



# Great Basin Wildlife Rescue

Rehabilitation & Education.

FEBRUARY 2013

VOL. #3 ISSUE #1

## Romance Is for the Birds

Valentine's Day is a time for us to celebrate our love and commitment toward the special people in our lives, especially our romantic partners. In those romantic relationships, monogamy is usually considered an essential component, but did you know humans aren't the only ones in the animal kingdom who form monogamous relationships? In fact, about 90 percent of birds are considered monogamous.



Monogamy for birds means that a male and female form a bond for anywhere from one nesting to a breeding season to several breeding seasons or life. The bonded pair raises the baby birds together, although for some birds the male involvement may only mean building the nest or alerting the female to danger. However, this social monogamy doesn't mean that the birds are necessarily sexually monogamous. A female and male in a socially monogamous pair often mate with other partners, but they still raise the chicks with the bird they are bonded to. Some monogamous birds are said to mate for life, although this doesn't necessarily mean they only have one mate in their entire lives; some may find another mate if their partner is injured or dies, and others may abandon their mate if they find a stronger one. Birds that are said to mate for life include bald eagles, Canada geese, red-tailed hawks, common ravens, and blue jays.

Not all birds are monogamous, however. There is also polygynous mating, which is when one male mates with multiple females. Birds known for this behavior include redwing blackbirds, house wrens, northern harriers, and eastern meadowlarks. Polyandrous mating, when one female mates with multiple males, is relatively rare and includes species like red phalaropes, Wilson's phalaropes, sanderlings, and spotted sandpipers. A final type of bird mating system is promiscuous mating, which means the male and female only consort for the length of time it takes to copulate then move on. North American hummingbirds, sage grouse, and some kinds of sandpipers are considered promiscuous maters.

Photo: Bowen Pan edited by Cavit Erginsoy, [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:SwansCygnus\\_olor\\_edit2.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:SwansCygnus_olor_edit2.jpg)

*Mailing Address: P.O. Box 954, Spanish Fork, Utah 84660; Phone: (801)310-0186  
Email: [greatbasinrehab@yahoo.com](mailto:greatbasinrehab@yahoo.com); <http://www.greatbasinwildlife.net>*

## Questions for Connery

Can wild birds eat all types of berries?

Interesting question! Berries are a plant's way of ensuring its seeds are dispersed. If the seeds are surrounded by colorful, tasty, nutritious berries, birds will eat them, and the seeds will then be scattered in the birds' feces. For some plants, such as juniper, the seeds actually grow better after they've been through the digestive tract of a bird, since digestion takes out chemicals that would stop the seed from growing. But this doesn't mean that every kind of bird can eat every kind of berry. Berries that may be toxic to some birds are harmless to others, and some berries are toxic to birds only if they eat more than a certain amount. In general, berries are an important part of many birds' diets, especially during fall and winter, when other food sources are scarce, and bird species even have berry preferences; they will, however, resort to non-preferred types of berries if the kinds they like aren't available.

Picture: A fieldfare, *Turdus pilaris*, a European species of thrush related to the American robin. The picture is by Theresa Reynolds and can be found at [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fieldfare\\_\(Turdus\\_pilaris\).jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fieldfare_(Turdus_pilaris).jpg)





### Volunteer Spotlight

Janet is the assistant director for Great Basin and has been a volunteer there for four years. Janet has Master's degree from BYU in "Wildlife and Wildlands Conservation." She works as research faculty at BYU and as a teacher for Eleutian Technology. She loves to hike, camp, and read books. She also enjoys spending time with her husband and son.

Janet has always loved animals. Growing up, she had birds, mice, cats, dogs, and fish as pets. After college she decided she wanted to become involved with wildlife rehabilitation. She heard of Great Basin through the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.

Janet's favorite bird of prey is the peregrine falcon. She loves their speed and agility and wants to become a falconer one day. She loves working with Catherine the peregrine falcon, one of the many animal ambassadors at Great Basin.

Janet feels that rehabilitation and conservation is a very important to preserve nature's wildlife for the future. She says that it is an amazing feeling to be able to watch a recovered animal return back into the wild.

## Education Programs

EDUCATE. LEARN. CONSERVE.



Great Basin Wildlife Rescue provides excellent education programs to the public. We travel throughout Utah County with our education birds and provide presentations to schools, fairs, expos, Eagle Scout courts of honor, and many more!

If you are interested in having us attend your school or event, please contact us for pricing and scheduling information.

*Like us on Facebook or visit our website at [www.greatbasinwildlife.net](http://www.greatbasinwildlife.net) to receive more information about our upcoming events.*

*If you encounter sick, injured, or orphaned wildlife, please contact Great Basin Wildlife Rescue, your local Division of Wildlife resources, or your local Fish & Game Agency.*



*Janet's favorite bird of prey is the peregrine falcon.*

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." - Margaret Mead*