

Rehabbers Journal

Vol. 1 Wind Farm Impact

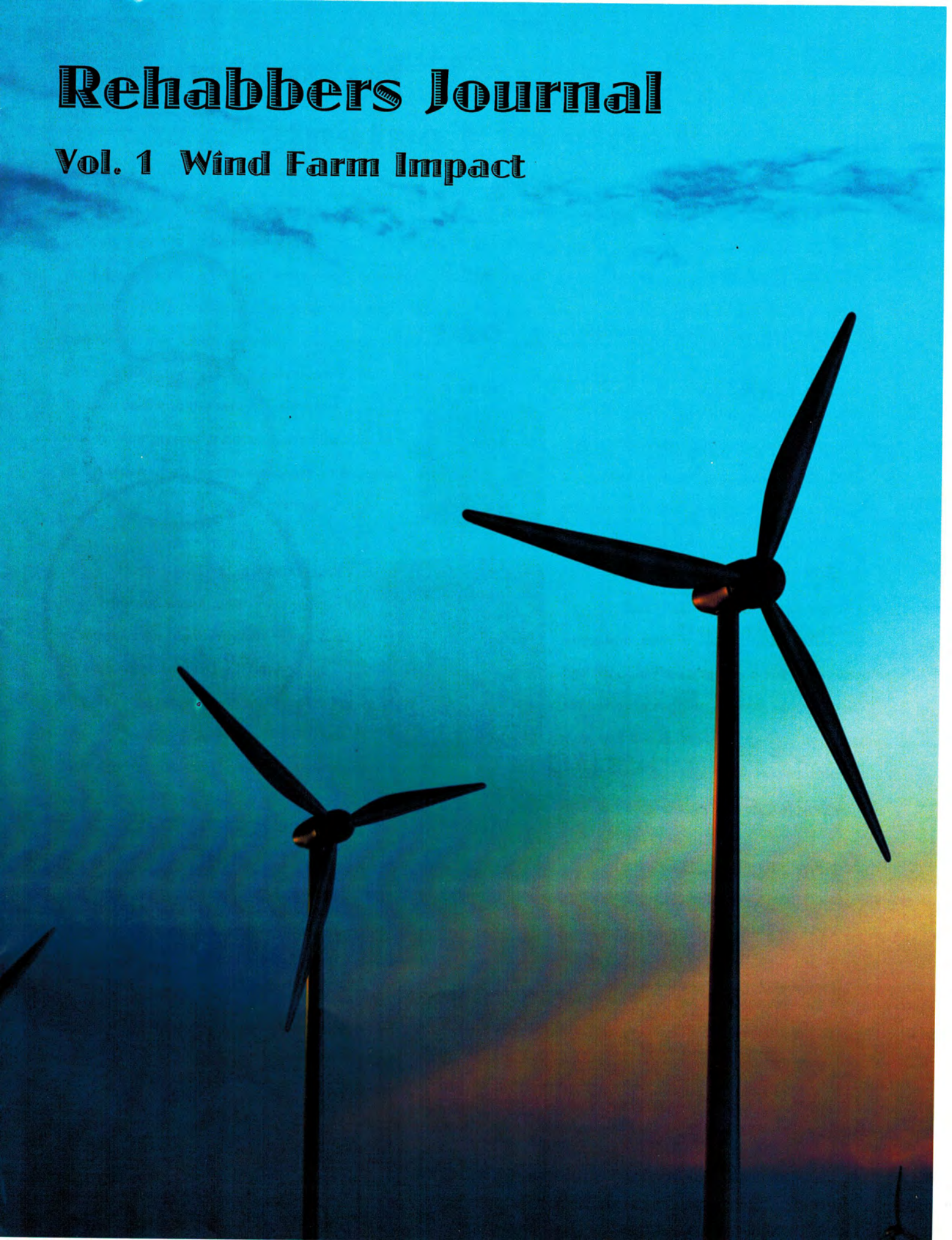
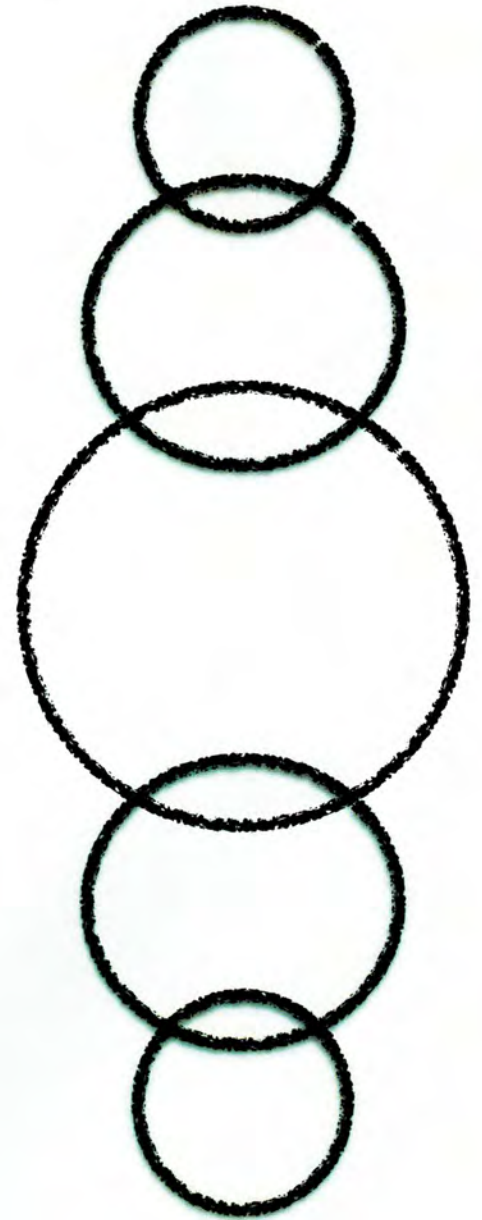


