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Rocky Mountain RAPTOR Program

a second chance at freedom

On the WING

OUR RESEARCH SAVES MORE RAPTORS

Your Support Propels Our Efforts

Studying raptors gives us knowledge, and knowledge is power. We are using this power to change the world. Here are examples of how your support enables RMRP's research efforts to deepen our understanding of raptors.

- **West Nile Virus Surveillance for the CDC.**

Raptors are often one of the first indicators of West Nile spreading through a population. We monitor "suspicious" cases and send blood samples to the CDC (Center for Disease Control) to test for West Nile to help predict the spread of the virus.

- **Wing Measurement Studies for EDM.**

By measuring the wings of large raptors, we can learn more about how to save them from electric shock injuries on power lines. A raptor receives an electric shock when two parts of its body (usually the outspread wings) touch two wires and connect the current. By changing the spacing of the lines to account for wing measurements, many raptors can be saved each year.



This Ferruginous Hawk was a recent victim of lead toxicity, a serious cause of mortality in raptors.

- **Bald and Golden Eagle DNA Study.**

This study will further the knowledge of eagle biology. By studying DNA markers and migration patterns, we can determine population movement, when eagles are moving and why, enabling us to better manage their populations.

- **Lead Monitoring Study.**

This study is helping us determine just how much lead is affecting raptors in the environment. How badly affected are raptors by lead shot? Is there a "typical" amount of lead that all raptors carry with them? At what point of exposure do they become ill? What geographic areas have the highest rates? We hope these questions and a lot more will be answered.

Inside THIS ISSUE:

Ospreys Adopt a New Home in Colorado 2

Announcing the Legacy of Freedom Society 2

The Moment I Live For 3

Wandering Right Into Trouble 3

We're Seeking Investors 4

Calling All Photographers! 4



An RMRP educational eagle helps to demonstrate the safety of exclusion devices designed to prevent raptor electrocutions.

OSPREYS ADOPT A NEW HOME IN COLORADO

25 Years Later...

Front Range birders and photographers are delighted and captivated by our resident Oreo-cookie colored raptors: the Osprey.

Twenty-five years ago, these excellent fisherbirds were seen in the Fort Collins area only as they migrated through. Despite flying thousands of miles on migration, they always return to nest in the same location where they hatched. This means there were many areas of excellent osprey habitat, like the Poudre River, that did not have any Osprey nests.

“Operation Osprey” was launched in 1989 to help the Osprey population grow and expand into new, environmentally suitable habitats. It was spearheaded by the Colorado Division of Wildlife, with support from several community organizations including the RMRP. Chicks were moved from their nests in other states to the Fort Collins area and raised in “hack towers”, which helped them imprint on local habitat as they grew and fledged. These youngsters would then return after winter migration and set up their home in our community, building a local osprey population.

Osprey can co-exist quite well near human populations, but they sometimes run into trouble. Their 5-6' wingspan can make them vulnerable to high voltage trauma if they attempt to nest on power poles. They often use orange baling twine for nesting material, but they can become entangled in the twine, leading to serious injury and death. The RMRP may rescue 2 or 3 osprey each year, and we work to raise awareness of such threats to osprey so that they are not threatened by their human neighbors.

Operation Osprey is another example of how humans can better the world we live in by helping preserve and protect these amazing creatures.



Above: Removing young osprey from a nest in Idaho for transplant to Colorado.

Top Right: Young osprey getting ready for transport

Bottom Right: The hack tower provides safety for the young osprey in its new home while imprinting on the surrounding area.



ANNOUNCING THE LEGACY OF FREEDOM SOCIETY

Here's a Way for Your Caring to Last Forever

The Rocky Mountain Raptor Program announces the creation of The Legacy Of Freedom Society, a special group of friends that have decided to make a future gift to RMRP through their will or with other assets.

By joining now, we can honor and thank you during your lifetime for your future gift. Your decision will help us save and release raptors in the future, conduct essential research, and educate children and adults about the essential role raptors have in nature.

Your legacy will live on, and your decision will make the world a better place. Donors tell us just how good making this choice feels. Designating the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program as a beneficiary in your will, or of bank or investment accounts is a simple process, and we can help! You can give anonymously if you'd like, and you retain full control of your assets.

This program is for everybody! If you have a heart for our work, you can become a Charter Member! Your legacy gift can be any dollar amount, any percentage of your estate, any possession or any portion of a bank or investment account.

Please notify us of your interest in the Legacy of Freedom Society, using the enclosed envelope. We will help keep the process easy for you, while you create a better future for this program and these raptors that we all love so much!



THE MOMENT I LIVE FOR

More Than 1,200 Programs and My Heart Still Swells With Pride

As the noisy second graders file into the auditorium, my raised hand with two fingers extended quells the rumbling thunder. The roar turns to whispers, and before long I begin.

I share information and the children ask questions. Then the awaited moment comes – the hush becomes palpable excitement as the clacking coming from a wooden box resonates in the now silent room.

Then the students fix their gaze for the first time on the bright large yellow eyes of a Great Horned Owl. The gasps rise as the wings spread and this awe-inspiring creature steadies herself on my fist.

It is in these moments that my heart swells and I'm filled with pride and appreciation to be a part of the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program's educational experience.

I have been sharing the RMRP's lifesaving and life-changing mission through these stunning creatures since 2003. More than a thousand presentations later, the moment I still live for is when the audience gasps in awe at that these larger-than-life creatures.

Each response is varied, from "Isn't it so beautiful?" when seeing an Eastern Screech Owl or, "Ewww, that is so gross and cool all at the same time!" as a mouse disappears in two bites from a hawk.

