

# Kotzebue refuge owl gets to go home

by Barbara Crane

Tundra Times reporter

Aristotle is going home.

The large white snowy owl was found near death last March in the Kotzebue National Wildlife Refuge.

"He was really, really thin," recalled Valesa Linnean of Anchorage's Bird Treatment and Learning Center, where Aristotle was brought for care. "Because it was such a cold winter, food was hard to find."

Aristotle has now put on weight and regained his strength. As soon as a minor foot infection clears up, he will be transferred to one of the center's new flight cages at Camp Carroll.

"When he goes out to Camp Carroll, we'll see how he flies and if he can catch his own live food again," said Karol Ann Longo, a biologist at the center.

She hopes to get Aristotle back to

the Kotzebue National Wildlife Refuge in the next couple of weeks, while the weather is still good, so he can become acclimated and stake out his territory for the winter.

"With any type of wild bird treatment, you're working against the clock," Longo explained. "We have a certain amount of time to get them healthy again, and then secondary problems start appearing, like his infected feet."

"They are wild animals, and the longer they are enclosed in a cage, the more stressed they become. That affects all their systems and everything starts to deteriorate."

Longo thinks the time, effort and money spent on rehabilitating Aristotle were well worthwhile.

"Owls live to be 15 or 20 years old," she said, "so Aristotle still has a lot of good years left to him."



photo by Barbara Crane

Karol Ann Longo holds Aristotle, a snowy owl from Northwestern Alaska.