

Summary of South Dakota Raptor High School Presentations

Spring 2008

By
Pamela Knowles, FaunaWest Wildlife Consultants

Week of April 14 through April 18 2008

Monday, April 14: I was unable to find a high school that had an opening on Monday. Drove to Black Hills and worked on presentation that day.

Tuesday, April 15:

School: Buffalo High School

Main Contact: Gene Van Bickerdyke

I gave the presentation to classes all day starting at 9:45 am to the close of the school day. Most of the classes were for grades 9 through 12, with some younger classes. The most interesting from my perspective was giving the presentation to a junior and senior biology class simultaneously with a 2nd grade class!

Wednesday, April 16:

School: Newell High School

Main Contact: Betsy Burtzlaff, Biology Dept.

Gave presentations all day to 4 or 5 classes including biology and advanced biology as well as an environmental class (I think a physics class got stuck in here also).

Thursday, April 17:

School: Stevens High School

Main Contact: Kerry Beyer

Began presentations at 8:10am and continued until noon. I was then asked if I could stay to give a class in the afternoon, which I did.

Friday, April 18:

Central High School

Main Contact: Jared Vasquez

Gave presentations to the Biology and Biology II classes starting in the morning and ending mid-afternoon.

Week of May 12 through May 16 2008

Monday, May 12

Belle Fourche High School

Main Contact: Brent Larsen

Drove to the Black Hills. I was scheduled to give presentations here but a computer malfunction a few days before my arrival caused their class registration to run late and they were unable to accommodate a guest speaker and cancelled. They were not able to reschedule this year and I was unable to find another school that could take me on such short notice.

Tuesday, May 13

Lead-Deadwood High School

Main Contact: Kim Fundaun, Principal

This was for an assembly and went over very well. There were two journalists there at the school and the presentation was eventually reported in the Lead-Deadwood newspaper (apparently it also ran in the Rapid City newspaper but I didn't receive a copy so am unaware of the contents). The Lead-Deadwood newspaper article is enclosed.

Wednesday, May 14

Hot Springs High School

Main Contact: Cheryl Huddleston

Started at 9am and went throughout the day. I think there were 6 classes, but it gets a bit hazy after the first few.

Thursday, May 15:

Hill City High School

Main Contact: Susan Roth

Started in the morning with a middle school class and then moved over to the High School where I had 3 9th grade biology classes, 1 ecology class and 1 advanced biology class the rest of the day.

Friday, May 16

Rapid City Christian School

Main Contact: Mike Vahrenkamp

This was originally planned for an assembly, but they ended up having me in a room too small for everyone so they broke it into lower and upper classes. I finished in the early afternoon.

Summary:

This was an exciting project and one that, in my opinion, was extremely worthwhile. I was thrilled to receive emails from a couple of the teachers later telling me how much their students enjoyed the presentation. The kids were all excellent audiences and I believe most were truly interested in the presentation.

For most of the classes I started my presentation out with:
"I'm here to introduce you to some of your neighbors. They build their homes here, they shop here, they raise their kids here. Meet the South Dakota Birds of Prey."

I am pleased to say that nobody slept all the way through my presentation (playing the kak kak call in the middle of the talk definitely had it's upside) and some of the kids were actually spellbound. I know that we made an impression when I got the following email,

"Just yesterday one of the Senior girls came into class all pumped up about the hawk she saw..white breast with brown tail. Then it turned and she swore the tail had red ...red-tailed hawk? They then began talking about the hawks and eagles they have seen. Isn't that fun?!!!"
Gene Von Bickerdyke

From the beginning, I maintained that if I could get just one kid to look at a bird of prey with interest, then I would have accomplished something. I believe this series of presentations did just that!

L-D students learn about feathered friends and foes

By Marla Loken
Lawrence County Journal

A May 13 assembly held in the Lead-Deadwood High

Lead School Library helped students identify their feathered neighbors. Pam Knowles, a wildlife biologist from Townsend, Montana, presented an illustrated talk, "These Are Your Neighbors; Get To Know Them."

Knowles, a biologist with Fauna West Wildlife Consultants, introduced the students to both common and rare raptors, many who frequent the Black Hills area. "You live in an awesome area for raptors; actually this area is one of the best raptor habitats in the country," said Knowles. Among the raptors Knowles introduced by means of power point photos were bald and golden eagles, red tail hawks, osprey, turkey vultures,

falcons, peregrine falcons, great horned owls, burrowing owls, and sparrow hawks. She told about their hunting habits, their lives as predators, their habitats, parenting techniques, and other interesting facts.

