A RECORD-SETTING WINTER
It appears that the winter of 2013-2014 is determined to send plenty of snow our way and wreak havoc with the clinic schedules. On January 21, a quick-moving storm brought rising snowdrifts and fierce winds, prompting us to close the clinic early. Oil Programs manager and farmhouse resident Sarah Tegtmeier, along with houseguest and former intern Audrey Russin, provided care to the birds that evening. On Wednesday morning, Sarah and Audrey were again on duty, supplemented by clinic supervisor Brie Brigham and volunteer Rachel Jester. Each time we face storms and other emergencies, we realize how fortunate we are to have experienced staff residing onsite to tend to the needs of our patients. By Thursday morning, we were back to business as usual. Kudos go to Greg Keegan, our maintenance supervisor, for his heroic efforts plowing, shoveling, and snow blowing the parking lots and paths to keep us safe.

Because our birds still need care, no matter the weather conditions, we are looking for a few good volunteers willing to come in on short notice during inclement weather. If you have a four-wheel-drive vehicle, or if you are someone who scoffs at ice and snow, would you be willing to be one of our “foul weather volunteers”? If the answer is yes, contact Julie Bartley at (302) 737-9543, extension 102.

Reminder to All Volunteers: So we have your contact information readily at hand, please be sure to provide complete contact information on your 2014 volunteer sheets, including your volunteer number, phone number(s), mailing address, and e-mail address. Thank you.

SUZI FELDHUHN: FRIEND TO TRI-STATE AND THE BIRDS
With heavy hearts, we learned of the death on January 15 of Suzi Feldhuhn, a Tri-State volunteer for more than a decade. Her compassion and love for the birds—particularly eagles and osprey—prompted her to do whatever was necessary to come to their aid, including climbing up to nest platforms and venturing into the water. Not only did she log many miles retrieving, transporting, and releasing birds, Suzi also served as a steadfast Monday morning clinic volunteer. Born in New York City, Suzi lived in St. Michaels, Maryland, with her husband, Bob, who often accompanied her on bird releases and took photos to document the occasion. We extend our deepest condolences to her family. We will all miss Suzi’s generous spirit and exuberant love of life.

RECENT RELEASES
In January, we released two bald eagles that came to us late in 2013. Unlike many eagles that we return to the site of capture, the fractious nature of these two birds necessitated a local release. Bald eagle 13-2519 came to us on December 30 from Easton, Maryland. The adult female had suffered minor wounds near her beak, and her right wing was grossly swollen, bruised, and edematous from the mid-humerus to the wing tip. The nature of her injuries made us suspect electrocution, and we administered both topical and systemic medications to reduce pain, decrease inflammation, and enhance circulation. As with frostbite, electrical burns cause extensive tissue damage, and the scope of the damage can be difficult to assess. Through intensive
nursing care and daily bandage changes, we carefully monitored the eagle’s condition. She was ready for outside housing on January 9 and exercise in the flight cage by January 12. Staff, volunteers, and a group of students working at Tri-State on January 20 for the Martin Luther King day of service watched this lovely bird take flight and enjoy her first moments of freedom.

Bald eagle 13-2411 was admitted on November 10, suffering a traumatic injury to his right wing. Despite the midshaft ulnar fracture and a large hematoma, the adult male was in otherwise good body condition. We surgically repaired the wing, but an additional surgery to stabilize the fracture site and facilitate healing was required. By New Year’s Eve, he was at last ready to begin his flight conditioning in the large flight cage. We released this eagle on the grounds of Tri-State on January 20.

The second patient of 2014 was a red-tailed hawk that arrived late on New Year’s Day. Found by a homeowner in her Newark backyard, the hawk had likely collided with a window. The immature male was still stunned when we examined him, with blood in his mouth and minor damage to his beak. By the next day, however, with pain medications to ease the way and a night of quiet rest in the clinic, he was alert and perching. To minimize handling of this easily stressed bird, we added medication to his food and prescribed cage rest for a few days until his mentation was normal and he was readily self-feeding. By January 6, he was ready to go outside to test his flight ability and coordination. Once we observed his strong flight and symmetrical wing carriage, we banded and released the red tail onsite at Tri-State on January 9.

A chimney in winter is no place for a bird. So when the call came in on January 2 about a barred owl trapped in a Newark chimney, volunteer Roger Suro leapt into action to free it and bring it to the clinic. The immature owl was underweight and had incurred bent feathers and worn talons during its confinement in the cramped space. Abrasions on its metacarpals were filled with soot, so we cleaned them with dilute betadine and covered them with a light bandage. These wounds were later debrided and sutured under anesthesia. With pain medications and a course of antibiotics bringing the owl some relief, it began self-feeding within two days of its admission and steadily gained weight. Once the injuries healed, we moved the owl to an outside cage to give it time to practice its flight skills and build up stamina. When the barred owl was flying well, we banded it and released it on Tri-State grounds on January 12.

