

**THE VERACRUZ RIVER OF RAPTORS PROJECT**  
**RAPTORS IDENTIFICATION-COUNTING COURSE MARCH 2017**



The Veracruz River of Raptors © Pronatura Veracruz; Laughing Falcon © Pronatura Veracruz

March 20 to March 30, 2017

**DO NOT miss this GREAT opportunity**

**Fee \$1,800 USD (Include housing and food and local transportation)**

**LIMITED SPACE TO 10 PEOPLE**

The Pronatura Veracruz River of Raptors program witnesses the **greatest migration spectacle on Earth**. Every fall, in central Veracruz Mexico, an average of four and a half million raptors from over 25 species have been counted in Pronatura's monitoring stations in their southward migratory journey! On a good day, **over 100,000 migratory raptors** and vultures can cover the skies; but, during a **Big Day, over 500,000 have been count!**

During the spring migration we have the opportunity to see the migration northward, although, the numbers are not comparable with the numbers in the Fall, it brings the opportunity to learn how to identify the following Raptors: (Osprey, Swainson's Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Zone-Tailed Hawk, Gray Hawk, Roadside Hawk, Short-tailed Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Common-black Hawk, Black-collared Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, American Kestrel, Laughing Falcon, Bat Falcon, Aplomado Falcon, Crested Caracara, Northern Harrier, Hook-billed Kite, Mississippi Kite, Swallow-tailed Kite, Snail Kite, Turkey Vulture and Black Vulture). The observation location, encounters the same species and the same flight behavior as in the fall, so participants, will be able to gradually get the skill to count and identify a wide variety of raptors and also learn to estimate large flocks of raptors (some lines can have 10 thousand raptors and cross the sky in less than 10 minutes) similar the way that the counters from the Veracruz River of Raptors count during the fall.

This raptor counting-identification course is perfect for those that want to join a raptor migration count site or improve their raptor identifications skills; it will be held during the peak of the spring migration March 20 to March 30, 2017, where thousands of raptor coming from their wintering grounds, stream the sky of central Veracruz where the training course is set up.

The Training course will be held in the center of Veracruz Mexico, (state that contains more than 700 bird's species) in the city of Xalapa in the *Parque Natura*. At this site, the flight is around 200 000 raptors, and the course dates are selected in the middle of the peak flight of the spring migration. Participants will view a wide diversity of migratory raptors, plus the local biodiversity of the place. More than 20 raptor species will be seen and many great tropical birds, like Masked Tityra, White-collared Seedeater, White-bellied Wren, Montezuma Oropendola, endemics as the Mexican Sheartail and others. Situated near the mountains and not too far from the coast, you will be immersed in the beauty rural Mexico and be able to visit many places depending on your interest. Traveling in central Veracruz is safe and you will enjoy seeing the rural culture of the region and enjoy a diverse gastronomy during your time here.

The training course will be taught by Kashmir Wolf, (official counter and monitoring coordinator of the Veracruz River of Raptors project).

The training will have discussion hours and field practice hours, discussion will talk about different issues and main tasks like the Veracruz River of Raptors program methods and goals, raptor flight strategies, behavior of the raptors, etc. Field practice hours we will be spent in the observation tower learning all what you need to ID and count migratory raptors by your own.

After this training course we expect you to be able to count and identify raptor species on your own, leave with an understanding of the patterns of raptor migration. You will be potentially certified by the Veracruz River of Raptors team to be hired in the Fall migration as a counter or assistant at the Veracruz River of Raptors or other watch sites in Central or North America, an experience that you can't miss in your life. Some friendly evaluations are expected during the course to help participants improve.

**FEE: \$1,800 USD** (Include lodging, food and local transportation)

**FEE: \$ 800 USD** (without housing, food and transportation)

All course materials are included.

Housing will be in Xalapa city (Where the observation towers are located) and you will need to share a room with other probably but may have your own room.

We only cover and care of the transportation from the Veracruz Airport to Xalapa and way back to the Airport at the end, as well as the local transportation to the birding trips as part of the course. You will have to pay for your own if you decide to stay longer for traveling into Mexico.

\*If you prefer fly into Mexico City, we can provide information on bus transportation to Xalapa, we recommend you to arrive at Veracruz International Airport.

**Important:** Pronatura do not cover the flight transportation or prior trips to get into Veracruz.



## Trainer back ground


**Biologist Kashmir Wolf.**




Original from Mexico city he is currently the monitoring coordinator of the Veracruz River of Raptors, grew up in a town in Veracruz Mexico where he started his career working as a collector of entomology samples at the age of 11 and at the age of 12 became his birder career, watching the spring migration and starting the check list of the birds of his town, at the age of 17 he started to participate at the Swainson's Hawk Observatory as assistant and started learning how to identify migratory raptors and count them, in 2008 he became part of the crew at the Veracruz River Raptors project where he started as assistant, next year he became an Official Counter till date. Since graduate from college he has been working with birds in Honduras, El Salvador, Texas and Pennsylvania in the US. And has been working and birding in almost all Mexico having great skills in hawk identification and birds in general.

