

Title: Rehabilitation Bird Release		Print Date: 9/28/2026
Rev #4	Prepared by: Leticia Olivarez	Date Prepared: 12/5/2023
Effective Date: Immediately	Approved by: Kim Westfall	Date Approved: 10/3/2025

Purpose: General procedures regarding release of rehabilitated birds

Who is responsible: Release Team, Release Coordinator, Care Coordinator

Procedures

GENERAL RELEASE RULES

IMPORTANT: For everyone's safety and to honor the bird's release protocol, please note that only the designated release volunteer will handle and release the bird. We kindly ask all others to observe and support from a respectful distance. Releasable birds must be safely returned to the location (or nearby) where they were rescued immediately

1. All release information will be transmitted through release@soarinhawk.org email, which automatically goes to all the personnel identified under **RELEASE CONTACTS**.
2. If applicable, the Release or Avian Care coordinator shall notify the team through release@soarinhawk.org or Group Me ICU team.
3. Birds shall be released within 48 hours of notification for birds that are deemed releasable by any of the following: Release or Avian Care Coordinators.
4. The Release Coordinator will send email to release@soarinhawk.org and Group ME ICU team with bird ID, current location and any other special information
5. Hawks should be released early in the day or with at least 3 hours of remaining daylight.
6. Owls may be released at any time of the day or with at least 3 hours of remaining daylight.
7. Adults shall be returned to the area where found.
8. Juvenile birds should be released where found but may be released anywhere within the rescue county.
9. For "family group" releases (nestlings that have been together for 2 months or more), contact permit holders for a proper release site.
- 10. Birds must be released in a safe area, usually not by a factory, office complex or around high traffic areas. Please contact the permit holders if there is a concern or question.**
11. Release may be delayed a day or two if weather conditions are unsuitable to safe release.
12. Where an audience is involved, at least 2 volunteers must be present at the release site.

RELEASE COORDINATOR

After being notified that a bird is ready for release by raptor Care or ICU via email, the release coordinator (RC) shall:

1. Establish the release location using Raptor Med information.
2. Orphaned birds shall not be promised for release at the rescue site. Often orphans are raised in 'family' groups and should be released as a family.
3. Schedule the release and location to occur within 48 hours of notification.
4. If required, notify the finder of the scheduled release.
5. Recruit a volunteer to release the bird, starting with the prime rescuer.
6. An all-hands notice may be sent, by email or GroupMe, asking for additional volunteers.
7. If no volunteer is available, contact the permit holder.
8. In the case of a special situation (bird releases with interesting stories or unusual birds) ensure the media coordinator and the newsletter editor are notified via release@soarinhawk.org email.
9. Provide the volunteer releaser with bird to be released biography, location, and any special conditions of the release location.
10. Provide the releaser with a copy of the 'RELEASE VOLUNTEER' information below.
11. Ensure that the release understands how to release a bird.
12. Send an email to release@soarinhawk.org with: Bird ID, volunteer name, release location, date and time, finder information and any other special situations.

<u>RELEASE (release@soarinhawk.org) CONTACTS</u>		
Role	Name	Contact Information
Care Coordinator	Kim Westfall	Kim.westfall@soarinhawk.org
ICU Coordinator	Kim Westfall Kim Nedberg	Kim.westfall@soarinhawk.org Knedberg@comcast.net
Media Coordinator	Andy Candor	Tacandor@comcast.net
Newsletter Editor	Lynne Ostergren	Lynofoz@gmail.com
Permit Holder	Christopher Schley	christopherschley@hotmail.com
Permit Holder	Kim Westfall	Kim.westfall@soarinhawk.org
Release Coordinator	Danielle Schley	Danielleschley@outlook.com
Story / Webpage Coordinator	Leticia (Tish) Olivarez	Leticia.olivarez@gmail.com

Report any issues to Kim Westfall @ kim.westfall@soarinhawk.org

RELEASE VOLUNTEER

The releaser and assistant volunteer shall do the following:

1. Retrieve the bird from the appropriate rehab pen.
2. Remove the leg band (Clippers are on the corridor of the rehab building).
3. Place the bird in a release box and ensure the box has a gripping floor surface.

If the bird is removed from ICU, the releaser and assistant shall:

1. Remove the leg band using appropriate cutters.
2. Remove the tail guard if present.
3. Place the bird in the release box and ensure box has a gripping floor surface.
4. Locate treatment chart and place on the desk by the computer with **sticky note** stating the bird has been released.
5. Remove paperwork in the "Intake/Treatment" tray or by the laptop in the ICU. Please fill out the **Release Form** located on the cabinet door above the laptop. Once completed, place it with the bird's paperwork/chart.

At the release location:

IMPORTANT: For everyone's safety and to honor the bird's release protocol, please note that only the designated release volunteer will handle and release the bird. We kindly ask all others to observe and support from a respectful distance.

1. Upon arrival at the release site, verify the site is suitable. Ensure birds are released in a safe area, preferably not near a factory, office complex, or high-traffic area. Please contact the permit holders if there is a concern or a question.
2. Introduce yourself and any other Soarin' Hawk personnel to the audience, provide SHRR information and business cards to the audience
3. Give the biography of the bird.
4. If possible, take pictures of the audience or count the number of audience members.
5. Instruct the audience to:
 - a. That pictures or videos of the release may be taken
 - b. All observers must be off to the sides or behind the release
 - c. No one may be in front of the release

(Releasing the bird)

1. Do not stand over the box when releasing the bird.
2. Release the bird, by slowly tipping the box forward, opening the top and letting the bird fly out.
3. Do not handle the bird.
4. Ensure the box is not blocked by a tree, bush, or plant.
5. If possible, take pictures or videos of the release.

After the bird has flown away from the location:

1. Collect info about the audience, number of kids, adults and any donations.
2. Prepare a brief story about the release and send email, along with photos and video to release@soarinhawk.org; including bird ID, volunteer name, location, date and time, and any audience information.

VERSION HISTORY			
VERSION	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE	AUTHOR	DATE
1	INITAL	Leticia Olivarez	12/5/2023
2	Comments/updated included	Leticia Olivarez	1/5/2024
3	Addition of protocol rules in releasing bird	Leticia Olivarez	10/3/2025
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