A spunky horned grebe arrived at our clinic on January 15, a transfer from our colleagues at Second Chance Wildlife Center. Found in a yard in Frederick, Maryland, the immature male was in beautiful condition. We theorize that he crash landed after he “mislanded”—perhaps mistaking a wet road or slick surface for a pond—and was unable to become airborne. After a few days enjoying serious pool time and many mealworms, he was banded and released to a large body of water on January 17.

OTHER RELEASES IN JANUARY
In January, we also released a Cooper’s hawk, a sharp-shinned hawk, an eastern screech owl, a ruddy duck, a great blue heron, a Canada goose, a downy woodpecker, an American robin, a northern cardinal, and a mourning dove. We also released the last birds from the Christmas spill: 11 Canada geese and one mallard. We released 36 of the 37 birds that came to us due to that spill.

WANTED: GOOD HOMES FOR RESCUE BIRDS
Although Tri-State treats only wild birds, many of our volunteers open their homes and hearts to companion birds. If you are interested in adopting a tropical bird, contact longtime Tri-State volunteers Vera Lee Rao (veraleerao@gmail.com) or Diane Korolog (dianekkorolog@gmail.com) for more information.
PLANS UNDERWAY FOR OPEN HOUSE
It’s not too early to make plans to attend Tri-State’s annual Open House. Sunday, May 4, 2013, will be here before you know it. Volunteers are needed to help set up, work during the new, extended hours this year, and clean up afterward. If you would like to help plan this fun-filled, community event, call Duke Doblick at (302) 737-9543, extension 108, or contact him by e-mail at ddoblick@tristatebird.org.

FEATURED BIRD: WHITE-THROATED SPARROW
A sure sign of winter, the white-throated sparrow can be seen in backyards, gardens, woodlands, and clearings throughout our region. With its bold black-and-white-striped head, broad yellow eyebrow, and sharply defined white throat, this sparrow is easy to pick out from among the many other species of sparrows.

Many people also learn to recognize the white-throated sparrow through its song, a thin, high-pitched whistle consisting of two single notes followed by three triple notes. Some use the mnemonic phrase oh, Sam Peabody, Peabody, Peabody, while our neighbors to the north equate the song to the phrase oh, sweet Canada, Canada, Canada.

A large sparrow at 6.25 to 7.5 inches long, the white-throated sparrow has brown upperparts, gray underparts with subtle streaking, white wing bars, a dark bill, and a long, narrow tail. Some members of the species have more of a brown or buff pattern on their heads.

Most often seen hopping on the ground, white-throated sparrows scratch through ground cover and forage in shrubs and trees for food. During the summer, they eat a variety of insects in addition to seeds, tree buds, and fruit from trees such as cranberry, mountain ash, and dogwood. In the winter, when they travel in large flocks, they readily visit backyard feeding stations where they enjoy suet, millet, and sunflower seeds.

This short- to medium-distance migrant breeds in Canada, forms monogamous pairs, and has one or two broods a year. Females incubate three to six eggs for eleven to fourteen days. Both parents feed the young until they leave the nest at seven to twelve days old. Although white-throated sparrows typically nest on or near the ground, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology notes that pairs occasionally build a second nest up to 15 feet off the ground if predators have attacked their ground-level nest.

Because white-throated sparrows sing frequently, even during the winter, once you become familiar with their song, you should have no trouble spotting them in fields, along forest and pond edges, and even in your own backyard. Learn more about the white-throated sparrow at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s All About Birds Web site, www.allaboutbirds.org, as well as in Birds of North America, published by the Smithsonian Institution, or your own favorite birding book.

VOLUNTEER ANNIVERSARIES FOR FEBRUARY

20 years: Mary Birney and Mark Cameron
16 years: Judy Rice and Roger Suro
15 years: Lucinda Peterson and Perrie Lee Prouty
14 years: Liz Gontarz
13 years: Barbara Nichols and Al Ware
12 years: Sam Crothers
11 years: Dave and Donna Houchin
10 years: Rosann Ferraro, Eileen Mills, and Mary Milroy
9 years: Cindy Ahern, Joan Beatty, Erin McDowell, Doug and Arlene Reppa, and Doug Stephens
8 years: Valnea Persak
7 years: Linda Amundsen, Janice Brink, Sharyn FAGONE, Emerson Jackson, Rob Romeo, and Gail Schrenk
6 years: Joyce Brink and Terri Heagy
5 years: Betty and Kate Sharon
4 years: Madison Ford, Gail Heath, Linda Kahn, and Angela Zapella
3 years: Dan Cotterman
2 years: Nicholas Mielnikiewicz, Hilary Sullivan, Alex Wolfe, and George Wolfe
STUDENT VOLUNTEERS LEND A HAND TO HONOR MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

We are grateful to the hard-working students from the Sanford School who came to Tri-State on Monday, January 20, with two of their teachers as part of the school’s service to the community on Martin Luther King Day. The six boys and two girls

- Placed Christmas trees in the outside cages
- Washed and disinfected the bird feeders
- Sorted newspapers, removing the color pages and advertisements
- Cleaned and inventoried the seed bins
- Cleaned all the trash cans and recycle bins
- Sorted radiographs

Their enthusiasm and pleasant demeanor made them a joy to work with. As a bonus, the students had the opportunity to witness the release of bald eagle 13-2519.

