



Rocky Mountain
RAPTOR
Program

a second chance at freedom

Summer 2025 Newsletter

ON THE Wing

Happy Summer From RMRP!

As we reach the year's halfway point, things are heating up—and we're not just talking about the weather. Our teams are diving headfirst into one of the year's busiest seasons, juggling high-stakes bird care and a full community outreach calendar.

In our rehabilitation and research department, we've continued to tackle challenges head-on. Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) remains a serious concern, and though the peak has passed, the disease now appears to be here to stay in our region. With federal monitoring decreasing due to administrative changes, our commitment to vigilance and rapid response is more critical than ever.

But even in the face of formidable odds, we've had reasons to celebrate. Three Red-tailed Hawks, all showing mild symptoms and testing positive for HPAI, beat the virus and were successfully released into the wild—a trio of victories we're incredibly proud of!

As HPAI fades into the background (for now), we're shifting focus to West Nile Virus (WNV), especially in young birds who haven't yet developed natural immunity. Since the virus first reached Colorado in 2003, we've built effective protocols and gained valuable experience in helping these birds fight back. Alongside that, we're still treating all the usual bumps, bruises, and baffling injuries. In fact, we're already a full month ahead of last year's patient count, so we're bracing for a hectic summer.

Luckily, we've got the right team for the job: an expert staff, tireless volunteers, and a brand-new class of 11 enthusiastic summer rehabilitation interns, all ready to roll up their sleeves and make a difference.

Meanwhile, our education team is out and about, bringing raptor magic directly to the community. Our summer events are in full swing, and our Educational Ambassadors are traveling far and wide to share the RMRP mission. These programs don't just inform—they inspire. Whether it's a child seeing a hawk up close for the first time or an adult learning about habitat loss, every connection plants a seed of awareness and action. Check our website to see where we'll be next—we'd love to see you there!

We're also looking to the future. Our collaboration with the City of Fort Collins on the Hughes property is progressing. While we await official decisions, we're busy behind the scenes, dreaming, designing, and budgeting for what's ahead. We'll keep you posted as the vision takes flight.

Thank you for reading and for standing with us. Through education, rehabilitation, and research, we offer hope to the raptors in our care and the world we all share. Every bird we help, every mind we reach, and every life we touch is a step toward a brighter, wilder, more connected future.

With greatest gratitude,

Carin Avila, Executive Director



*PS - Keep our future
bright with a life-saving
and life-changing gift
today*



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How We're Handling Avian Influenza at RMRP

The Ongoing Fight Against HPAI

H5N1, (Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, or HPAI) reemerged in fall of 2024, challenging our rehabilitation skills and biosecurity protocols. During the fall/winter 2023/2024, we saw only 9 cases. However, since last fall, we've seen 25, with most being fatal. Many rehabilitators euthanize these birds upon arrival to minimize risk to other patients. Since 2022, we have admitted 3 Red-tailed hawks with less-severe symptoms, feeling it was worth taking a chance on them.

Every case is time and resource-intensive, requiring significant daily care and many expensive tests until they are clear of the virus. A final evaluation process of flight conditioning and live prey testing led to two of these resilient Red-tails being successfully released, and the third is close to its Second Chance at Freedom. Because of your support, we are one of the only raptor facilities in the US that has successfully released known cases of HPAI.



Above: Red-tailed Hawk displaying neurological symptoms from HPAI.

Summer Birding Tips!

Here's some advice for all your summer birding shenanigans:

- **Shoes are transmitters!** Keeping your shoes clean between natural areas helps eliminate the spread of diseases.
- **Respect the nest!** Spring and summer are baby seasons. If birds react to you, you are too close. View babies and parents from a distance to keep them safe.
- **Represent your love of raptors with RMRP merch!** Hats, pins, shirts, and more, where proceeds go back to the raptors. Don't forget to grab a raptor field guide for your adventures. Wear your passion proudly — you never looked so good!

Summer Merch!



Pins perfect for collectors, nature lovers, and those who find joy in the details. \$20



Super soft, comfortable, and beautiful custom-designed Burrowing Owl t-shirt. This artwork is designed by RMRP's very own Bonnie Cleaver. \$25



With several to choose from, these field guides are helpful for at-a-glance ID or more in-depth natural history information. \$10-18

Shop Online:



<https://rocky-mountain-raptor-program.square.site/s/shop>

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Rehabilitation Hotline: 970-222-0322

Website: www.rmrp.org

Email: Carin@rmrp.org

Information: give@rmrp.org

Hughes Wildlife, Nature & Education Center website: www.wildlifenaturefoco.org

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

Education Corner



Above: Flint at his educational debut with volunteer Michaela.

