

WINGBEATS

The Summer 2020 Newsletter of RAPTOR Inc.

Celebrating 42 Years

RAPTOR Releases Bald Eagle July 4th

By Marc Alverson

On May 20th, RAPTOR Inc. received a call. Someone had found a juvenile bald eagle. It was in the middle of Rt. 131 in Fayetteville and apparently couldn't fly. Several hours later the eagle was still on the ground, so the finder called RAPTOR Inc. for assistance.

The bird was fairly lethargic and the intrepid finder picked up the bird and delivered it to RAPTOR Inc. himself. Usually a RAPTOR volunteer would be dispatched to pick up an injured bird (especially an eagle!) to minimize the possibility of further injury to the bird, as well as to the pickup person. Still, the eagle arrived with no further drama.

An initial exam found that the eagle was severely emaciated and infested with feather mites, but it had no apparent broken bones or visible wounds. The bird was extremely weak and was given fluids with the hope that it would survive the first night.

The eagle initially weighed in at 2274 grams (about 5 lbs.), which is several pounds less than it should have been. For starving birds, food must be carefully reintroduced. The eagle was given a special liquid food that is easy for the bird to digest and to get its systems working again. The eagle survived and was gradually transitioned to normal food as the bird gained weight, strength, and alertness.

After five days the eagle had gained about one pound and was eating on its own so it was transferred to one of the outside mews. This was a far less stressful environment. RAPTOR rehabilitators, using one of the TV cameras that we have installed in many of the mews, were able to observe the bird. Over the next few weeks the eagle



improved greatly, reaching a ready-to-go weight of over 8 lbs. During this time his flight capabilities improved until he was easily able to fly from the ground to the 13-ft high perches and to navigate multiple laps of the 140-ft total length of the big flight cage.

This eagle was going to be good to go!

See Eagle Release, on page 5

Challenging Times with COVID-19

By Cindy Alverson

When we reflect back on 2020, no doubt we will immediately think of COVID-19 and the impact it had on our daily lives. Here at the RAPTOR Center, we were fortunate to be able to keep our doors open to help the community with injured or orphaned raptors; this was especially fortunate since it was nearly baby season – our busiest time of the year.

We were hardest hit with the cancellation of four months-worth of educational programming. As a non-profit, this is our largest source of funds which keep our rehabilitation side operating. Although we are close to re-starting our educational side, many of our clients cancelled for an additional two months. Having to cancel 91 hours of presentations meant we have suffered a loss of programs worth a value of nearly \$10,000.

We've all heard the phrase, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." RAPTOR Inc. started offering virtual programming to help offset our losses. In these challenging times, programming could be done remotely, and so equipment was purchased and people were trained to expand our offerings to interested groups. We needed to adapt to this new and unusual situation.

In 2015, when Avian Influenza precautions were put into effect and we could not give educational presentations off-site, we were in the same situation. At that time, we thought that programming cancellations would never happen again, but here we are, five years later, with the shutdown of our educational programming, albeit for a different reason.

See Challenging Times, on page 5



Mission: Since 1978, RAPTOR Inc. (Regional Association for the Protection and Treatment Of Raptors) has been dedicated to "the rehabilitation and return of raptors to their natural environment, the education of the public on the importance of raptors, and the preservation of their natural habitat".

Open Houses Resume!

By Jackie Bray

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, we were unable to conduct our monthly open house events in March, April, or May. However, with new procedures in place to protect the health of our guests and staff, we were excited to resume our open house events on June 26, 2020!

Our wonderful Education Team guided guests through the facility. The younger visitors especially enjoyed measuring their wingspan, having their picture taken with our NEW Owl Cut-Outs, and touching the interesting biofacts. Everyone enjoyed seeing our magnificent Raptor Ambassadors up close and folks also had fun talking to our knowledgeable staff and volunteers.

To ensure proper social distancing and to best protect our visitors and staff, the number of guests that we can accommodate during our Open House events will be restricted. Reservation requests for specific arrival time slots are REQUIRED and will be scheduled on a first come, first served basis.

Please submit a reservation request via the form at <http://raptorinc.org/open-houses/>. We will confirm your reservation arrival time via email.

