



MEDIA RELEASE

Visitors On Receiving End

The Territory Wildlife Park has welcomed a new pint-sized edition to the popular Birds of Prey display – Cherokee the Pacific Bazza.

Animal trainer Priscilla Leeson said as a special feature during the display, one audience member will have the opportunity to have a keeper fly the bird to their leather glove.

“This will provide an opportunity for visitors to experience what we as keepers get to experience, and hopefully enhance their appreciation for the Top End’s native birds of prey,” Ms Leeson said.

“Cherokee is the only one of the nine raptors we currently have that flies to an audience member and he is great because he feels comfortable with anyone while the other birds prefer to stay near those people they’re accustomed to.

“The other birds we have part of the display include a wedge-tail eagle, osprey, brahmyn kite, barn owls and barking owls, which are all native to the Territory.”

The Pacific Bazza is one of the smallest members of the raptor family and unlike most other raptors, uses his sharp talons to catch prey that is predominantly green in colour such as stick insects and frogs.

This unusual liking for green foods is due to a specially adapted eye for distinguishing different shades of green, making it easy to identify its prey from leaves or shrubbery that it may be using as camouflage.

The Pacific Bazza is the only Australian raptor to have a crest and is commonly known as the Crested Hawk, with a wingspan usually 40cm wide.

The bird’s bold, brown and white horizontal strips across its breast and bright yellow eyes make it quite eye catching.

Ms Leeson said they can be quite difficult to see in the wild and are usually found flying among the canopy of trees rather than above, unlike most raptors.

Pacific Bazzas are also the only native Australian raptor that eats fruit with Cherokee having a particular taste for bananas.

Ends

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