

## FACILITIES

### Transport boxes

These should be constructed so as to keep the casualty secluded from its surroundings during its journey. Adequate ventilation must be provided to avoid any risk of suffocation.

It should be of a size large enough to allow a little movement but not so large to allow the bird to thrash around risking further injury. It should be made from materials that are easy to clean or should be disposable. Cardboard pet carriers are commercially available from veterinary surgeries and make ideal transportation for small to medium size birds.

Dog and cat carrying baskets are NOT suitable for transporting casualties due to being very open and allowing the casualty to see its surroundings, therefore becoming more stressed.

A non-slip surface such as a towel, or even better, carpet should be provided on the floor of the box. This prevents the casualty sliding around and gives it something to grip whilst being transported.



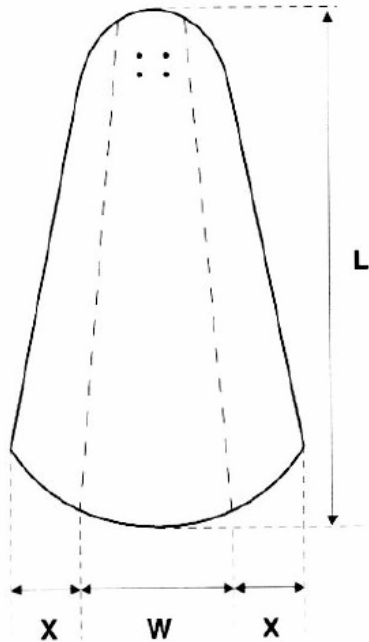
Cardboard carrying boxes bearing the **Raptor Rescue** logo are available for rehabilitators to use when transporting birds of prey.

### Catch Net



The catch nets are a recent addition to the list of specialist equipment and they are another example of items designed and manufactured especially for **Raptor Rescue**. The nets incorporate a sliding mechanism, which allows the net to be closed when a bird is caught, eliminating the possibilities of premature escape and minimising stress by allowing any bird to be caught quickly and efficiently. In conjunction with a set of extension poles, these nets are vital for situations where a bird such as a Sparrowhawk becomes trapped in a large warehouse.

## Making a Tail Sleeve



Make the tail sleeve from heavy-duty plastic or old x-ray film. Mark out as shown where 'L' is the length of tail, 'W' is the width of tail in closed position and 'X' is  $\frac{5}{8}$  of W. Fold along the dotted lines and punch four small holes in the top of the sleeve as shown. Place two small cable ties through the holes and partially close leaving a loop on the underside of the sleeve.

Place the bird with its back facing uppermost and slide these loops over the two centre tail feathers until the sleeve is covering the full length of the tail and then close the cable ties. Cut off the excess cable tie ends and fold the sleeve flaps to the underside of the tail. Turn the bird over and seal and secure the joint of the tail sleeve using adhesive tape.

Ensure that the sleeve does not obstruct the bird's vent. If the bird is moulting do not close the cable ties onto feathers which are still in blood. If necessary, the cable tie mounting holes can be set off centre to allow attachment to other tail feathers which are fully summed (not in blood).

## Treatment / Examination Area

The area should be free from damp and draughts but still have adequate ventilation e.g. windows. All doors and windows should be lockable.

The area should have an electrical power supply to provide adequate lighting and allow the use of various items of equipment such as heat pads and a water heater, which will be required for the daily care of casualties.

Running or stored water should be available at all times along with the availability of hot water to allow adequate cleaning. Drugs and medicines should be stored in a locked cupboard or box out of the reach of children.

All windows should have vertical bars or some other form of screen, mounted on the inside of the frame. This will minimise the likelihood of injury to a bird resulting from an attempt to fly through the plain glass.

## **Intensive Care Units**

These can be in the form of a disposable box or a purpose built hospital unit (see below). Whichever is used, it is essential that the unit is capable of providing warmth, quiet and seclusion for the casualty.

Ideally, the unit should be able to have the ambient temperature raised to 70-80°F (21-26°C) for the initial treatment of the casualty. Various sources of heat are available for achieving this. Whichever is used it should be controllable to avoid overheating the casualty.

