

# RRF 2023 Elections

The Raptor Research Foundation election season is here! The RRF nominations committee worked hard to line up a great slate of candidates for four directors' seats for the 2023 election.

Voting is a critical role for RRF members. Why? Because your vote represents your voice for the future of RRF. RRF directors are the only voting members on our board and their decisions will have an impact on RRF's future.

Voting in the RRF elections is your chance to elect candidates who will work for the issues you care about. This year's ballot will contain one important topic for RRF members:

1. Election for positions on the Board of Directors

## Candidates for directors, serving a 3-year term

### *North American Director #3 (vote for one)*

- *Michael Jones*
- *Trish Miller*

### *Eurasian Director (vote for **one**)*

- *Kenneth Johansen*
- *Natasha Murphy*

### *At Large Director #3 and #6 (vote for two; all nominees are pooled and the two who receive the most votes win the seats)*

- *Camille B. Concepcion*
- *Jennifer O. Coulson*
- *Juan Manuel Grande*
- *Joan Morrison*

# Nominees and Biography Sketches

## North American Director #3: vote for one

Michael Jones

Director of Avian Rehabilitation and Research  
American Eagle Foundation  
Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, USA

I am a member of the Raptor Research Foundation (RRF) because I am passionate about birds of prey. While I've had the opportunity to provide medical and surgical care for many species, my singular passion and focus in veterinary medicine has always been the health, management and conservation of birds of prey.

Being a member of RRF has helped me in my professional career by providing opportunities to not only network, but to collaborate with and learn from renowned raptor veterinarians, biologists, ecologists, researchers, etc. from around the globe. Of equal importance are the opportunities to continue to grow my knowledge and skills through access to publications, grants, field work opportunities, conferences, and workshops.

I would like to serve on the RRF board because I believe I can contribute to the growth and development of the RRF, its members, and its mission. Specific skills that I can bring to the RRF board include more than 30 years of academic and practice experience in avian, exotic pet, wildlife and zoological species medicine and surgery, significant research and publication experience, as well as leadership experience in student services, diversity, community outreach/engagement, and recruitment at the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine.

My vision of the challenges that raptors face is that they are threatened by multiple anthropogenic threats, such as trauma, toxin exposure, habitat loss and degradation, climate change, human-wildlife conflict, and emerging or reemerging diseases. To address these challenges, it is important for RRF to continue to support its members in conducting high-quality research that informs and advocates for effective conservation actions and policies. Equally important is community outreach and education especially geared towards diverse elementary, middle school, and high school age students during this significant formative time and influence of career exploration.

Trish Miller

Executive Director

Senior Research Wildlife Biologist  
Conservation Science Global, Inc.  
Cape May, New Jersey USA

I attended my first RRF Conference in 2007. Since then, it has been a mainstay of my scientific career. First and foremost, RRF, with its global network of researchers, has provided amazing opportunities for me to meet and learn from others working in raptor research and conservation worldwide. This has spawned ideas and collaborations that continue to grow with each new conference. RRF has also given me the opportunity to give back, by leading the telemetry workshop and teaching others, by providing me the opportunity to mentor new raptor researchers, and by providing me the opportunity to chair the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Serving on the board is a privilege. It is an opportunity to provide guidance to help RRF meet its mission, achieve its goals, grow, and better serve its members. I would like to continue to be on the board to do all those things. I recognize that there are still challenges and issues facing RRF and its members. As such I hope to continue pushing RRF forward, to grow its membership base to countries that are underrepresented and so that it will become a place where all raptor researchers feel safe and welcome. This is critical for RRF to meet its mission.

The mission of RRF is to advance the science, conservation, and understanding of birds of prey. It does this primarily through “accumulation and dissemination of scientific information about raptors” at conferences and with publication of the Journal of Raptor Research. But it cannot do this without a strong and diverse board and membership. First, I am passionate about raptors, conservation, and science and I am just as passionate about ensuring that we have a diverse membership and create an inclusive environment for RRF members. These are just a couple of the things that I bring to RRF as a board member.

The overarching conservation issue of our lifetimes is global climate change. Climate change is affecting raptor populations directly through ecosystem wide changes (e.g., shifts in rainfall patterns) and indirectly through increasing development of renewables in wild places to mitigate climate change. An issue of this magnitude can be addressed only by bringing together a globally diverse network of raptor researchers. With the majority of current members in developed nations, RRF can best serve its members, meet its mission, and address global conservation issues by recruiting and supporting more members from developing nations.

