

## February 23, 2007: Red-tailed Hawk Assisted by Preserve Manager

The Keeney Preserve, located in Butte County, is known for its healthy raptor populations. For example, a red-shouldered hawk can reliably be found on site, Swainson's hawks (state listed as threatened) forage in the grasslands, and, during salmon-spawning season, bald eagles (federal and state protected) perch in the preserve's mature cottonwoods. Another common species is the red-tailed hawk. In December 2006, CNLM Preserve Manager Chris Clifford encountered a disabled red-tailed hawk while patrolling the preserve. After maneuvering through blackberry thickets along Butte Creek where the grounded hawk was taking refuge, Clifford managed to catch the bird and delivered it to Chris Fitzgerald of the Bidwell Wildlife Rehabilitation Center—a nonprofit and volunteer-operated organization that serves Butte County. The hawk was underweight but had no obvious injuries.

In mid-January 2007, just a few weeks after its rescue, Fitzgerald determined that the hawk was well and strong and ready for release. Fitzgerald released him a couple of miles upstream from where he had been found along the Butte Creek.

Notes Clifford, "In addition to ensuring that the preserve's conservation values are being protected and not compromised by inappropriate activity, regular patrolling allows the CNLM staff to track changes in the biological resources of the preserves and occasionally, if the timing is right, to assist injured wildlife." The appropriate response when encountering injured, ill, or orphaned wildlife will depend on the species, its age and condition, its legal status, and other considerations. CNLM Preserve Managers make such judgment calls often and work closely with approved wildlife rehabilitation facilities and state and federal wildlife agencies to ensure the best decision is made for the animal and that its chances for recovery are optimum.

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The disabled red-tailed hawk on the Keeney Preserve, prior to its capture by Chris Clifford