

RAPTOR Says Goodbye to Lucy

By Cindy Alverson

Last month, the staff and volunteers were saddened to say goodbye to one of our most-loved avian ambassadors, Lucy, our peregrine falcon. Lucy suffered a sudden fatal, heart attack.

Lucy had accompanied our educators to over 1100 programs in the past 10 years. She had traveled to birthday parties, Christmas parties, and Harry Potter programs; one of her specialties was two days of performances at the Boar's Head Festival at Christmas. Lucy was a favorite at retirement communities whose residents remember a time when peregrine falcons were extirpated from Ohio; Lucy was a testament to their successful reintroduction. At presentations, she was a rock star; she could mesmerize the audience with her beautiful, big, brown eyes. Her tolerance of screaming children amazed us.

Lucy had given us 16 years of wonderful service. The volunteers and staff felt it was a privilege to be able to work with her. She may be gone from our mews, but Lucy will not be gone from our hearts. We will miss her deeply. Fly free Lucy.



Cincinnati Zoo Grant Provides Raptor Center with an Animal Intensive Care Unit

The staff at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden are very passionate about the animals in their care and often participate in wildlife conservation projects outside of the zoo in their spare time. To help support the staff in their conservation efforts, the zoo provides employees with the opportunity to request financial support for in-situ wildlife conservation or conservation education projects that are personally important to them.

Kimberly Klosterman, Senior Aviculture Keeper and RAPTOR Inc. Volunteer, won a grant on RAPTOR Inc.'s behalf to purchase a large acrylic Animal Intensive Care Unit (AICU). An AICU is a clear cage or cabinet where the environment can be controlled with precision. The unit is equipped with digital temperature and humidity controls, an audio-visual safety alarm, IV line port, supplemental oxygen port, and nebulizer kit.

Birds admitted to the raptor center for treatment are generally in critical condition; otherwise, it would not have been possible for a person to catch the bird and transport it to the raptor center.





Animal Intensive Care Unit



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".

Zoo Grant (continued from page 1)

It is an enormous undertaking for birds to maintain their body temperature, especially if they are young or if the weather is cold or wet. A healthy bird's plumage is very effective at preventing heat loss, but any damage or contamination of the feathers can interfere with this. In addition, any illness can interfere with a bird's ability to metabolically maintain normal body temperature.

Providing supplemental heat to compromised avian patients or young orphaned chicks is critical for their survival. Facilities with limited resources usually provide this supplemental heat by using electric or microwavable heating pads or heat lamps. While these methods can be effective, they lack temperature precision and can create hot and cold spots in the enclosure. They can also be hazardous to chewing animals if the animal gains access to cords or microwavable chemicals.

In addition to providing temperature precision, the AICU makes it possible to isolate avian patients that may suffer from a contagious condition, and to provide humidified air to keep delicate respiratory passages moist and reduce heat loss from evaporation.

Lastly, the AICU has the ability to efficiently provide supplemental oxygen and nebulized medications, which greatly enhances our ability to treat bird's suffering from respiratory issues.

RAPTOR Inc. wishes to extend our deepest appreciation to Kimberly Klosterman and the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden for supporting our rehabilitation efforts! The new equipment will help us provide our local birds of prey with excellent care.

Raptors on the Road: Migration Habits of Birds of Prey

By Kathleen M. Jenkins

Every spring and fall, billions of birds take to the skies and fly long distances - to their breeding grounds in spring, and to their wintering grounds in fall. What you may not know is that many raptors make this fantastic journey as well. Some, like ospreys and broad-winged hawks, travel thousands of miles to spend the frigid winter months in South America. Others are what is known as "partial migrants," meaning that some individuals migrate, while others remain in their territory throughout the year.

The ubiquitous red-tailed hawk is a partial migrant, with migrants most often being juveniles who have not yet established a territory, or adults who have for whatever reason not been able to hold one. Adult red-tailed hawks with established territories tend to remain in place, hunting and defending their hard-won range year-round. Still other species, like great-horned owls and barred owls, are permanent, year-round residents, adapting their diets to align with available prey.

Whether complete or partial migrants, those raptor species that do migrate use different strategies to conserve energy and maximize their progress. Those with broader wings, including eagles, vultures, and some species of hawks rely on updrafts and thermals to help power their flight, covering up to 300 miles in a single day. Others, including ospreys, falcons, and northern harriers utilize a more active flapping motion to propel themselves towards their goal. Cooper's hawks, with their relatively short wings, are not strong long-distance flyers, and tend to migrate only short distances, if at all.

