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## 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".

# HackBack

The Newsletter of RAPTOR Inc.

Celebrating 38 Years

HackBack

[www.raptorinc.org](http://www.raptorinc.org)

Fall 2016

## Turkey Vultures: Avian Garbage Removal Service

*By Alison Bewley, Volunteer*

A large dark bird soars in wobbly circles before zeroing in on something below. After making another unsteady circuit, it adjusts its course and descends on a fragrant pile of delicious . . . roadkill? The Turkey Vulture—maybe a distant cousin of RAPTOR, Inc.'s own Earl—touches down to poke at the carcass with a featherless red head and starts ripping out mouthfuls of lunch.

While dining on roadkill and other carrion seems disgusting to humans, scavengers like Turkey Vultures actually provide an invaluable ecological service. Turkey Vultures live in open and semi-open habitats, including roadsides, farm fields, suburbs, country sides, and landfills. Turkey Vultures find their food with a keen sense of sight, like all raptors, and a keen sense of smell, unlike most raptors. They can smell ethyl mercaptan (a gas produced by recently-decaying animals) from miles away, and use the scent as a beacon to locate food.

Turkey Vultures prefer freshly dead carrion to carrion that is already putrefying, and they rarely if ever kill live prey. Instead, their diet relies on scavenging animal carcasses, like an avian garbage removal service. By consuming decaying organisms before they have a chance to putrefy, Turkey Vultures remove breeding grounds for diseases like botulism, anthrax, cholera, and salmonella, all of which are harmful to humans. Scavengers keep the environment clean while safely recycling nutrients. So next time you see a big handsome bird scarfing roadkill, say thanks and wish him well.



*Earl, RAPTOR's resident turkey vulture doing her job*

## It's Membership Renewal Time!

It may be time to renew your membership. Please check your mailing label for the expiration date of your membership. Renewal notices are sent out in October for annual collection for the following year. Dues paid after September 1 will be credited for the following year.

Thanks for supporting raptor conservation!

## Mark Your Calendars! Come and Enjoy the RAPTOR Public Appearances!

Sat Oct 29	10am-2pm	<b>Fernald Nature Preserve</b> , 7400 Willey Rd., Hamilton, OH 45013
Sun Oct 30	1pm-4pm	<b>OPEN HOUSE at RAPTOR Inc.</b> , 961 Barg Salt Run Rd., Milford, OH 45150
Sat Nov 5	10am-11am	<b>Wild Birds Unlimited</b> , 4987 Houston Rd., Florence, KY 41042
Sun Nov 6	11am-3pm	<b>L.L. Bean Store Grand Opening</b> , 5901 E. Galbraith Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45236
Tue Nov 8	3pm-4pm	<b>Erlanger Branch Library</b> , 401 Kenton Lands Rd., Erlanger, KY 41018
Sat Nov 12	10:30am-1pm	<b>Newtown Feed &amp; Supply</b> , 6876 Main St, Cincinnati, OH 45244
Sun Nov 27	1pm-4pm	<b>OPEN HOUSE at RAPTOR Inc.</b> , 961 Barg Salt Run Rd., Milford, OH 45150
Sat Dec 10	10am-11:30am	<b>Aullwood Audubon Center</b> , 1000 Aullwood Rd., Dayton, OH 45414
Sat Mar 4, 2017	9:30am-3:30pm	<b>Adams County Amish Bird Symposium</b> , 3735 Wheat Ridge Rd., West Union, OH 45693

## RAPTOR Wish List

RAPTOR Inc. is in need of the following items for our bird care facility. To donate any of these items, please email RAPTOR at: [raptor@raptorinc.org](mailto:raptor@raptorinc.org) or call 513-825-3325.

- Dog Food (dry)
- Dustbuster (hand-held vacuum)
- Gas Gift Card
- Nitrile exam gloves (any size)
- Office Max Gift Card
- Stamps (Forever)
- Trash bags – 55, 30 and 13 gallon

Thank you for all of your donations!

