



# HUNGRY OWL PROJECT

# NEWSLETTER

[www.hungryowl.org](http://www.hungryowl.org)

*"For owls and our shared environment"*

Winter 2014

photo by Star Dewar



## New Plans For HOP's Education Program

We here at HOP are excited for 2015 and we have many lofty goals for our education program in the upcoming year. Each year we put on education presentations for schools, agricultural groups, community groups and more. We aim to teach people about the dangers of rodenticides, about non-toxic pest control and of course to promote wildlife stewardship and conservation. The greatest tool in our efforts is education and it's for this very reason that we hope to expand our educational outreach.

Our goals for the upcoming year:

- Increase our ability to provide seminars and field trips for adults and youth
- Start after school and summer camps for kids and teens
- Develop programs for disadvantaged youth, promoting nature awareness and animal advocacy
- Work more closely with agriculture groups and vineyards
- Expand our website resources for non toxic pest control

As you can see, we have great visions for what The Hungry Owl Project can accomplish in the future.

But in order to accomplish these goals we will need financial support, and a lot of it. Our goal is to raise \$30,000 in this campaign. This money will be put to good use. The need for new equipment, volunteer recruitment as well as operating and ambassador animal expenses is great.

Please join us on this exciting journey. Your donation is crucial for this flight to be a success.

With your financial support, The Hungry Owl Project can soar, and we can continue to help ensure the protection and survival of these magnificent creatures for generations to come.

To make a tax-deductible donation, use the form on page 7 of this newsletter or visit [www.hungryowl.org](http://www.hungryowl.org) to donate via credit card.



# IPM Demystified

By Maggie Rufo, HOP Founding Member

Here at HOP we promote barn owl nesting boxes because barn owls are great predators of rodents. This can create an expectation that all one has to do is put up a box, in appropriate habitat, and owls will fly right in and solve your rodent problem. Wouldn't it be great to have a quick fix? We humans love quick fixes! That's why we also need to manage people's expectations by filling in the details on the use of nesting boxes in conjunction with other methods, which is called IPM.



IPM? Is that some kind of secret weapon, or maybe a disease, or a new kind of trap? None of the above. IPM is Integrated Pest Management. Here's an analogy: you are going to build a shed. Would you be able to build that shed with just one tool? No, you would need a variety of tools. Similarly, IPM is a way of solving pest problems using multiple tools. These include the use of nesting boxes where appropriate, trapping where appropriate, and most importantly: sanitation and exclusion. IPM, in our opinion, does *NOT* include the use of poison. Rodenticides are not part of the solution, they are part of the problem.

What are the IPM tools we need? For context, it's important to understand that rats and mice benefit from living in close proximity to humans. And, they will come inside for safety, warmth and food, just like we do. We humans provide a lot of food and shelter for rodents just by

being ourselves, yet we certainly don't want to share our homes with them. We asked our friends at The Hitmen Pest Control to provide some background on IPM methods. The Hitmen specialize in exclusion. If you have an indoor rodent problem, exclusion is about as close to a magic bullet as you can get. So, the first tool we get out of our IPM toolbox is going to be Exclusion.

Exclusion professionals first inspect the structure to find all the ways rodents are coming in, knowing that rats only need 1/2" of space for entry! By using inspection and trapping, the pros know what type of rodent they are tracking, thereby signaling the best methods to dissuade the rodents from taking up residence in your structure. Once all the entry points are identified then rodent-proof materials are used to seal these openings.

Great, but what about any rodents now trapped inside your house? That's where the tool called Professional Trapping comes in. Rats and mice behave differently, so a professional knows the best spots to place traps for each species of rodent. So, now we have two tools working together to solve a problem, and these two tools are highly effective.

*...continued on page 6*



HOP Newsletter - Winter 2014/2015

The Hungry Owl Project Newsletter is published semi-quarterly. Subscribe by becoming a HOP member at [www.hungryowl.org](http://www.hungryowl.org).

