

Raptor Tails, Chapter 3: Raptor Rescue in Northern California



by Defiance Canyon Raptor Rescue

Community (This content is not subject to review by Daily Kos staff prior to publication.)

Follow

View Profile

🕒 Wednesday, February 02, 2022 at 12:27:29p PST

★ Recommend Story 24

🔄 Share



Rescuing an eaglet who's nest had fallen. Defiance Canyon Raptor Rescue rescues and rehabilitates eagles, hawks, owls, and falcons in rural counties in northern California.

Delilah, the bald eagle who was shot ([Chapter 1](#)) is making slow, but steady, progress at the veterinarian's. "Tincture of Time" is the term a vet used to me many years ago.

When the full wolf moon was bright a few weeks ago, we received a call from a veterinarian's office in Red Bluff that someone had brought them a hawk. It turned out to a rough-legged, a hawk we rarely have seen. These beautiful and strong hawks are born and bred in the Arctic, but some travel thousands of miles to winter in northern California.

Rough-leggeds, along with the ferruginous hawks, are the only hawks which have feathered legs all the way down to the ankle, as the golden eagles do.

They live where the sun never sets in the summer, flying free with polar bears, arctic foxes, caribou, snowy owls and gyrfalcons as their land and sky neighbors.

“Artica” had probably come to California in late October to escape the far north’s harsh weather, but the weather here was very harsh in December too.



A first year rough-legged hawk. Courtesy of J Cedarleaf.

He was lying on the side of a road when someone stopped. The finder thought the hawk was dead, so was surprised when the hawk stood up when approached. He took Artica to a nearby vet’s office, who contacted us.

Artica was extremely emaciated. He had probably lost at least 50% of his body weight. The standard operating idea with emaciated birds is that they may be able to come back from 30-35% body weight loss, but any more is usually too much. The body’s gastrointestinal tract shuts down and can not be restored.

Artica responded to being put on a heating pad and given hydration fluids, seeming a little more alert. He opened his beak for the fluids, grateful to have them.

He passed a relatively normal mute later, but in several hours more, passed a very black, loose mute. Pathologists describe this as hemorrhagic gastrointestinal contents or digested blood. Essentially the body is eating itself. He was still standing at 10 p.m. but died sometime in the dark hours later.



The feathering on a rough-legged hawk’s legs.

If we could see through Artica's eyes, we would see a whole different world of wondrous land, animals, birds and other life. His 2 pound body of feathers and hollow bones carried him thousands of miles. He did not get to live a long life, but he had a life rich in experience.

People often focus on individual species, but we believe every species is important, whether it is on a man-made list or not. Habitat fragmentation and loss have significant impacts on wildlife. We work to rescue, rehabilitate, and return raptors to their wild lives, along with our work to protect watersheds and forests of California.

Our website is here: www.thebattlecreekalliance.org

YouTube videos: www.youtube.com/...