

WINGBEATS

The Fall 2024 Newsletter of RAPTOR Inc.

Celebrating 46 Years

Barred Owls and Spotted Owls: A Plan for the Future

by Alison Bewley

In August, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) announced their Final Barred Owl Management Strategy to reduce the invasive barred owl population in the Pacific Northwest and aid the survival and recovery of the region's native spotted owl. The spotted owl is a medium-sized forest owl with three subspecies. They select mature, structurally diverse coniferous or redwood forests, and these owls prey primarily on arboreal rodents.

Starting in the 1960s, these forests were aggressively harvested for timber, destroying critical spotted owl habitat. Although several regional management plans were implemented in the 1970s and 1980s, it wasn't until after the spotted owl was listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act that the first federal, landscape-scale environmental policy was adopted in 1994. This policy, known as the Northwest Forest Plan, has been largely successful in halting the region's environmental devastation.

But habitat loss is not the only threat the spotted owl faces. Around 1900, barred owls began expanding westward, likely due to the impact of European settlement. Historically, barred owls' range stopped at the Great Plains. However, the combination of fire suppression, keystone species extirpation, and shelterbelt planting may have contributed to the expansion of forests into prairies, which allowed barred owls to spread across Canada and down into spotted owl territory.

Barred owls, like spotted owls, are medium-sized forest owls, though slightly larger and more aggressive. In the West, barred owls tend to prefer the same older, structurally diverse forests that spotted owls select. While spotted owls are limited to these forests, barred owls utilize a wider range of areas (including wooded urban areas, which spotted owls avoid). And barred owls, unlike spotted owls, are generalist predators: While they eat the same arboreal rodents that make up the bulk of the spotted owl's diet, barred owls also eat a wide variety of other animals. Their adaptability has led to denser owl populations, as barred owls outcompete their more specialized cousins.

In areas where barred owls are not managed, spotted owl populations continue to decline rapidly. The US Forest Service estimates that approximately 3,000-5,200 northern spotted owls remain on federal lands, while the conservation network Partners in Flight estimates that only 15,000 spotted owls are left in the wild. Partners in Flight estimates that the barred owl population is closer to 3.5 million.

See Owls, on page 5





Rehabbed Hawk is Going Strong After 7 Years

By Jordan West

Ozzie, a female red-tailed hawk, was admitted to RAPTOR Inc. as a patient in 2017 as a fledgling. She was rehabilitated, banded, and released on the east side of Cincinnati, close to where she was found. Over the next year or so, Ozzie traveled around 20 miles, searching for an area to call her own.

I first encountered her donning adult plumage in 2019 at Arlington Memorial Gardens, a cemetery on the west side of Cincinnati. I confirmed that it was Ozzie by looking up her US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) band numbers.

I kept track of Ozzie for the next two years. She remained at Arlington and hatched at least one chick there in 2020. After the autumn of her second breeding season, she began visiting Arlington less frequently, until she suddenly disappeared.

This left me to wonder what may have happened to her.

I didn't encounter Ozzie at all in 2022. But one spring day in 2023, I saw a familiar-looking banded red-tailed hawk at Spring Grove Cemetery, close to downtown Cincinnati. The hawk was establishing a breeding territory with her new mate and busily working on a new nest. The hawk resembled Ozzie and even had an approachable demeanor, as Ozzie did. With my camera, I obtained the USFWS numbers. Could this bird be Ozzie? Yes!

She had traveled another seven miles from Arlington to Spring Grove, where she ended up fledging two chicks in 2023, and another three chicks in 2024.

We know Ozzie has fledged at least six chicks in the past seven years, which is a remarkable success story. This is a perfect representation of what good things can come from local conservation, rehabilitation, and research. With the help of Ozzie's finder and rehabilitators, she has continued not only to live in the wild, but also to fledge chicks year after year. If her chicks have been successful, they will continue Ozzie's legacy of strengthening the red-tailed hawk population in and around greater Cincinnati. And this success story will also be a part of RAPTOR Inc.'s continuing legacy.