Water should always be available for birds being treated. Floor material should provide a non-slip surface and old newspaper is recommended for this purpose. Sawdust, hay etc should not be used as explained under the *Intermediate Accommodation*.

There are legal requirements for the minimum dimensions for bird accommodation but that is covered in the chapter about laws. Casualties should only be kept in these confined quarters whilst receiving initial treatment or for a period determined by a veterinary surgeon.



The **Raptor Rescue** designed intensive care unit is constructed from a lightweight, strong and durable plastic which is hygienic and easy to clean. All edges and corners are plastic welded to give a smooth and cleanable surface. The units are slightly translucent therefore making them light internally and this radical design has proved to work very well. If required, the unit can be covered to create total darkness, however, in practice this is rarely necessary due to the seclusion offered by the unit.

The overall dimension of the double caged unit is 1.2 x 0.6 x 0.6 meters, each cage being a 0.6 m cube. A sliding partition between each unit means that the bird can be moved from one side to the other - eliminating unnecessary handling - particularly useful when cleaning is necessary.

## **Intermediate Accommodation**

This should be a room that allows the casualty some space for exercise but not such as to make observation, catching or handling a difficult task. The accommodation should give protection from the elements and seclusion for the casualty.

A double door entrance system must be employed to stop accidental escape. Any windows should be screened or have vertical bars fitted to the inside. Floor material should not be straw, hay, bark or sawdust as they can be sources of serious infection and can often harbour undesirable fungi.

## **Recovery Aviaries**

Construction should be such as to minimise stress and the risk of injury to any bird. They must be well drained and have adequate ventilation. Each aviary must be screened from any possible disturbance that may cause the occupant to panic. Wire fronted aviaries should, in general, be avoided, unless being used for hacking purposes. See the section on *Rehabilitation* for more information.

The aviary design should incorporate a two door entrance system to avoid accidental escape. If any bird damages itself in the aviary, modifications must be undertaken to make the aviary suitable for the species concerned.

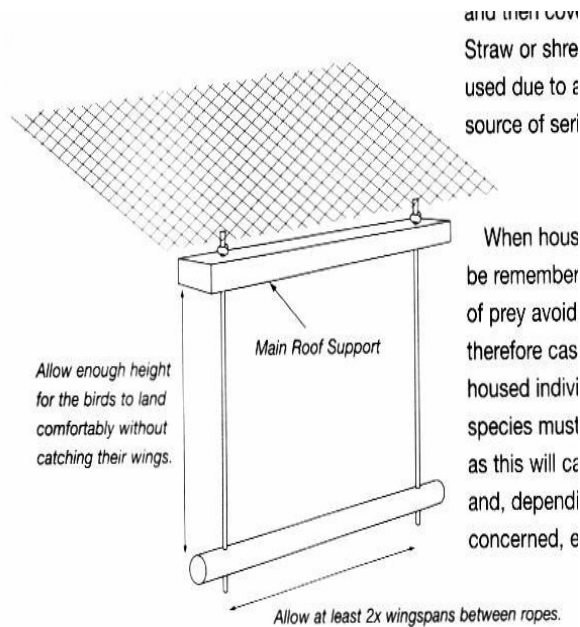
Different sized aviaries will be required, appropriate to the species being housed. Thought must be given to how different species are likely to react when confined in an aviary. A Buzzard may behave perfectly well in a 10 metre long aviary but the similarly sized Goshawk would very likely injure itself due to its greater speed and neurotic nature. As a guide only, aviaries measuring 2 metres by 2 metres and 2 metres high would be a minimum size for Kestrel and Tawny Owl sized birds. For larger species such as Buzzard and Peregrine Falcon, a minimum size would be 3.5 metres by 2.5 metres and 2 metres high. In many cases casualties would benefit from being housed in a larger enclosure. However, attention must be given to the species concerned as stated above. Variations on the skylight and seclusion style aviaries are best employed for housing wild casualties.

Plastic coated mesh of a reasonable gauge should be used for aviary roofs. Uncovered mesh tends to eventually go rusty and can then become very abrasive posing a possible source of injury. Thin hexagonal extrusion type wire, often referred to as 'chicken mesh', should never be used. This type of mesh acts like a cheese cutter on bird's feet and heads if they should fly into it, which wild casualties are almost certain to do. As an alternative to meshed roofs, sensibly spaced plastic or wooden slats work well.