Table of Contents

A Promise of Tomorrow	<u>Page 2-7</u>
Exotic Pet Food	<u>Page 8</u>
Dear Martha/Dear Pantha June	<u>Page 8</u>
FEATHER	<u>Page 9</u>
The Joy of Life	<u>Page 9-10</u>
The Sky King	<u>Page 11</u>
Soar	<u>Page 12-14</u>
The Hunt-WIND	<u>Page 14</u>
I Am	<u>Page 14</u>
Angles Call	<u>Page 14</u>
Green Bird Feeder	<u>Page 15</u>
Dear Suzie Gilbert	<u>Page 16</u>
Wind Riding	<u>Page 16-21</u>
Dear Editor/Dear Mr. Jay	<u>Page 21-22</u>
Binocular Stabiliser	<u>Page 22</u>
Addressing Green Energy	<u>Page 22</u>



Promise of Tomorrow

I flipped a small stone in my palm, the rhythmic slap like a chant, as I stared out over the ocean. My father had always liked promises, he said they were bigger than us, they were the legacies we left behind. And he was right, he died, and all he left behind were broken promises. I didn't need to look down to see it. It was a beautiful stone, topaz, a greenish-blue color, with wavy veins of gold running through it. It was a broken promise.

The sun sank into the sea, its entourage of wispy clouds were draped in silk and adorned in gold as if it was a great procession to see an emperor off on a journey, and not, the coming of night



I stood, yawning, it was late, but I wasn't worried about getting home, no-one would miss me. Since my father had died, my sister cared about nothing, and my mother... she was dealing with grief in her own way. I missed my father as well, but if I was honest, I was still too angry to grieve, he was supposed to be the one who always kept his promises, who I could trust. But now he was gone, and it was all his fault, because he made a promise he couldn't keep. He promised he'd be there for me.



It was late in the evening when I walked home, bare feet padding against the sand as the muggy air swirled around me like dust.



I hesitated at the entrance to town, my eyes snagging on the florescent sign advertising pets. It was my sisters birthday, but she didn't care. Maybe I could get her a lizard — it might cheer her up. I aimlessly wandered into the store, unsure, and yet unable to stop my feet from crossing the threshold. The place was overflowing with old crates, and tiny black labels were stuck to every



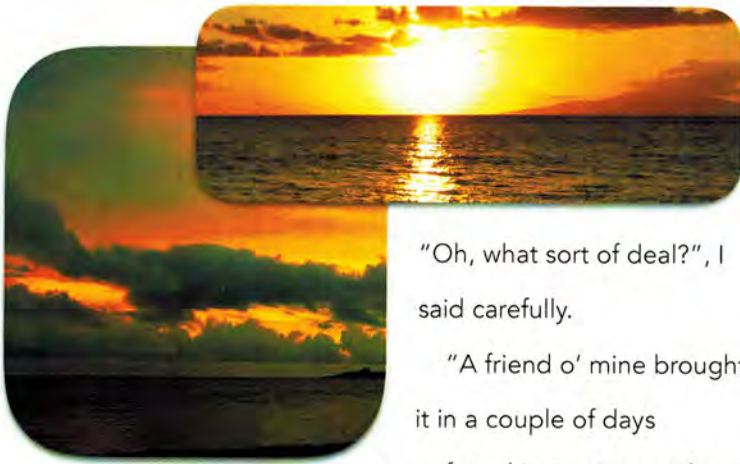
surface like smushed ants. Eyes seemed to watch from every corner, there were creatures everywhere. Dogs, cats, bats, lizards, and possums. Honestly, I wouldn't be surprised to see a Komodo dragon lounging around.

"Can I help ya, miss" came a gruff salty voice from behind me, I jumped in surprise - I had thought the store was empty. An old man sat behind a sagging counter, he had blue eyes, like the sea on a stormy day, and graying hair that went well past his shoulders. He was perched on an old stool, that was dangerously close to collapse.

"Me name's Martin," he said gruffly, "I own da shop".

"No, thank you", I said politely, eyeing the ferret lounging across his shoulders "I'm just looking"

"I've got a special deal for yea, if yea be interested?"



"Oh, what sort of deal?", I said carefully.

"A friend o' mine brought it in a couple of days ago, found it starving on da side of the road". He said, pulling out an old crate covered in cloth.

