



TALONS & TRIUMPHS

NORTH TEXAS 2024

IMPACT REPORT 2023

**Welcoming
New Team Members**

**Prairie Conservation
and Native Plants**

**Rehab
Success Stories**

**Blackland
Prairie
Raptor
Center**



OUR MISSION

Blackland Prairie Raptor Center is dedicated to environmental preservation through public education and the conservation of birds of prey and wildlife in their natural habitat. Named after the tallgrass prairie that once covered more than 23,500 square miles of Texas from the Red River to San Antonio, Blackland Prairie Raptor Center is a rehabilitation and conservation education organization, specializing in fostering better public understanding of the relationship between birds of prey and healthy ecosystems.

BPRC is state and federally licensed. Texas Parks and Wildlife permit #: REH-0715-124
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service permit #: MB138982

OUR TEAM

Executive Director: Laura Johnson

Medical Director: Janel Mason, DVM

Rehabilitation Manager: Hailey LeBaron

Maintenance & Operations Mgr: Karen Mitchell

Conservation & Restoration Mgr: Lorelei Stierlen

Education Coordinator: Lauren Knox

Program Coordinator: Andrea Darley Hanson

Volunteer Coordinator: Marla Layne

Accountant: Stacy Butler

CONTACT US

Blackland Prairie Raptor Center
1625 Brockdale Park Road Lucas, TX 75002

Telephone: [\(469\) 964-9696](tel:(469)964-9696)

Programs/Events: education@bpraptorcenter.org

General Questions: info@bpraptorcenter.org

Volunteer: volunteer@bpraptorcenter.org

Follow Us!

[facebook.com/bpraptorcenter](https://www.facebook.com/bpraptorcenter)
[instagram.com/bpraptorcenter](https://www.instagram.com/bpraptorcenter)



INJURED BIRD?
Call 469-964-9696
9 am - 3 pm
7 days a week

Dear Friends and Supporters,

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the Annual Report for 2023, providing a comprehensive overview of the impactful strides made by the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center over the past year. As the Executive Director, I am thrilled to share the remarkable achievements in prairie restoration, raptor rehabilitation, and education that have defined our organization's commitment to conservation.

In the realm of prairie restoration, 2023 has seen unprecedented success. Our dedicated team, in collaboration with community partners, has worked tirelessly to restore and preserve the vital Blackland Prairie. Through strategic initiatives, we have witnessed the return of native flora and fauna, marking a significant milestone in our ongoing commitment to ecological sustainability.

As for raptor rehabilitation, our center has continued to be a haven of care for injured and orphaned birds of prey. The year 2023 saw a record number of successful rehabilitations, with our experienced team providing specialized care and rehabilitation services. These efforts have not only saved numerous lives but have also contributed to the conservation of critical raptor species in our region.

Our commitment to education remains unwavering, with the expansion of innovative programs and outreach efforts. Throughout the year, we engaged with schools, community groups, and nature enthusiasts, delivering informative sessions on raptor conservation, environmental stewardship, and the importance of preserving our prairie ecosystems. The impact of our educational initiatives has been evident in the growing awareness and support from the communities we serve.

As we reflect on the achievements of 2023, we extend our deepest gratitude to our supporters, volunteers, and partners who have been instrumental in making these successes possible. Together, we are forging a path towards a more sustainable and harmonious coexistence with our natural environment.

In the coming year, we remain dedicated to advancing our mission, with new projects on the horizon, and a commitment to continuous improvement. Your ongoing support ensures that the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center will continue to have a significant impact on our native raptors and the Blackland Prairie, acting as a catalyst for positive change in our community.

Thank you for your unwavering support.