WHO'S WHO AT TRI-STATE: MEET MICHELLE NEEF

As we have seen with a number of people, many “former” Tri-Staters cannot resist returning to the flock. Such proved to be the case for Michelle Neef, the newest member of the staff, but no stranger to Tri-State Bird Rescue.

A graduate of Middle Tennessee State University, Michelle earned a bachelor of science degree in animal science. She first heard about Tri-State from her friend and former Tri-State extern Dr. Cheryl Hoggard, when the two worked together at the Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW). In August 2002 after Michelle completed her fellowship at CROW, she left her home in Nashville, Tennessee, and moved to Newark to accept a position as a Tri-State clinic supervisor.

She says her parents never quite understood her passion for wildlife rehabilitation until she took them with her to release a bald eagle. “I opened the carrier door and the eagle immediately flew out with determination and strength,” Michelle says. “That was the ‘aha’ moment for my parents—a final visual definition of wildlife rehabilitation—this unknown world to so many but a precious world to a select few.”

In 2005, after spending four years at Tri-State, Michelle moved to Jacksonville, Florida, and accepted a position as a vet technician at a small animal practice. She was able to take a leave-of-absence when Tri-State requested her help with two oil spill responses, first in 2005 for the Benton Sound response in Venice, Louisiana, and then in 2010 in Pensacola, Florida, for the Deepwater Horizon response.

Although she found this work deeply satisfying, Michelle says, “Ever since I left Tri-State, I have compared other jobs to Tri-State professionalism, medical and research accomplishments, and high standards for our patients. Tri-State is an Oscar-winning organization and a five-star resort for wildlife.”

A recent family move to Delaware coincided with a new job opening at Tri-State, and Michelle jumped at the opportunity to return, taking on dual responsibilities in the clinic and on the oil response team. “I remember the amazing dedication and compassion of our volunteers—the heart of Tri-State. I am astounded every day by the passion that soars from our volunteers.”

Married since 2008, Michelle and her husband Mike have “two beautiful, energetic, amazing boys. . . [I] look forward to sharing my experiences at Tri-State with them.”

Photos Courtesy of Sanford School

Michelle with sons McKeon, 4 (left) and Zachary, 2

Photo by Michael Neef
DON'T FORGET THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT
You still have plenty of time to learn how you can take part in this year’s Great Backyard Bird Count, which is scheduled from Friday, February 14, through Monday, February 17. This joint project of the Cornell Ornithology Lab and the National Audubon Society offers families, students, and bird lovers of all ages the opportunity to make an important contribution to conservation.

You don’t even have to leave the comfort of your home. Count birds in your own backyard and report sightings online at www.birdcount.org. Online resources at this Web site include tips on identifying birds and materials for teachers and students. Spend as little as 15 minutes counting birds on one or more of the designated dates. The more people who participate, the better the information scientists will have about how bird populations may be changing over time due to habitat loss, climate change, disease, or other factors.

ODDS AND ENDS

Another way to help Tri-State
Did you know you could help the birds and Tri-State simply by doing your weekly shopping? Follow the directions here to raise money for Tri-State by shopping at Pathmark. Contact Duke Doblick in the Development office if you would like to learn more about Pathmark PERKS.

Haven't seen us on Facebook recently?
If you like Tri-State’s page on Facebook but have not seen our stories in your news feed lately, please be sure to interact with our posts by liking them or commenting on them. This will ensure that you continue to see our photos and release stories.

If you haven't liked us on Facebook yet, you can click the link on our home page or click here (http://www.facebook.com/tristatebirdrescue) to visit our page. Thank you!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Information Sessions and Bird Care Workshops. Do you have friends or family members who think they may be interested in volunteering for Tri-State, but who are afraid that this may not be the right choice for them? We have the perfect solution: a one-hour Information Session that gives prospective volunteers a good overview of our operations and expectations. All those interested in volunteering at Tri-State must attend one Information Session before they can register for a bird care workshop.

February and March Information Sessions: Saturday, February 1, 11 a.m.; Saturday, February 8, 11 a.m.; Saturday, February 15, 11 a.m.; Saturday, March 15, 11 a.m.; and Saturday, March 22, 11 a.m.

Adult Bird Care Workshop, Saturday, March 1, 2014.

Bird Show Presented by Phung Luu, Saturday, February 22, 2014, 2 p.m. As a thank you to our hard-working volunteers, we have asked Phung to present a special bird show just for you! Please note this is for Tri-State volunteers only; it is not a public event.

Open House. Sunday, May 4, 2014. Stop by and see Duke Doblick in the Development office or call him at (302) 737-9543, extension 108, to learn how you can help us plan this important community event.