

The raptors are back

■ By Meena Sreenivasan

COME this spring, raptors are homeward bound again as they make their journey home up North.

These magnificent birds of prey will be swooping by our shores in Tanjung Tuan, Port Dickson.

Avillion Port Dickson is inviting all bird-watching enthusiasts and anyone who is interested in ecotourism to join the fun during the Raptor Watch Week (RWW).

An event organised by Malaysian Nature Society in partnership with the Malacca State government and with the support of corporate bodies, the RWW is a fun festival to celebrate the return of the raptors to their breeding grounds in the Northern hemisphere.

RWW is a public event meant to raise awareness on the conservation of raptors, their habitats and the Tuan Forest Reserve.

During the spring migration, thousands of raptors can be seen flying across the Straits of Malacca.

Having to use massive amount of energy flying across the Straits of Malacca, the raptors will be flying low at the event site, making it possible to have a good view of them.

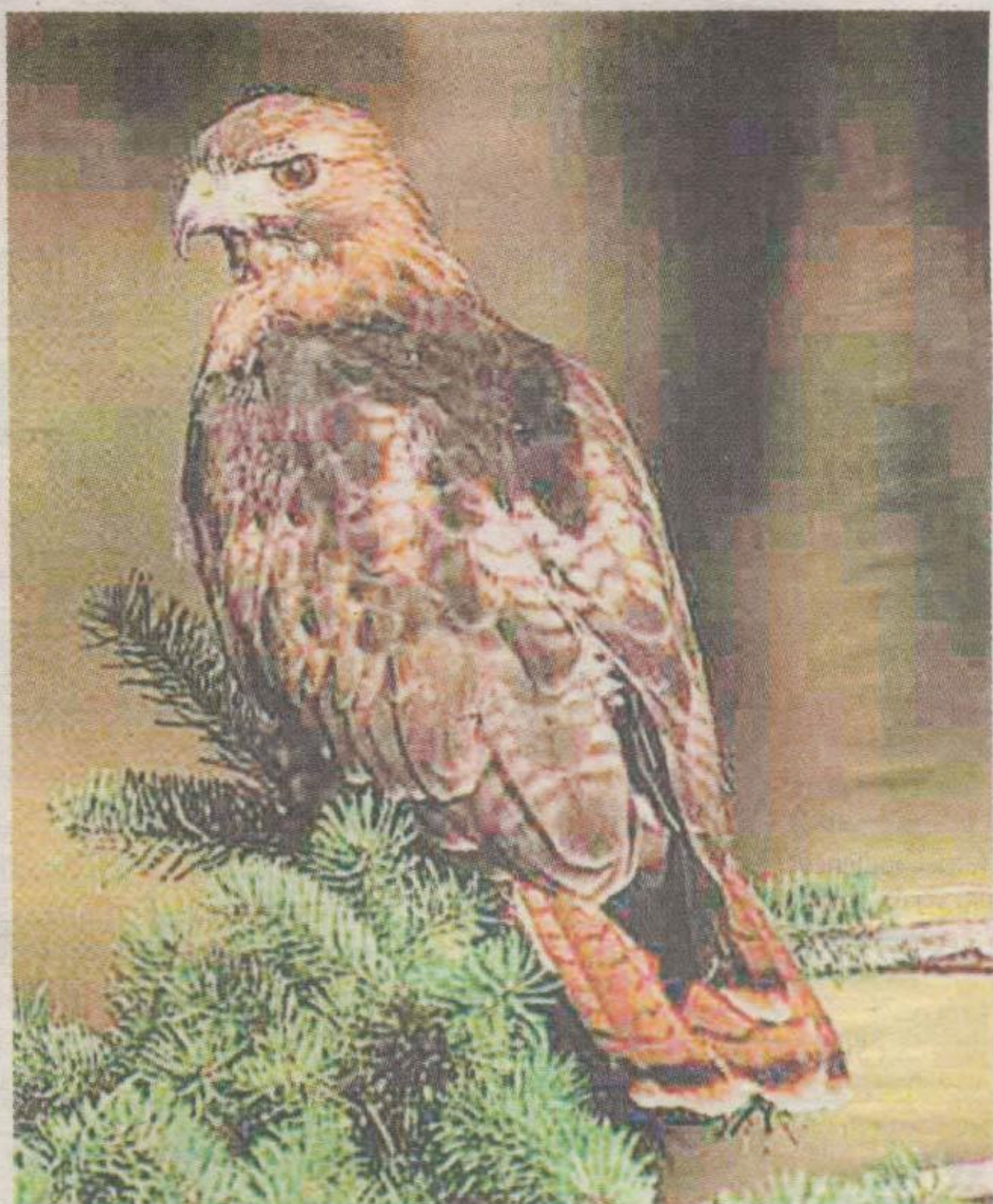
Tanjung Tuan has been listed as an important raptor site by BirdLife International, National Geographic Society and Hawkmountain.

It provides food for the raptors as well as a resting spot. It also provides shelter for the night before they take off again the next day.

Without the Tanjung Tuan Forest Reserve, many raptors may never make it home due to exhaustion and a lack of food.

Avillion Port Dickson plays homage to this spectacular event for the eighth consecutive year with

Thousands of raptors will be flying across the Straits of Malacca on their migratory journey home.



the Raptor Watch Week 2008 and Raptors Watch guests are offered special room rates.

For Garden Chalet it is RM370 (Sunday to Thursday), RM430 (Friday and Saturday) and RM550 (eve of and on public holidays; Water Chalet is RM425 (Sunday to Thursday), RM490 (Friday and Saturday) and RM630 (eve of and on public holidays); and Premium Water Chalet is RM480 (Sunday to Thursday), RM555 (Friday and Saturday) and RM710 (eve of and on public holidays). These rates are all nett prices.

This promotion is valid from March 1 to 31 and all Raptors Watch guests will be provided free shuttle services to the site.

As a supporting partner to the Malaysian Nature Society, Avillion Port Dickson encourages everyone to participate in this unique activity. RWW is an opportunity for the public to witness one of nature's most exquisite offerings.

Raptors migrate southward to escape the bitter cold of the northern winters and make the

same venturesome journey back during spring to their breeding grounds in temperate Asia.

There are 25 migratory raptors species visiting Malaysia during this time. The largest species of migratory raptor in Malaysia is the Greater Spotted Eagle. The largest species of local raptor is the Black Kite.

The smallest species of migratory raptor is the Eurasian Kestrel (14 inches) and the smallest species of local raptor is the Black-thighed Falconet.

Raptors are birds of prey. Science says that raptors are direct descendants of the velociraptor dinosaurs (dinosaurs with birdlike hips that walked on two legs).

These raptors hunt for food using physical tools such as incredibly good eye sights, very sharp talons and incredible agility in flight. They prey on rodents, chicken, other birds, other smaller raptors, bee or wasps' larvae, insects, fish and reptiles.

For reservation and enquiries, call 06-647-6688.