**Eurasian Director: vote for one**

Kenneth Johansen  
Raptor Group Finnmark  
Alta, Norway

Falcons and other birds of prey have been my primary interest most of my life. By profession I am a physician, but I have been involved in raptor work and research throughout the years. My main focus has been on the breeding ecology and management of gyrfalcons in Northern Norway, where I live. As part of a local raptor group I also work with other birds of prey and owls in my surroundings. Our work with arctic raptors spans more than three decades, and we will continue to conduct research and applied management on gyrfalcons in particular, with emphasis on the effect of a rapidly changing climate in the arctic. I regularly enjoy gyrfalcon fieldwork in Iceland, together with leading experts in the field.

Collaboration with other groups and researchers across the range are mandatory in order to detect climate-driven changes as early as possible.

I have been a member of RRF for some 25 years, and I attend the annual conferences whenever possible. The last three years I have served as the Eurasian Director on the RRF board.

I have attended different multinational collaboration efforts and projects on large falcons in the circumpolar area. I have a wide network of raptor biologists, researchers and falconers from all continents. Collaboration will be even more important for research and management of birds of prey in the years to come.

RRF should continue to play a central role in supporting collaboration and networking in the future, and as part of this increase the involvement in, and impact of the organization outside North America.

As one of the initiators of formalizing RRF's international efforts, I was happy that the board in 2023 approved the formation of an international outreach committee, of which I am one of the members. Our committee looks forward to launch initiatives and take action to reach these goals.

I hope to be trusted to continue as Eurasian Director of the Raptor Research Foundation for the period 2024-2027.

**Natasha Murphy**

Marine Institute  
Oranmore, Co. Galway, Ireland.

Since 2012, I have worked on various raptor projects internationally (e.g., Ireland, Thailand, Switzerland) and served as secretary for the Irish Hawking Club. During that time, direct involvement with the RRF felt out of my reach. It wasn't until I relocated to the U.S. for my PhD in 2019 that I attended my first RRF conference. RRF events allowed me to network and meet individuals who would go on to contribute greatly to my own projects on Ospreys and Barn Owls in the south-eastern United States. RRF grants supported my travel to

present at conferences and JRR has kept me abreast of the latest in global raptor research. As such, when I was nominated as Eurasian Director, I saw this as an opportunity to give back to an organization that has supported me and provides invaluable resources to early career researchers. As Eurasian Director, I believe my diverse experiences in global raptor research, falconry, rehabilitation, and education will afford me unique perspectives from which to offer support. I can pull on my previous fundraising, mentorship, and science communication experience to benefit the board and membership. I am motivated to serve RRF members outside of the U.S., especially those who may feel as I did; that opportunities to engage with and benefit from the RRF's mission are limited due to their location or native language. Our ability to conserve the most at-risk raptor taxa is limited by known discrepancies in the geographic distribution of resources. This, I believe, is a critical challenge our community must collaborate on to overcome. In tackling this multifaceted issue, we can serve the RRF's membership and mission by supporting our non-US membership, increasing local capacity for raptor research, and encouraging those researchers in underrepresented countries to get directly involved with the RRF.

## Director At Large #3 and #6: vote for 2

Camille B. Concepcion

Research Associate

Hawk Mountain Sanctuary

Camille B. Concepcion, a wildlife ecologist since 2003, embarked on her research journey with the Philippine Eagle, one of the world's rarest and most endangered birds. Her academic path led her to earn an Erasmus Mundus MSc in Conservation Ecology, spanning the UK, France, and Portugal, followed by a Ph.D. in Wildlife Ecology from West Virginia University in the USA. Presently, Camille serves as a Research Associate for Hawk Mountain Sanctuary (USA), an institution renowned for raptor research and conservation, notably as the sole Asian Research Associate representing her continent. In addition, she holds the title of Climate Reality Leader. She lives in Mindanao, Philippines with her marine biologist husband and two children. Camille's research has centered on understanding the movement ecology of lesser-known Philippine birds of prey. Her involvement with the Raptor Research Foundation (RRF) began through the foundation's techniques manual and journal articles which deepened her passion for raptor research. RRF also provided her the opportunity to connect with Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and other supportive individuals pivotal in her academic journey during her master's and Ph.D. pursuits. Camille aspires to serve on the RRF board to give back to the organization that profoundly shaped her professional growth. She believes her multicultural and international experiences, coupled with her dynamism and professional background, including administrative roles, will significantly contribute to enriching RRF's vision and mission. Her commitment lies in championing diversity, inclusivity, and the overall well-being of RRF members. Camille sees that the lack of information, especially of least concern and common species, is one of the greatest challenges raptors face in today's world. This demands RRF's unwavering dedication to

promote collaborative work among its members. Her vision emphasizes fostering diversity, inclusivity, and the comprehensive welfare of RRF members, ensuring the organization's enduring impact in raptor research and conservation.

