

The Gallery

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Talon's Reach

LIKE MOST 13-HANDICAPS, KIN QUITUGUA HEADS TO THE GOLF COURSE WITH THOUGHTS OF BIRDIES. Not that his card will show it, but Quitugua will invariably tally an eagle—or some other bird of prey—during his round. A Guamanian master falconer who has lived in Colorado for almost four decades, Quitugua runs HawkQuest, an organization he co-founded 25 years ago as a way to educate the public about the role of raptors in our ecology. Quitugua keeps dozens of raptors (including a bald eagles, great horned owl, falcons and other taloned predators) at his center in Parker. Emphasizing environmental stewardship and awareness, he estimates he has reached more than a million people—the majority of them children—across the country with his outreach programs and “classrooms in the wild.” He often finds himself on golf courses, which, he says are among the “best places to spot and study raptors. The ones with trees make great nesting areas, and you can see them soaring above the courses that have rabbits, because that’s what they eat.” Quitugua has done demonstrations at Sanctuary, Vail Golf Club and Keystone and will do one this July 4th at Basalt’s Roaring Fork Club. On the Front Range, he notes that raptors abound at Park Hill, Saddle Rock, Red Hawk Ridge, Lone Tree and Meridian, where he rescued a Swainson’s hawk that had been dazed by a golf shot. “Estes Park has an osprey nest, as does The Raven at Three Peaks,” notes Quitugua. There’s also a bald eagle’s nest on Aspen Glen that has temporarily closed the course’s 10th hole. As head of a non-profit, tax-exempt charitable organization, Quitugua says his goal is to acquire enough land to construct a raptor facility open to public. In the meantime, golf courses provide ideal and ample avian sanctuaries. hawkquest.com; 303-690-6959.

Courtesy of Colorado AvidGolfer, June 2011