John & Adrienne Powell 2004  
Jean Prins 2005  
Bruce Reskell 2001  
Carol Ryan 2003  
John Sanders 2004  
The Smith Family 2003  
Andrew Stafford 2005  
Jim & Kathy Stevens 2006  
Ian & Hilary Stollery 2003  
Julie Scott 2005  
Ashley Thomson 2001  
Josephine Thomson 2001

Brian Turner 2005  
Greer & Dee Twiss 2005  
Linda Waters 2003  
Paulette Westgaard 2005  
Phoebe Wong 2002  
Ann Whisman 2003

**BAY OF ISLANDS**  
Michael Lane 2004

**BIENMEH**  
Redwood Pass Vineyards 2001  
Grace and Davy Binmie 2001  
Chris and Lynne Boyce 2002  
Don Cromarty 2001  
Ian Lyall 1996  
Edwin O'Donnell 2006  
Jim Shield 2002

**CAMBRIDGE**  
David and Liz Jones-Parry 2005  
Graeme and Alison Parle 2006  
Elizabeth Scott 2006  
Rachel Skan 1996  
Jenni Steadman 2002  
Rob and Marie Steadman 2005  
Elisabeth Denham 2006

**CHRISTCHURCH**  
Rob Illingworth 2003  
S.A. Ingrey 2003  
Lyn McKinnon 2005

**CLIVE**  
Kathleen Allan 2005

**COROMANDEL**  
John Veysy 1996

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Rob Lawrence 2005

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David Laine 2004  
Lisa McArthur 2002

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D.F. and A.E. Hastings 2006  
Peter and Dorothy Hurren 2001

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Doug Bell 1996  
Derek and Gwen Kirkham 2002  
Kate McDonald 1996

**GORE**  
Bonnie Smith 2004

**HAMILTON**  
Clive & Frances Bleaken 2005  
Hugh and Zoe Clifford 2001  
Kona Larsen 2005

Ian Logan 2005  
Aunty Ross 2006  
Waikato Branch Royal Forest & Bird Protection Soc. Inc 2002  
Reg and Gael Salter 2005  
D.C. Sijbrandt & Ralph Ostergaard 2006  
Waikato Ornithological Society of New Zealand 2003  
Angela Wickham 2004  
Keith Wilkinson 2005

**KAIOHIO**  
Peter, Suzie & Bill Lindauer 2005

**KATIKATI**  
Robin Skeiton 1997  
Wendy Stewart 1997

**KAUKAPAKAPA**  
Suzi Phillips 2001

**KAWERAU**  
Kawerau Stroke Club 1999  
John and Margaret Brierley 1997

**KERIKERI**  
Dot and Rob Denner 2005

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Christine Moyle 2005  
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Janet & Loyal Combes 2005

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Sheila Combs 1996  
Heseline Trust 1996

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Pam Gore 2002  
Brian Jones 2004  
Caron Stewart 2003

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C and M Thomas 2005

**MT MAUNGANUI**  
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**NAPIER**

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**NELSON**Yoka De Houwer 2005  
Don Grant 2005  
Howard & Shelly Kalmier 2001  
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Harold and Jenny Barlow 2005**OPOTIKI**

Greg Gedson 2005

**OREWA**

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Rotorua Youth Hostels Association of New Zealand 2005  
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Pan Oliver 2002**WAIHI**Tod Kirk 2005  
Margaret Morgan 2005**WAIKANA**Shane Caley 1996  
Gideon Anderson Viv Lord 2006**WAINUIOMATA**

Susan McIvor 2005

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Ross Jury 2004**WAIKUKU**

The Hall Family 2005

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Graeme, Sue, Rebecca Walker 2004  
Judy Vernon 2006**WARKWORTH**Mr and Mrs R.A. Anderson 2003  
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Dre Bolland & Steph Mardell 2006  
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Graeme Brown & Debbie Clare 2003  
Brad Henderson 2003  
Matthew Henderson 2001  
Michael Kilpatrick 2003  
Miller Macleod Gore 2006  
Severn Macleod Gore 2006  
Mike Malanchuk 2005  
David Kayn, & Cambel Morris 2005  
Lloyd Morrison 2006  
Shirley Nairn 2003  
Nick Peetz 2004  
G Schipper 2004  
Kevin Waugh 2006**WHAKATANE**Adrian & Sarah Barlow 2005  
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Phil Hope 2002  
Fin Kampthorst 2002  
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Lindsay & Sharon Weavers 2005**WHANGAPAROA**

Jason Searle 2005

**WHANGAREI**

Elisabeth Long 2004

**WHITIANGA**

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**INTERNATIONAL MEMBERS****AUSTRALIA**Mike Conesable 2005  
Neville & Dawn Jess (& Jayden) 2006  
Jacob Jones-Henderson 2003  
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Shane Riey 2004**CANADA**

Ken Hoosie

**GERMANY**

Wolfgang Keller 2004

**UK**S Binns 2005  
David Bell 2006  
Alan Horton 2005  
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Lea and Adriane Peterson 2002  
Hutter (the Bear) Bolling 2004  
Matthew Clement 2005  
Charles & Karen Goetz 2004  
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Mr & Mrs C Schenlin 2004  
Will Trimble 2004**WINGSPAN BIRDS OF PREY TRUST****WINGSPAN BIRD OF PREY CENTRE**Open daily 9am-3pm  
2 pm Flying & Training Displays

1164 Paradise Valley Rd, Rotorua

Visitors Welcome, Tours by appointment

Adults \$10.00, Children \$5.00

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\$80.00 per group (plus admission per person)**School visits**Wingspan offers a unique education resource for students at just \$2.00 admission per person with **Raptor Experience** guided tours.If you wish to contribute towards the Wingspan programme, donations are welcomed. Donations are accepted at the Wingspan Bird of Prey Centre, by post to P.O.Box 993, Rotorua, or online (secure server) by credit card to [www.wingspan.co.nz](http://www.wingspan.co.nz)

Donations of \$5.00 or more are tax deductible within New Zealand.

**Wingspan members**

Subscribe to the annual newsletter, receive your special Wingspan members pin on joining, plus year round complimentary admission to the Wingspan Bird of Prey Centre.

**\$30.00 per annum****Sponsor a New Zealand Raptor**

Name the bird, receive an annual update, colour photograph, free admission to the Wingspan Bird of Prey Centre, and special acknowledgment on avian sponsor board.

**\$350.00 per annum****Lifetime supporter**

Includes the benefits as a Wingspan member and supporter, including lifetime subscription to the annual newsletter, special Wingspan pin and complimentary admission.

**\$1000.00****Sponsorship**

Sponsorship is welcomed for specific raptor research projects, rescued birds, breeding pairs, and including aviary naming rights. Formal registration and signage within the aviary facilities with logo branding. Specific project costs on application. Limited availability.

**From \$5000.00 per annum**

Photo by Ashley Gordon, 2006