



Rocky Mountain
RAPTOR
Program

a second chance at freedom

Winter 2023 Newsletter

ON THE Wing

The Issue

In my five years as Executive Director of the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program, we've never been busier than we've been this year.

Why It Matters

We've experienced an exploding caseload of 255 raptor admissions as of September 27, which is 16% above last year at this time. Combating High Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), West Nile Virus (WNV), and admitting many very sick raptors has led to greatly increased biosecurity precautions and expenses. To top it off, a collection of Cooper's Hawks has created a housing shortage. Meanwhile inside, we've simply run out of space for our staff and volunteers which has presented challenges like we've never seen before.

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What's Happening Now

Disease Double-Whammy - Last fall we admitted 44 raptors with Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) and that trend continued through the winter. This was a solemn introduction of this highly contagious disease to North America and RMRP. Next, we were inundated by dozens of West Nile Virus cases throughout the spring and summer, and we anticipate HPAI will make its deadly presence known any day now. The number of affected birds have caused our testing expenses to skyrocket.

Cooper's Hawk Explosion - We admitted 75 raptors in July, the largest number ever for July - a 36% increase from our second busiest July in 36 years! Of these admissions, 42 were Cooper's Hawks. Why so many? West Nile Virus. It hits them as fledglings and causes difficulties in growing feathers and delaying their flight as they have to start growing many feathers all over again. Separated from their parents, we get them when they are weak, emaciated, and very sick. Each raptor requires four hours of intensive care per day, and we remain committed to helping as many survive as possible.



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Wish List Drive

Every Wish List Item Saves and Changes Lives

Help Your Way

A simple way to support the life-saving and life-changing efforts of RMRP is to provide items from our wish list. Each item on our wishlist helps advance our mission to heal these magnificent birds and deliver conservation messaging.

Healing Injured Raptors

One of the pillars of the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program's work is the rehabilitation of injured raptors. From specialized medical equipment to food, your gifts directly translate into care for injured raptors.

1. Medical Supplies and RodentPro Gift Certificates: Your donations of medical supplies help ensure that injured raptors receive prompt and effective treatment, and nutritious food to help them heal.

2. Enclosures and Habitat Enhancements: Our enclosures require frequent repair to keep them in top shape. We strive to create safe and comfortable environments for the raptors in our care. Your support can help build or enhance enclosures, providing the raptors with the best possible setting for rehabilitation.

Spreading the Message of Conservation

Education and awareness are vital components of RMRP's mission. By purchasing items from our wish list, you are contributing to our Educational Outreach efforts in countless ways.

1. Educational Materials: Your gifts help us produce teaching materials; brochures, posters, and educational resources that we use to help children and adults understand the importance of raptor conservation.

2. Outreach Programs: RMRP conducts school visits and public presentations. Items from wish list purchases help expand our efforts, as we inspire a new generation of conservationists.



Find Our Wish List:

Scan the code to go to the Wish List Drive page or go to www.rmrp.org/donate/winter-wish-list-drive



Contact Us:

Physical Address—Call in advance if you'd like to schedule a visit.

720 E. Vine Drive, Unit B
Fort Collins, CO 80524

Mailing Address

2519 S. Shields Street, 1K-115
Fort Collins, CO 80526

Phone: 970-484-7756

Rehabilitation Hotline: 970-222-0322

Website: www.rmrp.org

Email: Carin@rmrp.org

Other wildlife emergency?

Go to: www.animalhelpnow.org

Rehabilitation

Rescuing North America's Mighty Ferruginous The Royal Hawk of the Prairie

This young Ferruginous Hawk, North America's largest hawk species, arrived at RMRP from east of Eaton, Colorado, on September 3rd. Concerned community members observed it for several days, grounded and unable to take flight. The admission examination revealed a harrowing story of emaciation and injury. It was evident that this formidable bird was in dire need of help.