Sincerely,

Laura Johnson
Executive Director





IMPACT 2023

Pounds of Food Eaten by our Birds

5,286

Hospital Admissions

702

Patient Release Success Rate

76%

Visitors

1,120



VOLUNTEERS



186
6,231

Programs / Program Participants

26,503

Donated Volunteer Hours

107

Number of Volunteers

Hours of Training per Year

2,848

Patient Release Success Rate

76%

Pounds of Food Eaten by our Birds

5,286

Hospital Admissions

702

Patient Release Success Rate

76%

Visitors

1,120



VOLUNTEERS



186
6,231

Programs / Program Participants

26,503

Donated Volunteer Hours

107

Number of Volunteers

Hours of Training per Year

2,848



MEET OUR TEAM



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John Frost, Board Chair
Christopher Chatten, Treasurer
Elisa Caywood, Member At-Large

Courtney Scott, Co-Chair & Secretary
Henry Merrick Darley, Member At-Large
Taylor Hansen, Member At-Large

BLACKLAND PRAIRIE RAPTOR CENTER TEAM



Laura Johnson
Executive Director



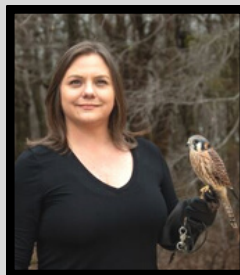
Janel Mason, DVM
Medical Director



Hailey LeBaron
Rehabilitation
Manager



Karen Mitchell
Maintenance &
Operations Mgr.



Lauren Knox
Education
Coordinator



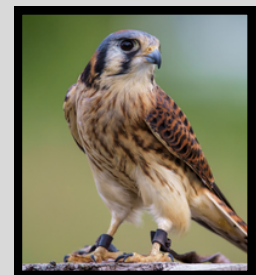
Lorelei Stierlen
Conservation &
Restoration Mgr.



Andrea Darley Hanson
Program Coordinator



Marla Layne
Volunteer Coordinator



Stacy Butler
Accountant



MEET OUR TEAM



WELCOME OUR NEWEST TEAM MEMBERS



Janel Mason, DVM
Medical Director

"I have always liked birds since I was little. I decided to go to vet school in part to help birds. While in vet school at LSU, I worked extensively with their raptor program and grew to love working with them. After working with small animals for a short time, I was eager to get back to working with birds. When we moved back to the Dallas area, I was excited to find BPRC and start volunteering. When the opportunity to be the veterinarian for the center was available, it was a chance to both pursue a passion and fulfill a dream."



Lauren Knox
Education
Coordinator

"I received my vet tech degree in 2017 in Nevada and started my journey with wildlife rehab soon after by volunteering at Houston Humane Society Wildlife center, AWARE Wildlife Center, and North Texas Wildlife Center where I learned to rehab wild mammals. Once I moved to Rowlett, I found my passion for rehabbing birds with BPRC and have been here ever since!"



Marla Layne
Volunteer Coordinator

"After a corporate leadership career in Operations and Human Resources, I looked forward to following my passion by volunteering in nature-based organizations. Through the Texas Master Naturalist program, I discovered the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center and immediately knew I had found my tribe. The BPRC mission, the people, leadership, and culture reflect my personal values and have provided a home where I can contribute my time and professional talents."



CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

CEDAR INVASION!

How We Brought the Prairie Back

Three years ago, a small but determined team walked up against a wall of eastern red cedar trees. Our goal was to clear the entire south woods down to the boat ramp access road and restore the prairie that had once grown there. There were more than 1,100 cedars on the property per our forester Rick Travis's 2020 survey, the majority of which were in this south parcel. The hypothesis was that the native seedbank in this area would have survived and would return once freed from this cedar prison.



Our twenty-year plan gave us three years to accomplish this goal, and in 2023 we hit this major milestone. More than 800 cedars were felled, and the team's determined cutters and haulers should receive recognition, having worked through blistering heat, freezing cold, and a tangle of greenbrier that tore us to shreds. And not a single power line was disturbed - special thanks to Lorrie Mathers, Rick Park, Duane Mortensen, Hannah Long and Wayne Huston for making this dream a reality. The reward? In the areas between the endless brush piles have appeared ten-petal anemone, prairie verbena, fringed puccoon, ironweed, wild bergamot, prairie plantain and more. The natives are back!

