RAPTOR Rescues and Releases Peregrine Falcon

By Marc Alverson, President of RAPTOR Inc.

One of our very first birds to be admitted for the 2019 year was a peregrine falcon that was found injured near the intersection of Sycamore St. and Central Ave., downtown near the courthouse. The bird was otherwise healthy, except for an obvious fracture of the left wing. The bird was banded and a bit of research revealed that the bird had been banded as a nestling almost 11 years ago southwest of Louisville, KY. At the time of banding, they thought the bird was a female, but with a weight of 656 grams at admission, it is likely that the bird was actually a male.

Injured peregrine falcons are often admitted with serious fractures, such as compound fractures, which cannot be successfully treated with the realistic possibility of a release. The speed at which they fly in pursuit of their prey usually makes any “crash” a serious one. Even so, RAPTOR attempts to fully rehabilitate every bird that has a chance, and so treatment was begun. An x-ray confirmed a mid-shaft fracture of the radius bone and also a possible fracture (or possibly just inflammation) of the alula. The bird’s left wing was wrapped (the equivalent of putting it in a cast) and a regimen of antibiotics was begun. A “tail guard” was applied to the peregrine’s tail feathers to protect them in the rehabilitation process. High-strung birds like the peregrine often will destroy their tail feathers during captivity, which could further impact their ability to be released.

A follow-up x-ray after 4 weeks revealed a fragment from the fracture was displaced, leading to a rewrap of the wing and another 2 weeks in critical care. After this, the peregrine was put outside in a flight cage for exercise and evaluation. This bird surprised everyone when it began to fly and turn corners well, and to land in a well-controlled fashion. This bird was going to be released!

Peregrine falcons can and do reside in downtown Cincinnati, but still, there are plenty of dangers with all of the buildings they need to navigate around. The Ohio River overlook at Eden Park was chosen as a good spot for the release, since it is high and overlooks the river. Of course, the bird promptly took off towards downtown, but he flew strongly and seemed to be on his way to resume his life in the wild.

Nest Cams: Watching the Next Generation of Raptors Come to Life

By Kathleen M. Jenkins, Volunteer

Spring brings warmer temperatures, longer days, and blooming flowers; it also heralds nesting season for raptors – and that means the beginning of nest cam season. Thanks to technology and a few brave souls willing to climb high above the ground to install cameras, we’re able to observe the intimate everyday lives of raptor species building nests, laying and incubating eggs, and feeding and fledging their young.

Nest cams gained popularity in 2012, when Cornell Lab of Ornithology staffers saw the campus’s resident pair of red-tailed hawks, Big Red and Ezra, building their nest on a light pole above the university’s athletic fields, and came up with the idea of installing a camera at the nest site.

See Nest Cams page 2
Nest Cams (continued from page 1)

After a harrowing ride in a bucket truck and some very suspicious hawks, the red-tailed hawk nest cam went live in early 2012. People around the world watched raptly as three young hawks flourished and fledged.

Now there are raptor nest cams all over the world, for species including bald eagles, peregrine falcons, great-horned owls, barred owls, ospreys, California condors, sea eagles, and of course, red-tailed hawks. In addition to video, many include audio, details about the species and the nest site, video archives, social media feeds, and hosted live chats with volunteer moderators.

RAPTOR, Inc. had a nest cam at 4th and Vine in downtown Cincinnati for several years, where a pair of peregrine falcons successfully raised and fledged their young. In 2016, the falcons did not reappear at the nest site, though they’ve been sighted and are alive and well.

While it can be thrilling to watch nest cams, it can be difficult as well. This is nature in action, and things go wrong, sometimes with disastrous results. Mates disappear, nests are attacked by predators — including other raptors — or poor hunting conditions result in starvation. Humans don’t intervene, and while it may seem cruel, it’s for good reason. According to the Biodiversity Research Institute, nest cams are considered a reflection of what’s happening with a species overall, and “The general rule is not to intervene.”

Here are a few nest cams to get you started; you can find more on the websites for The Cornell Lab (cams.allaboutbirds.org), Raptor Resource Project (raptorresource.org), and explore.org.