This young hawk embarked on a transformative path to recovery. Nurtured with supportive care and highly nutritious food, the hawk experienced a remarkable turnaround. In just a short time, it managed to increase its body weight by a remarkable 30%, reaching a more appropriate weight for its species. This incredible progress allowed for a significant milestone - the hawk's transfer to RMRP's Recovery complex.

Here, the bird received specialized attention and care, preparing it for the ultimate test: the Flight complex. Here they practice flight conditioning and live prey testing. These critical steps are designed to thoroughly assess the abilities and readiness of this feisty raptor to return to its natural habitat.

Staff and volunteers alike were captivated by the sheer magnificence of this Ferruginous Hawk. Its size and prowess in the role of an apex predator on the prairie are awe-inspiring. In fact, these hawks are sometimes affectionately referred to as "FE-beasts," a testament to their sheer force of nature.

As this remarkable journey unfolds, the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program remains committed to its mission of inspiring protection and conservation, not only for the raptors but also for the environments they call home.

With your support, this Ferruginous Hawk is continuing through its recovery and we hope for its return to the wild for A Second Chance at Freedom.



Above: This Ferruginous Hawk is currently recovering from starvation and trauma.

Life-Saving Care

To support this raptor's care, and others like it, scan the code below to donate or go to www.rmrp.org/donate.



Staff:

Carin Avila, Executive Director • Carin@rmrp.org
Bonnie Cleaver, Educational Avian Coordinator • Bonnie@rmrp.org
Jennifer Elliott, Data & Donor Communications • Jennifer@rmrp.org
Jazmine Fenner, Education & Outreach Associate • Jazmine@rmrp.org
Frank Hoffman, Rehabilitation & Research Associate • Frank@rmrp.org
Gail Kratz, Rehabilitation & Research Director • Gail@rmrp.org
Carrie Laxson, Rehabilitation & Research Assistant • Carrie@rmrp.org
Shayna Maddalena, Rehab. & Research Associate • Shayna@rmrp.org
Jessica Miller, Education & Outreach Coordinator • Jessica@rmrp.org

Lynsey Reed, Donor Relations Director • LynseyReed@rmrp.org
Jeff Stark, Facilities Maintenance
Mike Tincher, Rehabilitation & Research Coordinator • Mike@rmrp.org
Lisa Winta, Assistant Director • Lisa@rmrp.org

Board of Directors:

Carin Avila, Chair
Susan Baker, Secretary
Jessica Manning, Member
Judy Scherpelz, President

Visit Our Store & The Open House!

Holiday shopping at the RMRP gives twice, to your loved one, and to the birds.

Great Stocking Stuffers



Gift Shop Hours

10am - 4pm every Friday and Saturday from December 1st to the 23rd. 720 B East Vine Dr. Fort Collins.

Holiday Special: Island of Misfit Toys Package

Includes a medium stuffed animal, pack of playing cards, The Misfits book, Sibley Flash Guide, and an RMRP Turkey Vulture Sticker. Only 20 packages are available.

\$35



You can find so much more online, or better yet come to our Winter Open House!



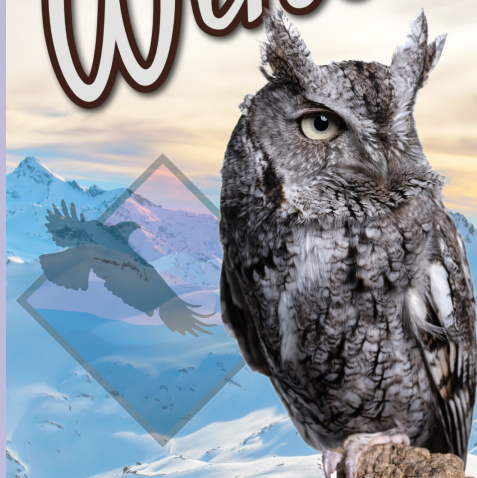
Scan the QR code to shop online or go to: <https://rocky-mountain-raptor-program.square.site/s/shop>

Winter Open House

December 16th, 12-3PM

720 E. Vine Drive

Fort Collins, CO



Educational Ambassador Raptors
Holiday Shopping
Behind-the-Scenes with the
Rehabilitation Department
...and more!