*We make every effort to ensure that all contents of this publication are accurate. Nonetheless, human error, printing errors and other mistakes still occasionally occur.*

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# Get To Know the Short-eared Owl

By Joe Fox, Assistant Director, HOP

The Short-eared Owl is a mid-sized owl measuring around 13-17 inches in length and weighing approximately 7 ounces to just over a pound (although like most owls, the addition of feathers make them look larger). You can find this owl all over the US and in fact, on every continent except Australia and Antarctica. It's preferred hunting habitat is open fields and grasslands. The Short-eared Owl is diurnal and crepuscular, meaning that it's active during the day as well as dawn and dusk. They love to eat Voles, but will also consume many other rodents as well as the occasional small bird. The breeding season typically runs from March to June (in the US), when you can find the males putting on quite the show as they try to attract females. In an effort to impress the females the males will dive from over 100' high and "wing clap". They nest on the ground. The Short-eared Owl has a very dramatic appearance with bright yellow eyes encircled by black rings around the eyes. In many areas the Short-eared Owl will migrate during certain times of the year. While not incredibly common here in Marin County, they do make selective appearances. ■



Photo by Kurt Lindsay



## "WHO"... YOU GONNA CALL?

**Bay Area Rodent and Pest Control Service Since 1978**

The Hitmen Termite & Pest Control specialize in different trapping techniques and the exclusion of rodents.

Rodent and Pest Control Services Include:

Trapping • Removal • Exclusion Repair • Cleanup • Sanitizing and Deodorizing



**Choose a Green Pest Solution = Hitmen Termite & Pest Control's Smart Choice Program.**

The Hitmen offer a complete line of professional botanical based products for various pest problems around your property.

Structural integrated pest management (IPM) means a systematic decision making approach to managing pests; suppression with minimal impact on human health, property, the environment, and non-target organisms.



**Call the Hitmen**

**800-351-2488**



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**www.hitmenpest.com**

# TALONS: A Festival Celebrating Birds of Prey

Talons: A Festival Celebrating Birds of Prey was a big success. From almost 20 different species of birds of prey on display (including flight demonstrations!) to educational talks to a fully fledged “Kids Corner” and much more, Talons was a blast! Thank you to all of the various organizations that participated and of course our own dedicated volunteers! We’re planning another festival for next year and we hope to see you there!

*For more info on our events and presentations. Visit our website or join our email list for all the latest info!*  
**[www.hungryowl.org](http://www.hungryowl.org)**



*Spectacled Owl - Photo by: Star Dewar*



*Above photos by: Robert Bloomberg*

# TALONS Kids Corner

By Suzanne Mirviss, HOP Education Coordinator



Kids were hooting with delight at the Hungry Owl Project's event in September. Over 50 children participated in activities offered at Kids Corner at Talons, but kids weren't the only ones who participated – some of the parents stayed with their kids to do a project, or watch their kids play. Kids Corner was a big success. We anticipate creating more educational and fun opportunities in 2015.

## *Some of the activities available at the Kids Corner:*

- **Art and Nature:** Little "owls" skipped around the Art and Garden Center wearing colorful masks they made.
- **Science and Discovery:** Kids were immersed in digging for bones in owl pellets.
- **Ambassador Visits:** Owls made exclusive visits to Kids Corner that day. Talons participants welcomed Hungry Owl Project's new ambassador owl Buho (western screech owl) into public view. Sequoia (Spotted Owl) and Kele (Kestrel) from Wildcare also made appearances at Kids Corner.
- **Face Painting:** our volunteer was painting owls and birds of prey non-stop, and kids wore their designs happily.
- **Feed the Baby Owls game:** Kids won prizes for landing beanbags in baskets. Lots of winners in this event.
- **Guessing Jar game:** Two kids won prizes for making the best guesses of how many "owls" were in the jar.
- **Other fun things:** Kids could have their photo taken as an owl, thanks to Sabrina Dolan's burrowing owl "head in hole". Also, kids could also draw on a mural, read an owl book, color and do puzzles at any time

