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## CKWC Raptor Rapture



**Janie Veltkamp and Beauty the eagle**

*Photo by Glen Hush*

**By Teri Brennan**

**Published Jan. 5, 2018 at 1:37 p.m.**

**CEDAR KEY** -- Did you know that, of all the lower 48 states, Florida has the greatest number of nesting bald eagles -- our national symbol?

Please meet Jane Veltkamp; a raptor biologist and rehabilitator, wildlife educator, master falconer and recent Cedar Key Woman's Club member. I mention the two here together because Janie is the lifetime guardian of Beauty, a bald eagle, who survived a gunshot to the beak, and then was left to die.

Thanks to Janie, her expertise, and an innovative-healing team, Beauty was fitted

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with a prosthetic beak and now lives out a nearly natural life in Idaho at Birds of Prey Northwest under Janie's care.

When not rehabilitating raptors, Janie has spent 10 years of her career reintroducing ospreys and peregrine falcons to regions where they had disappeared from their habitat.

Oh, and did I mention that she is the eagle expert for the Coeur d'Alene Tribe's Native American Aviaries? To add another feather to her cap, Janie has co-written a book titled *Beauty and the Beak*, recounting the pioneering journey of Beauty. Janie tells the story of how science, technology and a 3-D printed beak rescued a bald eagle.

Currently, the Cedar Key School third through sixth grade students are reading *Beauty and the Beak* while following the available instruction guide, a Green STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) Resource. Get this! Also available is a life-size prosthetic beak, the same as the one fitted for Beauty.

If I sound like I am crowing about Jane Veltkamp and her membership in the Cedar Key Woman's Club, I am! Raptor rescue and rehabilitation is not for the faint of heart. A rare bird Janie is -- a consummate volunteer as strong and brave as the birds she serves.

For more information about Janie and her work, please visit her website <http://www.birdsofpreynorthwest.org/>.

<https://youtu.be/3qz9EvjtV7k>

**Here is the video created about the American Bald Eagle named Beauty.**