## Jennifer O. Coulson

President  
Orleans Audubon Society  
64340 Fogg Lane  
Pearl River, LA 70452 USA

RRF has played a vital role in my professional development. The 1986 meeting in Gainesville was my first scientific meeting where I gave my first oral paper. Several mentors and most of my colleagues are active in RRF. I have also published much of my research in the JRR.

I desire to help this organization expand its service and appeal to raptor researchers from all walks of life, around the globe. I will work to ensure that RRF keeps pace with the changing needs of raptor biologists and with innovations in technology. For example, I will assist JRR in addressing the ramifications of artificial intelligence. I will also work to expand RRF's reach internationally by increasing its international outreach, grants, and mentoring, by facilitating virtual participation, by holding more annual meetings abroad, and by networking with raptor organizations worldwide.

Two decades of experience as president of a nonprofit conservation organization has provided me with leadership skills needed to steer RRF into the future. My service to RRF illustrates my commitment. I am currently Director-At-Large #6 and serve on the following committees: Legal (Chair), Hamerstrom Award (Chair), Cade Award (Chair), Governance, Bylaws, International Outreach, and Oscar Beingolea Raptor Research Grant. I also serve as a JRR reviewer. My professional affiliations include: Adjunct Faculty, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Tulane University and President, Orleans Audubon Society.

Looking forward, RRF needs to adapt quickly to assist raptor researchers in studying and coping with the increasing anthropogenic threats facing raptors. RRF can help address this crisis by providing a variety of resources and facilitating the rapid exchange of information and ideas. The JRR remains an important tool in this battle, and decreasing time to publication, increasing the number of Conservation Letters, and providing full open access will increase RRF's global impact.

## Juan Manuel Grande

Colaboratorio de Biodiversidad, Ecología y Conservación

Instituto de Ciencias de la Tierra y Ambientales de La Pampa (INCITAP)- CONICET / Facultad de Ciencias Exactas y Naturales - UNLPam, Argentina

I've been a raptor researcher through my academic and professional career. My first contact with RRF was through the JRR, a journal that filled my gaps of knowledge on raptors' livelihoods, threats, and management actions to face those threats. RRF was also a tipping point when I had the luck (considering I lived outside USA-Canada) to assist to an RRF conference held in Seville in 2002. There, I had access to first quality science as well as to networking opportunities that would be key in my future.

I was member of RRF in the 2000's and through the last decade, being Director at Large of the RRF Board for two periods. I currently chair the Membership Committee and I recently chaired the Nominations Committee.

The mission statement of RRF is to advance the science, conservation, and understanding of birds of prey. There are between 528-580 species of raptors in the world. Only 56 of them occur in USA-Canada. Of 103 raptor species threatened globally, only four occur in USA-Canada. RRF's membership however, is actually composed mostly by people from those two countries. If RRF has to be the leading organization pushing research and conservation of raptors worldwide, it has to include a wider representation of people from across the world. In this sense, I think that being from a country that recurrently struggles in crises, where research is done with a lot of imagination and personal effort, and where conservation practice is complex, gives me a good perspective of some problems raptor researchers face around the world. I take this particular perspective to the Board, where my presence was key to improve travel support and research grants for people of countries with limited possibilities. I work to open RRF to those that will lead conservation of raptors worldwide, what I think, will allow RRF to fulfil its goal statement.

## Joan Morrison

Professor of Biology and Environmental Science, Emerita  
Trinity College, Hartford, CT  
Current residence: Corrales, NM

I was introduced to RRF when I attended my first conference, in 1990. Soon after that I began my graduate studies on the Crested Caracara, in Florida. Since then, RRF has been my professional home; I have been a Regular and now am a Lifetime member, and I have attended 23 conferences in the 3 decades since. I was an Associate Editor for JRR for many years. In that role, not only did I meet and work with some incredible raptor folks, reviewing manuscripts helped me improve my own writing. I find RRF members to be friendly and the conferences to be welcoming. I strongly support RRF's increased focus on engaging with students and our international members.

In 2006, at the Veracruz meeting, then President Lenny Young asked me to be the Secretary. I served in that capacity from 2006 to 2010, then again, from 2015 through 2022. I stepped down

so I could co-lead the planning effort for the 2023 conference in Albuquerque. I want to serve on the RRF board so I could become involved in a different capacity than I have in the past.

Having been an RRF member for so long and, as Secretary, experienced board meetings and many other aspects of the foundation, I feel I bring a lot of history and in-depth knowledge of the workings of RRF.

Conservation continues to be at the forefront of raptor studies these days. Discussions have been expanding within the Foundation about our role in advocacy and how that fits within our mission, which is grounded in science. Given the challenges faced by raptors worldwide, it seems that RRF must find ways to continue developing the science but also to better translate that science into meaningful conservation actions and ways to engage with the public. I hope, if I am elected to the Board, to participate in these discussions and help RRF find an acceptable way forward.