

WINGBEATS

The Fall 2020 Newsletter of RAPTOR Inc.

Celebrating 42 Years

Introducing Ruby, the Red-shouldered Hawk

By **Cindy Alverson**

RAPTOR Incorporated is happy to introduce Ruby, the newest education ambassador to our facility. Red-shouldered hawks are always a special attraction at our facility, not only as the stars at educational programs but also as they shine a light on the exceptional research studies performed for the last 20-plus years by the local raptor research team led by Cheryl Dykstra.

Red-shouldered hawks are the “Chatty Cathys” of the raptor world, announcing their presence with their loud, screaming kee-aah vocalization. Blue jays are such great mimics of this call, that you might look up expecting to see a red-shouldered but instead see the imposter blue jay flying overhead.

Ruby is a female red-shouldered hawk hatched this past spring and she sports her immature plumage of tan chest feathers with brown upside-down teardrops with a brown back. All ages show narrow, pale crescents on their wing-tips in flight; these are more noticeable on young birds. Red-shouldered hawks are medium-sized birds, noticeably smaller than red-tailed hawks, and they are considered to prefer a woods habitat in contrast, although they are becoming more common in urban

habitats. Not long ago, many people who visited our facility were not aware of the existence of red-shouldered hawks, but with their increased move into urban environments and our correspondingly increased awareness of them, they are making their presence known.

Ruby was admitted to RAPTOR Incorporated in early June after falling from her nest in Monroe, Ohio. We had admitted her sibling and, following his lead, she landed on the ground in a flower bed a few days later. With fuzzy white heads and no injuries, both nestlings were returned to the nest in a honey locust tree after confirming that adults were present to care for them.

Six days later, another call came in, saying that the nestlings were once again on the ground. This time, one had evidence of a serious eye injury. An ophthalmology examination from Dr. Hauessler of the Animal Eye Institute, revealed permanent blindness in her left eye. Considering the lack of hunting experience of this hawk, along with the importance of two eyes for binocular vision to hunt living, moving prey items, this bird needed a home for long-term care.



Ruby, Our Newest Education Ambassador

Currently, Ruby is adjusting to life in her enclosure, stationing quietly while we feed her multiple times throughout the day. She is on display during Open Houses and will soon join our other ambassador birds, inspiring children and adults alike with the wonders of raptors in our world.

COVID Impact

It's practically impossible to overlook the impact of COVID-19 in the human sphere. From the masks to the taped distancing guidelines in stores, from the postponement of major events to the surge of video hangouts, remote working, and distanced learning, the effect of the virus on our daily lives is pervasive.

Perhaps less visible in daily life, but equally impactful, is how COVID-19 has changed the way we interact with our natural environment and with birds.

A study by Le Quéré et al. in Nature Climate Change reports that the daily global carbon dioxide emissions decreased by about 17% in April compared to

last year. Nearly half of this decrease is attributed to changes in surface transport, including traffic, city congestion, and country mobility. Emissions in individual countries decreased by an average of 26% at their peak. In the United States, this translates to less driving both for work and for recreation.

See COVID on page 2

By **Alison Bewley**



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”.

John Ruthven: 1924 - 2020

Renowned Wildlife Artist Passes at Age 95

By Marc Alverson

Cincinnati native, John A. Ruthven, was known throughout the world for his paintings reflecting animals, nature, and the natural world around us. Born in 1924, he grew up in Walnut Hills, taking every opportunity to hike and explore nature in the outdoors. An early interest in art led to classes at the Cincinnati Art Academy and a lifelong dream to follow in the footsteps of his hero, John Audubon.

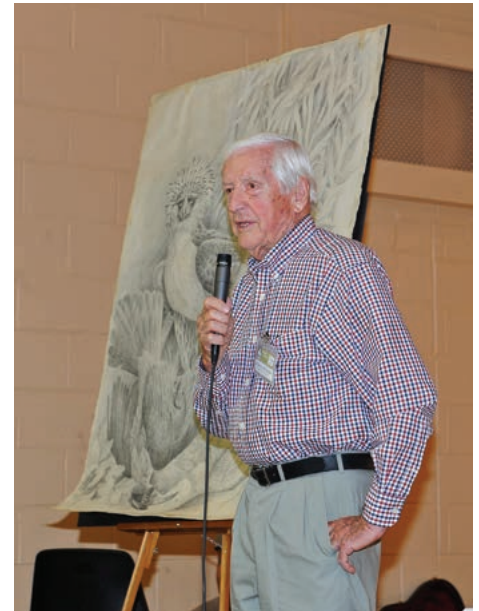
While John Ruthven's artwork graces art galleries and museums around the world, one of his more recent works, "Martha, the Last Passenger Pigeon," is now a 3-story tall mural in downtown Cincinnati at Seventh and Vine streets.

