



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

Summer 2024 Newsletter

# ON THE Wing

## What in the World is a Leucocytozoon?

### RMRP Research Helps Find Answers

Rhodes College, University of Delaware is researching leucocytozoons (leu·co·cy·to·zo·on) in birds, and RMRP is excited to partner in this important project.

### How Harmful Are These Parasites?

Leucocytozoons are parasites that live in the blood of birds. This parasite causes damage to the internal organs of the infected bird. Infections can cause anemia, anorexia, ataxia, emaciation, difficulty breathing, and weakness.

### Why is this Research Important?

Although widespread, leucocytozoons are the least studied avian blood parasites. Most research has been done on passerines (songbirds). Very little is known about their impact on raptor populations and how they are spread. RMRP has submitted blood samples to the project since 2021.

The study will examine DNA for different parasites across bird species and the number of parasites found in each species. They also hope to look for both generalist and specialist parasites. For example, do Great Horned Owls carry a specific parasite strain? This research project hopes to shed much light on a previously understudied disease.

We hope to see results from the project sometime in 2024! Learn more about the research we participate in by going to [www.rmrp.org/rehabilitation/research/](http://www.rmrp.org/rehabilitation/research/) or scan the code:



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**Above:** A raptor with leucocytozoonosis may be unable to stand or eat and have difficulty breathing.

**Right:** The purple cells are the reproductive cells of leucocytozoons.

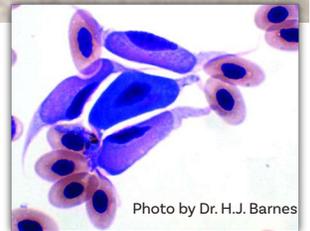


Photo by Dr. H.J. Barnes

### Are you involved in raptor research?

We would be happy to contribute data to your research project to further our knowledge of raptors. Contact Gail Kratz, Rehabilitation and Research Director, at [Gail@rmrp.org](mailto:Gail@rmrp.org) or 970-484-7756.

# Something is “Fishy” at RMRP!

## A Plethora of Piscivores Take Over Bald Eagles and Ospreys Recover at RMRP

It's been a busy season for fish-eating raptors at RMRP! We currently have three Bald Eagles and two Ospreys in our care while they recover from various injuries. Check out their stories in these case highlights:

### Bald Eagle 23-224

Rescued last August, this Bald Eagle had badly damaged feathers, on its right wing leaving it unable to fly. After nearly starving, the eagle was rescued and brought to us. It continues to regain muscle and molt in an entirely new wing of feathers.



### Bald Eagle 24-010

This eagle had a fracture of its right metacarpus (wrist) and a wound over its keel bone (sternum). The keel wound needed surgery to help it heal, and since then, this eagle has been on a steady road to recovery.



### Bald Eagle 24-021

After being hit by a car, this eagle was rushed to RMRP for treatment. Upon admission, a fracture to the right ulna was found and needed surgery. A tie-in fixator (TIF) aligned the bones for several weeks while they healed. The eagle is now going through physical therapy.



### Osprey 23-262

This Osprey suffered massive feather damage and burns in October 2023 when a methane flare at an oil refinery caused a fire. The burns and trauma have healed, but the extensive feather damage requires this bird to molt nearly all its feathers and replace them before it can fly again.



### Osprey 24-040

Found unable to fly after a destructive wind storm, this Osprey had general trauma and a broken left ulna close to the wrist. The bird is currently keeping quiet while it heals from its wounds.



These raptors require surgeries, medications, intensive care, and more. Help these raptors return to the skies. Donate using the QR code or go to [www.rmrp.org/donate](http://www.rmrp.org/donate)



### Contact Us:

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Wildlife & Nature Campus website: [www.wildlifefocofoco.org](http://www.wildlifefocofoco.org)

**Other wildlife emergency?**  
Go to: [www.animalhelpnow.org](http://www.animalhelpnow.org)

# Education in Action!

## Ambassador Spotlight

### Meet Ambassador Red-tailed Hawk – Ember

This fiery Red-tailed Hawk was found along I-25 near Fort Collins in 1999. She had sustained a fractured right clavicle & coracoid (shoulder area) and head trauma, which impaired the vision in her left eye. Due to her eyesight issues, she could not be released into the wild. She was an adult when admitted (at least 2 years old), so her exact age is unknown.