## 2016 Admissions

American Kestrel	18	Broad-winged Hawk	4
Merlin	0	Red-shouldered Hawk	53
Peregrine Falcon	2	Red-tailed Hawk	36
Eastern Screech Owl	17	Rough-legged Hawk	0
Barred Owl	20	Turkey Vulture	4
Barn Owl	2	Black Vulture	5
Great Horned Owl	28	Osprey	1
Long-eared Owl	0	Golden Eagle	0
Saw-whet Owl	0	Bald Eagle	0
Snowy Owl	0	<b>TOTAL Admissions</b>	<b>208</b>
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	<b>Released</b>	<b>60%</b>
Cooper's Hawk	18		



### RAPTOR Inc. Board, Spring 2016

Erica Locke, President (2016-2017)  
 Jeff Hays, Vice President (2016-2017)  
 Robert Smith, Treasurer (2016-2017)  
 Marc Alverson, Secretary (2016-2017)  
 Rosie Ayers, Trustee  
 Dan Begin, Trustee  
 Joseph Lucas, Trustee  
 Dan Bailey, Trustee  
 Alice McCaleb, Trustee

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 Erica Locke at [elanni@gmail.com](mailto:elanni@gmail.com) for meeting time and location.

### Communications

Gary Young, Newsletter Editor  
 Erica Locke, Assistant Newsletter Editor

To submit articles or pictures for consideration in HackBack, email the article to:

[raptor@raptorinc.org](mailto: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



### Thank You To Our Veterinarians!

Bob Dahlhausen, D.V.M.  
 (513) 576-1990

Joseph Grossi, D.V.M.  
 (513) 772-6060

D.J. Haeussler, D.V.M.  
 (513) 332-0718

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



## Serendipity: A Missed Flight for Both Human and Peregrine

by Ann Oliver

What would YOU do to save an injured Peregrine Falcon? Most folks reading the RAPTOR, Inc. newsletter "HackBack" would likely make sacrifices because they're birders. But if you knew nothing about birds, would you abandon your travel plans?

On Father's Day 2016, two flights were missed. First, a juvenile Peregrine Falcon failed to go "above and beyond" a downtown building, injuring itself in a window strike. But second, a non-birding good samaritan didn't make it to the airport in time because of going "above and beyond" by capturing the peregrine with two avid birding friends.

When Mark Skelton's phone rang the morning of June 19, the downtown resident was packing for an early afternoon flight. He hadn't anticipated a brief interruption by a visiting friend, nor had he planned on a prolonged rescue mission to save a species he'd never seen.

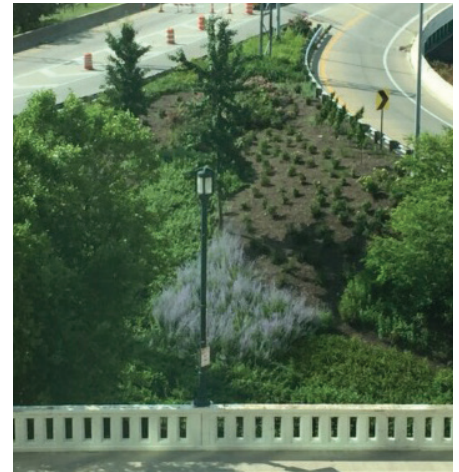
On the other end of the phone was Mark's friend, Dan, who wanted to return borrowed books. Dan advised he had no time for a visit, as he had dogs in his car. That's how Mark came to be serendipitously outside his building near the Taft Museum of Art. A minute or two later, a juvenile Peregrine Falcon careened into a window high above the street, then plummeted to the pavement.

That's when the drama escalated. Mark's friend, Dan, had already driven away and Mark felt he couldn't leave the wobbly peregrine alone on the sidewalk since a passerby had almost stepped on the bird. The bird began to wander into the street, so Mark called for assistance from his westside birding friends, Ann Oliver and Mike Acheson. Ann and Mike notified RAPTOR Inc. that they would be bringing in the bird, then rushed to the scene to help Mark.

After arriving downtown, Ann and Mike noticed the relentless alarm calls of American Robins and Northern Cardinals indicating the wounded peregrine was hiding somewhere in the triangular green space in the shadow of the Proctor & Gamble Towers. After thirty minutes of desperate searching through ornamental plantings, keen-eyed Mike saw the peregrine huddled deep in a thicket of Knock-out Roses. Mark and Ann slowly approached it through the thorny bushes using a large coat held open like a toreador cape to shepherd the bird toward an open pet carrier.

