

On The WING

Fall/Winter 2014

Volume 33

Number 2



Rocky Mountain
RAPTOR
Program
a second chance at freedom

RMRP Meets Demand For Additional Services

Impacting Our Texas-Sized Service Area and Beyond

RMRP takes calls from all over the world about raptor care and research, and cares for birds from a rescue area the size of Texas. We are also determined to do what we can locally to help raptors. Here are just some of the ways the RMRP has impacted your world (that you might not be aware of):

- **Training The Experts.** RMRP has held workshops to train Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife agency representatives and energy development field personnel in proper response to raptor injuries.
- **Is This Land Raptor Friendly?** Private individuals have used our recommendations to improve their lands for raptor habitation.
- **Shaping Public Policy.** RMRP provides scientific analysis and response to proposed federal regulations regarding impacts on eagle populations by "Eagle Take" permits by wind turbine operations.



We work closely with businesses, organizations and community members to achieve our lifesaving mission.

- **Training the Next Generation of Raptor Caretakers.** We offer training programs for students and others interested in raptor husbandry, and rehabilitation care. This program helps raptors everywhere, and is great for veterinary students and anyone with a passion for healing.



This curious youngster discovers the wonderful world of raptors.

- **Raptors Everywhere.** This year, RMRP has presented more than 120 programs to more than 8,500 people, and expanded our outreach in Northern Colorado.

Visit
www.rmrp.org
to find out what's happening next.

Holiday Open House, Sunday December 7, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Understanding the Unspoken Language of Owls

The Journey of a Great Horned Owl Into My Heart

by Lisa Winta

It was 20 years ago this Fall that I made the best decision of my life. I began volunteering at RMRP. I wanted to make a difference. I saw raptors at exhibits and festivals and became enamored. I decided to give it a try.

Although I loved nature, I knew nothing about raptors. I quickly learned that they telegraphed their likes, dislikes, comfort and discomfort very clearly. I fell in love with the unspoken language of raptors.

With eyes and ears wide open, I listened and learned. Judy and Gail were so intuitive and comfortable around the birds, and I wanted that also. As they took me under their wings, they revealed a gift: that I understood the language of Owls.



When you look into my eyes, what do you see?

When I look into the eyes of a Great Horned Owl and she looks back at me, it feels as if she is staring into my soul. That moment lays bare all of my secrets, quirks, shame, joy, love and dreams, and drills right down to

the core of my simple existence. Everything else fades away except me and the owl, staring deep into each other's souls through the portal of our eyes. It is primal. It is perfect. I am in love.

Over time, I had earned the privilege of training a Great Horned Owl to become an Education Ambassador. This was a huge reward and a daunting responsibility. My job was to encourage this owl to trust me without fear. This process can take many months. But when she finally let me touch her toe without her trying to get away, my heart soared with joy!

I finally understood the wide gulf between wild animals and human.

I fought back tears realizing that this amazing wild creature violated every one of her instincts to trust me.

I still cherish that moment to this day. We must fight to do what's right by these amazing creatures. Our Educational Ambassadors move people's hearts, minds, souls and spirits. The more wild places we lose, the harder we have to help people connect to it.

Twenty years later, I am still trying to change the world. I still feel that primal pause when I look into the eyes of a Great Horned Owl and see its soul while she sees mine. These amazing animals have so much to teach, and I still have much to learn.

Yes, I love them and have for 20 years, and hopefully will for 20 more.



*I'm planning to see you there.
Don't disappoint me.*

Best-Ever Raptor Gala Is Coming Soon!

Join us for our best-ever night of glitz, glamour, and gorgeous birds at the 22nd Annual Gala Dinner and Benefit Auction. On February 28th, 2015 we'll turn the Fort Collins Hilton into a raptor lover's paradise.

Market your business or simply show your support through your donation to our live and silent auction. Gifts of art, jewelry, services, trips, wine, gift certificates, and cool stuff of all shapes and sizes are needed. Call 970-484-7756 if you would like to donate.

Tickets will go on sale on New Year's Day, so take a break at halftime and jump online to reserve your seats at the early-bird price.

Business owners: Showcase to the community how wonderful you are by sponsoring the event, and receive some really great bang for your buck!

Questions? Give us a call at 970-484-7756 and ask for Judy!

For a complete list of upcoming events, visit www.rmrp.org/news/events

One-Stop Shopping at the RMRP Gift Shop

*Online or In Person, We Have
Something for Everyone.*

When you do your holiday shopping at RMRP this year, you are giving twice with every purchase! Once to help the raptors, and the other to show your family and loved ones how much you care about them. It's a win-win!



Beat the crowds and shop from home! We have a vast array of wearables, jewelry, art, note cards, stuffed animals, field guides and more for every budget! And every gift helps spread the word that raptors matter!



All proceeds go to helping injured birds of prey and support our education programs. You can't go wrong when you give the gift of Second Chances! Visit our online store at www.rmrp.org/store.

Amazing Tale of a Year and a Day

An Orphan's Scary Road

On September 2, 2013 a young Swainson's Hawk was admitted to the RMRP. He was extremely small for his age, starving, and had an old elbow injury that probably occurred after he first left the nest.