What's Happening

...continued from page 1.

No Room at the Inn

Unlike Red-tailed Hawks, Great Horned Owls or American Kestrels, Cooper's Hawks have to be housed individually as they are bird-eating birds. Housing them together is not an option. What this has meant for us is that in spite of us working like air traffic controllers, we've run out of places to put them. Many more birds mean more food and much higher costs.

Our birds and our staff are out of space. We exploded into our current facility in early 2007 after constructing the three enclosure buildings on the property. We've doubled in size since then, exceeding our staff space, while several staff members work in a warehouse without climate control.

What's Next

Pursuing a New Home - Finding a new home has become one of our top priorities, and we have two options for its location. The City of Fort Collins has purchased the old Hughes stadium property from the state, and we are proposing the creation of a Conservation Campus on the former one-square-mile former football stadium property. In partnership with the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, and Northern Colorado Wildlife Center, Audubon Rockies and others we are planning a proposal to the City of Fort Collins. We're also working with landscape architecture designers (at no cost to us) to develop a concept plan to take to the city in 2024. If the Hughes site isn't feasible, we plan to develop our current home on 26 acres on Vine Drive in Old Town North.

Yes, there's a lot going on.

But when I look at the opportunities facing us, I am deeply encouraged and thankful for you and every single one of our supporters.

How You Can Help

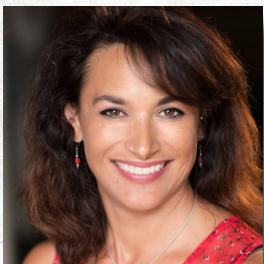
We invite you to help us meet this growing financial burden.

- Make a year-end gift, or better yet, consider a monthly pledge of support using the enclosed envelope.
- Attend our Open House on December 16 (See page 6).
- Join us for our Annual Gala on February 24 (tickets available January 1).
- Provide items from our Wish List (See page 2).
- Purchase 2024 raptor calendars or raptor merchandise for yourself and loved ones (See page 4).
- Adopt-A-Raptor for yourself or as a gift for a loved one (See page 6).

Thanks for standing by our side. I hope to see you very soon!



Carin Avila
Executive Director



Caring for Cooper's

Adopt-A-Raptor: A Cooper's Christmas Package

Experience the joy of giving this Christmas with our special Cooper's Hawk adoption package. For just \$35, you will receive a Certificate of Adoption, a species fact sheet, a set of 5 wildlife bookmarks, an RMRP logo sticker, and an exclusive Cooper's Hawk sticker.

This year, RMRP has seen a record number of Cooper's Hawks that need our care. One remarkable story brought a young hawk to us by the Wyoming Fish and Game in August. Despite having paralyzed legs and a broken shoulder blade, this determined bird showed incredible resilience. Our volunteers and staff were astonished by its fierce spirit.

After a stay in our hospital, the hawk's fracture has healed, and it is now diligently working on practicing flight and regaining strength and use of its legs. By adopting a Cooper's Hawk, you will sponsor the rehabilitation of this brave youngster and several others currently under our care.

Make a difference this holiday season and give the gift of hope to these magnificent birds.

Get Your Adoption Package

TScan the code to adopt a Cooper's Hawk or go to <https://www.rmrp.org/coopers-christmas/>.



Cooper's Hawks Stats

74 Have been admitted so far in 2023. This is the highest number of Cooper's ever seen in a year at RMRP.

These hawks suffered from:

45 Tested positive for West Nile Virus.

21 Had broken bones.

2 Tested positive for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza.

All of them thank you for your support that gave them a Second Chance at Freedom.



Left: This young Cooper's Hawk is recovering from leg paralysis and a broken shoulder blade.

Incoming Staff & Upcoming Gala!



Above: New staff member Rochelle Platter is ready to help RMRP soar!

Welcome Rochelle Platter!

