



Rocky Mountain
RAPTOR
Program
a second chance at freedom

© Name Name

On the WING

SILVER FLASHES IN THE SKY

Not Just for Mississippi Anymore

The Mississippi kite is a flash of silver gray when chasing insects on the wing. This southeastern species typically occurred only in extreme southern Colorado – but changing plant communities along the major river systems of Eastern Colorado have provided new homes this beautiful little raptor. Small nesting colonies are now thriving in Sterling and Fort Morgan, which means that when one these aerial acrobats run into trouble, the RMRP comes to the rescue.

This year we received two young kites, both suffering from West Nile Virus (WNV), one from the Sterling colony, and one from Fort Morgan. WNV is spread by mosquitoes, and can cause a variety of symptoms including weakness, emaciation, feather abnormalities, and neurological difficulties. While our kites have recovered from this ailment, they missed the annual migration to warmer southern climates where insects are readily available all year long. Without parents to guide them for their first journey, they would not find their way if released. They would likely perish in the winter.

These two young birds will need to spend the winter in sheltered captivity while they wait for the return of their kind in the spring. Young birds are brown and streaked, much like a young red-tailed hawk. But by the time these youngsters are ready for release in 2016, they will start to turn silver gray like the adults.

We will watch and learn as Mississippi Kites spread throughout the state - We wonder if someday their graceful, swooping and twisting forms will be seen hunting bugs over Fort Collins on hot summer days!



Ready for flight and return to the wild, this Mississippi kite must be patient until Spring.

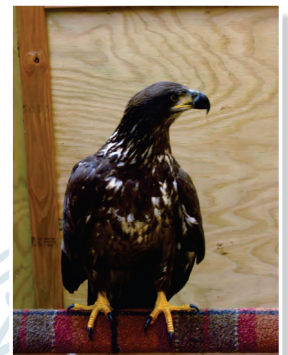


Adult Mississippi Kite is a striking silvery-gray bird with red eyes.

Inside THIS ISSUE:

Silver Flashes in the Sky	1
Year End Giving	2
It's Coming!	2
Come Visit Us	2
Not Just Another Ugly Holiday Sweater	3
Finally, a Vacancy!	4
Colorado Gives Day	4
Upcoming Events	4

This immature Bald Eagle came to us with a broken wing. She is healing, and hopefully heading for release, thanks for your support.



YEAR-END GIVING

It's Not Just a Check in the Mail



This Ferruginous hawk is fighting avian pox, but with supportive care – from your donations - should make a full recovery and be released.

Did you know that your gift at the end of year is more than just a check, an envelope and stamp? Your gift means life for a bird that may have previously had no hope. Your gift makes sure birds with West Nile Virus get the supportive care they need to beat their illness, birds hit by cars will have the bandages they need to mend broken bones, and birds with wounds torn by barbed wire fences receive the medicines they need to keep their injuries from infections.

It's not just a check, it's a life you are saving.

You can also help us save lives in many other ways. Here are just a few of the options you have to help injured raptors fly free again.

Planned Giving – Become a part of our Legacy of Freedom Society to leave a lasting impression on the world.

Cars Helping Charities – If you have a car, boat, or RV you are needing to re-home, please consider donating it to the RMRP through Cars Helping Charities where a portion of the car's value will come back to help RMRP.

Wish List – We always need items to restock our shelves. You can find our wish list online at www.RMRP.org. Some of the top needed items are stamps, unscented laundry detergent, unscented Clorox bleach (Clorox brand only please), and paper products of all kinds (paper towels and toilet paper).

And, of course, you can always donate to our life-saving mission online at www.RMRP.org. THANK YOU for making these bird's lives possible!

IT'S YOUR LAST CHANCE - TAX CREDIT PROGRAM IS ENDING

Get Your Donation in by December 31 Deadline

2015 will be the final year of Enterprise Zone tax credits available to supporters of the RMRP. Changes in the definition at the state level mean that the RMRP and our supporters no longer qualify for this benefit. So take advantage of a 25% credit with your gift of \$100 or more by Dec. 31, 2015, and help birds fly free.

IT'S COMING!

The Gala is Just Around the Corner

Are you READY?! The 23rd Annual Gala Dinner and Benefit Auction will be here before you know it. It's time for us to gather up all the great items that will be up for auction. Do you have a beautiful piece of art, an amazing service, or something else to tempt the attendees of the 2016 Gala Dinner and Benefit Auction? We are accepting submissions now! Want to showcase your business at the event? Call us at 970-484-7756 about sponsorship opportunities.

We are also excited for the Third Annual Egg-stravaganza. If you are an artist that would like a chance to decorate a goose, ostrich, or emu egg for this year's event, please contact us right away!

Tickets will go on sale in January. Keep an eye on our website, watch your mail, and Save the Date:

*You are cordially invited to the
23rd Gala Dinner and
Benefit Auction
February 27th, 2016
Save the date!*



A spectacular ice sculpture of the Osprey was sparkling addition to the event.



RMRP Education Associate Bonnie Cleaver escorted the barn owl at the 2015 Gala.

COME VISIT US!

December Holiday Open House

Celebrate the holidays with the birds. Join us for our Holiday Open House on Sunday, December 13th, 2015, from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. at our facility at 720 E. Vine Drive. Take the kids on a tour, meet an owl or a hawk, or maybe even an eagle! Peruse our gift shop for the raptor lover on your list. We hope to see you there!



This Cooper's Hawk was trapped inside a house under construction. Luckily, he was relatively unscathed from his trial and was released after a brief check up.



Enclosures need continual care to keep them in top shape.