He needed his parents to support him, but they weren't around. He couldn't make the extraordinary extended migration from the Colorado plains to the pampas of Argentina without the guidance of adults who had made the trip before. Separated from his parents and injured, this young bird had no way to eat or defend himself.

It took months of rehabilitation, but slowly, eventually he could fly in short bursts. Continuing to gain strength and weight, he was moved into a group of other young hawks and he continued improving until we knew he would be fine once he was released.

So on September 3, 2014, the young Swainson's received his second chance at freedom, one year and one day after nearly losing his life.

We already have five young Swainson's Hawks that are too injured to make this year's migration and will spend their winter in the large flight enclosures at RMRP. Thank you for helping provide the resources to save their lives!



After TLC and R&R at the RMRP, he's ready for a South American vacation.

The Great Swainson's Migration

Every year, we have immature Swainson's Hawks that aren't large or strong enough to migrate, so they spend their winter with us – healing, fattening up, and getting strong.

In late summer, wild Swainson's Hawks prepare to migrate. We transport young hawks that have completed rehabilitation to eastern Colorado to join a gathering group of hawks called a "Kettle," named so because the hundreds of hawks flying together look like a boiling pot.

Once a Kettle is spotted, they don't stick around very long, and a flurry of activity begins at RMRP. Quickly, we assemble those ready to go, perform a final assessment, and they are driven to the release point and set free into the group that is anxious to begin the 6,000-mile migration.

From there, instinct quickly takes over, and the immature birds do as they have done for generations: follow the adults to Argentina to feast on grasshoppers for the winter.



Are You Up For Colorado Gives Day's Million Dollar Challenge?

A Million Reasons To Give! – Your gift can give twice! One million dollars will be distributed among CGD participating charities. The more gifts to RMRP, the higher the take!

We're A Team – They Need Us, We Need You – Our goal this year is \$21,000 which is 20% above last year. Remember that your gift of any size on CGD will be partially matched. Help us continue our lifesaving and life-changing mission. Go to coloradogives.org to pre-schedule your donation today. For more information, email judy@rmrp.org or call 970-484-7756.

Stunning Photographic Calendar Makes A Great Gift!

Order Yours Today

The RMRP 2015 calendar contest is getting harder to judge every year. An amazing assortment of spectacular photos came in and we were forced to pick the top 14, and you are going to love it!

Our wonderfully gifted photographers outdid themselves this year. The calendar cost has been totally underwritten by artist submission fees and sponsorships, so every penny spent on these collector-edition calendars goes directly to help the raptors!

To order your personal and gift calendars, visit www.rmrp.org or call us at 970-484-7756!



*Perfect, easy-to-mail gifts.
Who doesn't need a calendar?*

Year-End Giving

For Every Dollar Donated, Get 50 Cents Back!

You can support our work, AND get a break on your Colorado State Income Taxes. When you donate \$100 or more to the RMRP, you will receive 25% of your donation as a credit toward your state income tax, and receive the charitable deduction from state and federal income taxes.

The process is simple. Make a donation to the RMRP with a check or credit card for \$100 or more. We will make sure you get the forms to file with your taxes.

Here are some examples. A gift of:

- \$5,000 will cost you only \$2,285 to \$3,165
- \$1,000 will cost you only \$457 to \$633
- \$500 will cost you only \$229 to \$317
- \$100 will cost you only \$46 to \$63

Make your Holiday or Year-End gift with double rewards today! Call 970-484-7756 or email judy@rmrp.org. Thank you!

*The more you give,
the more YOU save,
and the more birds WE save!*



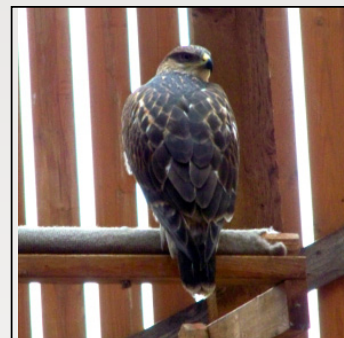
From Emaciated to "Look What She Ate!"

Sometimes A Second Chance is Just several Meals Away

An emaciated and starving Ferruginous Hawk orphan recently came to us from Wyoming. She urgently needed our help. At only 950 grams, about the weight of a guinea pig, she weighed half of what she should have. She was bones covered by feathers.

We had no information about her. Did a car hit her? Was she smashed around in a Wyoming thunderstorm? Whatever it was, she was lucky to survive and our job was to fatten her up and get her strong.

In just three weeks, her weight increased 70% but she still had more bulk to gain. Now that she was feeling better, we saw her true fighting attitude. She started live prey school, and was definitely an "A" student. Her weight continued to increase.



From scrawny to superhawk, this Ferruginous would not give up.

She quickly gained back all her lost weight and strength, and she let us know she was ready to head out into the big blue sky.

On a calm, sunny autumn day the scrappy Ferruginous Hawk was released to fight again.

This is one of many ways your support saves and changes lives. Every day our phone rings to save another raptor. Have you ever considered adopting a raptor? Our adoptive "parents" help us provide all of the food, supplies and care our rehabilitating and educational raptors need.

Please visit www.rmrp.org/store/adopt-a-raptor/ to learn more.