



# **Feathers of Hope: Pete Dubacher, the Berkshire Bird Paradise, and the Human Connection with Birds (Excelsior Editions)**

*Barbara Chepaitis*

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*A joyful journey through Pete Dubacher's Berkshire Bird Paradise, and a thoughtful contemplation of our relationship to birds and nature.*

*Feathers of Hope* takes the reader on a joyful journey through the Berkshire Bird Paradise in Grafton, New York. Founded and maintained by Pete Dubacher, the Berkshire Bird Paradise is a magical place that provides sanctuary to over twelve hundred injured or otherwise unreleasable birds, from emus, pigeons, and tropical birds to eagles, owls, hawks, and more. New York City residents regularly drive four hours to hand-deliver injured pigeons to Pete, and wildlife officials across the country have sent injured birds for his care, from an eagle mauled by a bear in Alaska to cranes left over from a breeding program in Maryland. In April 1999, two baby golden eagles were hatched from two disabled birds, and the surviving eaglet, Dotty, was successfully released into the wild, and in 2003 two bald eagles were, for the first time ever, hatched in captivity, raised, and released.

Following Pete for a “typical” day at the sanctuary, which includes tossing dead rats to eagles and stoking woodstoves at one in the morning, author Barbara Chepaitis provides an intimate view of what it takes to maintain a dream of this proportion, and what makes Pete Dubacher the kind of man who can do so. Along the way, she also tells the stories of other people in many different walks of life who have found solace in and taken inspiration from their interactions with birds, including a college student who takes an injured baby bird to her critical theory class, avid birdwatchers who keep careful lists of all the birds they've seen, and a man who found meaning by rescuing injured pigeons in New York City. Together with Pete's story and the story of the Berkshire Bird Paradise, their stories offer an engaging look at how forging a stronger connection to birds, and to nature in general, can teach us to be more fully human. *Birds of Paradise* is for anyone who ever rescued a baby bird or wondered how to make a dream come true.

“...a heartwarming story which underlines the necessity of mankind's continued stewardship of the natural world.” — *Hudson Valley Magazine*

“In *Feathers of Hope*, Barbara Chepaitis fledges three quiet, amazing stories ... This book is for you if you like birds, if you like the environment or if you are interested in the possibilities and limits that a single person faces when trying to tackle a big problem.” — *Schenectady Sunday Gazette*

“...an engaging and informative book—indeed a bible of the bird world ... Each of the twenty-some chapters is a plum.” — *Berkshire Eagle*

Barbara Chepaitis is the author of seven novels, including the critically acclaimed *Feeding Christine* and *These Dreams*, as well as the sci-fi series featuring Jaguar Addams. The fourth novel in that series, *A Lunatic Fear*, was nominated for a Romantic Times BOOKclub Reviewers' Choice award. She is founder and director of the storytelling trio the Snickering Witches, and has taught classes in creativity, storytelling, and writing at the University at Albany–SUNY.

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