I carefully peeled of the sagging bag of the cage (that was being used to keep whatever it was in the dark), and gasped. Perched inside the cage was a Hooded Vulture, the bird was in rough shape, feathers bent oddly, and its body thin. It had a striking white face mask, and the rest of his body was a dusty brown, and its neck was a pinkish-white. But I hardly saw, as I gazed in its eyes, struck by the piercing intelligence in its gaze. It didn't deserve to be in a cage. I tore my eyes away.

"How much?"

I pushed the front door open with my shoulder, dripping wet (having been caught in a sudden rain), and arms heavy from the combined weight of the cage and vulture. I couldn't leave it, not like that. I gently settled the cage on the parlor counter, and peeled back my rain soaked jacket from where I had wrapped it. I peered in, hoping I hadn't jostled the vulture too much. The rumpled bird met my gaze, ruffling it's feathers and eyeing me, vengefully. The store owner said that it hadn't eaten since his friend had found it two days



ago, I wasn't surprised. He'd been trying to feed it parrot kibble. I ran out to the garage, rummaging around until I found the rat traps (the kind that snapped the rats neck). I unsprung the rat traps and peeled them off not bothered by the smell, then chopped the rats in to smaller bite sized pieces. Then I scooped them into a small tupperware and walked into the parlor, uncaring of the foot sized-puddles that trailed in my wake. I slid the food into the cage and peered past the bars, startled to find the vulture watching me back, its black eyes trained on me with surprising intensity. I stood and walked out of the room, then smiled, and raced up the stairs, a desperate hope tugging at my heart as I skidded to a stop outside my sisters door. She was a computer genius(like my father), and we both shared a love of nature. She was a year younger than me, but since Father had died, she seemed more computer than girl, and didn't seem to care about anything. I knew she loved birds; maybe she would smile. I knocked and pushed open the door without waiting for an answer, because I knew she wouldn't.

"Happy birthday Livvy!" I caroled, trying to make my tone bright, but it ended up desperate.

"I'm not celebrating," she said tonelessly, never looking up. Dark circles sagged under her eyes, and her skin was pale from lack of sun. Her autumn red hair was a knotted and tangled mess, and her clothes were crumpled. So different from the girl she was two months ago, who worshiped right angles.



"I made ginger snaps". I said, attempting cheerful, but falling flat. Livvy said nothing. She wouldn't come. I sighed and headed out, pausing at the door.

"I miss you," I said in a small voice, then fled, making it to the parlor before I collapsed, my mind replaying the scene in slow motion. It wasn't supposed to be like that, she was supposed to come back to me. I sighed, exhausted. The vulture had eaten; and somehow, as I met its river-stone black gaze, I felt hope.

I sagged against the back of the chair, and rubbed my eyes, blinking sleepily. It had been two days since I'd brought Miren home (what I'd decided to call him). As there were not enough rats in my basement, I'd started asking the neighbors if I could trap rats in their basement's I'm pretty sure they thought I was crazy but they let me. I had been researching constantly. I'd found an avian rehabbing center and tried to call, but the contact information was old and I had been unable to find another way to get in contact with the rehabber. I was getting desperate, Miren was eating well, but the small guest room I'd converted into a bird room for Miren to live in was rapidly getting too small as he (I had guessed its gender) grew in strength. I also worried about what had brought him to the ground, and made him weak enough to catch. I slipped into the room with Miren and knelt, Miren had retreated to the far side of the room. But, as I put the food on the ground, he carefully crept forward, and snatched the rat of the ground. I crept backwards eyes glued to a spot of air just above his head (one of the many tricks I'd learned to keep Miren calm).

Just then, I heard the mail truck pull into the driveway and grinned. I'd ordered some "vulture toys," a.k.a. dog ropes and Kong toys (I'd read about vultures in captivity playing with similar things, and thought I'd give it a try). I ran to the mailbox, the gravel the mailbox, the gravel crunched under my feet, still wet from the morning dew.

My sister and I had painted our mailbox like a watermelon last summer, but the wavy green stripes had already faded in the blistering Florida sun. We owned a huge plot of land on the shore, that had been in my family for generations, my grandmother had been a gardener and transformed the land from scrubby brush to a lush jungle. I know some people have a green thumb; my grandmother had a green heart. My father had owned a huge internet company, since he had died, his co-manager had been running the day-to-day work in our name.

I reached in the mailbox and pulled out a brown cardboard box, I walked inside flipping it over in my hands, the corners were dented and the address was printed in sharp black letters. Inside, I opened it and pulled the toys out, setting them on the counter (I would give them to Miren when I gave him food later). I grabbed a yogurt out of the fridge and climbed the stairs, thoughts buzzing around my brain like fireflies in a jar, each vying for my attention. I froze suddenly, and as if the



jar was opened, my thoughts scattered in a thousand different directions, as I stared at the open door in shock. The vulture was gone.

I'm sure I only stood there a moment, but it seemed as if I was there forever. My reverie was abruptly broken as a yelp echoed down the hall, it was coming from my sisters room. I froze in indecision for a moment, then scooped up an old towel from Miren's room as I walk/ran down the hallway; I skidded to a stop by Livvy's door and slowly crept into the room. The scene was almost comical, Livvy and Miren were staring at each-other with the same, exact, look on their faces: stunned disbelief.