A short drive later, the quiet, dazed peregrine was admitted to RAPTOR, Inc.'s Milford facility and examined by Executive Director, Cindy Alverson. Experts at RAPTOR confirmed the bird had no fractures or dislocations and only suffered from soft tissue trauma, requiring rest and proper nutrition. After a three-week stay in rehab, it was time to release the peregrine. On July 10, a now-feisty Peregrine Falcon was released from the Carew Tower by Jeff Hays, Mike Acheson, and Ann Oliver. It rocketed high above the canyons of concrete, steel, and endlessly treacherous windows, and was immediately joined in the airspace above the Queen City by two adult peregrines! A second non-banded juvenile Peregrine Falcon was also observed sitting on the PNC Bank Tower nearby.

ANN OLIVER IS FORMER PRESIDENT OF CINCINNATI BIRD CLUB, FORMER EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF OHIO ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, FORMER BOARD MEMBER AUDUBON OHIO.



*Greenspace where the Peregrine Falcon was captured*



*Injured Peregrine Falcon on Cincinnati sidewalk*

## 2016 RAPTOR Inc. Calendar Photos

This edition of the HackBack continues with this quarter's winning photos which are showcased in the RAPTOR Inc. calendar.



*Turkey Vulture by Leon Herbert*



*Great Horned Owl by Katherine Sarlo*



*Barred Owl by Kathryn Cubert*

## Window Strikes Deadly to Raptors

By Kathleen M. Jenkins, Volunteer

WHAM!!! You've probably heard it: the sickening thump of a bird hitting a window. And you may have thought it was an unusual event. Unfortunately, that's not the case. According to the American Bird Conservancy, up to one billion birds die in window collisions each year, as they try to navigate around houses, office buildings, bus shelters, and other glass obstacles. Raptors are no exception.

Because of their larger size and high speed flight, raptors hit windows with an often bone-shattering impact, either dying instantly or sustaining injuries that will frequently kill them. Hawks, falcons, and owls are the most frequent victims, as they're often found in urban and residential areas with high concentrations of window glass.

This spring, RAPTOR, Inc. received a call about a peregrine falcon that had reportedly crashed into a window in the McAlpin building downtown. When our team arrived on site, we found it was actually a wild turkey. Neither the turkey nor the window survived the crash, however.

At Cornell University, where red-tailed hawks, Big Red and Ezra, nest high above the athletic fields, two of the three 2016 fledglings crashed into windows. One suffered a broken wing, and was successfully rehabilitated and re-released into the wild, where she continues to thrive. The second one wasn't so lucky: flying into a clear-glass bus shelter at full speed, she suffered a catastrophic spinal fracture and had to be euthanized.

### Why Birds Hit Glass

Birds hit glass simply because they can't see it (people can't, either, but we're more likely to know it's there). What they do see, though, is often a reflection of landscape and sky – an illusion of a clear pathway. Green habitats inside buildings with see-through glass are misleading as well. And, when there are windows or doors on opposite sides of a building, it looks like a clear pathway to the bird, and they try to fly through, with devastating results.

### What You Can Do

Fortunately, there are several things you can do to make your windows safer for raptors and other birds.

**Provide Visual Cues** – Placing stickers, silhouettes, or Window Alerts on the outside of windows and glass doors makes glass more visible by reflecting UV light, which is highly visible to birds. There are tons of great options, and they're either highly attractive or all but invisible to humans (what you choose depends on your preference). Hanging strings of beads or shiny materials outside windows can also help.

For a detailed review of options and photos of what they look like from the inside and the outside, see our fellow wildlife rehabilitator Forsyth Audubon's great blog post (<https://goo.gl/Tiwwfwe>) on reducing window collisions.

You can purchase window strike prevention products on Amazon (<https://goo.gl/ERb3Im>), and if you've designated RAPTOR, Inc. as your Amazon Smile charity (<http://raptorinc.org/raptor-support/>), you'll be helping raptors even more.

Placing indicators on the inside of the glass is less effective, because it doesn't reduce the reflection.