Photo: Ozzie. (J. West)

Meet Orion, Our Newest Avian Ambassador

By Jackie Bray

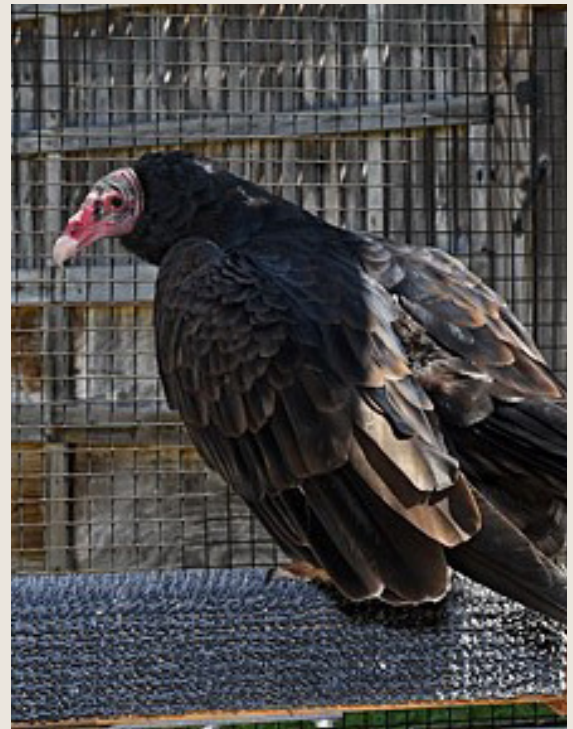
Meet the newest resident at the Raptor Center – a 1-year-old male turkey vulture admitted from Treehouse Wildlife Center in Dow, IL, just north of St. Louis, MO. His name is Orion, meaning “hunter in the sky,” or Heaven’s light. This bird was turned over to the wildlife center after being illegally held for a period of time by an unlicensed person. Unfortunately, this caused Orion to become human imprinted.

Imprinting is a rapid learning process that occurs during a critical time in a young bird’s life. This is when the young bird gains its species identity, usually (and ideally) from its parents. If a young bird imprints on humans, the bird will exhibit odd behavior and won’t interact appropriately with humans or with the bird’s own kind. This psychological process is irreversible,

resulting in a bird that cannot survive in the wild on its own.

Vultures are incredibly intelligent and live in social groups, which make them particularly vulnerable to human imprinting. It also makes them very responsive to training using positive reinforcement. When guests visit the raptor center, Orion likes to hop up on his high perch and open his wings, showing guests how beautiful his iridescent feathers are in the sunlight. He readily jumps to the glove of his trainers, eager to interact with them for the tasty morsels he knows they have in their pouch.

Orion should be visiting guests at our educational programs soon, helping our educators share about the importance of these birds to the environment.



Orion (Marc Alverson)

Upcoming RAPTOR Public Appearances*

Date	Time	Event	Location
21-Nov-2024	7-9p	Miami Township Holiday Parade	SR 28 from Cinema Dr. to Meijer Dr., Milford, OH 45150
23-Nov-2024	1-2p	Florence Branch Library	7425 US-42, Florence, KY 41042
24-Nov-2024	1-4p	RAPTOR Inc. Open House	961 Barg Salt Run Rd, Milford, OH 45150
14-Jan-2025	6-7p	Hebron Branch Library	1863 N Bend Rd, Hebron, KY 41048
11-Feb-2025	6-7p	Amelia Branch Library	58 Maple St, Amelia, OH 45102
13-Feb-2025	6:30-9p	Cincinnati-Hamilton County Main Library	800 Vine St, Cincinnati, OH 45202
1-Mar-2025	9a-3:30p	Adams County Amish Bird Symposium	3735 Wheat Ridge Rd, West Union, OH 45693
13-Sep-2025	9-11a	4th Annual RAPTOR Inc. 5K Run/Walk	Miami Meadows Park, 1546 OH-131, Milford, OH 45150