At the time of this printing, all persons are required to wear face coverings in any indoor location that is not a residence, and outdoors when unable to consistently maintain a distance of 6 feet or more from individuals who are not members of their household. Masks will not be provided by the Raptor Center.

With your help and adherence to the health guidelines implemented, we can remain open and keep the event free of charge. We are learning right along with you about how to best operate to keep each other safe and healthy. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and understanding.



Lots and lots to experience!

New at the Mews

By Alison Bewley

It's a beautiful, sunny Sunday afternoon in Milford, Ohio. Your car windows are down, and you have turned off the radio to listen to the birdsong burbling between the trees as you wind along Barg Salt Run.

You roll across a narrow bridge, up a curving hill, and up further still, through an open gate and onto a driveway facing a friendly red barn. Gravel crunches beneath your tires. You park, get out, and turn.

You are greeted by a vibrant green wall, an echo of the distant foliage behind it. A freshly-painted black door is centered beneath the wooden RAPTOR sign, guarded by an owl.

To the right of the door in crisp black is the Charley Harper logo, a trio of raptor faces and talons; to the left, downspouts-turned-trees offer a perch to a free-drawn and hand-painted great horned owl.



See Mews, on page 3

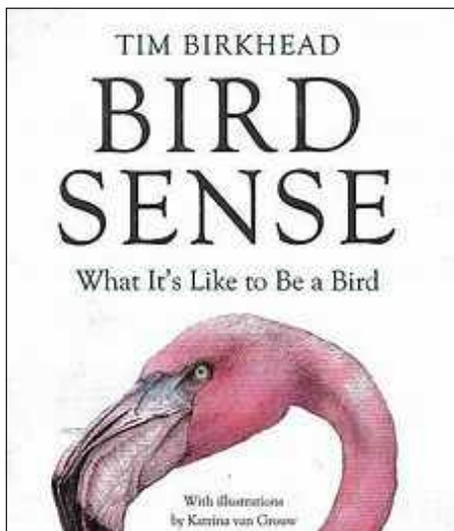
A mews like no other, courtesy of Jen Moormeier and Susan Bezerra.

Review: *Bird Sense: What It's Like to Be a Bird*

Reviewed By Erica Locke

The current ratio of birds to humans in my household is about 8:1 – and that is just the domestic birds. This count doesn't include wild birds, like the titmice and chickadees that frequent our feeders, or the wrens that raised a family in our garage. If you add in all those, my husband and I are vastly outnumbered. Living in close proximity to so many feathered friends, I have learned a lot about them – how to identify their species, where I can find them at different times of year, what they like to eat, and how to raise them. I know how I experience birds – what they look, sound, and even smell like – but how does a bird experience its world? What does my backyard look like to the mourning dove? What does a grape taste like to my parrot?

Tim Birkhead's book *Bird Sense: What It's Like to Be a Bird* attempts to answer these very questions and more. To do so, Birkhead explores the five senses humans and birds have in common – sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste – as well as one we do not share – magnetic. Throughout the book, Birkhead includes the histories and methods of scientists who research birds's senses – often



incorporating anecdotes from his own study of sea birds off the coast of Wales.

The guillemot, or murre as it is known in North America, is Birkhead's main study species. Guillemots are colony nesters, and rely on both excellent visual and auditory acuity to keep their families together amidst hundreds of other nesting pairs on sea cliffs. Using sight, guillemots can identify a mate returning

to their nest burrow as soon as it appears on the horizon – a mere dot to hapless humans. Using hearing, Guillemot chicks learn their parents' individual call while still in the egg. After hatching, this call recognition allows the family to stay in contact amidst the cacophony of other nesting pairs. Guillemots are also remarkable navigators, returning every year to the same nesting colony after traveling over a thousand kilometers to their wintering areas. To do so, they rely on a unique sense that allows birds to orient using the earth's magnetic field.

Birkhead shares other remarkable avian sensory achievements, including how the albatross uses smell to find food on faceless oceans; how their anatomy allows birds to sense ultra-violet light and see colors outside the human range; and how ducks can sleep with one eye open. Despite the technical nature of the subject matter, the book is easy to understand and enjoyable to read. It also reveals how much more we have to learn about avian senses. I highly recommend it for anyone who has ever tried to imagine what it might be like to fly like a hawk or sing like a lyrebird.