The aviary should have a solid, roofed and water-proofed area for protection of the bird against the elements. An area within the aviary that is screened off from the main entrance (see diagram later) can be an advantage. Such an area will offer a retreat to the bird, if it is necessary to enter the aviary whilst it is occupied.

Various diameter sized perches should be provided and installed so as to allow enough room above the perch for a bird to land and take off without clipping its wings on the roof.

Swinging perches can be a useful addition, acting like a damper by absorbing some of the impact on the talons when a bird hits a perch at speed. They also encourage more frequent use of both leg and wing muscles. (see diagram).



A cleanable food ledge or platform should be provided rather than just dropping food onto the floor. Bathing and drinking water should always be available and to minimise disturbance, access to food ledges and baths should be provided from outside the aviary. Water containers and food ledges should be cleaned regularly and water may benefit from the inclusion of a low level of cetrimide (Hibiscrub) during warmer months, to prevent bacterial growths developing.

Observation points should be designed into the building of an aviary which allow the bird to be monitored and checked daily. Aviary floors are best concreted and then covered with gravel or sand. If this is not possible it is advised that floors are at least meshed to stop the entry of vermin and then covered with the gravel or sand. Straw or shredded bark should not be used due to a high risk of it being a source of serious fungal infection.

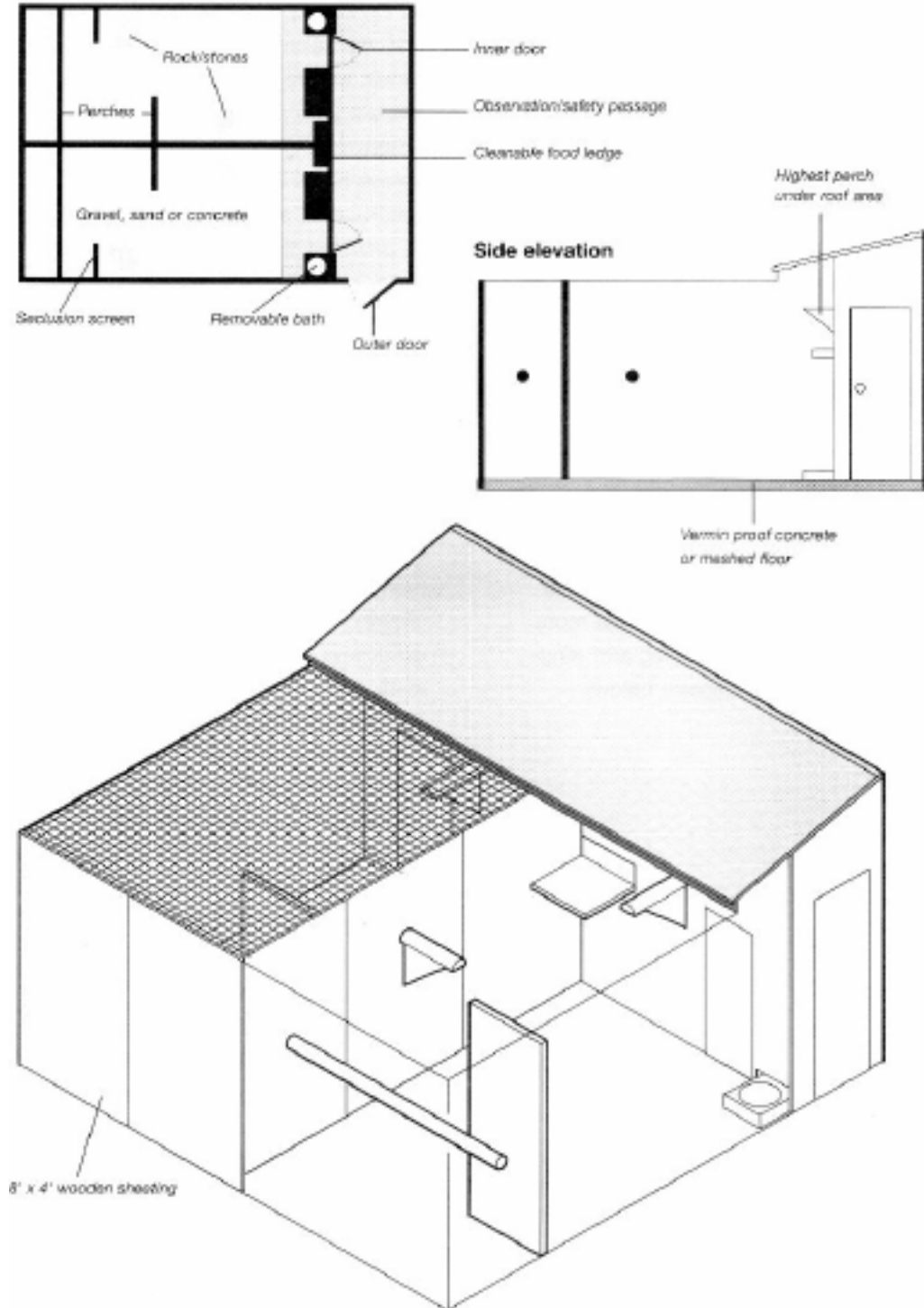
When housing casualties it should be remembered that in general, birds of prey avoid each other in the wild, therefore casualties should ideally be housed individually. The mixing of wild species must be avoided at all times as this would cause unnecessary stress and, depending on the species, even death.

