

Sunday, July 22nd 2007 – while walking back home I see 2 boys on the street with a big raptor in their hands. It's the first time I see a bird like this so it definitely captures my attention. At first I pass-by amazed by the beautiful bird but then I suddenly realize that if I leave the birds to them it might not have a positive end (especially because I know there aren't any specialized centers, vet specialists, etc.). So I immediately I decide to go and ask them what are they intending to do with the bird. They tell me it has a broken wing and they want to take it to a vet. I know most of the vets don't have any expertise with rare animals so I offer myself to help them in finding a vet. In a couple of minutes we get the first clinic: the vet has no idea what to do with the bird. As the boys don't seem to be very committed I explain them that it may be difficult to find a proper vet and I offer my self to take-over the bird and help it. They agree so I ask them details about the bird: where they found it, etc. They are only able to tell me that one of their brothers found it 50 km away from Bucharest, close to a lake. I take the bird and go home.

When my girlfriend sees me she already anticipates what is going to come: weekends spent with the bird, and lots of attention and time shifted to the bird ☺ I give the first calls and I find out about one surgeon Dr. Elefterescu from the Vet Faculty who might be the one capable to properly operate the bird.



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Monday, July 23rd 2007 – I already have an appointment with Dr. Elefterescu for the surgery. Once I get there people gather to see the “miracle”. Most of them see this kind of them the first time in their life. Still there is an initiative group at the faculty who tells me that they know more things as they involved in some activities for the protection of birds. I take the bird at the x-ray center and the verdict is confirmed: broken wing. The break is tough: the bone is split in 4 parts. The vet starts the surgery. Everything is done without an anesthetic as he tells me the bird wouldn't make it if they administrate it. After couple of hours the operation is succeeded. One of the 4 broken bones is taken apart and the others are fixed together with a metal clamp.



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In the next week I need to go with the bird daily to the vet for examination and administration of medicines against infection. I do this at 7 in the morning so that I don't have problems at work. So far so good.

The weeks to come are extremely important for the recovery of the bird. The wings are immobilized in order to allow the bones not to move. At first I keep the bird in a hard-paper box but I start looking for a cage. A friend of mine is working in constructions so I ask him to prepare a big one, 1m high, 1.5m long so that the bird feels a bit comfortable.



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I name it **Sacha** after the name of a very good friend of mine who inspired me. I realize I need to start finding a new home for it as my intention is to release it back in the wild. As I have no knowledge about raptors I start approaching specialized centers from UK and all kind of organizations which may have anything in common with animals. Dozens of emails leave my outbox especially abroad but also in Romania. In spite of this most of them remain not answered or not really helpful. I start spreading news among my friends but no promising feed-back. I am not feeling comfortable as I know I need solid background in order to succeed in rehabilitating a wild bird. I continue my daily visits to the vet and hope for the best.



After some time I receive an email from a famous wildlife artist in UK: Anna-Louise Pickering. She is telling me there is an NGO in Romania who can take care about Sacha: MILVUS. I am very happy about the good news but I remain suspicious. I have been working with Romanian NGOs for years and I know the market very well. So how can it be that there is a very good one out there that nobody knows about? I immediately email them and I get an instant response: they are real professionals. Over the next days/ weeks communication is not really facilitated as they are in the Danube Delta so this brings new question marks to me. I get very agitated because it is already over one month since I have Sacha and no concrete action from my side. But on the other hand I want to make sure she will really be cared after and not abandoned. So I decide not to give Sacha to MILVUS and still keep it until I find someone I can really trust.



Days are passing and I am already agitated: what if nobody in Romania can help me? What do I do? Lots of questions come to my mind. I know that probably the bird is not well maintained by me as I don't know many things. She is so beautiful, to have a tragic end would be such a loss.



Suddenly I receive a forwarded email from someone I don't know. It seems that my emails with pictures spread successfully. She is from Deva and she is giving me a link to a local newspaper with an article about a very passionate raptor specialist. Great! In the article it is mentioning he is working at the Museum of Daco-Romano Civilization. I call there and ask his personal number.

Sacha is a young Buteo Buteo, or a common buzzard. We immediately start sharing knowledge. Among others I find out that all my assumptions were wrong: the cage should have been done entirely from wood so there is no danger of getting trapped in the iron wires, a must is to eat bones and animal hair or feathers aso. I realize how many things I didn't know. He is mentioning to me MILVUS organization: they are indeed professionals. Great news! I decide to hand them over the bird.

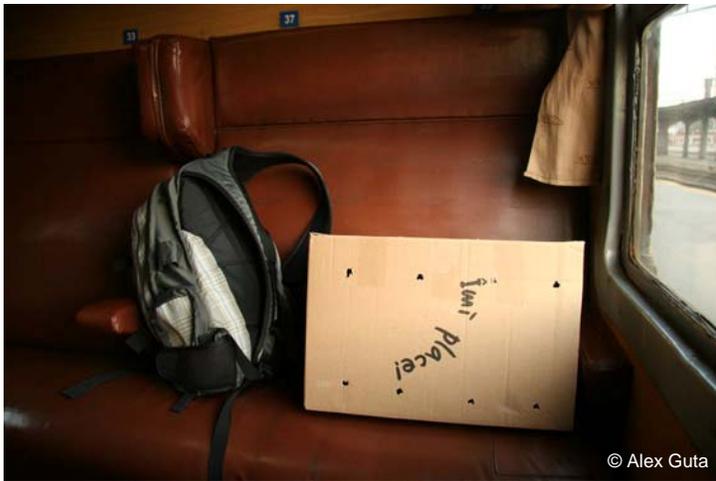
Friday, Sept 14th 2007 – I take the bird to the vet for the extraction of the metal clamp. The x-ray shows the bones fixed perfectly. Though there is not enough calcium around the fracture so as to remove the metal. We decide to postpone the surgery for one month, enough time for the calcium to deposit.

Sunday, Sept 23rd 2007 – guess what's in the box?



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Sacha is traveling to Tg. Mures, the MILVUS headquarter. Here people wait for Sacha. I meet some of them and the other birds they have under the rehabilitation programme: a hobby and 2 storks. The new cage of Sacha is very large, similar to an apartment room. They evaluate the bird and think is in a very good shape. Seems that the story will have a happy end. I will keep you posted with the news.



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