"Lara, what's going on?" she said, her voice coming out strangled.

I smiled sheepishly, -relieved there were no open windows. "This is Miren, help me herd him into a corner, I'll grab him".

Livvy's eyes widened with alarm, but she was too shocked to come up with an alternate plan. Slowly we herded him into a corner, the ceiling fans soft wafting was the only sound, apart from the click of Miren's talons on the wood floor. I risked a glance at Livvy, as I met her sea-green eyes, a bolt of understanding shot through them; it was time. I tossed the towel over Miren, and closed my hands around him like a trap. My hands fitted around his wings, pinning them to his side, as I pulled him to my chest to keep him from escaping. The towel wriggled as I stood and walked to the door.

"Livvy, can you get the door?", I asked, startling her from her shock. She nodded and pushed it open.

"Where are we going to put... "

"Miren's living in the spare guest room," I answered, as we walked down the hall. Livvy opened the door and paused. The room before us had no similarities to what it once was, all the furniture had been moved to the garage, and the floor was covered in old towels.

I shut the door and breathed a sigh of relief, Miren was safe, and didn't seem overly traumatized by her escape and capture (although I was sure to be having nightmares for the next week).

"Lara, how long have you had Miren?", Live asked tentatively, looking more alive than she'd been in weeks.

"Since your birthday.", I said, scratching my neck guiltily.

"Oh... does mom know?" I blinked, surprised, after Livvy had shot me down I hadn't even considered telling our mom.

"No"



"You're going to have to tell her, you know?"

Livvy asked. I nodded slightly, as I considered how best to break the news to my mother that I'd adopted a hooded vulture.

"Is everything all right girls?" I jumped, and spun around as my mother descended the stairs. She has short brown/blond hair and green eyes like Livvy's, only darker; she was an engineer for the US Navy when she was younger, and often it showed. No-one that I knew of had ever been able to win an argument with her. I hesitated for a moment, then sighed, she needed to know.

I bonelessly flopped back in my chair, we'd moved to the living room to talk, and the story had spilled from my lips like water from a dam; now there was complete silence, and I was starting to wonder if time had stopped. When my mother spoke, her tone was clipped and professional.

"Livvy, go upstairs and take a shower, and then help your sister find the rehabbers number; Lara you need to write up a record of the food and treatments you've given the vulture; so the rehabber can give it the best care"

"Yes, ma'm" Livvy and I said, and

saluted in harmony.

"Meanwhile"... my mom said, looking slightly troubled, "I'm going to make lunch."

We both stared at her, than burst out laughing (as she was quite possibly the worst cook in the world).

"I found it!" Livvy said, grinning as she typed a phone number in the phone and handed in to our mom. After we had had lunch (charred grilled cheese), we'd all moved up to my room, I had finished my treatment sheet, and Livvy had been looking for a phone number. Mom put the phone on speaker, and we waited.

"Hello, this is lylan Walker at the Florida rehab center, can I help you?"

"Yes, this is Kacy White, and we have an injured hooded vulture here. We need you to pick it up," (we had decided it would be best if the rehabber transported it, so we had less risk of hurting it).

"Can you send me a photo please?" lylan said, a touch skeptic. Livvy spun around in her chair, and her fingers flew across the keyboard like homing



missiles-we had taken a photo beforehand. The computer beeped, and there was silence on the line for a few moments.

"How long have you had this bird? It is a critically endangered species; you should have contacted a rehabber immediately" the voice said sharply.

"We tried to contact you earlier, but the information on your web-site is old, and we were unable to reach you," my mom said icily. "We live in Werla at 63 Palm Grove, we will be expecting you to come pick up the bird at noon. Thank you for your time." Then she hung up, to the flustered sounding rehabbers protests. But when noon came, lylan showed up, just like my mother knew she would.

lylan took Miren to her rehab facility with us in tow, she'd tried to argue, but, as I said before, my mom never lost an argument. Miren had an infestation of worms, but lylan was able to treat him.

It had been two weeks since lylan had taken him to her rehab center, and Livvy and I were there almost every day, while our mother went to business meetings. When we had decided to volunteer, our mom had decided it was better than sitting around the house all day. Then lylan confirmed Miren was ready to be released back into the wild.



I stared out at the grass field without really seeing it, my mind lost in thought. We were releasing Miren, it seemed all to soon, and yet it felt like my time with Miren had lasted forever. My feelings were no neater, I was thankful Miren was going home, and for everything he had done for us; but also scared and worried about what would become of him. lylan lifted the crate out of her truck, and gently set it on the ground. She was tall with wispy red hair and brown eyes, and seemed to be constantly frowning-as though the world, in-general, had

disappointed her (honestly, I don't think it is the world she disapproves of, just people). She glanced up at me, and I nodded slightly. She opened the door, Miren was cautious at first, his gray-marble eyes watching everything ; then, as if he knew the were no more walls to

stop him, he lifted his wings and flew. There were no lights or cameras, no evidence we'd ever been their at all, no way to distinguish Miren from the thousands of vultures I'd see in my lifetime; but It didn't matter, because Miren was never mine, he had always belonged to the wild.