### **Planning Permission**

It is recommended that before you build any facilities or aviaries that you check with your local planning authority that planning permission is not required. Having this in writing may save a lot of hassle later on.



**Suggested layout for a pair of Recovery Aviaries**



**Plan elevation**

## Portable Hacking Aviary



Each aviary measures 9ft x 6ft x 6ft and weighs just 80lbs. It can be easily transported and erected literally anywhere. They are virtually maintenance free and have an indefinite life-span.

This is a further example of innovative equipment developed to **Raptor Rescue** specifications, using the knowledge of some of the most experienced rehabilitators in the UK. The temporary use of the additional green panels allows the aviary to be used as a seclusion type enclosure when required.

## Loan Equipment

The Charity owns some items of equipment e.g. hospital units, catch nets and hacking aviaries and these are available to our rehabilitator members on a loan basis. Rehabilitators must have the basic facilities for taking in and caring for casualties before the trustees will consider loaning out this equipment. See the section *Accredited Rehabilitator Status* for more information.

## RESOURCES

NOTE: Inclusion in this list does not necessarily imply Raptor Rescue's endorsement.

### Addresses for Equipment & Materials

<b>Beak &amp; Talon clippers</b>	<i>Merlin Medical</i> , The Whitbread Centre, Rhymney, Gwent NP22 5XD.  <i>Foot Care Supplies</i> , 164 Bridgewater Drive, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex SS0 0DS. Tele 0845 230 0770 Web: <a href="http://www.footcaresupplies.com">www.footcaresupplies.com</a>
<b>Catch Nets</b>	<i>MDC Exports</i> , Unit 11, Titan Court, Laporte Way, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU4 8EF Tele 01582 655600
<b>Dispatching pliers</b>	<i>Mardle Products</i> , Great Yarmouth. Tele 01493 331525 Web: <a href="http://www.mardleproducts.co.uk">www.mardleproducts.co.uk</a>
<b>Heat pads</b>	<i>Petnap Ltd</i> , Hillside, Main Street, Tingewick, Bucks MK18 4NN Tele 0800 027 7952
<b>Hospital units</b>	<i>Luma Plastics</i> , Unit 4, Baltimore Trading Estate, Baltimore Road, Great Barr, Birmingham B42 1DD Tele 0121 344 4414
<b>Latex gloves</b>	<i>Lakeland Limited</i> , Alexandra Buildings, Windermere, Cumbria LA23 1BQ also shops nationwide. Tele 01539 488100 Web: <a href="http://www.lakelandlimited.co.uk">www.lakelandlimited.co.uk</a>
<b>Portable aviaries</b>	<i>Clem Cartledge</i> , Ryslip Kennels, Church Lane, Binfield, Bracknell, Berks RG42 5NL Tele 01344 424144