Mews (continued from page 2)

This gorgeous mural is the work of the extremely creative and skilled Jen Moor-meier and Susan Bezerra, and it is one of several recent beautification and improvement projects at RAPTOR's facilities. Since COVID-19 has slowed down presentations, volunteers have been using the time to work on other projects.

Along with the mural, flowerpots full of annuals and perennials have been installed along the tour pathway outside the mews as a colorful, blooming backdrop.

In addition to the beautification outside the mews, several enhancements are being made inside the mews for the birds: Water bowls with new built-in perching areas make drinking more comfortable for the

avian residents, and additional perches are being added to imitate natural conditions. The purpose of the natural perches is more functional than aesthetic, and it has to do with birds' beaks and talons.

Like human hair and nails, birds' beaks are made of keratin, and for most species of birds this keratin grows continuously over a lifetime. In the wild, raptors' diets help wear down their beaks, as does a process known as feaking, where birds rub their beaks against rough materials to aid in cleaning and "trimming" to maintain the correct beak size and shape.

In captivity, raptors are incredibly destructive to perches with both their beaks and talons. The grounds at RAPTOR are frequently

scoured for new branches to replace mangled perches. If a bird's beak isn't regularly worn down, caretakers have to use a rotary tool to cope the beak into the proper shape and length, which isn't fun for either the bird or the caretaker. The mews' additional perches are designed to be more natural-looking and provide a similarly rough texture to branches, which should provide good feaking material and should lead to less coping, making both the birds and their caretakers much happier.

To check out the birds' perching arrangements and see the beautiful artwork in real life, please visit <http://raptorinc.org/covid-19-response/> to make a reservation for an Open House!



How Much do Educational Ambassadors Eat?

By Cindy Alverson

At presentations, people often ask how much does it cost to feed a raptor? Our avian ambassadors have food weighed out each day, Monday through Saturday. Since our ambassadors are adults which are given a constant amount of food, we know exactly what they eat and we can figure out the cost of their diet. Young birds and injured birds are growing or recuperating and so they eat much more, seven days a week. The cost estimates below shows the cost of food for a healthy adult in a month.

Birds in captivity live much longer than birds living in the wild. Reasons for their longevity include (1) no predators to fend off, (2)

good, dependable nutrition, and (3) medical care which is always available for birds in captivity. This is illustrated by the difference in cost between our two great horned owls. Sylvester costs much more to feed than Ollie since Sylvester has a special diet which encourages him to take his medicine daily.

It may also be surprising that larger raptors don't necessarily cost more to feed than smaller raptors. The difference is that although larger birds eat more, the different type of food eaten may not cost as much. For example, rats are less expensive than mice, weight-wise. A large rat which costs \$3, might be the same weight as 5 mice, which together would cost \$4.50.

Monthly Cost of Food for RAPTOR's Adult Avian Ambassadors



BARN OWL
Storm: \$71



BARRED OWL
Spencer: \$63



TURKEY VULTURE
Earl \$61



BALD EAGLE
Eli: \$47



GREAT HORNED OWL
Sylvester: \$95
Ollie: \$65



RED-TAILED HAWK
Scarlet: \$45
Isis: \$80



EASTERN SCREECH OWL
Athena: \$79
Rufous & Sirin: \$64 ea.

Total monthly expenditure for food for avian ambassadors: \$734

If you would like to help feed our birds, Rodent Pro is offering gift certificates. Since the price of rats and mice keeps increasing, a gift certificate is very helpful with feeding the raptors. Please see <https://www.rodentpro.com/products/rodent-pro-gift-card> for information of how to help feed our raptors.



P.O. Box 118 - Inglesfield, IN 47618-9998
(812) 867-7598
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Eagle Release (continued from page 1)

The next problem to be addressed was the release of the eagle. It was determined that the eagle was hatched this spring and was only approximately two months old. While juvenile eagles up to several years old are mostly dark colored and don't have their characteristic white head and tail-feathers yet, the tiny tufts of feather extending from the ends of this eagle's flight feathers indicated that it was a very young bird that was only months old.