As one of our oldest and hardest-working Ambassador raptors, she has spent many years making hundreds of public appearances at events across Colorado. She is one of our “senior” Ambassadors; she is moving into a partial and well-deserved semi-retirement. While you may not see her at the bigger festival events anymore, she will still appear at many local programs and RMRP functions.

She was named Ember after her glowing red tail and her incandescent attitude



You can help care for Ember with our SOAR (Sponsor Our Amazing Raptors) Program. Scan the code to sponsor Ember:



## Volunteers and Interns Needed How To Get Involved

Volunteers and Interns in the Education Department are key players in the RMRP’s ability to provide conservation education about raptors. You’ll receive extensive training in handling raptors and representing the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program in our communities. Our education volunteers inspire people to protect and conserve raptors and our environment. When they see you holding an owl or hawk up close, the look of awe on a child’s face is heartwarming and will keep you coming back.

Learn more about the available volunteer opportunities and internships on our website by scanning the QR Code or go to [www.rmrp.org/volunteer](http://www.rmrp.org/volunteer).



## Event Schedule

Come see us!

Steamboat Art-in-the-Park  
West Lincoln Park  
July 13-14, 9-5

Loveland Art-in-the-Park  
North Lake Park  
August 10-11, 10-5

For our complete schedule, scan the QR code or go to [www.rmrp.org/events](http://www.rmrp.org/events).



### Staff:

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# You Save & Change Lives

## This One Life Needs You

### Baby Great Horned Owl Recovering From Trauma

An immature Great Horned Owl was found on the ground below its nest in early April. Its other two siblings were comfortable high in the nest with their parents. Although not uncommon, - young owls are curious and start to explore the world around them when they are just learning to fly. They sometimes tiptoe too close to the nest edge. This youngster fell hard to the ground; its feathers were matted with dried blood, and it couldn't use its left foot.

Upon admission at RMRP, we found the young owl had two fractured toes and many broken and deformed feathers. After several weeks of daily care, the toes healed, and the youngster grew new feathers.

Your support ensured that RMRP was there when this young owl needed help the most, and your continued support will guarantee that this Great Horned Owl continues to heal in our care.

In the wild, young Great Horned Owls are supported by their parents from hatching in early spring until the end of fall. At RMRP, the young owls spend many months with us going through many rounds of prey training as they mature. They also go through a "Soft Release," where the young are trained in a "Hack Box," an indoor/outdoor feed box that hangs on the side of our flight enclosures. They are released on our property, allowing them to gradually disperse to the wild, while they can return to the Hack Box as long as necessary to receive food as they explore and become adept at hunting in the wild.

Please send a gift to support the twelve young owls in our care. Your gift will give them A Second Chance at Freedom.



Help this baby owl with a donation by scanning the QR Code or go to [www.rmrp.org/donate](http://www.rmrp.org/donate).



## Other Ways to Help

### Watson's Wish List

Check out our Educational Ambassador Golden Eagle Watson's Wish List and donate much-needed items by scanning the QR Code or go to [www.rmrp.org/wish-list-drive](http://www.rmrp.org/wish-list-drive).

### King Soopers Card

You can support RMRP while you are grocery shopping. Simply log into your King Soopers or City Market account and search for RMRP (or use the code BF841) under the Community Rewards tab at [kingsoopers.com/communityrewards](http://kingsoopers.com/communityrewards). Then, every time you shop with your loyalty card, Kings Soopers/City Market will donate a portion of your purchases to RMRP.

Since 1987, the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program has been dedicated to inspiring the protection of raptors and conservation of the environment by rescuing and rehabilitating thousands of raptors, educating the public about natural history and human/wildlife conflicts, and contributing to research, protecting 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 chiefly by gifts from individuals and grants. Our Federal Tax Identification Number is 90-0131614.