"I'm impressed with this group of kids," said Knowles. "Some of them really know their birds."

Knowles wrapped up her presentation with wise advice for her young audience, "You'll spend most of your life working. Find a work that is something you truly love to do. Life is too short. Make sure you love your work."

Funded by the South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks, Knowles' presentation at Lead-Deadwood High School was one of an eight-school area tour. "If one kid walks out and later recognizes a bird, I feel I've done my job," she said.

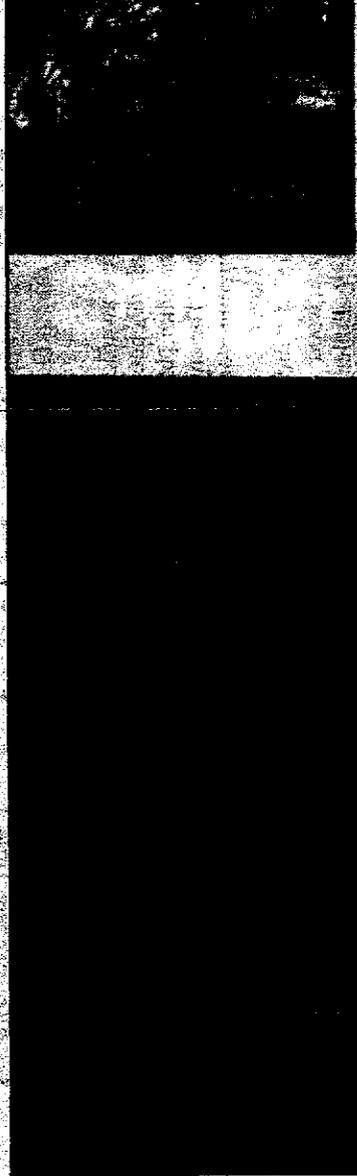


Photo by Marla Loken
Pam Knowles explains the habitat and hunting habits of the most common raptor, the red-tailed hawk to Lead-Deadwood High School students.

Backlund, Doug

From: Bickerdyke, Genevon
Sent: Saturday, April 19, 2008 1:20 PM
To: Backlund, Doug
Subject: Raptor speaker

Hi, Pam Knowles spent the day with me on Tuesday, speaking to my classes. Wow! What a turn-on, she was. The kids are still talking about different things that came up. This was a great way to introduce this career to my Jrs. and Seniors. The other classes are very pumped and want to do more studying about raptors. Parents have even mentioned how their children were sure excited about the speaker. Thanks for your insight into putting this together!

Gene Von Bickerdyke
Harding County School.

Backlund, Doug

From: Fundaun, Kim
Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2008 1:41 PM
To: Backlund, Doug
Subject: Pam Presentation

Just a note to let you know how much our students appreciated and enjoyed Pam Knowles Raptor Presentation at Lead Deadwood High School. The kids were very involved and a local writer did a real nice story in the Northern Hills Journal about this event. I know the state helps fund this, so wanted you to know how much it was appreciated. Thanks.

Kim Fundaun
Biology Teacher
Lead Deadwood HS

Backlund, Doug

From: Mike Vahrenkamp [mikevahrenkamp@hotmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, June 08, 2008 6:03 PM
To: Backlund, Doug
Subject: Birds of Prey

Doug,

On May 16, 2008, our school had Pam Knowles do her presentation to our students on Birds of Prey. Just wanted to let you know how much we appreciated the power point presentation and especially Pam with her sharing. Hope we can have her back with us again sometime soon. Thanks for your part in making her available to our school and our students. It was a great experience being able to expand our knowledge on Bird of Prey in South Dakota.

Sincerely,

MIKE VAHRENKAMP
Rapid City Christian School
23757 Arena Drive
Rapid City, South Dakota 57702

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Backlund, Doug

From: Huddleston, Cheryl
Sent: Friday, June 13, 2008 10:56 AM
To: Backlund, Doug
Subject: Pam Knowles

Doug,

I wanted to let you know how pleased my students and I were with a presentation by Pam Knowles on birds of prey in South Dakota. She did an excellent job of keeping the students' attention and provided a very informative presentation. I would love to have her return for a repeat performance for next year, if possible.

Cheryl Huddleston
Hot Springs High School
Bio 1 & Bio 2
Asst. Cross Country,
Head G. Track & Field