Flint: The Rock Star Kestrel!

Flint is our newest American Kestrel Ambassador, and is doing amazingly well! Having joined us in January, 2025 Flint was imprinted on humans, and because of that he was very comfortable with our staff and volunteers, happy to eat from the glove and participate in training.

Our training staff and volunteers work on trust-building sessions, positive reinforcement while putting on his handling equipment, and exposing him to a variety of people and stimuli. Flint has already worked at many events, including a couple of elementary schools and onsite tours of our facility. We are so pleased with his progress and adjustment to life at RMRP, and can't wait to see his growth as an ambassador.

Welcome, Martha Davis, Education & Outreach Associate

Our newest staff member, Martha Davis began as an Education and Outreach volunteer in 2018, and says she has grown exponentially as a person and as a wildlife advocate since joining.



Above: Martha and Educational Ambassador Aurelia.

A native of Austin, Texas, Martha moved to Colorado in 2012. For the past three years, she was an animal care technician at the University of Colorado Boulder. She has two cats and a dog that keep her busy and entertained.

In her free time, Martha is a snowboarding instructor for an adaptive sports program. She is very excited to join our team and continue to work closely with our incredibly dedicated volunteers.

Birds & Brews – What Could Be Better?

This summer, the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program is teaming up with some of your favorite local breweries for a unique evening of birds, brews, and giving back! Join us and our extraordinary Ambassador raptors at select breweries—including Purpose Brewing, Mythmaker Brewing, and the Gnebriated Gnome—which are generously donating a portion of their proceeds on special nights to support our mission.

Find Us At These Events

Check our events calendar regularly so you don't miss the fun!



<https://www.rmrp.org/events/>

Staff:

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Board of Directors:

Carin Avila, Member
Susan Baker, Secretary

Jack Dudek, Treasurer
Dr. Matt Johnston, Member
Judy Scherpelz, President

Leaving Legacies

Supporting RMRP Through Art

Your Legacy Gift Will Save Lives

Did you know there are many ways to support the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program besides writing a check? With a little planning, you can include a gift to us within your overall estate or financial plans (usually called a planned gift) that preserves your values, advances our mission, and can provide you with tax benefits. Planned gifts can be made now to immediately support our needs or can be enacted after your lifetime as a final way to leave your legacy. Anyone can make a planned gift.



<https://www.rmrp.org/donate/legacy-of-freedom-society/>



Consider these popular options:

- **BEQUEST** - A gift in your will or revocable living trust. This form of giving is accomplished by including a few simple sentences in your will or living trust. This gift doesn't go into effect until after your lifetime so that you can change your mind at any time.
- **RETIREMENT PLAN ASSETS** - By naming us as a beneficiary of a percentage or a fixed amount, you can make a taxwise gift to support our work after your lifetime.
- **INCOME FOR LIFE** - Through a life income gift, you make the gift and then return you and if you desire, someone else receives income for life after your lifetime, and that of the other person. You choose the remaining balance of your gift, supports the Rocky Mountain Raptor program.

To learn more about the benefits of planned gifts, contact Bob Francella at 970-449-3949. We can also connect you to a local estate planning attorney, an expert in these matters, for a free consultation.

Inspiring Future Generations

The next generation of wildlife guardians is soaring! After seeing RMRP at his school, 11-year-old Leif was inspired to help. For his community project, he created stunning drawings of our Educational Ambassador raptors and is selling prints to support RMRP.



Leif's talent and generosity give us hope for the future. Order your print and support his amazing work: <https://wryawry.bigcartel.com/>

Spicy Summer Auction

We have some sizzling items for our first summer online auction! Stay tuned to our website for dates and details.



Above: "Hunter's Eye" Ferruginous Hawk print by Paul Krapf. Coming soon to auction!

Since 1987, your unwavering compassion has supported the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program to carry out life-saving raptor rehabilitation, offering critical medical care, nourishment, and a safe haven for injured or orphaned birds. Your generosity also powers our transformative conservation education programs, igniting a passion for wildlife and inspiring the next generation of environmental champions. As an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit (Tax ID 90-0131614), we rely almost entirely on the compassion of people like you who believe in our mission and help us make a lasting impact. Together, we are inspiring the protection and conservation of raptors and our environment.