

## California National Guard Earth Day 2008

The California National Guard (CNG) Headquarters, located in the state capitol of Sacramento, celebrated Earth Day 2008 by inviting the University of California, Davis Raptor Center to lecture on raptors. Live birds (a male light morph Swainson's hawk and a male American kestrel) were presented along with valuable information regarding life history, anatomy, behavior, habitat requirements, and issues faced by raptors in California.



U.C. Davis Raptor Center Volunteer with  
Swainson's hawk - *Buteo swainsoni*  
Status - CA Threatened

Most raptors found in California are protected under one or more of the following laws/regulations: Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Federal Endangered Species Act, California Endangered Species Act, or Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. The CNG has installations that provide potential habitat not only for protected raptors, but to many other birds that also are covered under these laws/regulations.

One issue faced by protected species (often larger birds such as eagles), is electrocution from contact with overhead power lines. Avian interactions with old style overhead power lines can result not only in maiming or death of a protected bird, but have the potential to start wildfires as well. The CNG has been replacing old style power lines with new "raptor friendly" designs, in addition to incorporating the new styles into new construction.

Another issue of concern for some protected species is lead poisoning. Camp Roberts is in the range of the state and federally endangered California condor, a species which has been fatally poisoned by ingestion of lead bullet fragments. Recognizing the potential threat posed by the Camp Roberts' hunting program, the CNG banned the use of lead ammunition for hunters, becoming one of the first public lands in California to make this change. Since this pioneering action, the California Fish and Game Commission has subsequently banned lead ammunition within the condor's entire range.