Migrating raptors concentrate along specific routes during their journey, utilizing flyways rich in the updrafts and thermals that help them conserve energy. Flyways are created when wind blows against a barrier such as a mountain range, forcing air into updrafts that can support the migrants for hundreds of miles along mountain ranges, like the Appalachians, allowing them to travel remarkable distances with minimal energy expended. And while most migrating birds travel at night, raptors fly during the daylight hours, taking to the skies after the sunrises starts generating the thermals that ease their passage.

Raptors don't usually congregate in flocks, but a number of species will flock together during migration. Scientists believe this may



Easterly view from Hawk Mountain. Stock photo.

help them locate and utilize thermals more effectively, and may also generate some level of protection (the phrase "safety in numbers" is well-known for good reason, after all).

Traveling during daylight hours and the tendency to flock together make it much easier to spot migrating raptors, and "hawk-watching" (though many species other than hawks migrate) is increasingly popular along the nation's flyways. Hawk Mountain, in eastern Pennsylvania, is one of the closest spots to Cincinnati, and thousands of visitors congregate there each fall to watch these majestic creatures soaring overhead. Throughout the autumn months, visitors can witness different species of raptors make their way across the skies toward their winter habitats, beginning with broad-winged hawks in early September and wrapping up with red-tailed hawks and bald eagles in November and December.

The Hawk Mountain Sanctuary conducts an annual count during migration season, and averages more than 18,000 raptors each year. Hundreds or even thousands of migrants are often spotted in a single day: during the 2019 season, watchers observed more than 2,000 broad-winged hawks in a one-day period, and recorded 17 species of raptors for the year. The final raptor of the season was an adult bald eagle, sighted at 3:22 PM on December 15th.

To learn more about migrating raptors, or to plan a trip to view them, visit hawkmountain.org.

Page 2 Winter 2020

Northern Saw-whet Owls on the Move By Alison Bewley

Nestled deep in the boughs of an evergreen is a cream-streaked brown owl with enormous yellow eyes. Between its ferocious white cat-like face and oversized head, it is startling to realize that this tiny raptor is about the size of a can of pop. The Northern Saw-whet owl is the smallest raptor in eastern North America, and one of the most secretive, although it is not uncommon. Its range is from Canada to the southern United States, with a year-round population in parts of Mexico. It eats a variety of small mammals, including mice, shrews, voles, and bats, and hunts from low perches along the forest's edge.

During the day, well-hidden Saw-whets roost in thick conifers and nest in previously-excavated holes in deciduous trees. While they typically breed in mature forests whose understories are open for foraging, they will nest in many different wooded habitats. From shrub-steppes to savannahs to coniferous swamps, to nest boxes in poplar plantations or sand dune meadows or coastal shrubs, this little owl nests in a variety of environments.

When they are not nesting, Northern Saw-whet owls either overwinter in dense forests throughout their breeding range, or they migrate. While some Saw-whets are year-round residents of their breeding territory, in October and November many individuals migrate south or to lower elevations. Most migrant species are strongly loyal to their previous breeding and wintering locations, but not Saw-whets. These owls stick to their regional flyways (Ohio's, for example, is the Mississippi Flyway, spanning from Minnesota to Alabama), but within those regions, Saw-whets can be incredibly nomadic. For example, one banded owl has been recorded in both western Virginia as well as near the Canada/New York border in different years.

In addition to being nomadic, Saw-whets have highly cyclical nighttime migrations that some birders and ornithologists refer to as "irruptive," although that is not technically accurate. Truly irruptive migra-



In 2004 RAPTOR Inc. received an injured saw-whet owl from Morrow, OH. With a minor foot injury, this owl was able to be rehabilitated and released.

tions are dynamic and irregular and involve a large number of birds; Saw-whet migrations follow a three- to five-year cycle of population explosions. The number of adult migrants is stable from year to year, but every three to five years, there is a massive influx of juvenile migrants.

These spikes in the juvenile population can be traced to the population explosion of the small rodents the owls eat, which can in turn be traced back to the spikes in the spruce and fir tree cone productions in the previous autumn. The increased cone availability can feed more small mammals, which can then feed more Saw-whets, so monitoring the cone crops in boreal forests can help predict when juvenile Saw-whets will "irrupt."

So much data about Saw-whet migrations exists thanks to a continental monitoring effort known as Project Owlnet. This project was established in 1994 to facilitate communication and provide standardized methodologies for owl researchers, including professional ornithologists and volunteer citizen scientists. Saw-whets are counted at bird banding stations using mist

nets - fine mesh nets strung temporarily across stretches of forest. Owls are enticed to fly between the trees with audio-lures, or recordings of the males' toot-toot-toot breeding song. Bird banders patrol the nets and release owls safely for weighing, measuring, and banding, which is where the growing wealth of data comes from: In Pennsylvania alone, for example, more than 12,000 Saw-whets have been banded in the past twenty years.