I knew now what my father meant when he said your promises are your legacies, because a legacy is not something that one person can make. It is a story passed down through generations, he had left behind promises he could never keep, so I would keep them for him.

Dear Martha,

I read your magazine last week and wondered if you could answer some questions I had about falconry. How do you start your education? What are the permits required? And how do you become a falconer?

Sincerely,

Panantha June



Dear Panantha June,

The first step to becoming a falconer is to research it on your own. Decide if it's something you realistically pursue. If so, contact your government agency in-charge of permitting, most states have different rules and learn what regulations you will have to meet. They will send you a list of reading material and you will be required to take a test to determine your knowledge and score 80% or higher. The next step is to find a sponsor (a licensed falconer); if they take you on, you will be apprenticed for two years before you are considered a falconer. Falconry is not for everyone, but if you are willing to take on this commitment, the reward of flying with the falcons will be well worth your time.

Sincerely,

Martha Maybell

Out of food for your exotic pet? Pet stores unable to supply your need? Animal hungry?

Not if we can help it, Exotic Supply supplies every kind of exotic food available, and we provide a free delivery schedule if wanted.



Our shipments are the best quality and low prices, designed for your convenience.

Don't wait! Set up a delivery schedule today at ExoticSupply.com



Ballad - The Sky King

The sky king watched from lofty heights
The people small, the river bright
He was king of all above
He was king of dark and light.

Then he saw a flash of brown
His eyes were lit with scorn
For their bellow, another flew
He swooped, his talons ready, quick, and worn

He held it fast, his thoughts alight
His roost beckoned, and he turned his flight
The mighty king, so fierce, and proud
Never looked above the ground, for all his might

He never thought, of things above
Thinking himself above all other
And so he lived up in his hight
Never thinking of another

The wind struck hard
A mighty blow
To knock the sky king from his throne
And down he went, he fell quite low

The wind was fierce
And he was powerless before it
His might collapsed, his power flown
And then the fearsome wind did quit

Just as given, life may go
Even kings are powerless to know
When death will come and calm his throne
so while his wealth and power show

His mind was not quite so bright
And he knew without a doubt
That he would die and
Time would drown his dyeing shout





Soar

I stared, into the shadowy amber depths of Red-tailed hawks eyes, entrapped by the keen intellect and altogether otherworldliness that seemed to shawl the magnificent creature. I dropped my gaze, not wanting to scare her, and gently placed a handful of minced rat on her feeding perch and edged out of the mew (bird enclosure). She was a Juvenal Red-tailed hawk, and had been hit by a wind generation about a month ago. It was only a glancing blow, but when she crashed, her beak had been torn open and was still largely dysfunctional-although getting better.

"Zan" Kristy called from the adjoining mew, (she is a longtime volunteer at the Trade Wind Rehab Center, and one of our eagle trainers). "is the Peregrin's pen scheduled to be cleaned today or Wednesday?" she asked.

"Wednesday," I answered, mentally going over the chore list as I shut the door and latched it.

"You'd better get going, you don't want to miss the school bus, again" Kristy said coming up to stand by me, and we watched Minka (the Red-tailed hawk) gingerly pick at her food. I shrugged.

"I have time, its still early"

"It's six forty, you have twenty minutes" she said flatly.

"See I have plenty of time," I said brightly. She frowned, unimpressed, but let it drop, knowing me well enough to know she would get nowhere. Although I was technically second in charge to my mother, Kristy managed the day-to-day volunteer traffic, as I had school, and my mother often attended meetings between rehabbers and other like minded people. (she was one of the most well known faces of Birds Eye, a group of people working to stop/improve wind technology).

"What do you think about Evan Keepers (the owner of West Wind, one of the largest wind farm companies) refusal to meet with Birds Eye?" I asked, referring to the morning's news.

"It's troubling" she said, eyes worried.

I shivered as a wall of cold air knocked my breath away, and stepped into the abandoned playground. A layer of frost painted the ground, the air barely warmed by the few stray rays of sunlight that pierced through the turbulent storm.

"Hi there" a soft voice said, as I rooted around for a dry place to sit. But they were not talking me. I blinked, shocked that anyone else would be outside on such a stormy day, (normally everyone huddled inside until summer). I walked towards the sound the frost crunching under my running shoes, I rounded the bush that had obscured my view and followed the footprints pressed into the frost. As I ducked under the overhanging branches of an old willow I felt eyes on me. I looked up to meet the blue-gray eyes of the tall lanky black-haired boy sitting under the willow, a young thrush was perched on a nearby branch, a piece of sandwich clenched in its beak. The boy was silent, watching me, not wary but as though he simply felt there was nothing that needed said.





"Hi" I said, uncomfortable with the obvious scrutiny "my name's Zan, do you mind if I sit with you, the rest of the park is covered with frost?" I asked gesturing to the dry ground under the protective arms of the willow. He nodded, watching me with keen interest. I sat, and glanced at him curiously.

"Are you going to tell me your name?" I asked.

"You didn't ask" he said, eyes dancing with wry amusement.

"Then pray do tell" I grinned.

"My name's Shane" he said, his voice loose, but every word planned.

"And what's our feathered friend's name?"