Cornell Hawks — 2019 marks the 8th season for this popular nest cam. Big Red’s mate Ezra was struck by a vehicle and died in 2017. She found another mate in Arthur, and the two successfully fledged their first nest of three last year. Big Red laid eggs in late March, and hatch-watch will begin in late April.

http://cams.allaboutbirds.org/channel/16/Red-tailed_Hawks/

Decorah Bald Eagles — located in Decorah, Iowa, this popular cam has let us watch these majestic birds fledge generations of eaglets. This year, the pair has two eaglets, designated D32 and D33 (the 32nd and 33rd eaglets hatched at the Decorah site).

https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/decorah-eagles/

Barred Owls — located in a wooded area in central Indiana, the barred owl cam features two cameras — one inside the nest box, where the female lays and incubates eggs and feeds the owlets while the male brings a constant supply of prey, and one outside the nest box, where viewers can see the male delivering food and also watch the young owlets as they begin to “branch,” exploring the area outside the nest box before fledging.

http://cams.allaboutbirds.org/channel/43/Barred_Owls/

Dunrovin Ospreys — on a ranch in Montana, Harriet and her mate Hal have had remarkable success raising young osprey: the experienced pair typically experience good fishing conditions and less competition than at other nest sites.

https://www.daysatdunrovin.com/

Peregrine Falcons — In Baltimore, peregrine falcons nicknamed Barb and Boh have successfully nested for years on the 33rd floor of a downtown skyscraper. This year, Barb laid the first egg on March 20th, and the pair are currently incubating a nest of four. Hatch-watch begins in late April.


Raptors at Nest

Spring is a season of new life and new beginnings. As the days grow longer and warmer, leaves emerge on trees, flowers push up out of the ground, and birdsong fills the crisp air. Winter migrants return in waves, staking claim to the best territories, the areas with most abundant food or the choicest selection of shelters.

It’s time to nest.

Raptors tend to nest earlier than their passerine counterparts, sometimes as early as January or February. Larger birds of prey grow more slowly than songbirds, and the parents must nest early enough that their young have sufficient time and prey to learn how to hunt. By the time young prey venture out into the world, so do fledgling raptors. Timing is important: Nest too early and there’s not enough prey to feed a growing hatchling; nest too late and the juvenile won’t have time to learn the skills it needs before fall.

Different species of raptor nest in a variety of ways and habitats. Turkey vultures, for example, breed in forests, farmlands, rangelands, and low mountains, and they don’t build nests. Instead, the female lays her eggs in dark recesses, like on ledges or in caves, crevasses, or hollow logs. Turkey vultures will also lay eggs on the ground or in abandoned structures, like the stick nests of other birds, mammal burrows, or human buildings.

The Great Nest: Fast Facts

- The largest eagle nest in Ohio was located in Vermillion.
- It was 12 feet tall, 8.5 feet wide, funnel shaped, and weighed over 1 ton.
- The nest lasted from 1890-1925 until a storm destroyed the tree it was in.
- A replica is displayed at the Raptor Center in LaGrange, Ohio.

Another option is to nest in preexisting holes or cavities. Eastern screech owls go this route, although they never excavate their nest sites themselves. Instead, they rely on woodpeckers, squirrels, fungus, or rot to dig out a hole; but they also readily accept human-made nest boxes. The female lays her eggs directly on whatever happens

Continued on page 3

By Alison Bewley, Volunteer

Spring 2019
The most impressive stick nests, however, belong to bald eagles and sit high in the super canopy. Bald eagles choose the tallest living tree in a forested area near water and make their nests just below the tree’s crown near the trunk, where it will be supported by large forked branches. The exterior is made with interwoven sticks, the interior is lined with grass or other fibrous material, and the bowl is filled with adult down and moss. Both the male and female build, which takes 1-3 months and begins in January. Depending on the latitude, eggs may be laid as early as February. The average nest is 4-5 feet in diameter and 2-4 feet deep, although every year 1-2 feet of new material may be added. Bald eagles have very strong nest fidelity, which means that they’ll return to the same nest yearly if they successfully raise young. This nest fidelity means that bald eagle nests can be enormous: the largest on record was 9.5 feet in diameter, 20 feet deep, and weighed three tons.

