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Bob and Patt Lowrance: The Care and Tending of Birds of Prey

© APRIL 22, 2013 BY ADMIN IN FEATURES GIVE VOLUNTEERS COMMENTS OFF ON BOB AND PATT LOWRANCE: THE CARE AND TENDING OF BIRDS OF PREY

Outstanding Achievement in Wildlife Stewardship

For more than thirty years, Bob and Patt Lowrance have shared their home with a number of fly-by-night (and day) guests in need of a safe place to heal and recover. In their 80s, the couple has built their lives and household around rescuing and rehabilitating Mississippi's wildlife, with a particular emphasis on the magnificent birds of prey, called raptors.

On a typical day the couple rises before dawn to feed and care for their feathered patients. Patt (a former Jackson Zoo docent) oversees day-to-day care, while Bob puts in long days on the road, retrieving injured, orphaned, or displaced animals, or releasing rehabilitated raptors back into the wild. Their aviary has attracted skilled volunteers—veterinarians and vet technicians—to see to some of the more seriously injured raptors. When the sun goes down, the work doesn't stop: there are nocturnal birds to be fed, and the Lowrance household lovingly accommodates their natural rhythms.



In addition to their daily duties, Patt also travels with "education birds," sharing the majesty of these fierce animals with children and adults. She teaches program participants about raptors and their place in the ecosystem, wildlife rehabilitation, and the laws that protect these amazing birds from human harm.

The Lowrances have spent thousands of hours caring for animals, but also earning state and federal certifications and licenses to be of better service to the animals. They have led by example, not only organizing and recruiting volunteers and professionals to fill needed roles in rehabilitation, but training others to follow in their footsteps.

Mississippi's wildlife rehabilitation community holds the Lowrances in highest regard: three separate nominations lauded their education, rescue, and mentoring efforts. While their charges cannot speak to the care the Lowrances provide, their account of a rehabilitated peregrine falcon's farewell may speak to their work: "We took the bird to the highest point in Vicksburg, turned it loose, and that was the most beautiful sight. He circled us three times and it was just like he was saying, 'Thank you.' Then, we saw him fly higher and higher until he disappeared."

The next time you admire a Red-Tailed Hawk's wheeling, or hear an owl's cry at night, remember Patt and Bob's vital role in Mississippi's wildlife conservation efforts.

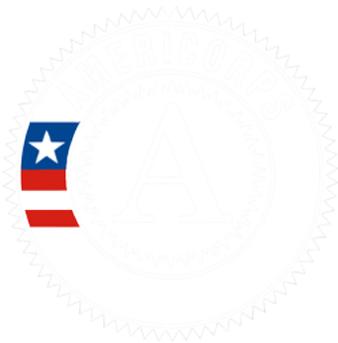




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