



Rocky Mountain
RAPTOR
Program
a second chance at freedom

Spring 2024 Newsletter

ON THE Wing

Change the Culture

Save the Vulture

As spring blooms in Colorado, we say hello to our summer migrants. Burrowing Owls, Swainson's Hawks, Mississippi Kites, and many more birds start nesting in preparation for breeding season. One of these species holds a special place in the heart of RMRP: Turkey Vultures.

Why are vultures so important?

Vultures keep our ecosystem clean and prevent the spread of disease. BirdLife International values the clean-up work of a single vulture as over \$11,000 in its lifetime. The decline of vultures in India between 1993 and 2006 cost its government over \$34 billion and caused the loss of 50,000 human lives because of the uncontrolled spread of diseases like rabies. Yes, vultures can eat a rabies-infected animal and won't get sick or spread the disease!

Supporting the Vultures of Colorado

Movies and cartoons portray vultures in a negative light. Conversely, raptor lovers know that Turkey Vultures play an integral role in maintaining a healthy ecosystem. You can help change the negative view of vultures in simple ways such as sharing this newsletter with friends and family, posting a Turkey Vulture with an informative caption, and supporting our conservation education efforts.

Inside this Issue

- 2 - A Tale of Two Eagles
- 3 - World Migratory Bird Day Open House
- 4 - What's in a Name?

Right: Our newest Educational Ambassador, a beautiful Turkey Vulture we have named Persephone, was hit by a car in 2012. She is blind in her right eye, and her left wing had broken bones that healed but not well enough for her to fly. Make sure to come see her at our Open House in May!



A Tale of Two Eagles

Bald Eagle Inches Toward Recovery Slow Healing For Nearly Starved Eagle

The people of the Fox Run Golf Course in Laramie, Wyoming were startled to find a Bald Eagle blocking their shot on a hot day in August of 2023. Wyoming Game & Fish responded to the situation and took the weak and faltering eagle to our great friends at Cheyenne Pet Clinic. They stabilized the eagle and then transferred it to RMRP.

This eagle was a hatch-year youngster who was unwell. Based on size, she was severely emaciated, with barely any muscle left on her body. The feathers on the left wing were badly damaged, but luckily, no major injuries were found, and the eagle tested negative for West Nile Virus (WNV).

Since then, this beautiful young Bald Eagle has been eating everything it can get its talons on! It has regained over 40% of its needed weight and is starting to regrow all the damaged feathers on its left wing. Regrowing feathers is a calorie and energy-draining process, so good nutrition is vital to healing! Once the feathers are finally grown, this young eagle will move into flight conditioning. Regaining its muscles will take time, but this spunky Bald has a fighting spirit befitting such a glorious bird.



Above: This spicy Bald Eagle is learning to fly again after fighting through near starvation.

Stay tuned to our e-newsletters for more! Need to be signed up? Just scan the code:



Golden Eagle Recovers from West Nile Virus We're Saving a Life With The Help of Our Friends!



Above: RMRP partnered with our community of wildlife supporters and rehabilitators to make sure this Golden Eagle gets what it needs to return to the wild!

In July of 2023, in the small town of Elizabeth, Colorado a young Golden Eagle was found on the ground weak, unable to fly, and limping. Our friends at Rocky Mountain Wildlife Alliance (RMWA) were on the job and rescued the eagle right away, and they nursed this Golden through West Nile Virus (WNV).

RMWA currently lacks the facilities to allow this giant of a Golden to stretch its wings and condition itself for release back into the wild and they called us for assistance. We are excited to be a part of this youngster's rehabilitation!

Right now, the young Golden is working hard in our flight conditioning enclosures to build strength and endurance for its return to the wild. When ready, this beautiful Golden Eagle will be transported back to RMWA and released to its original home territory. We love cooperating with our friends across the state and nation to help save these amazing raptors that we love so much!

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Other wildlife emergency?
Go to: www.animalhelpnow.org

Education in Action!

Thank You!

31st Annual Gala a Success!!

We're over the moon to have raised over \$130,000 at our recent Gala! Thank you for your support and participation in this event as an item donor, sponsor, pledge supporter, silent auction bidder, or one-time event donor. There is no "one-way" to support RMRP, and we're so grateful to everyone who made a bid, gave a donation, or sponsored the Gala. Our mission is stronger because of you!!

Thank you to our sponsors:

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Calendar Photo Contest & Fundraiser is Open!

Submit Your Raptor Images

Every year, wildlife photographers come together to support the RMRP Photo Calendar. This calendar is an essential fundraiser for RMRP, and your great images are needed to make it a success! We hope you will consider submitting your photos or becoming a sponsor for this fundraiser.



Scan the QR Code or go to <https://www.rmrp.org/news/calendar-photocontest/> to learn more or submit your photos.

What do you want to know from us?

Scan the QR code to tell us what you want to see in our upcoming newsletters! Or go to: www.rmrp.org/2024-spring-newsletter-content-survey/



Open House on May 11th, 12-3!

Celebrate World Migratory Bird Day with Us!

World Migratory Bird Day is a movement to help communities worldwide understand the challenges that migrating birds face. This year, the focus is on the importance of insects. Many raptors rely on insects for a food source, and some (like Swainson's Hawks) even travel thousands of miles to follow insect migrations.

Learn how you can make a difference locally and globally at our Open House this May!

Below: Did you know that Burrowing Owls are migratory in Colorado? Learn all about how you can support migratory species on May 11th from 12-3!



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Creating Connection

Educational Ambassador Raptors Are Essential to Conservation

RMRP has worked tirelessly to promote protection for and education about raptors, their habitats, their role in the environment, and the human role in conservation and stewardship. Along the way, RMRP's permanent resident Educational Ambassadors have helped people to connect to our mission. In 37 years, these birds have touched the hearts and minds of millions of people while creating an indelible impression for our education and outreach efforts.

Education creates connections to raptors and nature with the Ambassadors being the bridge. These raptors are our best teachers, and many have been with us for the length of their lives, some for 30 years or more.

What's in a name?

When our program began, we decided not to name our Educational Ambassadors to preserve their wild presentation to the public. Over the decades, research into understanding better how people connect and become inspired to take action has prompted us to evolve and to give names to our Ambassadors, and to create stronger public support for these heroic warriors.

Educational Ambassadors represent the hundreds of raptors that RMRP rehabilitates every year. A name facilitates a stronger connection for many people, especially young children. A name inspires empathy. And empathy drives us to take action. As our educational outreach expands, we understand that honoring our Ambassadors with a meaningful name will inspire more children and adults to bring about action to protect wild raptors.

SOAR-ing into a bright new future

April is Earth Month, and we will unveil our new raptor sponsorship program, "SOAR - Sponsor Our Amazing Raptors." SOAR will provide opportunities to support all raptors at RMRP, and will feature our newly named Educational Ambassadors. This program will also create new classroom and learning opportunities for our community. Every raptor in our care is treated with the utmost respect for its wild nature and is given the best medical care we can provide. The love, compassion, and understanding we have for raptors and nature is a connection that benefits everyone.

To learn more about
SOAR scan the code
or visit our website:
[www.rmrp.org/
soar-program](http://www.rmrp.org/soar-program)



Meet Barley!

This Swainson's Hawk is an Educational Ambassador who started as a teacher with our friends at Nature's Educators. We are so lucky they chose us for his forever home! He is blind in one eye and is permanently disabled. Since Swainson's Hawks are often found in agricultural settings, we felt his name was meaningful for the natural history of this species of hawk.

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,

4 501 (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 chiefly by gifts from individuals and grants. Our Federal Tax Identification Number is 90-0131614.