John Ruthven has been a longtime friend of local conservation organizations including the Cincinnati Nature Center and RAPTOR Incorporated. At a RAPTOR Inc.

fundraiser in 2015, John entertained guests with tales of his adventures as part of a research trip to the Philippines.

Due to his renown, he was invited to the presidential palace to meet President Ferdinand Marcos whom he presented with his original painting of the Philippine eagle. The eagle had been previously known by several other names including "Monkey-eating eagle," but John prevailed upon Marcos to rename the eagle to the "Philippine eagle," since it was found only in the Philippines. John's artwork helped save the Philippine eagle from extinction and helped it become the national bird of the Philippines.

John Ruthven devoted his amazing life to spreading the joy of nature through his artwork. He was a local treasure who will be deeply missed, but his legacy will live on.



John Ruthven

Covid (continued from page 1)

The reduction in driving "for recreation" overlapped with birds' seasonal migrations. Although fewer people are traveling to bird migration hotspots this year, backyard birding is soaring in popularity. Bird seed and supply stores around the country—including Lizzie Mae's Bird Seed in Millersburg, Ohio, according to a survey by Audubon's Neel Dhanesha—are reporting record sales and empty shelves as homebound bird-enthusiasts buy their way into backyard birding. Seed, houses, feeders, field guides, and binoculars are all flying off the shelves as more and more people realize that birds can be enjoyed from the comfort and safety of their homes, or in local parks where it's easy to maintain social distance. And birdwatching is a calming, grounding pastime: a gentle infusion of wonder that you can experience from something as commonplace as watching raptors wheel overhead, or robins foraging in the grass, or sparrows and finches chattering in the bushes.

Gardening, too, is an excellent grounding activity that has blossomed this season. Like bird seed stores, local nurseries and seed companies have struggled to supply enough seeds to

satisfy demand for home vegetable gardeners, as people begin to grow more food in backyards or containers. This growth, along with flower gardening, provides more abundant food sources for pollinators, too—bugs and bees and birds. By incorporating a few native plants into your garden, you can attract more birds to watch at home.

COVID-19's impact can be seen at RAPTOR Incorporated, as well: there's been a slight decrease in staffing, despite the number of received birds increasing during the baby season. Due to decreased driving, fewer admissions were due to birds being hit by vehicles. Unfortunately, however, more homebound people took unlicensed care of birds, resulting in two raptors imprinting on humans.

Imprinting is how an animal learns what species it belongs to: birds, like mammals, don't automatically know that they're birds when they hatch. They learn how to be birds (understanding their species' appropriate behaviors and vocalizations, identifying members of the species to mate with later in life, etc.) by learning from older animals. During a critical period of development after

hatching, they visually imprint on their parents—or whichever creature is taking care of them. If their caretaker is human, the imprinted bird will identify as human for life. Imprinting is irreversible, and renders birds unable to be rehabilitated and released into the wild.

This season, a juvenile American kestrel and a black vulture, both of which had imprinted on humans, were admitted to RAPTOR Inc. Both of these birds will become educational ambassadors. Imprinting is one of the reasons why it is vital to have licensed professionals handle wildlife, especially young birds.

A healthier way to care for birds is to provide feeders and bird baths, or native plants in containers or a backyard garden. Audubon has a database (www.audubon.org/native-plants) for help getting started. And go easy on the yard tidying this fall: messy gardens, with seeds leftover in flowerheads and leaf litter and loose brush, provide food sources and shelters for birds and other animals as the seasons change.

Even as COVID-19 changes how our human world operates, you can find peace in your own backyard—and it might even be flitting around on feathered wings.

Notes from the Field

by Jordan West

Each year I eagerly await the arrival of Autumn. As the temperatures begin to cool and the leaves change over to a warm color scheme, raptor activity really picks up. I immediately begin anticipating the arrival of fall and winter visitors.

As migration kicks in, we see the local departure of certain species such as osprey and broad-winged hawks. However, we also welcome a wide variety of wintering birds of prey. I find myself counting down the days until I spot my first merlin of the season. Only days before writing this article, I spotted a small familiar falcon perched in a local cemetery on an exposed snag watching for songbirds. Sure enough, on September 25th, I found my first merlin of the season, just one week earlier than last year.

I also find myself somewhat impatiently awaiting the arrival of northern harriers and short-eared owls which we host locally for a few months each year. There's nothing quite like watching these two species interact with one another as they fly low over wide open fields surveying and competing for prey in the middle of winter.

So many questions and scenarios run through my mind while out in the field during this time of year. I often find myself wondering if each year will bring a good season for saw-whet owls, or maybe even the coveted snowy owl. I've come to realize that I base my calendar year on what birds I look forward to observing



Jordan West

and photographing throughout each specific season. Not knowing what each season will bring, gives me something to look forward to and keeps me outdoors -- exactly where I prefer to be.

