

**THE VERACRUZ RIVER OF RAPTORS PROJECT**  
**RAPTORS IDENTIFICATION-COUNTING COURSE**  
**MARCH 2015**



**March 19<sup>th</sup> to April 07<sup>th</sup>**

DO NOT miss this **GREAT opportunity**  
Fee \$1400 USD (Include housing and food)  
**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, bringing the opportunity to learn 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 Veracruz River of Raptors counters count each fall.

This raptor counting-identification course is perfect for those that want to join a raptor migration count site or improve their raptor identifications skill; it will be held during the peak of the spring migration March 19th to April 7th. 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 be held in the center of Veracruz Mexico, (state that contains more than 700 bird species) in the town of Chichicaxtle at the Veracruz Bird Observatory. At this site, the flight is around 500,000 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 to the coast and not too far from the mountains, 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 Irving Chavez and Kashmir Wolf, (official counters both,\*see background for each one bellow) also will include some visits from professional ornithologist such as Dr. Ernesto Ruelas, who was the founder of the Veracruz River of Raptors project and Dr. Juan Francisco Ornelas, a hummingbird expert from the Ecology Institute. The training will have discussion/lecture 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 migrant 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 watchsites 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.



## ALL COURSE MATERIALS INCLUDING:



- Housing will be in two field houses in the town of Chichicaxtle (Where the observation tower is located) and you will need to share a room with other, in this town we will have the meals as well. We will provide 3 meals.

If you want to pay your own housing and food, the nearest hotel is 10 km (7 mile) away from the tower and is in Cardel city. The cost for a hotel room is between 50 USD/day and food is between 8 USD /meal. We only cover and care of the transportation from the Veracruz Airport to Chichicaxtle and way back to the Airport at the end, 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 the site, we recommend you to arrive at Veracruz International Airport.

**FEE: \$1,400 USD** (Include housing and food)

**FEE: \$ 1,200 USD** (without housing and food)

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



Dr. Mario A. Ramos Bird Observatory.



Bienvenido Hotel, Cardel City.



## TRAINER'S BACKGROUND



### Naturalist Irving Chávez

Original from a fishers town in the central coast of Veracruz, Irving started his career at the age of 10 when a group of biologists from Pronatura Veracruz started a banding station in his town, learning to handle bird in a banding station in the coast of Veracruz, he showed a great interest and ability to learn all the process. At the age of 14 was able to band birds for his own and became a LiderBander for the next 8 years. At the age of 15 he was invited to become assistant of the Veracruz River of Raptors project, where his assistantship last for 2 years to become an Official counter, till date he has been Counter and Field Coordinator of the Veracruz River of Raptors Count, having a great Raptor Identification and counting skills. He has participate doing banding in Costa Rica, banding passerines and marking Burrowing Owls in New Mexico. Has been invited to the migratory dragonfly conference in West Virginia to present our migratory dragonfly project, and because of his birding experience he has helped leading the Pronatura Tours during the Fall.



### Biologist Kashmir Wolf

Original from Mexico city, grew up in a town in Veracruz Mexico where he started his carrier working as a collector of entomology samples at the age of 11 and at the age of 12 become his birder career, watching the spring migration and starting the check list of the birds of his town. At the age of 17 he start to participate at the Swainson's Hawk Observatory as assistant and start learning how to identify migratory raptors and count them. In 2008 he became part of the crew at the Veracruz River Raptors project where 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, in the US, Texas and Pennsylvania where he was an intern of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, the world's first raptor observatory for conservation and learning. And has been working and birding in almost all Mexico having great skills in hawk identification and birds in general.



