

# The **BASIC**

## Warehouse Raptor Capture Handbook

- ◆ Resources
- ◆ Call Response
- ◆ Equipment
- ◆ Strategy

**Ben Montgomery**  
Property Manager / Educator  
benmont@verizon.net  
(908) 432 3615

WELCOME to the world of 'Field Rescues!' This handbook outlines proven techniques for safely and successfully capturing fully flighted raptors trapped in building enclosures, such as warehouses, barns and the like. Though by no means intended as a complete guide, **THE BASIC WAREHOUSE RAPTOR CAPTURE HANDBOOK** provides the would-be rescuer with a beginner's blueprint for successfully conducting these kinds of rescues, including tips for proper phone protocol, a list of equipment and a simplified description of BASIC strategy.

**PLEASE USE CAUTION:** ALL rescue attempts must be made with the utmost regard for personal safety, and must comply fully with all local, state and federal laws governing equipment and procedures.

## **Resources**

US Fish & Wildlife Service, Dept of the Interior - *Migratory Bird Program*

<http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/mbpermits.html>

Bird Banding Laboratory, USGS - *Banding Permit General Information*

[http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/homepage/gen\\_info.cfm](http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/homepage/gen_info.cfm)

## Call Response

### Manage the caller's concerns / expectations

- Hawk is STRESSED (will want to stay up high for safety)
- Hawk will generally find one main roost (w/ predictable flight pattern)
- Hawk's biggest risk is dehydration (physical injury unlikely)
  - Depends on building operations

### What they can do

- Open any skylights / high windows / ceiling hatch (can they make one?)
- Open all doors (how busy is that area? can they temporarily avoid it?)
- Turn off the lights (reduces stress, may draw the hawk to the doors)
- "Shallow Pan" of water by the door(s)
  - Also: seed to attract small birds (may draw the hawk,)
- NO MEAT: DO NOT FEED THE HAWK!
  - Reduces the effectiveness of some capture techniques
  - Can be dangerous for dehydrated raptors

### What you need to know

- Size of the Facility / Building (square footage / ceiling height)
- Nature of operations / What's in the building? (safety concerns)
  - How many people?
  - Equipment: Any kind of lift (plus operator)
- How long has the hawk been in the building?
  - Not all rescues require immediate physical response

# Equipment List

## General

- Box / Carrier
- Handling Gloves
- Hand nets
- Duct Tape (!)
- Parachute Cord
- Scissors
- Pliers / Flashlight / Binoculars / Radios / Broom

## Trapping (A-Frame)

- Trap (and accessories)
  - Treadle(s) (triggering mechanism to hold trap set)
  - Canister(s) (to hold live bait)
  - Bait (live bait requires food and water)

## Catching (Mist Net)

- Nets (at least 2 - sold in 6m, 9m or 12m lengths / 110 or 210 denier)
- 1 5/8" Closet Poles (at least 6 / 2 each of 8', 10', 12' lengths)
- Bases (to hold poles upright - 2 / metal or pvc)

## **BASIC Strategy**

### **Trapping / A-Frame**

- Place as high as possible
- 'Preferred' corner / Quiet corner
  - Bring 2 traps?
- Treadle height "sweet spot"
  - Setting too low prevents treadle from folding
  - Setting too high may leave room for hawk to move around it
- Provide food and water for live bait

### **Catching / Mist Net (requires 2-3 people)**

#### **Step 1: Planning / Preparation**

- Set up in clean area (no debris / sweep if necessary)
- Transect 'preferred' flight path
- To the roof! Place mist nets as high as possible
  - Just below trussing or girders
  - Mind the gaps! Check the top and side(s)
  - For the highest ceilings, poles can be attached to storage racks or even suspended from trussing (Requires lift support)
- LOFTS are your friends
  - Set-up on a loft, or off of one
  - Storage racks can help the same way
- Trammel placement on poles is crucial
  - Make a bag with the netting in each trammel section

## **Step 2: Procedure / Capture**

- Organize your rescue team
  - One person stationed at the mist net with a hand net and raptor handling gloves
    - Must be prepared to use the hand net to pin the hawk to the mist net, or snare the hawk if it bounces off
  - Other team members chase the hawk so it flies to the mist net
    - Spare poles or bean bags can be used to encourage the hawk to leave perch (DO NOT allow poles or bean bags to strike the hawk)
- KEEP CHASING! (DO NOT let the hawk rest)
  - As the hawk tires, it will fly lower and slower, making it easier to capture and less likely to maneuver around the mist net
  - A quick capture will ultimately be less stressful for the hawk

## **After Capture**

- Be sure the hawk is secure! (do not allow hawk to escape trap or nets)
  - Remove hawk from mist net immediately
  - For traps: move to small, enclosed space before removing hawk
  - Use proper raptor handling techniques
- Make friends
  - Quick photos
  - Make your pitch for the organization and its mission
  - Distribute propaganda
  - Big 'THANK YOU' for helping the bird
- Stash hawk in carrier in your vehicle before disassembling equipment