Today, Project Owlnet encompasses more than 125 banding stations, and has accumulated more than three decades of capture data from banding sites across the Saw-whet's range. These data show that, in some areas, the Saw-whet's peak migration numbers are declining every year. This decline could be a local issue, but it could also be indicative of habitat loss due to industrial logging and forest fragmentation. Climate change could also play a role, although more data are still required to draw any definitive conclusions. Hopefully the monitoring of these tiny, secretive owls can continue well into the future, as the data reveal what needs to be done to ensure that these owls continue to survive and thrive in our changing climate.

If you would like to learn more about Saw-whets, Project Owlnet, or bird banding in general, check out the links under "Further Reading." If you would like to get involved at RAPTOR, please visit: http://raptorinc.org/raptor-support/.

Further Reading:

About Saw-whets:

- https://bit.ly/2t4K9ZH
- https://www.allaboutbirds.org/ guide/Northern_Saw-whet_Owl/

About Project Owlnet:

http://www.projectowlnet.org/

About bird banding:

• https://on.doi.gov/2tZk3HP







Winter 2020 Page 3

Take a Second Look: Identifying Red-shouldered Hawks

By Kathleen M. Jenkins

Hawks are a common sight in our area – we see them soaring overhead, perched on fences along the highway, hunting from the tops of lampposts and road signs, and even staking out our backyard birdfeeders. You might assume that what you are seeing is a red-tailed hawk since they are common in Greater Cincinnati, but the next time you spot a hawk, look closer: you might be seeing a red-shouldered hawk – especially if there is water nearby.

Red-shouldered hawks are close relatives of red-tailed hawks, with similar body shape and size (though red-tailed hawks are slightly larger). Their markings, though, are very different. While red-tailed hawks have a creamy breast with a belly-band of darker feathers, red-shouldered hawks have a reddish, speckled breast and checkered black and white wings. And while adult red-tails have, of course, their trademark red tail, the tail of the adult red-shouldered hawk has a beautiful black-and-white striped pattern. As you might expect from the name, red-shouldered hawks feature patches of red-brown feathers at the top of their wings, along with pale, translucent, comma-shaped markings across their outer wings; these markings are easily visible when the hawk is in flight. Red-shouldered hawks are noisy hawks, too, with a distinctive kak-kak-kak call that is often imitated by blue jays.

Once one of the most common raptors in North America, red-shouldered hawks suffered steep population declines due to habitat loss: the clearing of wet hardwood forests at the beginning of the 20th century led to the species being declared "of special concern" in Ohio and surrounding states. Re-forestation has helped the species recover, and red-shouldered hawks are especially successful in southwest Ohio, where the amount of greenspace retained has helped them thrive in suburban areas. In 1997, a group of area scientists and volunteers began a study of red-shouldered hawks, banding and tracking their development, behavior, and reproductive rates. The study, supported in part by RAPTOR, Inc., found that not only are red-shouldered hawks adapting well to suburban life, but also their reproductive rates are similar to those of red-shouldered hawks in rural nesting areas.

Red-shouldered hawks will return to the same nesting territory year after year, often refurbishing the same nest in the fork of a large tree near a water source. They will occasionally nest on the roofs of man-made structures like apartment buildings, and one pair even nested on a suburban homeowner's grill for several years running. They lay three to four eggs, and the nestlings fledge at about six weeks old, though they remain dependent on their parents for a month or two after fledging.

Like most hawks, red-shouldered hawks are territorial, especially during nesting season, and will drive away other hawks, owls, and other predators. While crows will mob red-shouldered hawks, the two species sometimes join forces to drive an owl away (great-



Adult red-shouldered hawk. Photograph by Jordan West.

horned owls are a predator of both species). Barred owls nest earlier than red-shouldered hawks, and sometimes out-compete them for nest sites.

In our area, red-shouldered hawks are no longer considered a species of special concern, though they retain that status in some surrounding states. They are adapting well to their changing world, and their numbers are increasing – but they still need our help.

You can help red-shouldered hawks by retaining large trees that may serve as appropriate nesting sites, especially if there is water nearby. Leave natural vegetation in fields and around ponds to support prey populations, and avoid using lawn chemicals, which can enter aquatic ecosystems and result in reduced availability of prey.

If you do spot a red-shouldered hawk, look for a banded leg and snap a photo if you can. Share it with the red-shouldered hawk research team at redshoulderedhawkstudy.com, and help us learn more about these amazing raptors.







Page 4 Winter 2020

Volunteer Spotlight: Mike Wood

By Alison Bewley

In order to carry out its mission, RAPTOR Inc. relies on an army of volunteers. Volunteers are responsible for transporting injured raptors, presenting educational programs, cleaning mews, rehabilitating birds, and everything in between.

One of RAPTOR's many all-star volunteers is Mike Wood, who has had a lifelong passion for birds of prey. When he was younger, he used to draw them from photographs, because he "was fascinated by the detail in the feathers, the intensity in the eyes, and the personality in their faces." He dreamed of working with them someday, and his dream came true when he passed the RAPTOR entrance while hiking at the Cincinnati Nature Center about four years ago.

Most weeks, Mike volunteers about two to four hours at RAP-TOR, doing a wide variety of tasks. He cleans the mews with the Saturday crew, feeds patients and program birds during the week, and cuts the grass. He is also a transporter, responsible for picking up injured birds and releasing them once they have been rehabilitated. In addition to transporting birds, he also transports food, both the rats RAPTOR receives from Michigan (which he helps bag once they are back at the Red Barn) and other food as well.

He says his favorite part of volunteering is "anything that brings me into close proximity with these extraordinary birds," although he also loves "having the opportunity to work for such a professional and knowledgeable organization led and staffed by people who are so passionate about the welfare of the birds."

In 2018 and after thirty-two years, Mike retired from Great American Insurance. He now spends time "traveling, photographing, and finding ways to give back after a lifetime of blessings."



If you're interested in volunteering your time or talents at RAP-TOR Inc., please visit raptorinc.org and click on "Volunteer" under the "Support Us" tab.

Homes for Hoots

The mission of RAPTOR Inc. is conservation of raptors. One of the many ways to help with this is to install nest boxes to encourage nesting of owls on your property. Besides providing a habitat for owls where there are no holes in trees or snags, you will be gaining nature's natural pest control!

RAPTOR In. is pleased to announce that one of our dedicated volunteers, Michael LaTour, is also a talented carpenter and has partnered with RAPTOR Inc. to craft quality, hand-crafted owl boxes, donating all proceeds to our organization. Materials are locally sourced and support local businesses. Upon delivery, boxes are supplied with instructions for placement of boxes.

For more information or to purchase nest boxes, visit http://raptorinc.org/nest-boxes/ for Eastern Screech Owl , Barred Owl , or Barn Owl Boxes. It's a win-win for owls and RAPTOR Inc.

By Cindy Alverson



Clockwise from bottom:
barn owl box for building mount,
barred owl box,
barn owl box for tree-mounting,
and eastern screech owl box (held by Michael LaTour)

Winter 2020 Page 5

Mark Your Calendars for our Upcoming RAPTOR Public Appearances

Date	Time	Event Sponsors	Address
8-Feb-20	12pm-1pm	MidPointe Library Monroe	1 Tennessee Ave, Monroe, OH 45050
8-Feb-20	2pm-3pm	MidPointe Library Middletown	125 S Broad St, Middletown, OH 45044
9-Feb-20	2pm-3pm	MidPointe Library West Chester	9363 Centre Pointe Dr, West Chester Township, OH 45069
14-Feb-20	10:30am-11:30am	MidPointe Library Trenton	200 Edgewood Dr, Trenton, OH 45067
15-Feb-20	11am-1pm	Newtown Feed and Supply	6876 Main St, Newtown, OH 45244
3-Mar-20	7:45pm-8:15pm	Cincinnati Nature Center	4949 Tealtown Rd, Milford, OH 45150
7-Mar-20	9am-3:30pm	Amish Bird Symposium	3735 Wheat Ridge Rd, West Union, OH 45693
10-Mar-20	6pm-7pm	Hyde Park Branch Library	2747 Erie Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45208
14-Mar-20	1pm-2pm	Madeira Branch Library	7200 Miami Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45243
14-Mar-20	6:30pm-7pm	Cincinnati Nature Center	4949 Tealtown Rd, Milford, OH 45150
19-Mar-20	7:45pm-8:15pm	Cincinnati Nature Center	4949 Tealtown Rd, Milford, OH 45150
27-Mar-20	7:30pm-8pm	Long Branch Farm & Trails	6926 Gaynor Rd, Goshen, OH 45122
28-Mar-20	11am-11:30am	Miami Twp. Branch Library	8 N Miami Ave, Cleves, OH 45002
29-Mar-20	1pm-4pm	RAPTOR Inc. Open House	961 Barg Salt Run Rd., Milord, OH 45150