West Nile Virus nearly took this little American Kestrel's life, but with supportive care all he lost was his tail! Did you know West Nile Virus can cause a bird's feathers to be destroyed?



Conservation of our beloved raptors has to start with education. RMRP gives hundreds of Environmental Education programs every year.



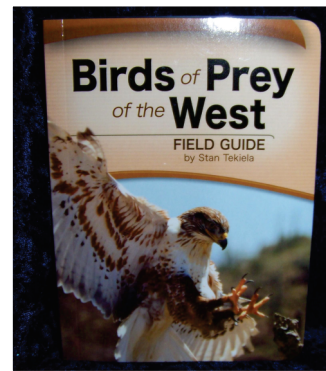
No matter the weather, our patients need our help. Neither rain nor sleet nor snow...or more snow...can keep us from saving lives!

NOT JUST ANOTHER UGLY HOLIDAY SWEATER

Gifts from RMRP Save Lives

If you want your holiday gifts to have a special meaning to your friends and family, please visit the RMRP gift shop online or call to set a time to visit our facility gift shop at 720 E. Vine Drive. The proceeds from the gifts you buy go directly to our mission of rehabilitation and education. Your gift can give twice, once to someone you love and once to the birds you are helping to save.

We also have Adopt-A-Raptor packages available for your holiday giving. Each package helps us save even more lives, and your loved ones will know they are a part of each bird's loving care. Please visit us online at www.RMRP.org to become a part of our life-saving mission!



Learn how to identify raptors with this great pocket guide!



Hand-carved replicas of raptor feathers make stunning jewelry.

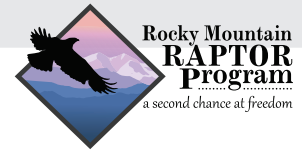


Who can resist a cuddly owl?

FINALLY, A VACANCY!

Young Great Horned Owls Check out - to the Wild

Join the conversation...



This year was extremely taxing on the RMRP with the number of young Great Horned Owls that needed our care. In the wild, they receive many months of parental care before they are on their own, and the RMRP replicates that care in our own way. We put each owl through two rounds of "Rat School" where they learn how to hunt, and then the birds are "soft released."

A soft release is a process that takes many months. A "hack box" is attached to one of our flight training enclosures. The birds are fed there for many weeks as they perfect their flying skills. The day of their release, a door on the hack box is opened to the outside world and the birds are usually very eager to disperse!

However, like their wild counterparts, they return to where they know an easy meal will appear. In the wild, they return to their parents. For our youngsters, they return to the hack box, and we continue to leave food at the hack box every night. When the birds we released are having trouble hunting on their own, they can come snag a meal from us.

In October, we released the last batch of 23 youngsters we raised this year. They will slowly disperse farther and farther until they have found their own territory. Around December, they will stop visiting us and we will no longer need to leave food for them in the hack box. They will now be fully fledged from our nest.

The enclosures have filled up again with new patients. Enclosures that are temporarily empty will be quickly refurbished with new perches and replaced wall slats. The freezers need to be restocked with the mountains of food the hoard of owls devoured as they grew strong and healthy.

Can you help us repair our cages and restock our freezers for next spring's new batch of bouncing baby Great Horns? Please visit us online at www.RMRP.org if you can assist us in rebuilding our resources.



This hack box on the side of our flight enclosure provides a soft release for young Great Horned Owls.



In 2015 the RMRP set a new record for highest number of baby Great Horned Owls admitted: 26!



Your Gift May Count Twice!

Mark your calendars for December 8, 2015: Colorado Gives Day is an annual statewide movement to celebrate and increase philanthropy in Colorado through online giving. Incentive funds from corporate sponsors increase the value of each donation given during the 24 hours of CGD. When you give through the Colorado Gives Day website at www.coloradogives.org/rmrp, you give the RMRP a chance to win even more funding. Drawings and matching gifts are available for non-profits that are a part of this day of philanthropy. You do not have to live in Colorado to be part of this event! And remember that this gift can also be a gift back to you through the Colorado Enterprise Zone Tax Credit program where you can get back up to 25% of your donation for gifts of \$100 or more.

Join us and the rest of Colorado on December 8, 2015 to help create a bright future for the raptors.

The Rocky Mountain Raptor Program is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. We strive to inspire the appreciation and protection of raptors and the spaces where they live through excellence in rehabilitation, education, and research. We are supported by donations from caring people like you who want to make a difference in the world.

Mailing address: 2519 S. Shields St. #115 Fort Collins, CO 80526

Physical address: 720 E. Vine Drive, Fort Collins, CO 80524

970-484-7756 info@rmrp.org www.rmrp.org

Thank you to Bonnie Cleaver, Lynsey Reed, and Judy Scherpelz for contributing to this newsletter.

UPCOMING EVENTS (Come see us in action!)



Our youngest Education Ambassador bird is a male American Kestrel. He was admitted in July of 2012 with West Nile Virus. He recovered from the virus but was left with visual and behavioral deficits.

November Events:

- 7th** RMRP Birds of Prey Course (Owls & Falcons)
RMRP, 720 E. Vine Dr.
9:00am - 2:00pm
- 11th** Education Presentation
Old Town Library
6:30pm - 7:30pm
- 14th** RMRP Birds of Prey Course (Field Trip)
RMRP, 720 E. Vine Dr.
9:00am - 3:00pm

December Events:

- 8th** Colorado Gives Day
- 13th** RMRP Holiday Open House
RMRP, 720 E. Vine Dr.
11:00am - 3:00pm

February Events:

- 27th** RMRP Gala Benefit Auction
Fort Collins Hilton