"He has yet to tell"

"What brings you out here on a day as fine as this?" I asked speculatively. He shrugged, once again preferring silence to the spoken word. We talked for the remainder of lunch, the topic ranging from wind mills to Trade Winds to sports, (alho I did most of the talking); when we returned inside I caught Shane looking back to the door longing, apparently he didn't much care for the indoors. The rest of the day passed in a numbing haze as the night's unrest caught up with me (I had spent the night feeding baby grackles every two hours). I climbed into the school bus at the end of the day and glanced back at the school, catching sight of Shane standing by the gate, -he was getting picked up by his mom. He watched me for a moment, then smiled.

I yawned, eyes still half closed I minced six mice and a young pheasant, and marked it down on our food charts-Kristy lived 1/2 an hour away and my mother was at a conference, so I was in-charge of the early morning/night jobs. I didn't mind, I loved

working with the birds and gaining a glimpse into their worlds. But as much as I would like to be, I was NOT a morning person. A sharp rap at the door dragged me from my musings, and I stared at for a moment, wondering for a moment who else could be up at this unearthly hour. I opened the door, and stared at Shane in shock.

"What are you doing here?" I asked, - momentarily contemplating the prospect that he was a hallucination due to lack of sleep.

"You said that you were going to clean some of the vacant mews this morning, and I was up anyway" he said, as though it made perfect sense. I blinked at him, befuddled.

"I'm here to help" Shane said in explanation.

"How did you get here?" I asked, seeing no car or bike in the driveway.

"Walked" I shrugged, the job would go faster with two, and I could use the help.

"All right" I said, unwilling to look a gift horse in the mouth; "but you'll need to fill out a volunteer application". I finished chopping the mice and quail, and fed it to the baby grackles, as Shane filled out the application. By then I was more awake and we heeded out to clean the cages.

"You're a morning person aren't you" I asked, trying to keep the accusation out of my voice. He grinned.

"I take it you're not?" he asked, I shook my head sourly. We worked on the cages for around an hour then Shane paused.



"Would you like to come to my house for dinner on Friday?" he asked, and I considered for a moment, my mom would be back then, and would probably appreciate not having to cook right away.

"I'll ask my mom, but were probably in".

Three days later we pulled into Shane's driveway, the house was covered in plants, vines spilled out of open windows and tall pines blanketed the area. I knocked on the door, and heard a sharp gasp behind me as I stared in shock at the man who'd opened the door. Shane's father was Evan Keepers.

The Hunt - Wind

Wings slice through the wind like knives.

In the eagles eye its prey is fixed.

Never did it stand a chance of escape

Death fell.

I Am

I am

The mornings cry,

By wind I live and die,

Waiting sky, shadow hunting in

Dreams eye.

Angles Call

Eye

be drawn

by whispers call

To watch angels rise and

Fall

Green Bird Feeder

Have you ever wanted to have a bird feeder, but never found the perfect one, now with these simple steps you can build your own just the way you want it! This bird feeder is made entirely of repurposed material, do what you can to help our planet, one step at a time.

Supplies you will need, include an old plastic container of some sort (of your choice), old rope or yarn, a way to drill a hole in the side of the plastic container, a small bead and bird seed.



Step 1

Root around your trashcan and find a plastic container of some sort. Then clean and let dry. (or your bird seed could mold)

Step 2

Drill holes where they are needed to keep your container upright and not spilling the bird seed.

Step 3

Cut however many holes you have that many pieces of string, make sure they are long enough that they all reach the hook where you're going to hang it.

Step 4

Feed the yarn/rope through holes and tie a knot in the end on the yarn/rope that is inside the container. After you are done with all of the strings put them through the bead and pull it down so that the container is held how you want it.

Step 5

Fill with birdseed, hang, and admire your handiwork.

This project is a great way to reduce the trash flow, help the earth, and have birds around your house.

Dear Mrs. Gilbert

I read Fly Away this February and found it informational and a good read, I was wondering what inspired you to write down your lives experience, was it to help spread awareness? If you were to start from scratch again would you start the same or are there improvements or other steps you would want to take? Did Skye or Mac ever become involved with wildlife rehabbing? At the end of your book you seem to imply you planned to start your rehab center up again, did this ever happen? If you were to give advice to a new rehabber what would you say is the most important thing you've learned? Why?

In the book It seemed as though there were never enough rehabbers; and you were often swamped with work, if you had only done song birds like you planned, do you think it would have gotten out of control. Did you ever reopen Flyaway. Ink? What happened to the fledgling nestlings, did you take care of them or were they taken in by another rehabber. Do you think it would have worked better if you had taken on volunteers, or would that have just made it harder? Knowing what Flyaway Inc. was like to run would you do it again?