The south end firebreaks were prepared, and the next step is to have the controlled burn in 2024 to clear off as much of the material as possible. We will seed the entire area with carefully selected Collin County native species, augmenting the existing native seedbank and begin reestablishing the upper area as true Blackland Prairie. With the cedars gone, we can look forward to a much healthier stand of hardwoods along the shoreline to help prevent erosion and begin the establishment of understory species that will greatly benefit wildlife. We also have ahead of us the challenge of removing the invasive privet which has sadly made itself rather comfortable in these former woods.



(Continued next page)



CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

Willow While You Work!

Forester Rick Travis led our third year of planting native willow cuttings along the shoreline areas which do not have any hardwoods as part of our erosion mitigation strategy. The survival rate is approximately 10-15%, and we plant 400-500 cuttings each year.



Repopulating Bobwhite Quail to our Prairie

We again partnered with the Connemara Conservancy to introduce an additional 25 Bobwhite Quail to our prairie. We released 100 birds three years ago and do still have occasional reports of seeing or hearing them so we are hopeful that over time we will be able to establish a larger population.

With Monarch Watch we collaborated collecting green milkweed seed pods from our prairie in support of their milkweed initiatives, and for the third year participated in the emerald ash borer trap effort with the Texas A&M University Forestry Department. We continue to make progress in reducing the invasive scabiosa and johnsongrass but are finding more bastard cabbage each season so diligence is required going forward to prevent future infestations.



Lorelei Stierlen
Conservation & Restoration Department Manager





REHABILITATION SPOTLIGHT

REHAB STORIES

*2023 Brought Us
All-To-Familiar Situations*



May 2023

We have already admitted month-old screech owls with fertilizer burns to their feet! This is painful and preventable as long as homeowners, cities, HOAs, and lawn care companies are responsibly fertilizing!



Chemical Burns on Talons

We are sharing pictures of a patient who received minor chemical burns. The pictures of the patient with the worst burns are absolutely devastating as these can keep burning down to the bone. This is extremely painful for these babies to endure and lead to a long healing process in rehab.

Please, please, please, advocate for these youngsters and do not fertilize. If you do fertilize, water those dangerous chemicals into the ground immediately. This will save the skin of both wildlife and the pets that walk on the grasses and plants that are being fertilized in our community.



Birds, Pets, Children - Anyone Can Be Affected by Fertilizers

What to do if you find an injured raptor...

Please go to: <https://bpraptorcenter.org/raptor-rescue/>
For further information call 469-964-9696.





REHABILITATION SPOTLIGHT

REHAB STORIES

Continued



November 2023

After looking through his photos, our rehab volunteer, Jacob Drapkin shared with us this phenomenal photo from a recent eagle release.

This bald eagle arrived as a three month old bird of prey, who had stunted growth and development. Found close to its deceased sibling, with no parents in sight, game wardens brought this youngster to BPRC for rehabilitation.

Thank you once more to everyone who helped support this eagle during its six months in our care!



December 2023

After two weeks in care, we are confident this long-eared owl will thrive back in the wild! On its intake exam, we took x-rays which looked quite unusual. This long-eared owl appeared to have visited a different rehab facility before! Its left ulna (wing bone) had a very clean, fully formed callus, indicating it had previously broken it and went through a medical procedure to heal it.



After four days in the ICU, our team placed this owl outdoors to ensure no limiting arthritis, given the proximity of the fracture to the joint.

On December 1st, this owl returned to the area it was found. This owl will likely remain in Texas until spring, when it may travel as far north as Canada to breed.



Whether helping with the financial cost of caring for this patient, providing food when asked, or simply sharing these stories to those around you, your efforts have helped this and other patients in BPRC care!

