

# New Children's Book Flaco's Journey Celebrates NYC's Famous Owl and Inspires a Fresh Look at Zoos

*A wild escape that encourages kids to think about freedom and wildlife*

CA, UNITED STATES, June 24, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Flaco's Journey](#), a poignant and beautifully illustrated children's picture book by debut author Kathleen Conklin, is based on the true story of the beloved Eurasian eagle-owl who escaped from the Central Park Zoo after his enclosure was compromised by an unknown individual. Though he had never learned to hunt, Flaco spent 13 extraordinary months learning to navigate life in New York City. As birdwatchers and admirers around the world followed his progress,



Flaco defied expectations—learning to soar, hunt, and survive on his own. He quickly became a mascot for the city and a powerful symbol of freedom, resilience, and the untamed spirit within all living creatures.

In February 2023, Flaco soared to freedom when his enclosure was deliberately vandalized. For the next 13 months, he roamed the city's parks and skies, learning to fly and hunt after a lifetime in captivity. Against the odds, Flaco not only survived—he thrived—becoming a symbol of resilience, freedom, and the wild spirit at the heart of every creature.

This story introduces young readers to Flaco's remarkable journey, while encouraging reflection on themes of wildlife conservation and the ethics of captivity. Although zoos have historically played vital roles in education and species preservation, Flaco's Journey invites a new generation to consider whether all animals—particularly non-endangered ones like Flaco—belong behind bars.

"Flaco's story is extraordinary," says Kathleen. "But the deeper I researched, the more I found myself asking: Why was he caged in the first place? Why was his enclosure built too small for him to fly in? His story challenges us to think about freedom, coexistence, and how we care for wild animals in modern society."

More than just a heartwarming tale, Flaco's Journey is a rich educational resource for families and classrooms. It encourages empathy, environmental awareness, and thoughtful discussion—all through the eyes of a magnificent owl whose spirit touched millions.

#### About the Author

Kathleen Conklin grew up in rural Connecticut, surrounded by woods that became her favorite place to spend time. Today, she splits her time between her home in Connecticut that sits alongside 30 acres of state forest, and a riverside cabin in Downeast Maine, where wildlife and birds remain constant companions. A retired teacher and lifelong nature enthusiast, she was drawn to Flaco's story after a colleague shared the owl's escape—and ultimate passing. With a passion for picture books and their power to spark big conversations, she wrote Flaco's Journey to honor both the owl and the questions he leaves behind.

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