Sincerely

Jona Siverly

Wind Riding

I collapsed in the meadow gasping for breath, exhilarated from my run, and laughing as the grass tickled my cheek. I clambered to my feet, loving the feel of the wind racing across the hilltop meadow. Adjusting the strap on my back-pack, I scrambled over to a small grove of trees and plopped down in the shade. Leaning against an old aspen by our picnic spot, I dug around in my bag, unearthing a yellow pencil, and my math homework. I sighed and let my gaze rest on the field for a moment, my eyes tracing the grass, and falling on the tall metal fence surrounding the wind farm, wishing I didn't have homework. Kids were supposed to be playing on days like this; sadly, my mother did not share my view of the world. She doesn't believe in fairies either; humph, poor form for a writer, in my opinion. I dragged my eyes back to the paper. Must. Not. Be. Distracted. Tomorrow was the last day of school, but unfortunately, that didn't change the fact I had homework today.



Something flashed out of the corner of my eye, I jerked my head up watching the field of grass sway in the wind as I scanned the field; there! A flash of brown caught my eye as I messily shoved my school stuff in my bag. I carefully picked my way across the field, slinging my back-pack across my shoulder and gasped, laying on its side in the grass, was the most beautiful bird I'd ever seen; it had a pale white head with red shoulders and dappled patches of white on its upper shoulders, mahogany brown on its wingtips, its tail was red fading to brown. Tears clouded my eyes as I stared at the magnificent Red-kite, dead like all the others.

Every few months when I came up to the hilltop I would find a dead bird in the grass that had been hit by the wind mills, and killed. Gently, I knelt at its side, brushing my fingers across its feathers and stifling a sob; then its eyes flickered open!

I jumped back, and stared at it in shock, it was alive! Its right wing flew up as it tried to stagger to its feet and collapsed, passed out. Snapping out of my shock, I unwound my head-scarf, and gently wrapped its still body. Red stained the blue of the fabric; it was hurt.

Carefully, I gathered it up in my arms and stood, I needed to get it to my father. He was a doctor, but had stayed home today

to file taxes. The house was four miles away; I flew down the path, my legs pumping as I half fell, half ran, my back-pack rhythmically thumping on my back as I pounded through the woods. I slipped the dried leaves, crashing down the narrow path; and burst out of the woods onto the pavement; usually I felt resentment, angry at the wind farms owners for cutting through the woods to build a road. But today, I could only feel relief.

I set the Red kite down on the side of the road as I wrenched my bike out of the bushes. Picking up the Kite, I clambered on my bike; one arm gently holding it to my chest, as I used my other arm to steer. The wind whistled past my ears as I arrowed down the road, watching for the dark shape



of my house in the distance. My father had a small clinic at home; if I could get it there, it would survive. It had to. I clattered into my driveway, flinging myself off the bike staggering slightly as I carried the Kite into the house. I stumbled into my father's clinic, he was working at a small desk in the corner of the room, as I entered, he sighed.

"Mira how many times have I told you to slow down, honestly its four miles to the hou-" he said, cutting off abruptly as he spun his chair around.

"Is it alive?" I gasped, as he mutely took it out of my arms, unwrapping it and feeling its chest. After a long time he nodded, it was alive. I collapsed on a small bench against the wall, exhausted. I watched my father wash the kite and gently clean a large wound under its wing. Eyes fastened on its chest, begging it to live.

I watched the kite's chest rise and fall gently. It had been two days since I had brought the young red kite home, she had a large wound under her wing; my father had given her stitches and bandaged her. Today was the third day she had been sedated (so she didn't hurt her wing more by stretching it, or rip out the stitches). When my mother got home, she had helped me research what to feed it and its age and gender. I had been tube-feeding it a mixture of turkey baby food, water and Pedialyte once every seven hours.



Today my father planned to take it mostly off medication, it would be awake, but drowsy. We felt it was unhealthy to keep it drugged any longer. Carefully, my mother and I carried a large wooden perch, topped with astroturf, into my mother's greenhouse. My father needed his work space clear for another patient. We moved the perch into the middle of the small greenhouse, and screwed it down, I stepped back to make sure it would be stable enough.

"What do you think we should call her?" my mother asked as we appraised our handy work.

I considered it for a moment.

"How about, Merika?", I asked.

"Not right."

"Arrow?"

"No."

"Kaile?"

"No."

"Hmmm, what do you think of Imera?" I asked.

"I think its perfect" she answered, smiling. I hovered over my father's shoulder as he wrapped the bird in a blanket, carried it outside, and removed the blanket just as it opened its eye's, blinking. Then slowly, she took in her surroundings with the groggy air of someone who fell asleep at 1:00 in the morning.

Carefully, we settled Imera onto the perch and hooked a small padded clamp to her foot that was attached to a rope, that was tied to the perch (to keep her from flying away before she healed). My parents and I went back inside, watching as the haze in Imera's eyes slowly faded to clarity. She lunged off her perch, powerful wings lifting her up, and she was half-way across the green-house before her leash caught; and crashed to the ground in a tangled heap of feathers. I opened the screen door, quietly padding over to Imera, who had picked herself off the ground and was hopping around like a little sparrow. I squatted beside her as she watched, head cocked, as she considered me warily. Quickly, I scooped her up in my arms, ignoring her (and my parents) startled squawks, and deposited her gently on her perch. Taking a deep breath, and hoping I hadn't made her hate me for life, I pulled a dead mouse out of a plastic bag I had in my pocket, and gently set it on her perch and stepped back (hoping my peace offering would be accepted). Imera ruffled her

feathers and holding the mouse in one talon, ate, watching me the whole time. Slowly, I backed away and slipped into the house, collapsing on the wall.