RMRP's new Director of Development and Major Gifts

Executive Director Carin Avila is excited to announce the selection of Rochelle Platter as Rocky Mountain Raptor Program's Director of Development and Major Gifts. Rochelle will implement a strategic fundraising program including major gifts, annual giving, social and peer-to-peer fundraising events, fee-for-service revenue, bequests, and estate gifts, expanded grant writing, sponsorships, and corporate giving.

We sat down with Rochelle to learn more about her experience and what drew her to RMRP.

“ Why RMRP?

I love the vision for collaborating with other nonprofits to create the Conservation Campus in Fort Collins. The staff and donors I've met are dedicated to rehabilitating our majestic raptors and I'm excited to be part of this amazing program. ”

Say Yes!

I will volunteer for the 2024 Gala!

We extend a warm invitation to you to join us in making the 31st Annual Gala and Auction a resounding success! Your enthusiasm and participation will play a crucial role in making the event even more enjoyable. By volunteering for this February 24, 2024 Gala, you will actively contribute to the success of the RMRP.

There are various opportunities to assist in event planning, as well as the day of the event. Contact Lisa Winta at Lisa@rmrp.org or 970-484-7756. She will be delighted to discuss all of the possibilities with you and help you find the perfect role for your skills and interests.

What brought you to Fort Collins?

I'm a Fort Collins native! My parents lived in Fort Collins in my early years when my father was a CSU veterinarian, though our family moved away when I was a child. I returned to Fort Collins in 2017 to be closer to family.

How did you become a fundraiser? Is that something you majored in?

I majored in Accounting and minored in Communications to combine my interest in finance with my passion for people. Out of college, I worked on the trading floor at a large bank in Tulsa, managing a portfolio of corporate investments for Fortune 500 companies.

I took some time off to start a family, and six children later I returned to a public relations job where my children attended school in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The school had launched a capital campaign to build a new facility, and I tagged along with a fundraising colleague on a donor visit. When I realized how honored the donor felt to make a significant gift to the school – which represented a mission she believed in – I thought, “THIS is what I want to do!” I love journeying with a new donor who catches the vision for RMRP and donates because they feel that their personal values align with RMRP's mission to give raptors “A Second Chance at Freedom”. Seeing their passions awakened through giving is incredible!

You Have the Power to Make a Difference

Maximize Your Impact on Colorado Gives Day

Every year, on December 5th, the spirit of giving takes center stage in Colorado. It's a day when communities come together to support the causes they hold dear, and for organizations like the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program (RMRP), it's a chance to inspire and fundraise for the protection and conservation of raptors and the environment.

The Power of the Incentive Fund

What sets Colorado Gives Day apart is the Incentive Fund – one of the largest of its kind in the country. Here's how it works: Starting on November 1st and leading up to Colorado Gives Day on December 5th, every donation made to participating nonprofits gets a boost from this fund. The percentage of the fund that each nonprofit receives is directly proportional to the percentage they raise on Colorado Gives Day.



Why Choose RMRP on Colorado Gives Day?

As a supporter of the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program, you're already familiar with our mission: to inspire the protection and conservation of raptors and the environment through excellence in rehabilitation, education, and research. Your contribution on Colorado Gives Day directly supports this vital work, ensuring injured, ill, and orphaned raptors receive the care they need, and that educational programs continue to inspire future conservationists.

How you can donate:

Any time from November 1st until December 5th, make a gift through Colorado Gives Day.

You can go through our website directly at: <https://www.rmrp.org/donate/colorado-gives-day/> or scan the code.



You can also go through the Colorado Gives Day portal at: www.coloradogives.org/organization/rmrp.



Since 1987, The Rocky Mountain Raptor Program has rescued and rehabilitated thousands of raptors, educated the public about human/wildlife conflicts and conservation, and conducted research to protect raptors in the wild. As an independent, 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization, RMRP is non-government, and is not state or federally funded. We do not receive regular operating support from any national or international humane organizations but are supported mostly by gifts from individuals and grants. Our Federal Tax Identification Number is 90-0131614.