# RAPTOR IDENTIFICATION-COUNTING COURSE SCHEDULE 2015

DATE	MAIN THEME	ACTIVITIES
19-Mar-15	Arrival of all participants/Welcome meeting.	<p>Pick up all participants at the airport and transport to Chichicaxtle, Veracruz.</p> <p>17:00-18:00 Welcome meeting presentation of all participants.</p> <p>18:00 to 20:00 Dinner</p>
20-Mar-15	Introduction	<p>8:00-9:00 Breakfast</p> <p>9:00-11:00 Introduction to the Veracruz River of Raptors (VRR) program, the importance of having a good counting team.</p> <p>11:00-13:00 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)</p> <p>18:00-19:00 Dinner after walk</p> <p>19:00-21:00 Raptor Shapes presentation.</p>
21-Mar-15	<p>Counting and ID raptors</p> <p>Will explain how to ID and count raptors at the same time, first practice of counting.</p>	<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 Talk about the birds of the day and the counting practice issues.</p>



DATE	MAIN THEME	ACTIVITIES
22-Mar-15	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 counting-ID practice.  17:00-18:00 Break  18:00- 19:00 Dinner  19:00-20:00 Talk about the issues of the day
23-Mar-15	Day Off	Birding trip. (Chavarrillo)
24-Mar-15	Migration behavior	07:00-08:00 Breakfast  8:00 a 13:00 –Learning how the migrants behave during migration. (Outdoors)  13:00 a 14:00- Lunch  14:00 a 17:00- Hawk watching  17:00 a 18:00 Break  18:00 a 19:00 Dinner  19:00 – 21:00 Talk about all species behavior during migration. (Slides presentation)
25-Mar-15	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 site.  13:00-14:00. Lunch.  14:00-17:00 Continue the count- ID practice.  17:00-18:00 Break



DATE	MAIN THEME	ACTIVITIES
		18:00- 19:00 Dinner 19:00 a 21:00 Flight strategies. (Slides presentation)
26-Mar-15	Count-ID practice and TEST During the day the Raptor ID and estimation numbers will be tested.	07:00-08:00 Breakfast 08:00-13:00 Count- ID practice. Test 13:00-14:00 Lunch. 14:00-17:00 Count-ID practice. Test 17:00-18:00 Break 18:00-19:00 Dinner 19:00-21:00 Talk about the miss IDs of the day, (slides presentation as tool)
27-Mar-15	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 counting-ID practice. 17:00-18:00 Break 18:00- 19:00 Dinner 19:00-20:00 Talk about the issue
28-Mar-15	Day Off	Birding Trip (La Joya)
29-Mar-15	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.



DATE	MAIN THEME	ACTIVITIES
		17:00-18:00 Break 18:00- 19:00 Dinner 19:00-21:00 Tracking techniques (slides presentation)
30-Mar-15	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 Talk about the principal migratory raptors on the planet (slides presentation)
31-Mar-15	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. Test. 13:00-14:00. Lunch. 14:00-17:00 Continue counting-ID practice. Test. 17:00-18:00 Break 18:00- 19:00 Dinner 19:00-20:00 Talk about the issues of the day
1-Apr-15	Day Off	Birding trip (Alvarado)





DATE	MAIN THEME	ACTIVITIES
2-Apr-15	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 counting-ID practice. 17:00-18:00 Break 18:00- 19:00 Dinner 19:00-20:00 Talk about the issues of the day
3-Apr-15	Formal Count day, evaluation by Irving-Kashmir  The participants will manage and organize the count for the day and will be responsible for filling data sheets.	07:00-08:00 Breakfast 08:00-18:00 Count. Lunch will be take it in a flight break around 13:00 18:00-19:00 Dinner 19:00-20:00 Fill Data sheets.
4-Apr-15	Formal Count day, evaluation by Irving-Kashmir  The participants will manage and organize the count for the day and will be responsible for filling data sheets.	07:00-08:00 Breakfast 08:00-18:00 Count. Lunch will be take it in a flight break around 13:00 18:00-19:00 Dinner 19:00-20:00 Fill Data sheets.
5-Apr-15	Formal Count day, evaluation by Irving-Kashmir  The participants will manage and organize the count for the day and will be responsible for filling data sheets.	07:00-08:00 Breakfast 08:00-18:00 Count. Lunch will be take it in a flight break around 13:00 18:00-19:00 Dinner 19:00-20:00 Fill Data sheets.
6-Apr-15	Day Off	Birding trip (Xalapa)
7-Apr-15	Free Hawk Watching/ end of the training course	07:00-08:00 Breakfast 13:00-14:00 Lunch 14:00-18:00 review of the course- feedback will give the score for each participant, Diploma and Farewell