Feather tufts at the end of flight feathers.

As a very young bird, it would require the help and example of adult eagles to master the necessary skills to hunt and survive. There was no known nest nor regular eagle sightings in the Lake Lorelei area near where he was found and presumed to have been hatched. So, we sought another suitable release site.

Through contact with another RAPTOR finder who had a barred owl fall out of its nest at their home in Mt. Orab this spring, we found out that there was a bald eagle nest with active parents and young at the Grant Lake Wildlife Area in Mt. Orab. Grant Lake looked like the best area to release the rehabilitated eagle. It would give him the environment and support that he needed to thrive and be successful.

With the eagle ready to go and the 4th of July around the corner, the release was scheduled for the 4th. With the barred owl finders, and some locals who just happened to be at Grant Lake, and our RAPTOR volunteers, the juvenile eagle was successfully released.

While many newly released birds seem to fly to a nearby tree and get their bearings for a while, this eagle promptly did a huge flyover of the lake before he disappeared in the distance. He was clearly ready to go and we wished him a happy Independence Day!

Challenging Times (continued from page 1)

The first three Open Houses of 2020 were cancelled. A reservation system for the June and July Open Houses allowed us to accommodate our guests in a safe and efficient manner. The number of guests during these Open Houses was lower in comparison to our usual 200 guests, but the guests were able to visit, to learn, and to experience the wonders of our avian ambassadors up close.

To keep operating and receiving injured raptors, changes were made to our transport team to keep our volunteers safe. Guests entering the building, dropping off raptors, abided by social distancing. Within the close quarters of our critical care area, our rehabilitators wore masks when taking care of birds. Staffing was decreased in some areas and the start of our summer internship program was delayed. With our facility located in Clermont County, we are now wearing masks inside our facility to abide by the level 3 emergency requirement.

When COVID-19 first hit in March, we wondered what impact it would have on wildlife. Before baby season started, we noticed that we were receiving just as many injured adult raptors, but they weren't being found by roadways, since people were staying at home. Usually the majority of our injured raptors are found by the side of the road, hit by vehicles. Less vehicles on the road meant less raptors hit by vehicles.

Baby season has come and gone and we are on a path to set a record for receiving more admissions than any other year. To date, we have already received 196 injured or orphaned birds; not that long ago that was the number of admissions for an entire calendar year.

Although we are receiving birds which need our care, we do not have the usual revenue stream to support our work. We have exhausted our food supply and are continually buying food to meet the increased number of admissions.

As a nonprofit organization we are doing our part to help the community with raptors in need.

The Raptor Center has never had to turn away any raptor in need because we did not have the resources available to care for or feed them and we do not plan on that ever happening. It has been challenging with our small facility, but we have always found a way to make it work.

Part of how we are able to make it work is from our generous members and supporters.

If you would like to help feed our birds, Rodent Pro is offering gift certificates. Since the price of rats and mice keeps increasing, a gift certificate is very helpful with feeding the raptors. Please see <https://www.rodentpro.com/products/rodent-pro-gift-card> for information of how to help feed our raptors.

THANK YOU...



...for your continuing years of membership.



...to the donors who supported construction of new flight areas for our growing admissions.



...to all of the volunteers who donate supplies.



...to the 200-plus households who support us through the community rewards programs.

Your support is making a difference to raptors in need.

2020 Admissions

American Kestrel	15	Saw-whet Owl	0	Rough-legged Hawk	0	2020 Dispositions (as of June 30, 2020) Released 50% Euthanized 15% Died 8% Transferred 0% Education 0% Under Care 27%
Merlin	0	Snowy Owl	0	Northern Harrier	0	
Peregrine Falcon	0	Short Eared Owl	0	Turkey Vulture	6	
Eastern Screech Owl	13	Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Black Vulture	2	
Barred Owl	19	Cooper's Hawk	9	Osprey	0	
Barn Owl	0	Broad-winged Hawk	1	Golden Eagle	0	
Great Horned Owl	26	Red-shouldered Hawk	35	Bald Eagle	2	
Long-eared Owl	0	Red-tailed Hawk	36	Total	165	

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@raptorinc.org or call 513-825-3325.