**RAPTOR IDENTIFICACION-COUNTING COURSE SCHEDULE 2017**  
**PRONATURA MÉXICO A.C- VERACRUZ**

<b>Main theme</b>	<b>Activities</b>
1. Arrival of all participants/Welcome meeting	<p>Pick up all participants at the airport and transport to Xalapa, Veracruz.</p> <p>17:00-18:00 Welcome meeting presentation of all participants and Introduction to the Veracruz River of Raptors.</p> <p>18:00 to 20:00 Dinner</p>
2. Introduction to the groups of raptors by shape.	<p>8:00-9:00 Breakfast</p> <p>9:00-11:00-1300 Visit to the Look-out, explanation of the flight direction and ID TEST (to see the level of each participant).</p> <p>13:00-14:00 Lunch</p> <p>14:00-15:00 Break</p> <p>15:00-17:00 Slides presentation: General characteristics of raptors by groups (Buteos, Falcons, Eagles, Accipiters and Kites) in the office.</p> <p>18:00-19:00 Dinner</p>
3. Counting and ID raptors  Will explain how to ID and count raptors at the same time, first practice of counting.	<p>07:00- 08:00 Breakfast</p> <p>08:00-13:00 Counting practice.</p> <p>13:00-14:00 Lunch.</p> <p>14:00-17:00 Counting practice.</p> <p>17:00-18:00 Break</p> <p>18:00-19:00 Dinner</p> <p>19:00-21:00 The characteristics of migratory raptors with Shapes.</p>

<p>4. Day OFF</p>	<p>Birding trip. (Alvarado)</p> 
<p>5. Characteristics of the species</p>	<p>07:00-08:00 Breakfast</p> <p>8:00 a 13:00 –Learning how the migrants looks during migration. (Outdoors)</p> <p>13:00 a 14:00- Lunch</p> <p>14:00 a 17:00- Hawk watching</p> <p>17:00 a 18:00 Break</p> <p>18:00 a 19:00 Dinner</p> <p>19:00 – 21:00 Talk about all species characteristics</p>
<p>6. Count-ID Practice</p>	<p>07:00-08:00 Breakfast.</p> <p>08:00-13:00 Practicing how to count and ID, will set up the way the count works in teams.</p> <p>13:00-14:00 Lunch.</p> <p>14:00-17:00 Continue the count- ID practice.</p> <p>17:00-18:00 Break.</p> <p>18:00- 19:00 Dinner.</p> <p>19:00 a 21:00 Flight strategies.</p>

<p>7. Day Off</p>	<p>Birding trip to Chavarrillo.</p> 
<p>8. Count-ID practice</p>	<p>07:00-08:00 Breakfast</p> <p>08:00-13:00 Practicing how to count and ID, will set up the way the count works.</p> <p>13:00-14:00. Lunch.</p> <p>14:00-17:00 Continue counting-ID practice.</p> <p>17:00-18:00 Break</p> <p>18:00- 19:00 Dinner</p> <p>19:00- 20:00 Principal migratory raptors in the world</p>
<p>8. Count-ID practice</p>	<p>07:00-08:00 Breakfast</p> <p>08:00-13:00 Practicing how to count and ID, will set up the way the count works.</p> <p>13:00-14:00. Lunch.</p> <p>14:00-17:00 Continue count-ID practice.</p> <p>17:00-18:00 Break</p> <p>18:00- 19:00 Dinner</p> <p>19:00-21:00 Tracking techniques (slides presentation)</p>

9. Count-ID practice	07:00-08:00 Breakfast 08:00-13:00 Practicing how to count and ID, will set up the way the count works. 13:00-14:00. Lunch. 14:00-17:00 Continue count-ID practice. 17:00-18:00 Break 18:00- 19:00 Dinner 19:00-21:00 Final Test, end of the course and celebration
10.	07:00-08:00 Breakfast and Farewell

**Birding trips: (Trips are optional and costs are included in the \$1800 package and not included in the \$800 one).**

**Chavarrillo** (between dry forest and cloud forest): to see Toucans, wrens, Oropendolas and more.  
**Alvarado** (Wetlands): to see Great Black Hawk, Black-collared Hawk, Sungrebe, and waterfowl.

