

MEDIA ADVISORY
For Immediate Release
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Tracy Aviary Takes the University of Utah by Storm
The Sky is the Limit with New Partnership

Salt Lake City, Utah – Tracy Aviary and the University of Utah have teamed up to bring a whole new level of excitement and education to fans by introducing a new mascot named Storm. Storm is a 6-year-old red-tailed hawk who makes appearances at U of U athletic competitions. He has already begun to show his stuff at Ute home football games at Rice-Eccles Stadium. With his rust-colored tail, commanding wingspan, and fearsome talons, Storm is a great ambassador for both raptors and athletes.

Allyce Linder, Central Bird Keeper at Tracy Aviary, offers more information on the majestic bird, “Red-tailed Hawks are one of the largest hawks in North America and Utah’s most common raptor. They are a fierce predator with keen eyesight and efficient weaponry; strong, sharp talons. Red-tails can be aggressive birds when defending nests or territories and will chase off other hawks, eagles, and owls. Their majestic 2- to 3-second raspy high-pitched scream is typically dubbed in movie soundtracks to represent just about any predatory bird. The collective ecological role of raptors is to control populations of species that could become “pests,” and to maintain what is known as “the balance of nature.” Red-tails are diurnal hunters, meaning they feed during daylight. Common prey items include voles, mice, rats, rabbits, snakes and squirrels. With eyesight eight times as powerful as the human eye, they watch for prey over open areas either from a perch or while soaring, making a steep dive to capture their prey. What better mascot for the Utah Utes than the red-tailed hawk?”

The goal of the Education Department at Tracy Aviary is to integrate the allure of birds with the best practices in interdisciplinary science education to inspire youth and adults to better understand, appreciate and sustain our environment. The partnership extends Tracy Aviary's mission and educational message further into the community. Bruce Thompson, Tracy Aviary Director of Education, elaborates, "This gives us the unique opportunity to introduce the fascinating world of birds to an audience with which we've not been previously connected. To do it with a bird as fascinating as the red-tailed hawk is likely to increase interest in birds and conservation efforts." Tracy Aviary staff members take the time to chat with visitors about red-tailed hawks, birds of prey, and conservation at each event.

"Utah Athletics is looking forward to a partnership with Tracy Aviary and the expanded role Storm will have at our athletic events," Jennifer Binkley with Utah Athletics explained. "Working with our local aviary to develop the red-tailed hawk program has been something we have been seeking for some time. Our hope is that this partnership will lead to a long legacy of red-tailed hawks as part of the Utah Athletics tradition."

Before discovering stardom, Storm worked several odd jobs, including serving as a falconer's hunting bird and performing as a show bird at various fairs and festivals. Under Tracy Aviary's professional care and training, Storm is destined to remain a prominent fixture in the Ute's football lineup.

The UTES Home game Schedule is as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Opponent</u>	<u>Time</u>
09/25/10	vs. San Jose State	6:00 pm
10/23/10	vs. Colorado State	4:00 pm
11/06/10	vs. TCU	1:30 pm
11/27/10	vs. BYU	1:30 pm

Tracy Aviary is located 589 East 1300 South inside Liberty Park, enter from 900 South and 600 East. Hours of operation: daily from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Cost: \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors and students, \$3 for children ages 4-12,

children under 3 are free. Tracy Aviary fosters caring for the natural world, enriching and transforming lives through our connection with birds. For more information please visit our website at www.tracyaviary.org.

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