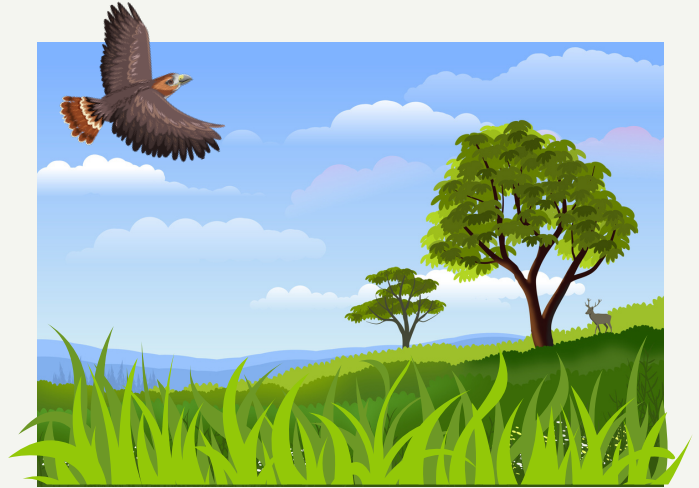




EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT

GETTING OUR MESSAGE OUT

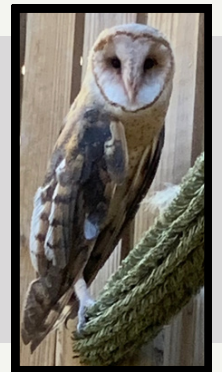
At the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center, we are proud to offer diverse and engaging education opportunities aimed at fostering a deeper understanding of raptors, conservation, and the importance of preserving our prairie ecosystems. Our educational programs cater to a wide audience, including students, educators, nature enthusiasts, and community groups.



For schools and educational institutions, we provide tailored field trips and outreach programs that align with curriculum standards. These immersive experiences allow students to connect with nature, witness live raptor demonstrations, and gain insights into the vital role these birds play in maintaining ecological balance.

Community engagement is at the heart of our mission, and we host regular public events, seminars, and guided tours to share our knowledge with nature enthusiasts of all ages. These events provide a platform for individuals to interact with our resident raptors, learn about their unique behaviors, and grasp the significance of preserving the Blackland Prairie ecosystem.

Whether through hands-on experiences, interactive workshops, or virtual learning, the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center is committed to providing accessible and enriching education opportunities that inspire a lifelong passion for raptor conservation and environmental sustainability.



Adopt an Education Ambassador

Becoming a sponsor supports the feeding, care and any medical treatments of one of our raptor ambassadors for one year. Adopt a raptor for yourself and one for a friend or family member as a gift!





NEW AMBASSADORS

MEET CHARLOTTE

In 2023, we welcomed our charming new Great Horned Owl ambassador, Charlotte. She arrived at the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center imprinted by human interaction. Imprinting during a critical developmental phase left her unable to acquire essential survival skills in the wild, making her permanent residency at our center necessary.



As an ambassador, Charlotte plays a vital role in educational programs, school visits, and public events. She serves as a powerful advocate for wildlife conservation, raising awareness about the impacts of human interference on wild populations. Her presence ignites curiosity and inspires individuals to take an active role in preserving the habitats and ecosystems crucial for the survival of these magnificent raptors. By becoming an ambassador, she not only finds safety and care, but also becomes a voice for her species, contributing to our ongoing mission of fostering a harmonious coexistence between humans and wildlife.

Blackland Prairie Raptor Center

BPRC is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. BPRC receives no federal or state funding. All operating funds come from donations, grants, and educational programming.

We are dedicated to educating the public about birds of prey and their role in maintaining a healthy environment. We are committed to restoring and maintaining the Blackland Prairie habitat at Brockdale Park.

We present more than two hundred programs each year to school groups, Scout groups, libraries, church groups, and day camps.

BPRC is open to the public on the First and Third Saturday of each month.