I love seeing light bulbs pop above the heads of the audience members; when a spark that we have struck has ignited into a fire. They learn why we exist, and know that they can be a part of the solution. Then I know I have made a difference.

People learn not to approach nest sites, and to call us when they see a raptor on the ground. They



Changing the world, one person at a time.

become our eyes and ears in the community and join us as caretakers of this beautiful blue planet.

Once a fourth grader asked us if his father had to stop shooting hawks. Our presentation gave him the answer.

This is why the education you help us provide is so important. This is how we change the world, one child, one person and one raptor at a time. We are the change that we wish to see in the world.

That is my mission. That is why I am here.

Carin Avila, Education Director



Healing from traumatic injury.

WANDERING RIGHT INTO TROUBLE

One Young Peregrine's Tale

Peregrine Falcons are known as "The Wanderers." Their migrations in the Western Hemisphere take them from the Arctic Circle to Cape Horn in South America. However, they tend to stay near mountainous and cliff-strewn regions.

Finding a first-year Peregrine Falcon on the west side of Fort Collins is pretty unusual. Good Samaritans were out for a morning bike ride and found this one in the middle of a busy road. They called us and formed a traffic barrier around the youngster until our rescuer could arrive.

The young falcon showed some trauma, possibly from a minor collision with a car. He had some scrapes and bruises and his left wing was injured. A few days of confined rest healed

up the worst of his injuries and he was transferred to a larger enclosure so he could continue to work out any kinks.

His wing started out weak, but gained strength quickly. Not quite ready for prey school, this bird graduated to our largest flight training enclosures to gain endurance and stamina. A few short weeks later, he proved himself fit, and was released in west Fort Collins to be a "wanderer" once again.

Your support makes helping birds like this one possible! The medications and bandages he and others use to recover put a dent in our resources. Help us replenish by donating at www.rmrp.org.

WE'RE SEEKING INVESTORS...

...and We Promise Amazing Returns!

Engines need fuel, light bulbs need electricity, healing raptors need heat, fresh water and healthy food... And we need you! You see, we have gotten very good – a little too good actually – at limping along financially... At barely squeaking by.

You see, when friends ask how we're doing, if I say – "great" – they assume that we don't need additional support. If I say – "great, but we really need help", they assume we need someone ELSE's help – but not theirs'. And if I say – "we really, really need YOUR help" – the response often is, "Wow, you must be failing and about to close, why should I give my money to a losing organization?" But that just isn't true... Here's the unvarnished truth.

Programmatically, we are doing fine. We answer every call and respond to worried citizens every day who have found a raptor on the ground. We deliver education programs or display our Education Ambassador raptors several days a week to eager audiences. Our research activities continue to reveal insights. We are fulfilling our mission and we have you to thank for that.

But the need for our services has dramatically increased in the past ten years while revenue has remained flat. There has been a dramatic increase in the awareness of the program in our region, which means our phone is ringing more than ever for rescues, education programs, outreach requests and essential research.

I'm asking if you will consider making an increased commitment to help RMRP. (Please use the enclosed envelope to indicate your support.)

- Become a monthly, quarterly or annual supporter.
- Join our Aerie Society annual giving society with yearly support of \$1,000 or more (or \$83.33 per month).
- Make a gift to RMRP in your will or as beneficiary of a bank or investment account.
- Become a regular Wish List donor (go to www.rmrp.org/donate/wish-list)



**Rocky Mountain
RAPTOR
Program**
a second chance at freedom

join the conversation...



There is so much more we can do, and we will share more about these exciting plans as they develop. But for now, there are children waiting for programs that we can't deliver. There are lifesaving research projects that we are eager to begin to help keep raptor populations healthy. There are advancements in our rescue and rehabilitation programs that we need to implement to save more lives.

You see, when we say we can't do this without you, we REALLY MEAN IT. The difference you make is often the difference between life and death. You have brought us this far, and we hope you'll consider taking us even farther.

Warmest regards,

Judy Scherpelz, Executive Director

CALLING ALL PHOTOGRAPHERS!



The RMRP is once again hosting a raptor photography contest, with the winning photos to appear in the RMRP's 2016 Raptor Photo Calendar. Your participation helps us raise funds to care for injured birds – and YOUR photo may end up on the cover!

Submission details are on our website at rmrp.org/news.

Deadline for submissions is July 1, 2015.

For more information, please contact judy@rmrp.org.

Mailing Address: 2519 South Shields Street, #115, Ft. Collins, Colorado 80526

UPCOMING EVENTS *(Come see us in action!)*

April Events:

8th Education Presentation
Harmony Library
6:30-7:30pm

May Events:

2nd New Volunteer Orientation
RMRP, 720 E. Vine Dr.
10am

6th Education Presentation
Old Town Library
6:30-7:30pm

10th RMRP Open House
RMRP, 720 E. Vine Dr.
11am-3pm

16th Hot Rods & Hawgs -
Thunder Mtn. Harley Davidson
Time TBD

23rd-25th Boulder Creek Festival
Boulder, CO
11am-7pm

June Events:

13th & 14th Taste of Fort Collins
Old Town
11am-7pm

20th Pancake Breakfast
RMRP, 720 E. Vine Dr.
Time TBD

27th & 28th Scandinavian Festival
Estes Park
10am-5pm

July Events:

11th & 12th Art in the Park
Steamboat Springs, CO
10am-5pm

August Events:

1st New Volunteer Orientation
RMRP, 720 E. Vine Dr.
10am

8th & 9th Art in the Park
Loveland, CO
10am-5pm

August Events (continued):

15th & 16th New West Fest
Old Town, Fort Collins
10am-7pm

22nd RMRP Open House
RMRP, 720 E. Vine Dr.
11am-3pm

