



Banding of Cooper's Hawk Chicks in Beacon Hill Park

Date: Tuesday, June 22, 2010

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC – Tomorrow morning, City Parks staff will assist Andy Stewart, a wildlife biologist, with the banding of Cooper's Hawk chicks in Beacon Hill Park. Since 1995, more than 1,600 Cooper's Hawks have been colour-banded at over 85 sites in Greater Victoria as part of a study of their urban nesting habits.

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY:

What: Banding and Identification of Cooper's Hawk Chicks in Beacon Hill Park
When: Wednesday, June 23, 2010, from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.
Where: Beacon Hill Park (Media are asked to meet in front of the Cameron Bandshell, located off Douglas Street near Goodacre Lake.)

A professional arborist will climb a 27-metre, Western red cedar in Beacon Hill Park to reach the nest, carefully lowering the chicks in a bag to Stewart, who will be waiting on the ground. With Parks staff assisting, Stewart will record a variety of weights and measurements, and fit the chicks with colour bands – red for females and black for males. The arborist will then safely place the banded chicks into their nest.

Andy Stewart is considered to be Victoria's "Cooper's Hawk Guru." Recently retired from the Ministry of Environment, Stewart began researching Cooper's Hawks as a personal interest 15 years ago. Before then, the hawks were thought to be an endangered species in the wild, but Stewart's study has shown they prefer to live in cities.

The Cooper's Hawk is the most common raptor, or bird of prey, in Victoria. About the size of a crow, this hawk can often be seen flying over parks and sidewalks. Victoria's yards, playing fields, gardens, and back alleys provide an ideal habitat for catching prey such as starlings, sparrows, rabbits and rats.

Over the past 15 years, the population of Cooper's Hawks has remained stable. This year, there are at least six nests in Victoria, with each nest containing three to five chicks. This will be the fourth year that City staff have assisted Stewart with the banding and identification of Cooper's Hawks in Victoria parks.

To report a sighting of a Cooper's Hawk in Victoria, the public can contact Andy Stewart at 250.477.1328 or email andy.stewart@shaw.ca

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For More Information:

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