Partners

U S Army Corps of Engineers
Texas Master Naturalists
Reliant EcoShares SM
Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society
Accenture
HEB

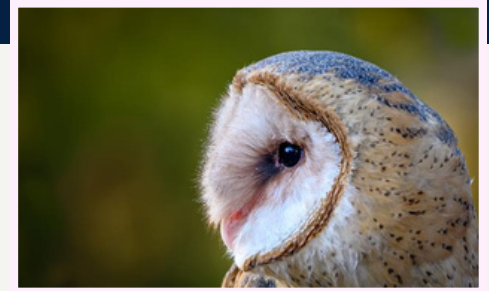
Support

Adopt - A - Raptor
Donate Directly
Scout Projects
Volunteers - Individual and Groups





SUPPORT OUR MISSION



PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

- **Live Raptor Program**
- **Field Trips**
- **Behind the Scenes Tour of BPRC**
- **Education Booth**
- **Camping at Brockdale Park**
- **Camping**
- **Camping VIP**

Live Raptor Program The educational program introduces children and adults to the world of raptors. These hawks, owls and falcons are well trained, and with the assistance of BPRC education specialists, show you what makes them an important part of our environment. You will discover their roles in the food chain and their unique adaptations to hunt in woodland, wetlands and prairies. There's no better way to learn about the birds of prey in North Texas than to meet them in person! Also available in a virtual setting.

Field Trips Join us at BPRC for a great day of education. This event includes a raptor presentation, guided trail hike through the native Blackland Prairie, and age appropriate educational activities.

Behind the Scenes Tour of BPRC Ever wondered what the day-to-day looks like at the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center? This is your opportunity to tour the "behind the scenes" area to learn more about what we do on a daily basis. As an added bonus, you will have the opportunity to meet our full crew of raptor ambassadors!

Education Booth Our education and marketing team is happy to host a BPRC booth at your event! We will bring information about our center and awesome biofacts (wings and talons) to share with your guests to help educate them on the incredible raptors that are native to this area.

Camping - Book our Park Spend the night at our incredible facility. Enjoy the beautiful scenery - natural setting with Lavon Lake as our backdrop and remnant prairie considered an endangered ecosystem with plants unique to this habitat.

NEW! All Inclusive BPRC Camping Experience Take your camping experience up a notch! This all-inclusive option is a great way to enjoy our raptor program, s'mores, breakfast, and trail walk bundled together with your camping for a great price!



Programs are a great gift for single, married, or a small group of bird lovers!
To find out more about all of our BPRC Programs, visit: <https://bpraptorcenter.org/programs/>



SUPPORT OUR MISSION

LOTS OF WAYS TO DONATE

Our restoration, rehabilitation, and education initiatives are made possible through the generous donations of individuals, families, foundations and businesses. For nearly 20 years, supporters like you have been the key to the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center's success.

There are many ways to support the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center. Giving through the Annual Fund, becoming part of our Friends of a Feather Monthly Giving Society, being a Partner of the Prairie, or Adopting a Raptor are the most direct paths to help the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center focus on our funding priorities, like:



- **Providing outstanding medical care to hospital patients**
- **Supporting the training and care of our education ambassadors**
- **Educating students across North Texas about the importance of raptors and land conservation**
- **Expanding our conservation and restoration efforts**
- **Creating memorable visitor experiences**



Visit our website at:
<https://bpraptorcenter.org/ways-to-donate/>



YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

ONE LAST THOUGHT...

*Interested in Joining
Our Team?*



Volunteering at the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center offers a unique and fulfilling opportunity to actively contribute to the preservation of our natural environment. Whether you are passionate about conservation, interested in the rehabilitation of raptors, or eager to educate others about the importance of wildlife, our center provides diverse volunteer roles.

Each volunteer plays a vital role in our mission, and the experience offers not only a chance to make a meaningful impact but also to foster a deeper connection with the fascinating world of raptors and their ecosystems. Email volunteer@bpraptorcenter.org if you are interested in joining our team!



**Join Our Team! Email:
volunteer@bpraptorcenter.org
for further information.**