

# Raptor Tails, Chapter 1



by Defiance Canyon Raptor Rescue

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🕒 Tuesday, January 18, 2022 at 10:26:41a PST

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Defiance Canyon Raptor Rescue rescues and rehabilitates eagle, hawks, owls, and falcons in rural counties in northern California.

Welcome to our first post about Raptor Rescue and Rehabilitation. We are all about protecting, and helping, the natural world in any way we can.

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. A map of the counties we receive birds from is here on our site: [Wildlife Rescue](#)

Last week, we received calls about 2 injured bald eagles on the same day, which is unusual (thankfully). One was an adult near the town of Gerber,

south of Red Bluff. She was unable to fly, but could run when CDFW (California Department of Fish & Wildlife) biologists went to search for her. They were able to find her (not always the case) and capture to transfer to us. There are many calls we receive which involve directions such as near that tree, past the rock, which is only helpful if there is only one tree, or rock. This eagle stayed in the same place for some hours, which meant she was very injured, but could be found.

Bald eagles take 5 years to develop their white heads and tails, so this eagle is a full adult. She does have some faint dark feathering near her eyes and dark splotches on her tail though, which suggests she is in her first full adult year.



Bald eagle "Delilah"

We give our patients names to keep track of them because names are

easier to remember than numbers like 22-0153, but they are not pets. The nearest street near this eagle was named Samson, so her name is Delilah.

Delilah had some bleeding which we could not determine the source of, as well as a slight inability to lift her right wing normally. We got her about an hour before dark and she was very anxious and stressed, so we left her alone overnight.

By the next morning she was more relaxed, but we still could not find where the blood was from. However, when a fish was put in front of her, her foot shot out to grab it and pull it back under her body. She ate it after the person was gone. It's always a good sign when an injured bird will eat.

We had gotten an eagle some time ago who had unexplained bleeding, and found he had been shot. We contacted a raptor specialist veterinarian near Sacramento because Delilah needed further diagnostic tests than we could do. It was more stress for her to be driven 3 more hours, but she arrived at the hospital to have a full workup. The veterinarian found that Delilah had gun pellets in her, a hairline fracture in her right wing's radius, and a trauma injury to her liver, consistent with falling to the ground after being shot. She is currently being treated for these injuries. The vet thinks the eagle can recover, but that is not a surety. Traumatic injuries to organs can sometimes not cause known problems for several weeks. It's our fervent hope Delilah will be able to recover and return to living wild and free, and not be assaulted by an idiot with a gun again.

It is both a state and federal crime to shoot any wild bird, but shootings usually occur without witnesses.



The typical stern raptor stare. Some of the sternness is due to the folds of skin over their eyes that create visors to protect their eyes in the sun.

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