**\*Pronatura will grant a diploma/certificate that contains the score of each participant in this course.**

**Evaluation:**

**Every test-day is going to have 1 or 2 points of value, the total tests will equal 100%  
With a rank of values as show below**

- 100% Excellent candidate, ready for VRR counting!**
- 90% Very good candidate, ready for VRR assisting!**
- 80% Good candidate, ready for North American sites**
- 70% or below: needs to improve Raptor counting and ID skills, ready to assist in North America**



## **REGISTRATION:**

Please complete the Registration & Participant Release and Indemnity Agreement included at the end of this brochure and email to: [rioderapaces@pronaturaveracruz.org](mailto:rioderapaces@pronaturaveracruz.org)

In the same email, please let us know the amount, hour and date of when your international transfer was sent or deposit via *Paypal*. Participants will receive the pre-training package information once participants sent us this information.

**NOTE: This information material is for exclusive use of Pronatura and the Organization Partner to promote the VRR environmental education and conservation efforts of Pronatura and its partner organizations conservation efforts in Latin America.**

### **Refund Policy**

Refunds are made according to the following policy:

- Cancellations made by participant 60 days before departure date will have 100% of deposit and any other balance payments refunded, minus a \$50 administrative fee.
- Cancellations made by participant within 30-60 days will have 50% of deposit returned and full refund of any balance payments received.
- Cancellations made by participant within 0-30 days: the deposit is not refundable, but any other balance payments will be refunded.

The above amounts of non-refundable monies are to cover certain fixed-cost services such as vehicle rental, housing deposits, guide fees, administrative fees, and other services.

### **Raptor Identification-Counting Course Cancellation and Itinerary Changes**

Allcourse activities are subject to change based on local conditions. Pronatura Veracruz reserves the right to cancel, change alter and/or rearrange any specific scheduled course activities, or the complete activities, based on the judgment of Pronatura Veracruz staff concerning to local conditions, keeping in mind at all times the safety of our guests. It is understood that as the Mexican based course and service provider Pronatura Veracruz has a special insight and knowledge in the host country and reserves the right to make all decisions that may affect the safety and health of our foreign visitors whether they be paying quests or guide, staff, management or owners of foreign-based course operations.

**Raptor Identification-Counting Course Insurance**

We strongly recommend the purchase of trip insurance in order to safeguard against any losses due to course cancellation due to illness, weather, or accident. For those participants with medical concerns, trip insurance would cover any medical emergencies up to a medical evacuation. Please check with your current insurance policy and/or you may contact Pronatura Veracruz or your travel agent for more information.

**Payment:**

International transfer to:

Pronatura A.C.

Bank: BBVA BANCOMER HOUSTON AGENCY

Address: 5075 Westheimer Rd, Suite 1260 W

Houston Tx. 77056 USA

ABA Number: 113-024-672

Branch Code: 568

Swift Code: B C M R M X M M P Y M

Account Number: 8000-477800-100

Or in our Paypal account:

[http://pronaturaveracruz.org/vrr/vrr\\_donaciones.php](http://pronaturaveracruz.org/vrr/vrr_donaciones.php)

**For more information and any other inquiry regarding this course contact:**

Elisa Peresbarbosa Rojas and Kashmir Wolf

Veracruz River of Raptors

Pronatura Veracruz A. C.

Ignacio Zaragoza número 73, Col.Centro,

Coatepec, Veracruz

México Tel. / Fax: +52 228 186 5548

[rioderapaces@pronaturaveracruz.org](mailto:rioderapaces@pronaturaveracruz.org)

[www.pronaturaveracruz.org](http://www.pronaturaveracruz.org)

**SEE NEXT PAGE FOR THE RESERVATION AND PARTICIPANT RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT TO BE SENT TOGETHER WITH THE TICKET OF YOUR RESERVATION. THANK YOU!**

**Pronatura Veracruz Raptor Identification-Counting Course  
Registration Form & Participant Release and Indemnity Agreement**

I am willingly participating in a Raptor Identification-Counting Course in the state of Veracruz, Mexico between \_\_\_\_\_, and I acknowledge that there are inherent dangers and risks that may occur with this trip, known or unknown, relating but not limited to: travel in remote areas by means of aircraft, boat, automobile and other conveyances, without the means of rapid evacuation or medical facilities; nature walks or hikes, swimming, use of camera and birding equipment, accidents and/or illness, and acts of nature, man, or God.

I recognize and agree that I am taking part in this course at my own risk. I acknowledge that Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association and Pronatura make no warranty or representation, express or implied, regarding the conditions that may be encountered during the course, and/or the safety of any means of transportation during the course, and that Hawk Mountain and Pronatura will have no liability for any defect or dangerous conditions pertaining thereto.

I further certify that I am in good health and able to and have taken any precautions recommended by my physician or training course leaders.

In consideration of the right to participate in this course, I hereby release Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association and Pronatura México A.C. and their agents, associates, related parties, directors, and staff, from all responsibilities for damages, injuries, losses, or delays due to any reason whatsoever and hereby assume all risks and dangers in connection with this training course.

I have read the related information pertaining to this training course and I am aware of the terms and conditions of the training course involving refunds and cancellations, responsibility and liability.

**Printed Name in Full:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_