When it comes to nesting, building their own, borrowing someone else’s, or laying directly on the ground are all viable options for birds of prey, and the strategy varies by species. Next time you’re taking a spring stroll, admiring the new growth and breathing fresh air, don’t forget to look up and see how many nests you can find.

Meet Our Veterinarians

By Thomas Eisele, Volunteer

As a volunteer organization, RAPTOR Inc. depends on the time, talents, and generosity of many individuals to fulfill our mission. Some of our most dedicated volunteers are our veterinarians. These highly trained professionals provide essential services to our organization at little to no cost. Their services include treating our rehabilitation patients and avian ambassadors, establishing our treatment protocols, providing us with medications and medical supplies, and signing off on our state permits. In this and forthcoming WingBeats issues, we will feature our awesome attending veterinarians and share some of the amazing contributions they make to our organization and our community at large.

Dr. Ann Manharth, DVM

Dr. Ann Manharth has come full-circle during her professional career. She began in Milford, Ohio, where she graduated from high school. After college, she attended Ohio State University in veterinary medicine, where she received her D.V.M. degree in 1990. And she stayed in northern Ohio from 1990-1995, either in private practice near Youngstown or interning at the Toledo Zoo. Yet, the siren call of big-city zoos spoke to her, and from 1995 through 2002, Dr. Manharth was working at much larger zoos in Chicago and Detroit. And then, in 2003, she came back to Ohio, where for the past 16 years, she has been happily working in a number of settings.

How did this varied and vigorous career begin for her? As with so many of us, if we are lucky, it came about by someone inspiring her. At age 16, young Ann Manharth attended a lecture. The lecturer, Betsy Dresser, Ph.D., addressed the audience on conservation and community at large.

Raptors entered the picture fairly early in Dr. Manharth’s career. She spent four years working at the raptor rehab ward while she attended OSU’s Veterinary school. Afterwards, whether she was in private practice or in veterinary medicine for zoos, she continued her interest in treating and rehabilitating birds of prey. In Chicago, while working at Lincoln Park Zoo, Dr. Manharth frequently dealt with raptors. Sometimes the raptors were injured, but not always. Sometimes they required general health assessments, as a way of keeping the raptor population at the zoo healthy and thriving. As well, many times the zoo was at the cutting-edge of raptor research, doing blood tests, checking for fertility rates and factors, and generally trying to understand how raptors could thrive in an urban, controlled (zoo) environment. The Peregrine Program, for example, is one of the outstanding raptor programs in Chicago. Dr. Manharth was a part of its work through her assessments of chicks in the nest and her care for injured falcons.

Zoo medicine can be difficult. It is a competitive field, with fewer jobs than applicants. Sometimes, too, salaries at zoos can be less than what a veterinarian might receive in private practice. Preventive medicine is the order of the day at zoos, trying to avoid injuries to zoo animals, rather than having to treat them once injured. Research and even routine animal husbandry also add to the agenda for zoo
Volunteer Appreciation

Over 7,500 hours of time were donated by passionate volunteers to the mission of RAPTOR Inc. in 2018. We have many service groups performing work on site at our center as well as volunteers working from home. The service groups are composed of rehabilitators, educators, transporters, Saturday crew, newsletter committee, facilities maintenance as well as the individuals who keep our membership database and dispatch running smoothly.

The Board and Staff hosted a volunteer appreciation luncheon to recognize the 60+ volunteers who give tirelessly of their time and talents to the growth of our organization. Gathering at the Union Township Civic Center on April 6, 2019, catering was from City Barbeque, a local favorite, and the service groups and individuals were recognized for their dedication and great work.

Saturday Crew: This group cleans our outdoor enclosures year-round, in all weather. This job is essential to the health and welfare of our avian ambassadors and the birds in rehabilitation.

Rehabilitators: After a raptor arrives at our facility, the rehabilitators begin providing treatments day or night. 324 injured raptors were admitted to our facility last year with an overwhelming success rate of 51%.