"Isn't she beautiful?" I said softly, awestruck, as my parents exchanged concerned looks, probably questioning my sanity.

For the next four weeks minus a day, (because it was the last day of school), I was Imera's constant companion, spending hours every day drawing, feeding, or just sitting with her, feeling closer to the sky then ever before as our two worlds met eye to eye. She no longer startled when I entered the green-house. One day, I walked in with a thick gardening glove on my hand. As she watched me impassively, I knelt down, carefully unhooking her line and tying it to a belt loop on my pants, and holding my hand out to her, clicking my tongue. She stepped on carefully, and as was custom I gave her a small piece of meat as a reward. Double checking my knot, I tentatively opened the door and stepped outside where my parents waited.

"Are you sure this is safe?", I asked, worried.

"Yes", my father said, "her wound is mostly healed, and she needs to start

building up her strength"

"I know," I said, knowing the conversation would get us nowhere. I prodded her gently until she flapped her wings, slowly rising of my hand. I carefully fed her rope as I watched her soar through the sky, wild and fierce in her beauty, as she swept across the clouds. But slowly, the weight of the rope, and her weakened wing brought her freedom to an end, and she landed, panting, on a nearby tree limb, as if she understood she was still bound to the earth. Gathering up the rope, I walked over to her. When I was within a foot of her and clicked my tongue, after regarding me for several long moments, she swept from her perch, landing neatly on my hand, and graciously accepted my offer of mouse meat.

"What if she's not ready yet?", I asked, staring at the limp bird in my lap. For a week, I

had taken Imera out daily to help her strengthen her wing, and every time she was even more reluctant to come back; until she refused to come back at all, and I'd had to reel her in with the rope.

"Imera is a wild bird," my mother said firmly.

"We've done every thing we can for her, and now its time to let her go"

"But-"

"No buts," she said "We've been over this."

Sighing, I turned to look out the car window, upset Imera had to be sedated for the drive. We were taking her three miles out of town to let her go, I knew it was the right thing to do, but that didn't keep me from worrying about her.

Just as we arrived, Imera, woke and was still getting her bearings, when we pulled over. We were letting her go in the parking lot of a hiking trail, and I carefully climbed out of the car, balancing Imera on my hand. She blinked sleepy, but quickly the combination of fresh air and the wind in her feathers, perked her up. She ruffled her feathers, and stretched her wings as we walked out to the edge of the woods. I reached over, gently unclasping the clip on



her leg, I slowly held her up. The day was sunny with a few patches of clouds, and although I hated the circumstances in which we had met, I would always treasure our time together. She spread her wings as she launched off my hand, soaring into the sky, free, as she was always meant to be

To: Stephen Wheeler

From: Maria O'Sullivan

Dear Stephen Wheeler

I am living next to the Kings Mountain Wind Farm in Sligo, Ireland; and I want you to know how it affects the avian life in this area...

Dear Editor

I have previously read your magazine and was particularly interested in your short story featuring the Red-kite; and had a few questions regarding the outcome of the story. The person the letter was written to was Stephen Wheeler CEO of a large wind company, was her goal accomplished and something done? Did she ever see Imera again? You mention they let her go at the head of a hiking trail, had they been there previously, or was that the first time they'd been there. After this did she ever find another bird still alive?

After this experience did Mira ever become a raptor rehabber or get involved with other wildlife cases? If I wanted to get involved with wildlife rehabbing what would you advise? I live in a small farm in Kansas, and there are many large wind farms in my area, could some of the birds be saved if they were found in time? I enjoyed reading this magazine and hope a solution can be found to help protect the birds.

Sincerely

Walter Jay





Addressing Green Energy



Dear Mr Jay,

I appreciate your interest in this story, and would be happy to answer your questions. Mira's letter did accomplish something as to helped raise awareness to this problem, and prompted the wind farm supervisors to do a survey of the land to see if they could gather a rough estimate of the number of birds that are affected. I don't believe Mira never saw Imera again. The hiking trail was one Mira's family had been to before, and they knew the area well; it was in a place that Imera could easily return to her territory (if she had one) or stay in the national park they had released her at. Mira never found another injured bird that I know of.

Mira became a regular volunteer at an amphibian rehabilitation center nearby; and later became a falconer and eventually joined an educational program, and befriended an unreleasable golden eagle with a wing injury. She partnered with the eagle in many educational programs until it died six years later from old age. If you wanted to get involved with rehabbing, I would volunteer at your local rehab center (if there is one). Many of the birds are killed before they hit the ground or are to injured to be helped. But there are some that if given proper treatment and care they can be saved.

Sincerely

Alican Gray



Many people have been moving towards green energy, working to lessen their carbon footprint. But have you considered the impact this new "green" energy will have on earth. Around 328,000 birds are killed every year in wind mill collisions, and often green energy sources damage habitats and food sources for animals. While green energy is a good way to protect our planet, it is still new technology and can have unpredictable results. So while it is a worthy cause to help preserve our home, the green energy we have today is still a rough draft. If you really want to help you have to consider all the ways your methods will impact our planet.