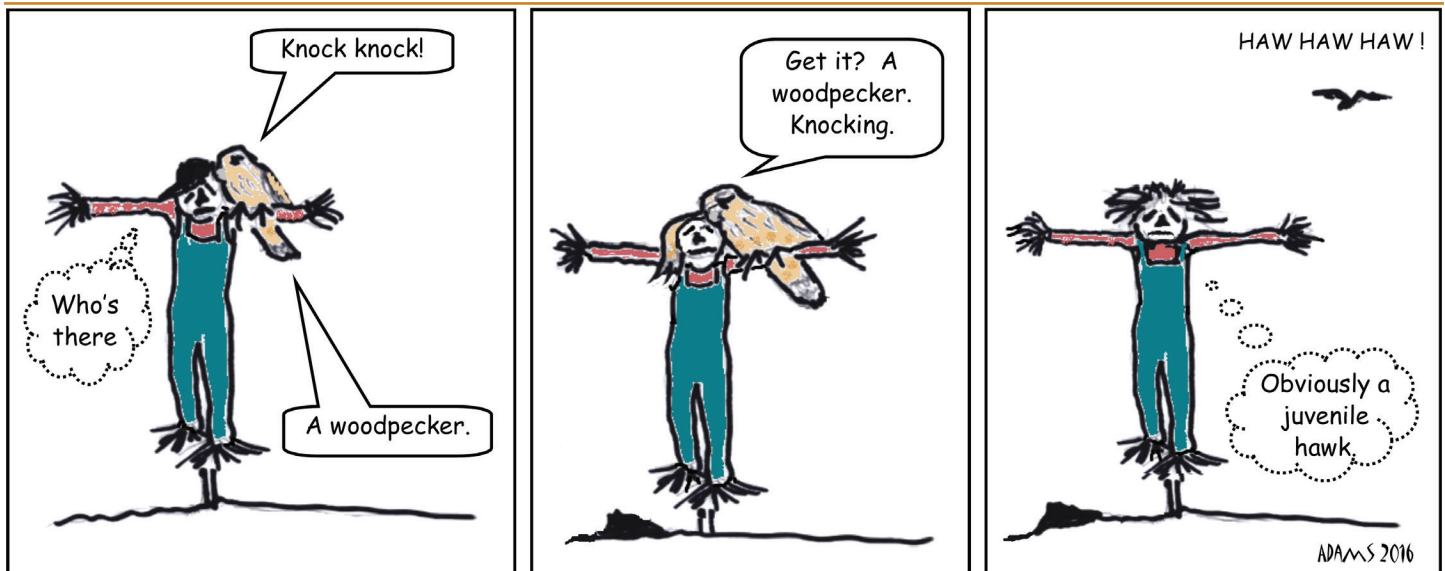
**Install Screens** – window screens installed over windows reduces the impact and may save birds from catastrophic injury or death. Screens also reduce the reflective properties of windows, making them more visible and less deadly to raptors and other birds.

**Turn Your Lights Off at Night** – Fall migration is in full swing, and most migrating birds fly at night. Lighted windows can easily disorient or distract birds, causing fatal crashes. Owls are also active at night, and at greater risk for window strikes during that time. Lights Out programs (<https://goo.gl/5ral5P>) across the United States have begun to reduce fatal window strikes for migrating birds at night. If you'd like to learn more, visit the Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP) website (<http://www.flap.org/faqs.php>).

*Continued. See "Window Strikes" on page 5*

## Raptor Ink

by Catherine Adams





## Window Strikes, continued

**Relocate Bird Feeders** – move your feeders away from problem windows to protect Cooper's hawks and sharp-shinned hawks, which often hunt at backyard bird feeders. (They are bird feeders, after all.)

It is often suggested to also use netting to protect birds from window strikes. RAPTOR Inc. does not advise the use of netting as we receive birds which have suffered serious injuries from struggles sustained in an attempt to free themselves from entanglements. Sometimes the birds are fortunate and after being rescued promptly, can heal and be released. Birds with severe injuries may not survive.

## What to Do if You Witness a Window Strike

If you do see a raptor strike a window, you can help by calling RAPTOR, Inc.'s dispatch line at 513.825.3325 for detailed instructions on how to proceed. Instructions will be given how to safely put the bird in a box and place it in a dark, quiet place. Remember that raptors are wild animals, and one that's injured may respond aggressively out of fear, pain, or in self-defense. For injured birds which are not raptors, go to the link of RAPTOR's Inc.'s website at <http://raptorinc.org/rescue/#coverage> to find the Department of Wildlife's list of referral numbers in the Cincinnati area.