Educators: In 2018, this group gave over 330 educational presentations to schools, libraries, scouts, and private events in the area. They educate the public about raptors, what people can do to help them, and whom to call for assistance.

Transporters: This group rescues raptors hit by vehicles or caught in nets, fishing line, barbed wire, buildings, chimneys, or traps, on land or water. Dispatch volunteer, Mary Landis (crouching, center) is the first contact for every rescue.

Board of Trustees (Left to right): Rosie Ayers, Dan Begin, Marc Alverson, Robert E. Smith, Jeff Hays, Joe Lucas, Alice McCaleb (Absent: Bob Dahlhausen, DVM and Gary Denzler)
vets. Zoo medicine is 7 days a week (and sometimes 24 hours a day). It requires commitment and a willingness to work 60 or 70-hour work-weeks. The field of zoo medicine is not an easy occupation.

With two sisters still living in the Milford area, Dr. Manharth eventually decided that she wanted to try more of private practice near Milford. In 2003, she joined Dr. Loomis in his practice. She also initially kept her hand in with an occasional visit to Toledo for some zoo medicine. This mix of medical practices lasted for 6 years, and it proved to be a good formula for a satisfying professional and personal life. Since 2009, Ann Manharth has focused her efforts on her private clients at the Day Heights Veterinary Clinic, 5628 Wolfpen Pleasant Hill Road, in Milford.

In addition to her veterinary work, Dr. Manharth has traveled extensively. Bolivia, Costa Rica, Kenya, and Tanzania, are only some of the foreign countries she has visited, sometimes doing veterinary field work, sometimes doing more tourist-oriented activities. Iceland may be her next foreign visit – who knows? She also is a photographer and an avid snorkeler, with a new twist being her enrollment in pottery classes (results pending on that last activity).

Ann Manharth said, in closing our interview, “I appreciate the opportunity to work with RAPTOR Inc.” Its program to rehabilitate injured birds and to educate people about the rewards that birds of prey bring to the human world is something Dr. Manharth shares.

Her partnering with RAPTOR Inc. is a win/win for all of us. Thank you, Dr. Manharth.

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Open House Excitement!

In 2016, RAPTOR Inc. began offering Open Houses to reach out to the community and share our mission with our guests. We open our doors to the public 9 times a year to bring awareness to how we help the community with rehabilitation of injured birds of prey. We also try to engage and inspire our guests to learn more about birds of prey and how they can help.

Open Houses are free, fun, and family-oriented. All ages enjoy seeing these magnificent birds of prey up close and learning more about the habitats they live in and their adaptations to being fierce predators. Our Open Houses are the last Sunday of the month, March through November, 1–4 PM.

Below are photos of our first Open House of the year with nearly 200 guests enjoying the activities at our raptor center. So, what do we do at Open Houses? Outside, the educators are located on the path near our enclosures to engage the guests and answer any questions about our permanent avian residents. Different birds are perched outdoors to observe and to photograph. Guests of all ages enjoy our wingspan banner comparing their wingspan to birds of prey. Inside, there are biofacts such as feathers, feet, and wings to touch, vocalizations to hear, and treats to eat. In the afternoon, there is a short, interactive presentation for preschoolers to enjoy. Our building itself is home to the beautiful photographs of the late Ron Austing, internationally-recognized wildlife photographer and naturalist.

We ended the March Open House with the spectacular release of a turkey vulture which had been rehabilitated (see inset). It was the end of this vulture’s recuperation and stay at our facility, but it was the beginning of his flight back into the wild!

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Rehabilitation of Turkey Vulture 19-02

On March 7, 2019 a turkey vulture was found by our intern, Avery Fithian, at the side of the road, suspected of having been hit by a vehicle. When admitted, this turkey vulture exhibited a leg injury and was unable to fly. Getting booted off the side of the ride by a 2-ton car is no match for a 4 ½ pound bird, and fortunately, there were no fractures shown on the radiographs. Two weeks later, the vulture was put into our large flight enclosure and began to fly short distances, 20 to 30 feet at a time. A week later, the vulture was flying perch to perch, 16 feet high, and banking around the corners of our 140-feet-long “L-shaped” enclosure. At this point, we knew the vulture had healed from the injuries and was ready for release.