It's not all about migrants though. Bald eagles will start working on their nests again as they anticipate a new breeding season, and great horned owls will begin courting, soon to be followed by many of our other year-round species.

To sum it up, the autumn and winter seasons can be the best time of the year



Eastern screech owl. Photo by Jordan West.

to throw on a few extra layers, get outside, visit a local park or preserve, and look for birds of prey. You just might get to see an eastern screech owl sunning itself at the face of its tree cavity, maybe spot a new raptor species that you have never previously observed, or possibly hear the unique jungle-like caterwauling of a pair of barred owls echoing through the woods. If you are like me, watching these amazing birds in their natural habitat is enough to make oneself forget about the cold all together. See you in the field!

Celebrating Over 40 Years of Bird of Prey Conservation!

Little Miami Brewing
Wednesday, December 9, 2020, 5pm-8pm
208 Mill Street, Milford, OH 45150

Support RAPTOR Inc. while enjoying great local brews and wine! Bring your family and friends to this great fundraising event and help us continue our mission – to conserve local birds of prey!

During this time of COVID precautions, Little Miami Brewing is following all guidelines with spaced tables and masks required when standing.

\$1 from each pint of beer or glass of wine will be donated to RAPTOR Inc.!

The event is FREE and open to the public!

GIVEBACK WEDNESDAYS
WEDNESDAYS FROM 5 PM - 8 PM
\$1 PER PINT DONATION
GOES TO LMBC APPROVED 501(C)3

Last RAPTOR Open House of 2020

Join us on Sunday, November 29, from 1pm until 4pm for the last RAPTOR Open House of the year! As always, you'll find us at 961 Barg Salt Run Road, Milford, OH 45150.

2020 Admissions

American Kestrel	24	Saw-whet Owl	0	Rough-legged Hawk	0	2020 Dispositions Released 65% Euthanized 16% Died 9% Transferred 3% Under Care 7%
Merlin	0	Snowy Owl	0	Northern Harrier	0	
Peregrine Falcon	1	Short Eared Owl	0	Turkey Vulture	15	
Eastern Screech Owl	20	Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Black Vulture	3	
Barred Owl	26	Cooper's Hawk	19	Osprey	2	
Barn Owl	1	Broad-winged Hawk	2	Golden Eagle	0	
Great Horned Owl	32	Red-shouldered Hawk	45	Bald Eagle	3	
Long-eared Owl	0	Red-tailed Hawk	58	Total	252	

Rescue, Rehabilitate, and Release: Three Raptor Cases

By Cindy Alverson

After a very busy spring with the large influx of nestlings and fledglings, it was followed with another record-setting season of releases. I wanted to share the three stories below of different species - an osprey, a great horned owl and a turkey vulture. Each case had different challenges exemplifying the wide variety of problems or dangerous situations which raptors experience and

the unique care given to the individual birds. In training raptors, we often say, that it is "a study of one." This saying also holds true for rehabilitation.

Each bird is examined as an individual and treatments are prescribed accordingly to give the individual raptor the best chance for recovery and release.

Osprey Rescued from a Dangerous Situation

An osprey was admitted to the Raptor Center at the end of August, captured in a most unlikely place, in the middle of the street in front of an auto repair shop in the heart of North Bend. These large, diurnal birds with their 5-foot wingspan are usually seen flying gracefully above rivers or lakes or a body of water, but in this case it was found at night with no water nearby.

The initial examination showed the bird was in good body condition, weighing in at a healthy weight of over 3 and one-half pounds, and, fortunately, with no evidence of trauma. Sporting orangish-yellow eyes, we knew it was an immature bird which hatched this spring. Like other inexperienced birds which hatch and begin to find their way in the world, this osprey's inexperience got it into trouble. Without finding a spot to roost for the night, it ended up on the ground and in a dangerous situation.

Fortunately, caring people found the bird and were able to capture it. From there, the Raptor Center was able to give the osprey safe haven, letting it fly in our flight enclosure with grace and ease until its release two days later. Osprey are notorious for being difficult eaters in captive situations. So, we enlisted the help of a volunteer, Joe Lucas, to supply us with some live, wiggling fish to entice it to eat. The osprey was banded by volunteer Jeff Hays



The banded osprey, photographed by Mike Hollan days after banding.

and released at East Fork Lake where it immediately took off and flew across the lake and out of sight.

Usually that is the end of the story, but in this case a local photographer, Mike Hollan, was able to capture the banded osprey on film a few days later. After ospreys hatch and disperse from their nesting grounds, they eventually make their way south to Central or South America. Unlike most migratory birds, the immature osprey, with their orange eyes, will return two years later with the bright yellow eyes of an adult.