*Contact Sponsor for details and to see if reservations are required

2024 Total Admissions

American Kestrel	29	Northern Harrier	0
Bald Eagle	1	Osprey	0
Barn Owl	3	Peregrine Falcon	1
Barred Owl	35	Red-shouldered Hawk	56
Black Vulture	12	Red-tailed Hawk	60
Broad-winged Hawk	5	Rough-legged Hawk	0
Cooper’s Hawk	34	Saw-whet Owl	0
Eastern Screech Owl	9	Sharp-shinned Hawk	0
Golden Eagle	0	Short Eared Owl	0
Great Horned Owl	50	Snowy Owl	0
Long-eared Owl	0	Turkey Vulture	16
Merlin	0	Total	311

Dispositions	
Released	57%
Euthanized	24%
Died	15%
Under Care	4%

3RD ANNUAL 5K RUN/WALK

RAPTOR Inc. Hosts 3rd Annual Raptor 5K Walk/Run

By Jackie Bray

Thanks so much to everyone who supported our 3rd Annual 5K Raptor Run on September 14, 2024 at Miami Meadows Park. We had a blast!

Participants received a medal and t-shirt featuring the image of a turkey vulture. The turkey vulture was chosen to honor the life of Earl, an avian ambassador who resided at the Raptor Center for 40 years. Earl helped us educate thousands of guests about the importance of vultures to the environment and their fascinating adaptations for survival. Earl will be sorely missed.

A record-setting 197 runners participated. The weather was beautiful. Everyone loved seeing our Avian Ambassadors, Apollo, Lazarus, and Rufus. Our AMAZING RAFFLE items included a Falconry Field Experience for 6 people; a VIP Penguin Experience

and a Goat Painting Experience from the Cincinnati Zoo; tickets to Newport Aquarium; gift certificates from local businesses; and much more! The kids loved the take-home craft projects and the pellet dissection lab.

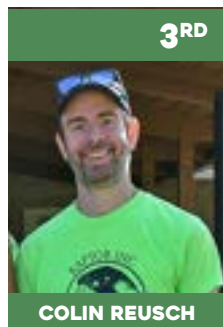
Congratulations to our race winners! In the Men's Division: **1st Place - Benjamin Jones, 2nd Place - Nick Barela, 3rd Place - Colin Reusch**. In the Women's Division: **1st Place - Stephanie Berrie, 2nd Place - Rachel Giltner, 3rd Place - Rebekah Brigano**.

We wish to thank our generous sponsors and our dedicated volunteers. Without their support, the event would not be possible! Save the date - next year's race will be on Saturday, September 13, 2025. Which bird will be featured?

WOMEN'S RACE RESULTS



MEN'S RACE RESULTS



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT!

RAPTOR

Gold Sponsors

TireDiscounters Wild Birds Unlimited Cincinnati West

Silver Sponsors

Wild Birds Unlimited West Chester Wild Birds Unlimited Chester RDI Raptor's Center of Health and Learning Tri-State Running CHILDREN'S MEETING HOUSE

Bronze Sponsors

Avian and Exotic Medical Center Pet Care Animal Hospital Day Heights Veterinary Clinic Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden The Animal Eye Institute Row House Gallery

Our Staff is Growing!

By Mark Moore, President

After twelve amazing years of serving as RAPTOR Inc.'s first and only Executive Director, **Cindy Alverson** will be transitioning to the new position of Director of Avian Operations, effective December 2, 2024. In her new role, Cindy will be focused on leading the team dedicated to the medical treatment and rehabilitation of the 350-400 birds admitted each year as well as the oversight of the medical care for our permanent resident education birds.

We're excited to announce that **Steve Wesselkamper** will be joining RAPTOR Inc. as our new Executive Director. Steve is a Cincinnati native and has spent many years in successful leadership roles both in private industry as well as the nonprofit world. In his role, Steve will have overall operational responsibility for RAPTOR Inc.'s staff, programs, facilities, and resources as well as the development of our marketing, communications, and development strategies. Please join us in welcoming Steve to the team!