Special thanks to Kids Corner volunteers: Sabrina Dolan, Sarah Hopkins, Cynthia Fry, Howie Fry, Saorise Staples, Rhea Stewart-Laws, Mary Shirley, Meg Organ, and Gabriela De John, and Sami Fink. ■

## **Thank you to the following organizations, sponsors & individuals for your support with TALONS:**

WildCare, Bird Rescue Center, West Coast Falconry, Native Bird Connections, Corvid Connection, Joe Mueller, Jules Evens, David Press, RATS, GGRO, MALT, River Otter Ecology Project, Project Coyote, Sonoma Birding, Audubon Canyon Ranch, Mendocino Brewing Company

Top photo by Robert Bloomberg / All others by Star Dewar

# Owl Word Match Game

Match the word on the **LEFT** with the description on the **RIGHT**



- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. Barn Owl          | a. French for "owl".   |
| 2. Hibou             | b. The longest owl, at 27 inches in length.                      |
| 3. Diurnal           | c. Opposite of nocturnal, meaning active during the day.         |
| 4. 270               | d. Term used to describe a group of owls                         |
| 5. Supercilium       | e. Makes a "screeching" call.                                    |
| 6. 19                | f. Makes a "hooting" call.                                       |
| 7. Zygodactyl        | g. Number of degrees an owl can rotate its head.                 |
| 8. Parliament        | h. A term for an owls eyebrows.                                  |
| 9. 1                 | i. The weight, in pounds, of a Barn Owl.                         |
| 10. Great Grey Owl   | j. The type of feet owls have. 2 toes forward, 2 point backward. |
| 11. Great Horned Owl | k. Spends summers north of the Arctic Circle.                    |
| 12. Snowy Owl        | l. Number of owl species in North America.                       |

1.e. 2.a 3.c 4.g 5.h 6.l 7.j 8.d 9.i 10.b 11.f 12.k

*Snowy Owl With Chick Photo by Tony Hisgett*

## IPM Demystified Cont.. (Continued from page 2)

The third tool we need is Sanitation. This is important in our homes and garages and especially outdoors. Rats and mice are a normal part of the environment, but there are things we can do to keep their presence to a tolerable level. Sanitation needs help from another tool.

That tool is a tough one: Changing our Behavior. For example, ivy is probably the number one attractant for rats, but people are reluctant to get rid of it. Ground or fence ivy gives rats everything they need to survive: shelter from predators, water in the form of moisture on the leaves, and food in the form of snails and other critters. Ivy growing over a structure gives rats a way to climb up to roofs and find entry points. It's also important not to feed pets outdoors, to secure garbage cans and compost piles, clean up fallen fruit and nuts, and use a low-waste birdseed mix if you feed the birds. Whew, that's a lot of work!

So as you can see, IPM is an array of tools and behaviors that we use to solve a rodent problem. The tools described will not harm non-target animals when used properly. Tools like poison and glue traps have a high rate of secondary poisoning and injury to non-target animals. Poison is touted as a quick fix, but it's called "bait" for a reason. Bait attracts. Therefore, as long as you have "bait" out for them, they will keep coming. If you use a pest company, that insures them a monthly fee for refilling the boxes. Pretty clever, eh?

The Hitmen is one of the few companies the Hungry Owl Project recommends because of their specialization in exclusion and trapping. We hope that over time, as more and more people stop requesting and buying poisons, poison manufacturers and pest control companies will join the IPM movement. Trying to get the government to ban all poisons is a slow, expensive process. It's up to consumers to reject anything that will harm other creatures, including our pets, while protecting our homes. Hopefully, as the pest control industry evolves, techniques for pest remediation will become safer through science and through the proven success of natural checks and balances, like bats and bluebirds for insects, or owls for rodents. The most responsible businesses will recognize the benefits of utilizing nature's beneficial species. This is a win-win.

