



Summer 2009

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR,

This has been the summer of Red Shouldered Hawks. We have taken in a record number of young fledglings and nestlings this year. We received our first one around the end of May. We're at fifteen and counting. We've seen birds from all over Northeast Ohio. All were found on the ground with minor injuries that were treatable. The majority are healthy and progressing nicely. Conditioning and mouse school will be next for these little ones.

We are seeing an increase in wildlife-human interaction. With the continuing loss of habitat and the ability of birds and animals to adapt to urban living in urban areas we seem to be faced with more incidents of people with good intentions involving themselves with young wildlife. In some ways this is a good thing because we have more birds found that are in need of help. However, in many ways we are interfering with the natural progression of their lives especially during fledging time. This is such a vulnerable time for all birds and a very natural process. Both parents provide training at this time that is critical to the success of birds in the wild. The staff at the Medina Raptor Center does our best to prepare these fledglings for what they will encounter in the wild. They are provided appropriate, healthy diets and flight conditioning. They miss out, though, on essential skills like foraging for natural foods and learning to flee from predators. So our message remains the same: if at all possible, put young birds back in the nest and allow the parents to raise them.



We recently received a generous grant from the Haslinger Family Foundation to rebuild some of our older cages. After 20 years of service, some of these cages were beginning to become rotted and dangerous. Thanks to this wonderful grant we were able to rebuild two large flight cages, along and a small flight cage with four attached holding cages. We are also grateful to Dan Provoznik and staff from Odds and Ends Contractors for doing the work needed to complete this project on time and on budget. Thank you again to the Haslinger Family Foundation. Their generosity made this important project possible.



We also had the opportunity to work with a Bobby Ferrell from Brunswick Boy Scout Troop 518. Bobby's Eagle Scout project was to build the new, large cages for Ella the Snowy Owl, and Jack, the Barn Owl. Bobby and his hard-working crew of fellow scouts and adult volunteers worked through some nasty weather early last winter to complete the project. Bobby received his Eagle Scout badge in a moving ceremony in June. It was a wonderful experience to work with great troop leaders Clarence and Martha Lahl and the rest



of Troop 518. Congratulations Bobby on a job well done!

Thank you, *Laura Jordan*



## He's Only Just Begun

We have also enjoyed the chance to raise a one-week old Barn Owl. He came in underweight and in trouble. All his siblings were much larger and stronger, and prevented him from eating. MRC volunteer Lisa Romaniuk, who monitors Barn owl nests, brought him to MRC so he could gain size and strength. After a few weeks he was placed in a foster nest where his new siblings were closer in age. In less than a month, the baby Barn Owl grew from baseball size with a beak too large for his body to soccer ball size.

He left in great health, was banded and ready to tackle any large mouse his foster mom could find him. We wish him Godspeed, and hope to see him flying across a field in Holmes County some day.

## **Bald Eagles**

The population of Bald Eagles in Ohio is booming. This year, Ohio has 211 active nests with thirty new pairs formed this year. This is an amazing rebound from the low of 4 nesting pairs in the late 1970's.

Bald Eagles are large birds. A female eagle can range in size from 35 to 37 inches from beak to tail with a wing span from 72 to 90 inches. The smaller male bald eagle has a body length of 30 to 34 inches with a wingspan ranging from 72 to 85 inches. Eagle weight ranges from 10 to 14 pounds. Eagles found in northern states are significantly larger than eagles found in southern states.



Both male and female Bald Eagles have dark brown bodies with distinctive white heads and tails, yellow beaks, feet and yellow eyes. Juvenile eagles are dark brown with a mixture of white mottled feathers when they first leave the nest. They have dark brown beak and dark eyes. As they mature they will slowly acquire the coloring of adult eagles. By the time an eagle is 5 years old it will have adult plumage.

Bald Eagles form long term pair bonds, and many pairs mate for life. Eagles can begin mating as early as three years old but typically wait until they are four to five years old. Pairs perform pair bonding rituals which include nest building and aerial flight displays. Eagles' nests are very large. An eagle pair may use a nest for many years, adding more sticks to the nest each breeding season. One nest in Vermillion was as large as twelve feet wide by 8 feet tall and weighed more than two tons and was used for 35 successive years by several pairs of eagles. Their nests are usually in the top, sturdiest fork of the selected tree.

Mated females lay one to three eggs, which they incubate for 34 to 37 days. The eggs will hatch in the order they are laid. Both adult eagles will incubate the eggs, and both will feed and care for the eaglets. The female eagle will do about 75% of the incubating of eggs and feeding of the young.

Eaglets grow very fast. By the time the eaglets are 6 to 7 weeks old they have attained full size and they can tear their own food and feed themselves. As they grow they will spend time in the nest, flapping their wings and strengthening the muscles they will need to fly. By the time the eaglets are 8 weeks old they will spend time hopping from the nest to the branches surrounding the nest and back. Once they have strengthened their wings and gotten comfortable moving in and out of the nest to the branches, fledging is imminent. Eaglets usually fledge between 10 to 13 weeks old. After their first flight they will usually return to the nest a few times to roost and to be fed. The parents will continue to feed and assist the fledged young for two to three months after fledging while the young eagles learn to hone their flying and hunting skills. The first year for young Eaglets is the toughest. Statistically, only 10% of fledged eaglets survive to breeding age.

Eagles eat a variety of different foods. Fish and animals found around water are mainstays of their diet. In addition to fish they eat ducks, gulls, muskrat, turtles and frogs and even snakes. Eagles will also eat carrion and will gladly steal food from unwilling Osprey and Herons whenever they have the chance.

As the Eagle population expands, we can look forward to more opportunities to find these magnificent birds in areas where we can enjoy witnessing them in action.

Written by Lisa Romaniuk

## **Andy and Ally's Story**



We would like to announce the transfers of Andy and Ally to new homes. Andy is a Peregrine Falcon from the Hilliard Road nest in Rocky River from 2008. Andy was injured and unable to be released. We trained him and sent him to the Conservation Ambassadors at Busch Gardens Virginia. He is being used for educational programs. Ally is a Red-tail Hawk who was found as a fledgling on a farm in Spencer, Ohio. She had an injured eye that did not allow her to return to the wild. She was trained here and sent to Busch Sanctuary where she is being used for an educational ambassador.

The Medina Raptor Center would like to extend a big THANK YOU to pilots Curt Keal and John Pinter for personally flying the birds to their new homes. Door to door service can't be beat. Thank you for providing such personal care for our special birds!

**Keep Current on Avian Flu**  
[http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian\\_influenza/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/)

## **Fundraiser Update**



The Medina Eagles Lodge played host to a wonderfully successful MRC fundraiser July 11th. About 200 guests enjoyed hamburgers and hotdogs, as well as side dishes and desserts homemade by Eagles Lodge volunteers, while they bid in a silent auction of arts and crafts donated by raptor center supporters and volunteers. More than \$5,200 was collected toward renovation of the raptor centers eagle flight cage. Raising the roof on the cage will bring it up to standards set by the Ohio Division of Wildlife, and will allow for more freedom of movement for bald eagles being rehabilitated for a return to the wild.

At the center of fund-raiser planning was volunteer Jamie Baker and her parents, Sandy and Ralph Hillen, who sponsored the event at the lodge. Meal tickets for the event, plus money brought in through a 50-50 raffle and a Chinese raffle of donated gifts, helped raise funds. The centerpiece of the sunny summer afternoon was a silent auction of arts and crafts, notably a pair of beautiful stained-glass window hangings by Ralph Hillen and an Aplomado Falcon hand-carved by artist and MRC volunteer Steve Pavelka. