

# WINGBEATS

The Summer 2021 Newsletter of RAPTOR Inc.

Celebrating 43 Years

## Athena Fosters Two Orphaned Owlets

By Jackie Bray

Each year during baby season, RAPTOR Incorporated receives up to ninety birds too young to survive on their own. The rehabilitators utilize several techniques to make sure these immature birds receive proper care and return to nature as the magnificent wild birds they were born to be.

The goal is always to be as least intrusive to their natural ecology as possible. Ideally, the chicks are stabilized and returned to their parents. If this isn't possible the chicks may be fostered, either by parents of the same species with chicks near the same age, or with an ambassador bird at the Raptor Center. Lastly, the young birds can be hand-reared by highly trained rehabilitators at the Raptor Center. These trained rehabilitators go to extreme lengths to make sure the birds remain wild and are capable of surviving once released.

On April 27th Clermont County Wildlife Officer, Gus Keibel, brought two Eastern Screech Owlets to the Raptor Center after their nest was destroyed by tree removers. Unfortunately, their mother and two siblings did not survive. The owlets were

not injured, but they were quite young, only about one week old, with their eyes just starting to open. This is a critical time of development when the young birds imprint on their parents.

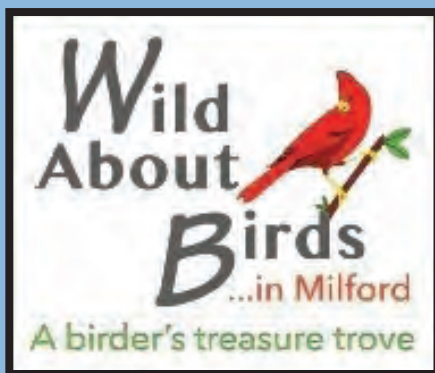
Imprinting is the process where a bird learns its species identity. Generally, young birds imprint on their parents, learning appropriate vocalizations and behaviors for that species. This imprinting allows them to choose appropriate mates later in life.

Athena, our resident female Eastern Screech Owl, has proven to be an excellent foster parent, so the chicks were placed with her. Athena immediately took the owlets under her wing – literally!

The owlets were weighed periodically to make sure they were receiving enough food and were developing normally, but otherwise the family was left alone. After 3 weeks with Athena, the owlets were moved to a larger enclosure to develop their flight abilities. After some practice catching live prey in their enclosure, the owlets will be ready for release. Thanks to Athena's attentive care, these owlets will be well prepared to thrive in the wild!



Athena with foster owlets. Photo by J. Bray.



## Thank You!

### Thanks to Wild About Birds for hosting another great fundraiser!

Wild About Birds, 125 Main Street, Milford, Ohio 45150  
Donations to RAPTOR Inc. supports local raptor conservation.



**Mission:** Since 1978, RAPTOR Inc. (Regional Association for the Protection and Treatment Of Raptors) has been dedicated to "the rehabilitation and return of raptors to their natural environment, the education of the public on the importance of raptors, and the preservation of their natural habitat".

# A Tribute to Sylvester and Scarlet

By Cindy Alverson

With a heavy heart, we must report the passing of not one, but two, of our precious avian ambassadors – Scarlet and Sylvester.

Scarlet passed away on June 8th. Her illness became apparent with a sudden change in her behavior. Laboratory tests and radiographs were performed, which indicated that she was suffering from a large liver tumor, most likely cancerous.

Scarlet was a long-term resident of RAPTOR Inc., gracing us with her fierce spirit - a perfect example of the disposition of a powerful bird of prey. Scarlet was big, strong, and ornery, and never missed an opportunity to make sure everyone knew it.

RAPTOR Inc. was fortunate to have Scarlet as an ambassador for 18 years. In the past ten years alone, she gave 631 hours of appearances at schools, libraries, outdoor exhibits, photography events, and Open Houses. Each occasion provided the attendees the opportunity to admire this powerful raptor up close. Scarlet was a beautiful red-tailed hawk and the memories of her personality will live on. She will be greatly missed.

Our beloved great horned owl ambassador, Sylvester, passed away on June 13th. We knew this day would come, but we didn't want to think about it. Sylvester was one of our most-loved birds. Educators enjoyed working with him and guests looked forward to seeing him and knew him by name. People would come to the

RAPTOR Inc. Open Houses and ask, "Is that Sylvester?" He was stoic with the attitude of a fierce predator, but gentle in his behavior.

Sylvester lived at RAPTOR Inc. for 24 years. No one really knew how old he was, since he was an adult when admitted for care of fractures in his wing and foot. During those 24 years, with his easy-going behavior, Sylvester lit up the faces of thousands of guests as he traveled off-site to presentations at libraries, schools, and anywhere else. Nothing phased him. With some birds, loud noises and children running with excitement might be cause for alarm; but not so with Sylvester. Always calm, some additional hissing might escape his beak, but nothing more.

Although Sylvester has left this physical world, he will remain forever in our hearts. Fly free, Sylvester!



Scarlet. Photo by James Szuch.

## Scarlet

By Mary Landis

Our Bold Ambassador  
Bright and Brassy  
Bold and Sassy  
All attitude with wings  
In command of all things  
Wearing her tail of red  
Watching with her noble head  
Talons, beak, and austere staring  
Reminded us of her apex bearing.



Sylvester. Photo by Ed Sorauf.

## Requiem

by Mary Landis

Our Regal Ambassador  
Poised patient proud  
Able to draw an awestruck crowd  
Never failing, ever enduring  
The love of all he was insuring  
Dependable with a daunting face  
To be remembered with love and grace.



# Notes from the Field: A Brand New World

By Jordan West

I recently spent a few days observing and photographing an eastern screech owl family. What an amazing opportunity it was to spend time in the wild with our smallest, all-year-around owl species.

The adults of this family were composed of both color morphs, the adult male was a red morph and the female was grey. However, the grey female was heavily streaked with brown and red tones, and in my opinion was a better fit for an intermediate, brown morph. The male was the most active of the pair, hunting and protecting the owlets, the first of which fledged on my first day watching them. The female stayed in place, roosting at the opening of her tree cavity while watching her mate and nearby surroundings.

I assumed the remaining owlets to be in the same cavity as the mother, but a fluffy little owl face sticking out of an even smaller cavity caught my peripheral vision. All of a sudden there were now two more owlets taking turns peeking out of the smaller cavity, completely enamored with everything going on around them. Every insect that happened to fly by captivated the attention of the owlets. Interestingly, the owlets already knew to retreat into the cavity every time they would hear harassment

calls from nearby blue jays alerting of the owl's presence. These two were ready to fledge at any moment and join their sibling who fledged the previous day.

I decided to depart the owls for the time being, and then came back in an hour or so before sunset, hoping that the owlets wouldn't have fledged during the hot and sunny afternoon. Upon my return and just in time for me to set up my camera equipment, the second owlet was hanging onto the outside of its nesting cavity ready to leap into its brand new world. It lunged from the tree and quickly tumbled to the ground in the marsh below. This prompted the last remaining owlet to do the same. I watched the family until it was too dark to capture any more images.

It was a special experience to be able to watch the young owls clumsily explore their surroundings, repeatedly falling to the ground below and easily climbing back up the trees using their beaks and talons. The parents were sounding soft trilling calls which caused the owlets to climb towards the adults and stay near them.

All in all, a truly one-of-a-kind, successful wildlife experience, I am thankful to have been there at just the right time, capturing unique images and sharing their story with others.



*OK world...here I come! Photo by Jordan West.*



*Adult (foreground) and owlet. Photo by Jordan West.*



*Photo by Virginia Blum.*

## Barred Owlets

By Virginia Blum

This spring I had the privilege to observe a barred owl nest from start to fledge. I first saw the nest cavity in late February, but then the nest site flooded, and for weeks thereafter, the nest appeared to have been abandoned. Not so, as it turned out! I stopped by in early April (after I had mostly given up) and there was the face of the female owl staring out from her nest in the tree cavity. It was explained to me that she had been there the whole time but lower in the cavity and thus out of sight. I also learned that the owl pair had been nesting in this particular cavity for the past seven years.

Barred owls have small territories (under a square mile) and they tend to return to the same nest year after year. It was a unique opportunity to behold as the owlets

See **"Owlets"** on page 4

## Owlets (continued from page 3)

began to branch and then fledge. "Branch" is the term used to describe how owlets first explore the world beyond the nest's interior. They often settle on a nearby branch and test-flap their wings to build up their flight muscles, moving from branch to branch and periodically returning to their nest.

"Fledge" is the term used for leaving the nest altogether. Owlets might manage to leap to a nearby branch or they (commonly) fall from their nest, a fall cushioned by slightly buoyant wings, and then instinct drives them to climb back up using their talons and beaks. Climbing up the tree trunk using their talons to dig into the bark as well as their beak, is a sight not commonly seen, but totally natural. Or using their wings to flap, the owl even can propel himself upward to the safety of the canopy of the tree.

We might see owlets repeatedly fall back down during this process, take a break, and then start from scratch. One day I came upon a woman alarmed by the sight of a just-fledged owlet sitting on a low branch, only two feet above ground. She and others were calling RAPTOR Inc. to report their concern. It was believed that this owlet fledged unintentionally, had tumbled from the nest before it was altogether prepared—but such is the precarious nature of fledging. RAPTOR, Inc. staff advised the callers to stand back and be patient.

For the human witnesses, it can be surprising to find a small barred owlet on the ground. We expect to see owls high up in trees, and thus the sight of an owlet at the base of a tree suggests to us that it's in distress. But for the most part, it is not. That is just how barred owlets fledge. Unless we perceive them to be in danger (say, from dogs off leash or too close), we need to observe from a distance and admire the determination of these small creatures to reach the top of a tree. There, tucked among the leaves, they will be hidden from predators such as eagles and great horned owls. As they move away from their nesting tree over the next months, the parents, responding to their shrill calls, will feed the owlets until they are capable of hunting on their own.

All three owlets from this nest successfully fledged. The last time I saw them, they were perched close together high up in a tree.



Photo by Virginia Blum.

## An Early Visitor

By Jackie Bray

This little one was found at the front entrance of the Raptor Center early on Saturday, May 29th, and it remained there through Sunday's Open House. In fact, it was still there Monday morning.

Information from Ohio Department of Natural Resources: "Fawns are born nearly scentless (so predators cannot find them easily). They also have spots that serve as camouflage and are able to stand soon after being born, but as a protective tactic will remain hidden. It is common for female deer in urban areas to place fawns around homes, backyards, or flower beds. The mother placed it there because she felt it would be safe (often intentionally near humans). To protect her fawn, the mother will spend very little time with it. This is to prevent attracting predators to the fawn's location. She will leave her fawn in various hiding places for long periods of time, returning several times a day to nurse it. By staying away, the mother is protecting it."

"If you find a baby deer on your property, leave it alone if it is seemingly healthy. The mother is likely nearby. Leave the area. Do not repeatedly check on the fawn. The more time you spend in the area the more likely you are to attract predators to the location. Also, the doe will not return while you are present. If the fawn is in a dangerous location, move it to a safer location. Although you should limit touching the animal, it is a myth that the doe will reject a fawn with human scent on it. If the animal is injured or the mother is found dead, contact a licensed rehabilitator."



Photo by Jackie Bray.

# Thanks to our Auction Supporters!

We wish to THANK all of our sponsors, in-kind donors, and bidders for their generous support of our Spring Online Auction. Because of your generosity we were able to raise \$6,475.00 to support local bird of prey conservation!  
Please consider patronizing the following businesses and thanking the individuals for their support!

## Businesses

A Bottle or Two	Fabulous Frames & Art, Montgomery	Newtown Feed & Supply
Berns Garden Center & Landscaping	Filo Ink	Out of Thyme Kitchen Studio
Bethel Feed & Supply Pet & Garden Center	Geraci Fine Jewelry	Pepper Portraits
Boonshoft Museum of Discovery	Great Parks of Hamilton County	Rebel Mettle Brewery
Children's Meeting House	Habitat Skateboards	Scene 75
Cincinnati Art Museum	Hocking Hills Canopy Tours	Spirits of Madeira
Cincinnati Bengals	Homes for Hoots	State Farm Insurance – Milford
Cincinnati Museum Center	JL Aerial Views	Veterinary Molecular Diagnostics Inc.
Cincinnati Nature Center	Jordan West Photography	Whistle Stop Clay Works
Cincinnati Reds Hall of Fame and Museum	Kentucky Horse Park	Wild About Birds
Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden	Medicine Bluff Studio	Wild Birds Unlimited – Forest Park
Coney Island Park	Mike's Car Wash	Wild Birds Unlimited - Florence
Day Heights Veterinary Clinic	Newport Aquarium	Xavier University Athletics

## Individuals

Marc & Cindy Alverson	Gary Denzler	Louise Head	Adolfo Olivas
Edward Annal	Leslie Dunlop	William Holmes	Tom Powers
Rosie Ayres	Cheryl Dykstra	Margi Hopkins	Tyler Rankin
John & Debbie Beasley	Chris Eckes	Charlene Howell	Laura Schmid
Alison Bewley	Alex Eicher	Kimberly Klosterman	Robert Smith
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Lauren Connolly	Michelle Hall	Bonnie McNett	Leslie Wilsong
Bruce Cortright	Bella Hartzel	Donna Morsbach	Debbie Winkelman
Dr. Robert Dahlhausen	Jeff Hays	Kathy Newton	Susan Maggard

## 2021 Admissions

American Kestrel	18	Saw-whet Owl	0	Rough-legged Hawk	0	<b>2020 Dispositions</b> <b>Released ..... 40%</b> <b>Euthanized ..... 19%</b> <b>Died ..... 16%</b> <b>Transferred ..... 0%</b> <b>Education ..... 0%</b> <b>Under Care ..... 25%</b>
Merlin	0	Snowy Owl	0	Northern Harrier	0	
Peregrine Falcon	0	Short Eared Owl	0	Turkey Vulture	8	
Eastern Screech Owl	16	Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	Black Vulture	6	
Barred Owl	15	Cooper's Hawk	26	Osprey	1	
Barn Owl	2	Broad-winged Hawk	1	Golden Eagle	0	
Great Horned Owl	19	Red-shouldered Hawk	43	Bald Eagle	0	
Long-eared Owl	0	Red-tailed Hawk	35	<b>Total</b>	<b>190</b>	



## Upcoming Public Appearances (Contact sponsor for details and/or necessary reservations)

13-Aug	6-9pm	Cincinnati Nature Center Rowe Woods - Hoots & Hops	4949 Tealtown Rd, Milford, OH 45150
17-Aug	2-3pm	Union Township Branch Library (Virtual Program)	4450 Glen Este-Withamsville Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45245
21-Aug	2-3pm	Little Miami Conservancy	211 Railroad Ave, Loveland, OH 45140
22-Aug	10-11:30am	OVCC Photo Shoot at RAPTOR Inc.	961 Barg Salt Run Rd, Milord, OH 45150
29-Aug	1-4pm	RAPTOR Inc. Open House	961 Barg Salt Run Rd, Milord, OH 45150
19-Sep	1-4pm	Greater Cincinnati Rose Association at Ault Park	5090 Observatory Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45208
25-Sep	2-3pm	Little Miami Conservancy - Great Outdoor Weekend	211 Railroad Ave, Loveland, OH 45140
26-Sep	1-4pm	RAPTOR Inc. Open House - Great Outdoor Weekend	961 Barg Salt Run Rd, Milord, OH 45150
10-Oct	10-11:30am	OVCC Photo Shoot at RAPTOR Inc.	961 Barg Salt Run Rd, Milord, OH 45150
16-Oct	2-3pm	Little Miami Conservancy	211 Railroad Ave, Loveland, OH 45140
27-Oct	11-11:30am	Miami Township (Hamilton Co.) Library	8 N Miami Ave, Cleves, OH 45002

## Financial Contributions

Thanks to the following individuals and groups for their financial contributions to RAPTOR Inc. for the first two quarters of 2021.

### Up to \$499

Ahrenholz, Teresa	Farrington, Heather	Kindl-Corbeil, Sonja	Pettys, Carol	Waske, Owen
Alverson, Tammy	Faske, Mona	King, Rhea	Pheanis, Emily	Wauligman, Wayne
Amazon Smile,	Felde, Carol & Tom	Kirssin, Jeffrey	PolICASTRO, Barb & Dan	Weber, John
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Daugherty, Tim	Houlihan, Tori	Morsbach, Donna	Stitzel, Vince	<b>Bald Eagle \$10,000 and up</b>
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Doerger, Kirk	Jaspers, Rev. J. Dennis	Newman, Darci	Stryker, Linda	<b>In-kind Donations</b>
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**RAPTOR Inc. Staff**

Cindy Alverson, Executive Director  
 Jackie Bray, Associate Director

The Board of Trustees generally meets the third Wednesday of each month, at 7:00 P.M. All RAPTOR members are welcome to attend.

Contact Marc Alverson at [marcalverson@cinci.rr.com](mailto:marcalverson@cinci.rr.com) for meeting time and location.

**Thank You To Our Veterinarians!**

Bob Dahlhausen, D.V.M.  
 (513) 576-1990  
 D.J. Haeussler, D.V.M.  
 (513) 374-3963  
 J. Peter Hill, D.V.M.  
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**Communications**

Gary Young, Newsletter Editor  
 To submit articles or pictures for consideration in Wingbeats, email the article to:  
[raptor@raptorinc.org](mailto:raptor@raptorinc.org)  
 or by mail to:  
 RAPTOR Inc.  
 961 Barg Salt Run Road  
 Milford, Ohio 45150  
 To report an injured raptor in the Greater Cincinnati area call RAPTOR Inc.: (513) 825-3325

**Mission**

Since 1978, RAPTOR Inc. (Regional Association for the Protection and Treatment Of Raptors) has been dedicated to "the rehabilitation and return of raptors to their natural environment, the education of the public on the importance of raptors, and the preservation of their natural habitat".

# RAPTOR Inc. Membership

Renewal notices are sent out at the end of the year for annual collection for the following year. Dues paid after September 1 will be credited for the following year.

Please use the form below to become a member or update your contact information. You can also become a member online at our website: [www.raptorinc.org](http://www.raptorinc.org)

If you don't need the membership form, pass it on to someone who might be interested in becoming a member of RAPTOR Inc.

Your membership dollars provide for care, treatment, and feeding of our birds as well as the continuation of our education programs.

Mark the membership level you request. All membership levels include electronic (default) or postal delivery of the newsletter, as well as an invitation to the Fall Picnic. Members are also invited to attend Board meetings and may nominate candidates to serve on the board.

**\$10 Student Membership**  
 (1 year - up to age 18)

**\$25 Hawk Membership**  
 (1-year)

**\$50 Owl Membership**  
 plus receive stunning Raptor Notecard Set

**\$100 Eagle Membership**  
 plus receive Charley Harper designed T-Shirt

**\$500 Lifetime Membership**  
 plus personalized tour for 5

**Eagle and Lifetime Memberships, please indicate T-Shirt Size: (S, M, L, XL, XXL) \_\_\_\_\_**

*Eagle and Lifetime Memberships also include perks from the level(s) above.*

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

Check if you prefer postal delivery of HackBack

Mail this completed form with your check or money order to:

**RAPTOR Inc., 961 Barg Salt Run Road, Milford, Ohio 45150**

**Attn: Membership**

Thank you for your support of RAPTOR Inc.!

Even if you can't make the picnic, join us any time on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter!



RSPV to: raptor@raptorinc.org by Sep. 4 | Please bring a dish to share; we will provide grilled food, drinks, and the RAPTOR Inc. cake

*Raptors will be on display!*

via the Milford Parkway sign.

Note: Detour around the intersection of Round Bottom Road and Route 50

961 Barg Salt Run Road, Milford, Ohio 45150

Member's meeting at 4:30 pm | Food served at 5 pm

**Saturday, September 11, 4 pm till dark**

# *Members' Meeting & Picnic!*

2021 RAPTOR Inc.