Jackie Bray, who has served as Associate Executive Director since 2015, will be assuming the new role of Director of Education. In this position, Jackie will be responsible for the day-to-day management and execution of all aspects of our 350+ educational programs each year to further our mission of inspiring bird of prey conservation for today and future generations.

Finally, **Michelle Rahtz** will continue in her role of Administrative Assistant which she has held since joining us in 2023. Michelle has been a great addition to the team and will continue to be a key contributor in the new organizational structure.

We're excited to announce these organizational changes and believe they will position us well for the future as we continually strive to be the Midwest's premier raptor center dedicated to the conservation of birds of prey via rehabilitation, education, research and community service.



Owls *(continued from page 1)*

Several experiments have been performed to see whether removing barred owls would help spotted owl populations rebound. In these areas, spotted owl populations not only stopped shrinking, but actually grew. The collective results were reported in a 2021 meta-analysis, which found that barred owl removal has a strong, positive effect on the survival and recovery of spotted owl populations.

Given these results, the FWS came to the difficult decision to adopt the Final Barred Owl Management Strategy, which calls for the lethal removal of barred owls from spotted owl territory. The FWS has a Migratory Bird Treaty Act special purpose permit to implement the strategy, which allows barred owl removal to be carried out only in designated areas by authorized, trained professionals, as quickly and humanely as possible. The maximum removal will be less than one-half of 1% of the total barred owl population of North America, and will—hopefully—save the spotted owl from extinction.

For more information, visit FWS's barred owl management page (<https://www.fws.gov/project/barred-owl-management>), which includes links to the meta-analysis and the Final Strategy.



Spotted Owl (Getty)



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.

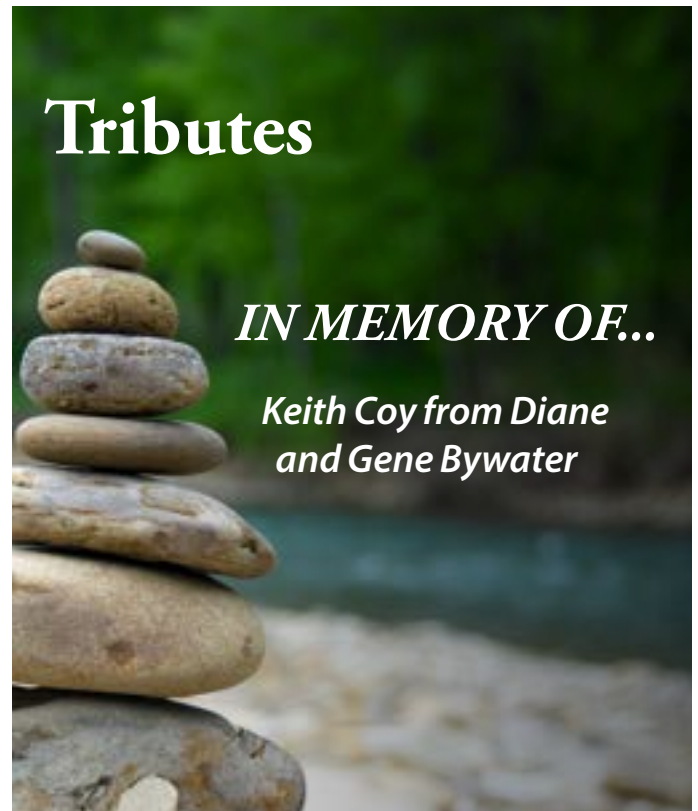
- Dog Food (dry, for large dogs)
- Duct Tape
- UDF Gas Gift Card
- Latex or Nitrile exam gloves (any size)
- Office Max Gift Card
- Paper towels
- Stamps (Forever)

Thank you for all of your donations, including those who donate through the Amazon Wish List! Due to changes at Amazon, we unfortunately no longer receive information on the names of Wish List donors.

