

Konner the Falcon is Back on the Job

Avian Specialty Veterinary Services of Alaska

By Scott L Ford, DVM, Dip. ABVP (Avian), May 21, 2009

www.alaskabirddoc.com / vet@alaskabirddoc.com



In January, All Creatures Animal Hospital of Bremerton, Washington called me to consult on a tiercel falcon that had sustained multiple fractures of his right tibiotarsus. The tibiotarsus is the “shin” bone in the lower leg, located between the knee and ankle. It turns out that I knew this bird as a previous patient owned by Robert Leporati. Konner is a hybrid peregrine X gyrfalcon and cherished friend and business partner of Bob’s. Every summer, Bob works with Konner to clear birds around an airport in New York. Waterfowl and other birds can create a real hazard for airplanes landing and taking off at the airport. For the most part, Konner and his other cage-mates just have to fly to a lure and play in the sky—that’s usually enough to make it an uncomfortable place for gulls, ducks, and geese.



Konner had injured himself during routine lure-training. The tibiotarsus was shattered into at least 5 larger pieces (and many smaller ones) and required placement of an intramedullary (IM) pin and external skeletal fixator (ESF). Because of trauma to nerves and tendons from the fractured bone ends, Konner could not move his foot and there was a lot of swelling. Not only this, but some bone had protruded from the lower part of the leg, which can prevent complete healing. However, between Konner’s easy-going attitude and Bob’s excellent care, Konner healed very well. I removed the last of Konner’s fixation hardware about 5 weeks after his first surgery. He was still unable to move his toes very much but as is typical for lower leg injuries, function did gradually return.

I was very pleased to receive an e-mail from Bob a few days ago. Konner is back to work! He has been able to use his foot pretty well since early April and is now back to full steam! I want to congratulate Konner and Bob on their hard work and patience and wish them the best in keeping New York’s skies safe for us.

Thanks, Bob, for taking the time to share this success!

If you have a success story to share, please e-mail me at vet@alaskabirddoc.com. These stories really make my day!