Our final, and most exciting IPM tool, is the Nesting Box. Attracting beneficial predators, like bats, bluebirds, American Kestrels, hawks and owls, has the added benefit of enriching us by providing a closer look at how they live, nest and reproduce. In many places, traditionally, these animals were not appreciated and their numbers dwindled or disappeared, yet people are now working hard to bring them back. Owls are not just pretty faces, indeed they are of great benefit to the one species that has the power to harm them or help them. So be like the owl: choose wisely. ■

# Donate to the Hungry Owl Project



**HUNGRY  
OWL** PROJECT

**Thank you for supporting the Hungry Owl Project!**

Your support will help with:

- HOP Education Program
- Public Outreach / Presentations
- Info & Emergency Services
- Raptor Rescue & Reunites
- Owl Fostering
- Owl Cams
- Advocacy
- Tree Life Program
- Non-toxic Pest Control Resource
- ..and much more!

HOP is a partnership with



501(c)(3) Non Profit  
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**I would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to the Hungry Owl Project!** Please print clearly

Select Donation Amount:

\_\_\_\_\_ \$25 - Saw-Whet Owl

\_\_\_\_\_ \$35 - Screech Owl

\_\_\_\_\_ \$50 - Barn Owl

\_\_\_\_\_ \$100 - Spotted Owl

\_\_\_\_\_ \$250 - Great Grey Owl

\_\_\_\_\_ \$500 - Great Horned Owl

\_\_\_\_\_ \$1000 - Eurasian Eagle Owl

\_\_\_\_\_ Other - (Fill in below)

Check if you would like this to be a recurring gift: \_\_\_\_\_ Monthly \_\_\_\_\_ Annually

Donations of \$25 or more will include a 1 year membership with HOP.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to join our mailing list? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_** (payable to **HOP/WildCare**)

or

**Please charge my credit card:**

Credit Card Type \_\_\_\_\_ Visa \_\_\_\_\_ MasterCard \_\_\_\_\_ Discover \_\_\_\_\_ AmEx

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Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_ Year CVV Number \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please fill out and mail to:

**The Hungry Owl Project**

50 Glen Rd  
Novato, CA 94945

HOP is a partnership with  
wildcare

## Volunteer Opportunities

### Current Volunteer Positions Available:

#### Education Program Volunteers -

With our expansion goals for our education program in 2015, we will need a variety of additional volunteers from speakers, to school program volunteers, to an event calendar keeper and more.

#### HOP Phone Line Volunteers -

Help with the Hungry Owl Project information telephone line (AKA "HOP Line"). Learn all about owl boxes, our local owls, our various programs, non-toxic rodent control and much more. Volunteer from home!

#### Development Associate -

Help HOP identify and work to obtain potential foundation, government, and private funding sources for the Hungry Owl Project.

Visit [www.hungryowl.org](http://www.hungryowl.org)



Photo by Kurt Lindsay

## What does HOP do?



### Education Program

Educational presentations & events for communities, schools, vineyards and more. School projects for students and classrooms.

### Non-Toxic Pest Control

Provide a resource of info on non-toxic pest control and using owls as a means of non-toxic rodent control. We sell nesting boxes for Owls, Blue Birds and Bats. Installations, site consultations & box management programs.

### Raptor Rescue & Reunite (RRR) Program

Owl & hawk rescues and reunites, orphan foster care and an emergency hotline.

### Tree Life Program

Wildlife-safe tree work education for arborists and the public. Site visits and tree occupancy reports.

### Blue Bird Program

Nesting boxes, site consultations and installations. Programs for schools. Blue Birds are excellent insect controllers!

### Owl Cams

Online streaming cameras to follow the life cycle of owls in nesting boxes.

*This is just a sampling of what we do. For more info visit:*  
[www.hungryowl.org](http://www.hungryowl.org)