**Birding trips: (Trips are optional and each participant will have to pay own transportation and food, remember that traveling here is very cheap)**

**Chavarrillo** (between dry forest and cloud forest): to see Toucans, wrens, Oropendolas and more.

**La Joya** (Pine Forest): to see Red Warbler, Olive Warbler, Painted Redstar, Brushfinches, etc.

**Alvarado** (Wetlands): to see Great Black Hawk, Black-collared Hawk, Sungrebe, and waterfowl.

**Xalapa (Cloud Forest)**: to see Chachalacas, thrushes, Squirrel Cuckoo, Parrots, Blue Mockingbird and many more. Probably we can visit the Museum of Anthropology.

**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 amount and date your reservation deposit check was sent. 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.

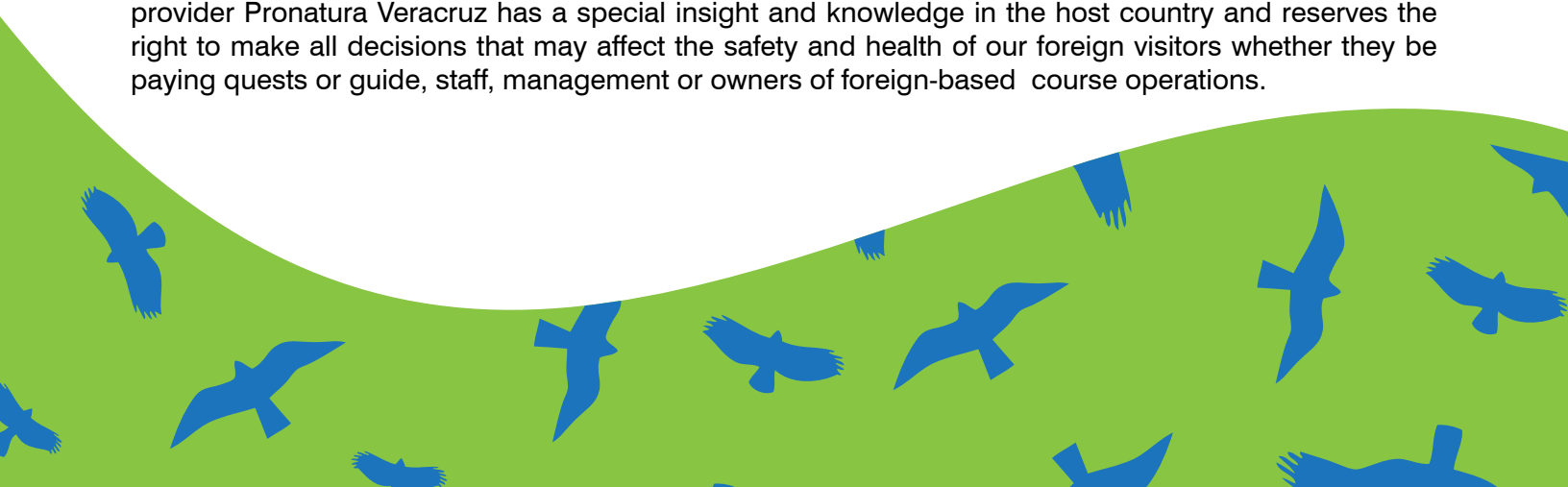
### **Refund Policy**

Refunds are made according to the following policy:

- Cancellations made by participant 30 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 15 days will have 50% of deposit returned and full refund of any balance payments received.
- Cancellations made by participant within 15: 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**

All course 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:**

You can send a check made out to "Veracruz Project" to:  
(Laurie J. Goodrich, Ph.D)  
Acopian Center for Conservation Learning  
Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association  
410 Summer Valley Road • Orwigsburg, PA 17961  
570-943-3411 x 106 for questions

Or send an 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

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

Elisa Peresbarbosa Rojas  
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Pronatura México A.C.-Veracruz  
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Coatepec, Veracruz  
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[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: \_\_\_\_\_

**Send the form to: [riderapaces@pronaturaveracruz.org](mailto:riderapaces@pronaturaveracruz.org)**