See Release on page 5

Release (continued from page 4)

Great Horned Owl Caught in Netting

Early October, Ranger Kendra Keuffer was called to the scene at Armleder Park of Great Parks of Hamilton County. A great horned owl had become entangled in a soccer net and needed to be cut free. Although RAPTOR Incorporated encourages the community to take down sports netting when not in use, there will still be instances when birds get trapped during sports seasons.

The owl had struggled so fiercely that the net had completely encompassed the bird. At the Raptor Center the last bit of "necklace" was removed. Fortunately for this owl, no fractures were sustained during the struggle and recovery time was short;

bruising and soreness resolved, and soon the bird regained its ability to fly. Conditioning for release began and the owl increased its endurance and exhibited good lift, flying quickly from the ground to high perches in our flight enclosures.

Less than three weeks had passed when the bird was released back to Armleder Park (although away from the soccer nets!) in the early evening. Without wasting any time, the great horned owl emerged from the box and flew straight away into the woods, not wasting any time for goodbyes.



Great horned owl release. Photo by Jordan West.



Heading for the woods! Photo by Jordan West.

Turkey Vulture Recovers from Spinal Injury

On September 16, 2020, an immature (hatch-year) turkey vulture was admitted to the Raptor Center. The finder reported that the vulture had been lying on his porch for three days before admission. On exam, the young vulture was unable to stand or fly. The bird showed a pain response when the left wing was examined, but no fracture or obvious injury was detected. Since the bird was unable to stand, the rehabilitators were concerned that the bird could have a spinal injury. After the bird was stabilized, it was taken to Dr. Ann Manharth, DVM, for examination and radiographs. The x-rays showed a very concerning spinal lesion. Only time would tell if the spinal injury would result in permanent damage.

The turkey vulture was returned to the Raptor Center and treated with fluids, nutritional supplementation, and anti-inflammatory medication. After five days of rest and tender loving care, the bird miraculously began to stand. A few days later, it was well enough to be moved outside to the flight enclosures, where it was able to make short, low flights. Over the next two weeks, the bird rapidly improved with no permanent damage from the spinal lesion and was soon flying the length of the 100-foot flight



Turkey vulture release. Photo by Ben Kitzler.

enclosure and perching on the 13-foot high perch. This vulture was ready for release!

The young vulture was returned to its home territory, where it joined a flock of other turkey vultures and soared high on the rising thermals.



2021 Calendars Available

The beautiful 2021 RAPTOR Inc. calendar is now available for purchase!

The photos, by photographer and naturalist Jordan West, feature birds of prey photographed in their natural habitat around Greater Cincinnati. Jordan has spent countless hours observing these birds, and we wish to extend a special thank you to Jordan for generously donating his beautiful artwork.

Calendars may be purchased online from our website at <http://raptorinc.org/raptor-support/calendar/> or in person at our Milford facility (please call (513.825.325) before stopping in to make sure someone is available to greet you).

Calendars are \$15 each (plus \$5.00 shipping if purchased online).

Thank you for supporting local wildlife and the work we do at RAPTOR.



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.

- Latex or Nitrile exam gloves (any size)
- Lysol Disinfectant Spray
- Pine Bedding
- Pine bedding
- Office Max Gift Card
- Stamps (Forever)
- Volunteers—Retired Teachers

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>.

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 third quarter of 2020.

Cajka, Linda
Castleberry, Anne
Corbeil, Sonja
Cortright, Mr. & Mrs. Bruce
Coy, Keith
Curry, Wynne
Delta Partners
Downey, Mr. & Mrs. John
Farrell, Donna
Gillen, Jennifer
Hansford, Carol
Charley Harper Art Studio
Herman, Samantha
Honeywell Matching Program

Horton, Vicky
Village of Indian Hill
Kosse, Theodore
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Menke, Catherine
Morsbach, Donna
Muthersbaugh, Mark
Robinson, Anne
Rupel, Jeffery
Smith, Robert
Throp, Judith
Webster, Mr. & Mrs. Andy

Falcon Level \$500 to \$999
Flierl, Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth
Lippard, Bruce

Osprey Level \$1000 and up,
Grooms, Grant

In-Kind Donations from April - October,
Alverson, Marc
Carlson, Stephanie
Daulhausen, Bob, DVM
Dorsey, Mike
Einson, Steve
Hall, Michelle

Levitas, Paul, DVM
Lucas, Joe
Morsbach, Donna
Powers, Tom
Seafood Station
Smith, Zan
Visitors of Spring Grove Cemetery
Terlau, Tim & Sue
Thompson, James
Wright Brothers Air

In Memorium:

Amy Fenhoff, in memory of
Darwin Orion Strubel

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

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 Daulhausen, 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

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 in the envelope included with this issue.

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.!

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
- 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.!

RAPTOR
INC.