2019 Admissions

American Kestrel:	27	Saw-whet Owl:	0	Rough-legged Hawk:	0	2010 Dispositions	
Merlin:	2	Snowy Owl:	0	Northern Harrier:	0	2019 Dispositions	
Peregrine Falcon:	4	Short Eared Owl:	0	Turkey Vulture:	11	Released:	67%
Eastern Screech Owl:	30	Sharp-shinned Hawk:	3	Black Vulture:	10	Under Care:	5%
Barred Owl:	32	Cooper's Hawk:	23	Osprey:	0	Transferred:	0%
Barn Owl:	0	Broad-winged Hawk:	0	Golden Eagle:	0	Education:	0%
Great Horned Owl:	29	Red-shouldered Hawk:	49	Bald Eagle:	3	Died:	11%
Long-eared Owl:	0	Red-tailed Hawk:	53	Total:	276	Euthanized:	17%

A record high release rate in 2019! The usual number of young (nestlings and fledglings) were admitted, 89 in all, but we did not receive the usual number of young birds admitted in the fall who were experiencing problems due to their lack of experience of catching prey. This is usually our second busy time for admissions, but we did not receive the usual influx. Networking with other rehabilitation facilities, the same pattern was seen there. This decrease in the number of fall admissions impacted our release rate giving us a higher than usual percentage.

Financial Contributions

Thanks to the following individuals for their generous donations to RAPTOR Inc. for the fourth guarter of 2019.

Anderson, Patricia Auer, Mary Beer, Amira Berger, Judath Bewely, Donalee Boeckman, Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Borisch, Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Buck, Anita Cole, Cathy Connelly, Mr. & Mrs. Michael Deardurff, Dayle Earls, Joanne Fernandez, Mr. & Mrs. Ricardo Fitzgibbon, Mathew Franklin, LI Photography Freeman, Mr. & Mrs. David Goldick, Mr. & Mrs. Brian Griesser, Joseph Hadley, Sylvia Halpin, Timothy Hansford, Carol

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Falcon Level \$500 to \$999

Daley, MC Flierl, Peggy Smith, Mr. & Mrs. Zan Smith, Robert Stevenson, Andrew

Osprey Level \$1000 and up

Butler, Joel Johnston, Laura Lambert, Carol Simon, Mr. & Mrs. Irv

Honorariums

Demetria Wright from Elizabeth Toraanson Suzanne V. Skidmore from Grant & Melissa Cowan Michael West from Ruth Sherbon

Page 6 Winter 2020

About RAPTOR, Inc.

RAPTOR Inc. Board

President: Jeff Hays
Vice President: Marc Alverson
Treasurer: Robert E. Smith
Secretary: Alice McCaleb
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Trustee: Joe Lucas Trustee: Gary Denzler Trustee: Zach Gambill

Staf

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* for meeting time and location.

Thank You To Our Veterinarians!

Bob Dahlhausen, D.V.M. (513) 576-1990

Joseph Grossi, D.V.M. (513) 772-6060

D.J. Haeussler, D.V.M. (513) 374-3963

J. Peter Hill, D.V.M (513) 793-3032

Vanessa Kuonen Cavens, D.V.M. (513) 561-0069

Paul Levitas, D.V.M. (513) 871-8866

Ann Manharth, DVM (513) 248-0904

Communications

☐ Check if you prefer postal delivery

of Wingbeats

Gary Young, Newsletter Editor
To submit articles or pictures for
consideration in Wingbeats, email the
article to:
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

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**

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 наwк метвеrsпір (1-year)	ы \$50 Owi Membersnip 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 Lifetim	e Memberships also include perks f	from the level(s) above.
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Phone:	Email:	

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

RAPTOR Inc., 961 Barg Salt Run Road, Milford, Ohio 45150 Attn: Membership

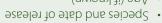
Thank you for your support of RAPTOR Inc.!

Winter 2020 Page 7

Sponsor a Banded Raptor

Raptor" program. Sponsors will receive a fact sheet on the selected species and a certificate with the following information: time, this will help us determine how successful our rehabilitation efforts are. You can get involved with our "Sponsor a Banded Since the fall of 1994, RAPTOR Inc. has been banding most rehabilitated birds released back into the wild. Over a long period of





- Age (if known)
- Weight at time of release
- U. S. Fish & Wildlife band number

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	Yes, I would like to sponsor a banded bird of the species checked below:				
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