

EAGLE RESCUE

On May 3, 2010, Laurie Hall spotted a baby eagle sitting on the lawn of the home next to Betty's Place. The bird was a fledgling and had been sitting on a pine tree for a couple of days and did a lot of crying. He couldn't fly.

Laurie's husband Jim, along with Mike and Mary Small also saw the bird, and Mike and Jim got on their phones to call the Conservancy to tell them about the bird. Laurie also told George Mouzakis, who called the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service because it was taking a long time to connect with the conservancy. The baby eagle was in bad shape, and its wounds were loaded with maggots.

As the Riverbenders were keeping an eye on baby eagle, he crossed the street and hid under the bougainvillea at Jim Bracknell's place. He stayed there until the volunteers from the Conservancy captured him. Fish and Wildlife showed up shortly after the capture, and were disappointed that they were not able to make the capture. Their guy said he had never captured one before.

NOW HERE IS THE REST OF THE STORY FROM THE JUNE 30, 2010 NAPLES NEWS

Tim Healy didn't think the day would come.

The Conservancy of Southwest Florida wildlife clinic volunteer did the honors Wednesday, opening the crate door to release a bald eagle back into the wild.

He and his wife, Norma, had brought the young eagle to the clinic May 3 with wounds so severe and maggot-infested that Healy doubted the eagle would make it.

The doubts were erased as the eagle spread its wings to fly up onto a branch of a tall pine tree in a wooded area south of Wiggins Pass Road in North Naples as a storm brewed overhead.

"The release is what it's all about," Healy said.

The eagle was thought to be only a couple months old when it was found hurt in a mobile home park along Walkerbilt Road. Nest watchers said the bird had fledged only a week before.

The eagle put up no fight when the Healys approached it, scooped it up into a towel and put in their car for the trip to the clinic, Healy said.

Wildlife rescuers treated the bird with a low-level laser to speed repair of deep-tissue injuries to its right leg, right wing and tail — the first time the Conservancy had used the technology, wildlife clinic director Joanna Fitzgerald said.

The bird was transferred to an outdoor recovery area on May 30 in anticipation of its return to its home territory.

Although its parents might have left the area for the summer, the young eagle is expected to make it on its own, she said.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission banded the eagle at the clinic before it was delivered to the release site.

Healy helped carry the crate, covered with a sheet, through the woods to a clearing with about a dozen onlookers following behind.

With the crate on the ground and the door open, it took some gentle jostling to convince the eagle to leave.

The eagle stayed on the tree limb as Healy and the others walked away — rehabilitation accomplished.

“You bring it in and pray for the best,” Healy said.