Prepare a box, with newspapers, a towel, or other absorbent material in the bottom (don't use pet carriers, as they can cause severe damage to the bird's feathers). Use thick (very thick!) gloves to protect yourself from the bird's talons and beak. They may not look it, but even small raptors have talons which are razor sharp and can inflict an impressive amount of (very painful) damage.

Place the raptor in the box, close the lid securely, and cover it with a towel; then place it in a warm, quiet, and safe area. Resist the urge to check on the bird, take photos of it, or otherwise handle it unnecessarily. Don't offer food or water, and don't do anything to cause the bird additional stress – it can be deadly for them.

Window strikes kill between 2 and 10 percent of the U.S.'s bird population every year, but by taking the actions we've talked about here, you can help reduce that number, and the likelihood of hearing that heart-sickening THUMP.

## Success! Broad-winged Hawk Release!

*By Kat Jenkins*

On July 26th, Angela Chong found the above pictured juvenile broad-winged hawk near Fairview Park in Clifton; it appeared injured and was unable to fly, so RAPTOR Inc. was called in to help. Rehabilitators suspected the hawk had flown into something (window strikes are a very common cause of injury for raptors and other birds), but medical assessment determined no treatment was required beyond rest and proper nutrition (he was hungry!)

After a few days of good food, our broad-winged guest had gained weight and strength and was flying well, so on July 30 the hawk was released back into the area where he was found. We're happy that Angela was able to join us for the release, and shared this photo. (RAPTOR, Inc. includes finders at release events whenever we can!)

Broad-winged hawks are considered summer nesters in our area. This one was banded before being released, so if this hawk is encountered again, data can be entered in the United States Geological Survey database providing more information about the species.



## Annual Fall Members Meeting and Picnic

*by Jackie Bray*

On Saturday, October 1st, RAPTOR Inc. welcomed members to our Milford Facility for a bi-annual meeting and picnic. Board President Erica Locke and Treasurer Robert Smith updated members on the incredible successes the organization has achieved in the past year, including the Open House events, exhibitry of Eli the Bald Eagle, and increases in membership, educational

programs, and revenue. Plans for the new educational facility were discussed, along with our upcoming fundraising events at City Barbeque on Oct. 9th, and our annual calendar sale. The food was incredible, but visiting with our RAPTOR Inc. family was even better.

We hope to see all of our members next year!