- Gas Gift Cards
- **Non-latex exam gloves – large and XL (increased need during COVID)**
- Lysol Disinfectant - blue aerosol can
- Paper towels
- Printer Paper
- Office Max Gift Card
- Stamps (Forever)
- 50 or 55 gallon plastic bags

Thank you for all of your donations!

Amazon Wish List

RAPTOR Inc. is 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>.

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 and groups for their recent financial contributions to RAPTOR Inc. for the second quarter of 2020..

\$25 to \$499

Ahrenholz, Teresa
 Auer, Mary
 Aungst, Mr. & Mrs. W. Patton
 Ayres, Mr. & Mrs. Richard
 Baughman, Sarah
 Bezerra, Susan
 Binstadt, Richard
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 Ohio Valley Camera Club
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 Einson, Stephen
 Eulberg, Mr. & Mrs. William
 Finley, Hanna
 Freeman, Mr. & Mrs. David
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 Gerring, Lori
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 Halpin, Timothy
 Handlon, Mr. & Mrs. Shawn
 Hardy, Mike & Leora
 Harris, Cheryl

Head, Louise
 Hensley, Mr. & Mrs. James
 Hibrandt-Robin, Judy
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 Hoeper, Mr. & Mrs. Michael
 Howell, Mr. & Mrs. Douglas
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 Jaspers, Rev. J. Dennis
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 Keiter, Karen
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 Rubenstein, Mary Bob
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 Tapp-Philipp, Elise C
 Thobaden Jr., Mr. & Mrs. Robert
 Todia, Judith
 Viles, Amanda
 Waske, Owen
 Wetzel, Sandra
 Wick, Mr. & Mrs. Tom

Falcon Level \$500 to \$999

Blum, Virginia
 Garber, Ethel & Sam
 Gift, Johnson & Johnson
 Mueller, Michael A.H.
 Piepmeier, Mark

Osprey Level \$1000 and up

Krone, Mr. & Mrs. Bruce

RAPTOR Inc. Board

President: Marc Alverson
 Vice President: Jeff Hays
 Treasurer: Robert E. Smith
 Secretary: Alice McCaleb
 Trustee: Rosie Ayers
 Trustee: Dan Begin
 Trustee: Bob Dahlhausen, DVM
 Trustee: Joe Lucas
 Trustee: Zach Gambill

RAPTOR Inc. Staff

Cindy Alverson, Executive Director
 Jackie Bray, Associate Director

The Board of Trustees generally meets the third Wednesday of each month, at 7:00 P.M. All RAPTOR members are welcome to attend.

Contact Marc Alverson at marcalverson@cinci.rr.com for meeting time and location.

Thank You To Our Veterinarians!

Bob Dahlhausen, D.V.M.
 (513) 576-1990
 D.J. Haeussler, D.V.M.
 (513) 374-3963
 J. Peter Hill, D.V.M.
 (513) 793-3032
 Vanessa Kuonen Cavens, D.V.M.
 (513) 561-0069
 Paul Levitas, D.V.M.
 (513) 871-8866
 Ann Manharth, DVM
 (513) 248-0904

Communications

Gary Young, Newsletter Editor
 To submit articles or pictures for consideration in HackBack, email the article to:
raptor@raptorinc.org
 or by mail to:
 RAPTOR Inc.
 961 Barg Salt Run Road
 Milford, Ohio 45150

To report an injured raptor in the Greater Cincinnati area call RAPTOR Inc.: (513) 825-3325

Mission

Since 1978, RAPTOR Inc. (Regional Association for the Protection and Treatment Of Raptors) has been dedicated to "the rehabilitation and return of raptors to their natural environment, the education of the public on the importance of raptors, and the preservation of their natural habitat".

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

\$500 Lifetime Membership
 plus personalized tour for 5

Eagle and Lifetime Memberships, please indicate T-Shirt Size: (S, M, L, XL, XXL) _____

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.!

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, RAPTOR Inc. will not be hosting our annual Members Picnic this fall.

MEMBER PICNIC CANCELLED!