Turkey vulture release (photo by Jordan West)
Mark Your Calendars for our Upcoming RAPTOR Public Appearances

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Sponsors</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Little Miami Conservancy</td>
<td>18-May-19</td>
<td>2pm-3pm</td>
<td>211 Railroad Ave, Loveland, OH 45140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*OVCC Photo Shoot at RAPTOR Inc.</td>
<td>19-May-19</td>
<td>10am-11am</td>
<td>961 Barg Salt Run Rd, Milford, OH 45150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAPTOR Inc. Open House</td>
<td>26-May-19</td>
<td>1pm-4pm</td>
<td>961 Barg Salt Run Rd, Milford, OH 45150</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAPTOR Inc. Fundraiser at Wild About Birds</td>
<td>8-Jun-19</td>
<td>11am-1pm</td>
<td>1133 Main St, Milford, OH 45150</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Stanley M. Rowe Arboretum</td>
<td>15-Jun-19</td>
<td>11am-12pm</td>
<td>4600 Muchmore Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45243</td>
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<td>Little Miami Conservancy</td>
<td>15-Jun-19</td>
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<td>211 Railroad Ave, Loveland, OH 45140</td>
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<td>Price Hill Branch Library</td>
<td>21-Jun-19</td>
<td>11am-12pm</td>
<td>959 Hawthorne Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45205</td>
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<td>West End Branch Library</td>
<td>24-Jun-19</td>
<td>2pm-3pm</td>
<td>805 Ezzard Charles Dr, Cincinnati, OH 45203</td>
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<td>Corryville Branch Library</td>
<td>25-Jun-19</td>
<td>2pm-3pm</td>
<td>2802 Vine St, Cincinnati, OH 45219</td>
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<td>*Veterans Park in Anderson</td>
<td>28-Jun-19</td>
<td>10am-11am</td>
<td>8531 Forest Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45255</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bethel Branch Library</td>
<td>29-Jun-19</td>
<td>11am and 1pm</td>
<td>611 W Plane St, Bethel, OH 45106</td>
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<td>RAPTOR Inc. Open House</td>
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<td>961 Barg Salt Run Rd, Milford, OH 45150</td>
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<td>Mt. Healthy Branch Library</td>
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<td>Mariemont Branch Library</td>
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<td>4033 Gilmore Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45209</td>
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<td>7pm-8pm</td>
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<td>Batavia Branch Library</td>
<td>22-Jul-19</td>
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<td>180 S Third St, Batavia, OH 45103</td>
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* Check with event sponsor to see if reservations are required

RAPTOR Wish List

RAPTOR Inc. needs the following items for our bird care facility. To donate any of these items, please email RAPTOR at: raptor@raptorrinc.org or call 513-825-3325.

- Batteries – AA
- Latex or Nitrile exam gloves - large
- Lysol Disinfectant - blue aerosol can
- Pine Bedding
- Office Max Gift Card
- Shredded Paper (any color)
- Stamps (Forever)

Thank you for all of your donations!

Amazon Wish List

RAPTOR Inc. is now listed on the Amazon Wish list. For a complete listing of all of the items we use for rehabilitation and to provide our volunteers with all of the necessities, please visit [https://goo.gl/s0LVpG](https://goo.gl/s0LVpG).

If any of these wish list items is purchased, it is shipped directly to our RAPTOR facility in Milford.

How easy is that?

Financial Contributions

Thanks to the following individuals for their in-kind donation to RAPTOR Inc. for the first quarter of 2019.