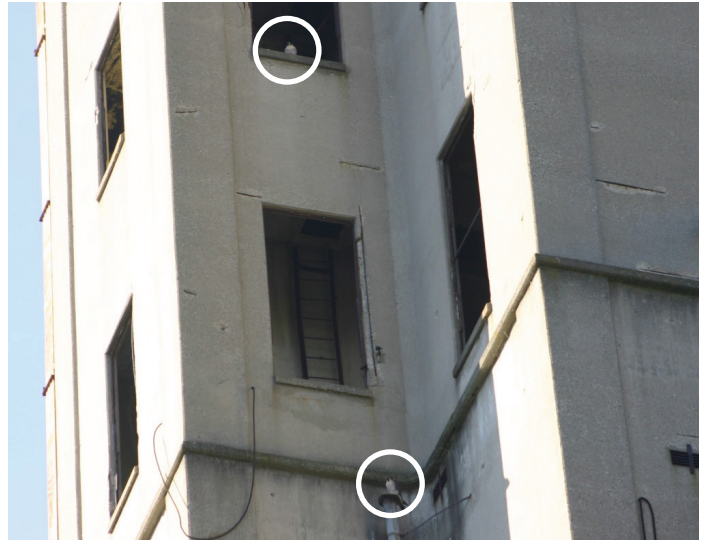
*Veggie Owl, created by the McCalebs*

## Mystery Solved?

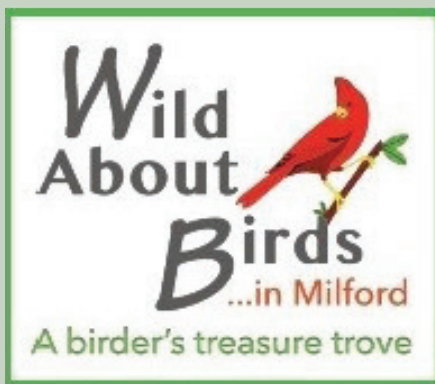
by Cindy Alverson

Much to the dismay of our falcon webcam fans, the spring of 2016 did not see any nesting action from the downtown Cincinnati peregrine falcons. RAPTOR Inc. did however receive a young injured peregrine from downtown, hatched this year, which needed our rehabilitation expertise (see *"Serendipity: A Missed Flight for Both Human and Peregrine, by Ann Oliver"* on page 3). Previously, birdwatchers had seen multiple peregrines flying downtown, but were unaware if they had nested and where. The rescue of an injured fledgling peregrine falcon confirmed the fact that a downtown pair had nested and at least one young falcon had successfully fledged.

As to the mystery of where the nest site could be, an avid birdwatcher, Gary Willoughby, might have solved the mystery! Last month, on his way to work, Gary spotted peregrine falcons flying around the vicinity of the Hopple Street viaduct. Two adult peregrines were spotted roosting on a grain silo which had been out of use for many years. Could this be the 2016 nest site, or was it just a quiet place to roost with lots of good hunting opportunities?



Peregrine Falcons (circled) roosting in grain silo near Cincinnati



## RAPTOR, Inc. Thanks Wild About Birds

RAPTOR Inc. would like to extend a special THANK YOU to Deb Winkleman and Wild About Birds in Milford for their generous support throughout the year. Visit the store and website at [www.birdchat.com](http://www.birdchat.com) for information on upcoming events that support raptor conservation!



## Thanks to the following individuals and groups for their recent financial contributions to RAPTOR Inc.

Cathrine Adams  
Angie Aylor  
Allison Blankemeyer  
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Borisch  
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Bressler  
Eric Cahall  
Mr. & Mrs. Dale Chamberlain  
Diane Clark  
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Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Wick  
Courtney Williams  
Mrs. & Mrs. Michael Wood

### Falcon Level \$500 to \$999

Alan Gast

### Osprey Level \$1000 and up

Wild About Birds

### In Kind Donations

Marc Alverson  
Jackie Bray  
Wright Brothers, Inc.  
Bob Dahlhausen, DVM  
Steve Einson  
Bzak Landscaping  
Joe Lucas  
Donna Morsbach  
Wildside Rehabilitation Center  
Dee Wright



## RAPTOR Inc. Serves as a Site Host During Great Outdoor Weekend!

Greater Cincinnati's Great Outdoor Weekend (GOW) event, sponsored by Green Umbrella, took place on Sept. 24th and 25th. In previous years RAPTOR Inc. participated by conducting programs at designated Host Sites such as the Cincinnati Nature Center or The Children's Meeting House. This year RAPTOR Inc. was excited to serve as a Host Site as we move forward opening our doors to the public.

RAPTOR Inc. volunteers made the event special for visitors by offering new and entertaining activity stations that included a coloring station, an owl pellet dissection station, and a bird banding station. Children, who were banded to represent local birds, received special gift bags if researchers "recaptured" them! There were plenty of treats available, including fruit, veggies, cookies, brownies, and Madison's Gelato! During next month's Open House on Oct. 30th we will celebrate "Owl--o-ween". Stop by and see the special activities our educators have planned!



NEW

### Updates to RAPTOR Inc. Membership and NEW Benefits

RAPTOR Inc. is introducing new perks, tiers and pricing for membership. We hope these changes will clarify each level's benefits, intent, and terms as well as simplify the renewal process. Changes are effective immediately for new members and will apply to existing members at renewal. Renewal notices are sent out in October 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](http://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.!

Fall 2016

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:

- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>American Kestrel: \$20</i>    | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Eastern Screech Owl: \$20</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Cooper's Hawk: \$20</i>   | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Barred Owl: \$20</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Red-shouldered Hawk: \$25</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Great Horned Owl: \$25</i>    | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Red-tailed Hawk: \$25</i> |  |

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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 Attn: Membership**

Thank you for your support of RAPTOR Inc.!