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Georgia Southern University Center for Wildlife Education and the Lamar Q Ball, Jr. Raptor Center Welcome New Bald Eagle

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The Georgia Southern University Center for Wildlife Education and the Lamar Q Ball, Jr. Raptor Center recently welcomed a new American Bald Eagle to its habitat with the addition of "Franklin," a 6.3-pound bird which is considered a "southern bald eagle" due to its smaller size.

Franklin joins two other bald eagles – Freedom, the eagle that has become the mascot for Georgia Southern Athletics and flies over Paulson Stadium at football games and graduation ceremonies, and Glory, whose nest is prominently displayed at the Wildlife Center.

Franklin came to Georgia Southern University by way of the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland, Fla. He was found running through the woods near Tallahassee, Fla., with a bone fracture in his right wing and ligament damage.

After an unsuccessful attempt by a veterinarian to pin Franklin's broken bone and elbow, he was deemed unable to fly and therefore could not be released to the wild.

With the help of the Audubon Center, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Franklin found a new home when Georgia Southern was able to add him to its permits. He will be on display along the nature walkway at the Wildlife Center.

"It is unfortunate when bald eagles sustain injuries that keep them from being released back into the wild, but I am pleased that the Wildlife Center has the opportunity to give Franklin a new home," said Scott Courdin, wildlife curator at Georgia Southern. "Here at the Wildlife Center he will be admired,

appreciated and will help our visitors gain insight to this majestic species."

Franklin's name, given to him by the Wildlife Center, is a playful reference to Founding Father Benjamin Franklin, who wished to make the turkey the national symbol of the United States.

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