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 they need to care for our birds, please visit our website, raptorinc.org. Click on the tab, Support Us (not the dropdown) and click on the Amazon Wish List Icon midway down the page. This will take you directly to the RAPTOR Inc. Wish list.

If any of these wish list items are purchased, they are shipped directly to our RAPTOR Inc. facility in Milford. How easy is that?



Financial Contributions

Thanks to the following individuals and groups for their financial contribution to RAPTOR Inc. for the third quarter of 2024.

Osprey Level \$1,000 - \$9,900

Bullock, Gay
Farrell, Donna
Haynes, Richard & Nancy
SEC Charitable Corporation

Morgan, Dean
Myers, Kathy & Bob
Sweigard, Chris
Wild Birds Unlimited, Harrison Avenue

Dwyer, Evelyn
Duval, Cynthia & Eric
Ferguson, Amy
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MacAoidh Jergens, Andrew
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Menke, Catherine
Meyer, Nancy
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Sachs, Bill
Story, Amy & Leland
The Red Poppy
Tri-State Running Company
Wiggs, Peggy
Wild Birds Unlimited West
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Dahlhausen DVM, Robert
Farrell, Donna
Fryman, Shelly
Hayden, Tracy
Leach, Robert & Wendy
McNett, Bonnie
Menke, Jeanne
Tri-State Running Company
Wild Birds Unlimited, Cincinnati
Wild Birds Unlimited, West Chester

Peregrine Falcon Level \$500-\$999

Ethel & Sam Garber
Foundation
HIGHTECH Signs
Lamb, Libby & Heil, Taylor

Gifts \$100-\$499

Berlacher, Mark
Brandis, Daniel
Brennan, Nita
Bywater, Gene and Diane
Children's Meeting House
Cochrell, Annmarie

In-Kind Donations

Adams, James
Bray, Jackie



RAPTOR Inc. Leadership, Staff, and Communications

RAPTOR Inc. Board

President: Mark Moore
Vice President: Dan Begin
Treasurer: Robert E. Smith
Secretary: Alice McCaleb
Trustee: Rosie Ayers
Trustee: Bob Dahlhausen, DVM
Trustee: Jeff Hays
Trustee: Joe Lucas
Trustee: Mark Alverson
Trustee: Open position

RAPTOR Inc. Staff

Cindy Alverson, Executive Director
Jackie Bray, Associate Director
Michelle Rahtz, Administrative Assistant
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 Wingbeats, 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. is Here to Serve You!

The end of the year is fast approaching and that means we will be reaching out to remind you that it is time to renew your membership (if you have a student, hawk, owl or eagle membership). As you reflect on why you are a member and what RAPTOR Inc. has done for you, please note that this organization is not only about raptors—we are about serving you!



Found an injured raptor?
Call us; we want to help you.



Want to help prevent raptor injuries and meet new people? Join us for our litter pick-up four times a year.



Want to know about raptors and conservation? Visit one of our public presentations listed in the newsletter.



Want to have a fun afternoon and see some cool birds? Come to an Open House; we would love to meet you!



Want to be a part of our good work?
Renew your membership today!

Renewal is easy. Go online: <http://raptorinc.org/raptor-support/membership/> or mail the completed membership form included with this issue.

Venmo Now Accepted

RAPTOR Inc. can now accept Venmo for purchases or donations. Our user name is @RAPTORInc.



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 a stunning Raptor note card set

Eagle and Lifetime Memberships (below) also include perks from the levels above.

\$100 Eagle Membership
plus receive a 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) _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Check if you prefer postal delivery of Wingbeats

I would like more information about making a planned gift to RAPTOR Inc. Please call me | Please email me

I have already included RAPTOR Inc. in my will or estate plan. Please call me | Please email me

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.!

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

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

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
- Great Horned Owl: \$50
- Red-tailed Hawk: \$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.!