- Animal Hospital of Mt. Lookout Square
- Ayers, Rosie
- Conzett, David
- Dahlhausen DVM, Bob
- Eirin, Steve
- Haeussler DVM, DJ
- Lippard, Bruce
- Loveland 6th Grade Student Council
- Lucas, Joe
- Morsbach, Donna
- Seahorse Station
- Spring Grove Cemetery
- Wright, Dee

In Memorium

Donation from Dee Wright in loving memory of her father, Herbert R. Lahmann

2019 Admissions

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<th>Birds</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>American Kestrel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saw-whet Owl</td>
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<tr>
<td>Merlin</td>
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<td>Snowy Owl</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short Eared Owl</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharp-shinned Hawk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barred Owl</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooper’s Hawk</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Red-shouldered Hawk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Long-eared Owl</td>
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<tr>
<td>Red-tailed Hawk</td>
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2019 Dispositions

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<th>Birds</th>
<th>Released</th>
<th>Under Care</th>
<th>Died</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Euthanized</th>
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</table>
| Rough-legged Hawk     | 0        |            |      | 1     | 13%
| Northern Harrier      | 0        |            |      | 1     | 13%
| Turkey Vulture        | 2        |            |      | 3     | 13%
| Black Vulture         | 2        |            |      | 5     | 13%
| Osprey                | 0        |            |      | 1     | 13%
| Golden Eagle          | 0        |            |      | 1     | 13%
| Bald Eagle            | 1        |            |      | 1     | 13%
| Total                 | 53       |            |      |       |            |

2019 Dispositions

- Released: 47%
- Under Care: 28%
- Died: 12%
- Euthanized: 13%
RAPTOR Inc. Membership

Renewal notices are sent out at the end of the year for annual collection for the following year. Dues paid after September 1 will be credited for the following year.

Please use the form below to become a member or update your contact information. You can also become a member online at our website: www.raptorinc.org

If you don’t need the membership form, pass it on to someone who might be interested in becoming a member of RAPTOR Inc. Your membership dollars provide for care, treatment, and feeding of our birds as well as the continuation of our education programs. Mark the membership level you request. All membership levels include electronic (default) or postal delivery of the newsletter, as well as an invitation to the Fall Picnic. Members are also invited to attend Board meetings and may nominate candidates to serve on the board.

☐ $10 Student Membership
   (1 year - up to age 18)  ☐ $25 Hawk Membership
   (1-year)  ☐ $50 Owl Membership
   plus receive stunning Raptor Notecard Set

☐ $100 Eagle Membership
   plus receive Charley Harper designed T-Shirt
   Eagle and Lifetime Memberships, please indicate T-Shirt Size: (S, M, L, XL, XXL) ____

☐ $500 Lifetime Membership
   plus personalized tour for 5

Eagle and Lifetime Memberships also include perks from the level(s) above.

Date: ____________________________

Name: ____________________________

Address: ____________________________

City: ____________________________ State: _____  Zip: __________

Phone: ____________________________  Email: ____________________________

☐ Check if you prefer postal delivery of HackBack

Mail this completed form with your check or money order to:
RAPTOR Inc., 961 Barg Salt Run Road, Milford, Ohio 45150
Attn: Membership

Thank you for your support of RAPTOR Inc!
Sponsor a Banded Raptor

Since the fall of 1994, RAPTOR Inc. has been banding most rehabilitated birds released back into the wild. Over a long period of time, this will help us determine how successful our rehabilitation efforts are. You can get involved with our "Sponsor a Banded Raptor" program. Sponsors will receive a fact sheet on the selected species and a certificate with the following information:

- Species and date of release
- Age (if known)
- Weight at time of release
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife band number

If the bird you sponsor is recovered, you will be notified of the date and location of the recovery.

Yes, I would like to sponsor a banded bird of the species checked below:

- American Kestrel: $50
- Eastern Screech Owl: $50
- Cooper's Hawk: $50
- Barred Owl: $50
- Red-shouldered Hawk: $50
- Red-tailed Hawk: $50
- Great Horned Owl: $50
- Red-tailed Hawk: $50
- Eastern Screech Owl: $50
- Cooper's Hawk: $50
- American Kestrel: $50

Name: ____________________________
Address: ____________________________
City: ___ State: ___ Zip: ___
Phone: ____________________________
Email: ____________________________

In the event your selection is not available, we will contact you to arrange an alternative. Sponsoring a bird is tax deductible. All proceeds benefit RAPTOR Inc. Complete this form, enclose a check or money order, and mail to:

RAPTOR Inc., 961 Barg Salt Run Road, Milford, Ohio 45150

Thank you for your support of RAPTOR Inc.!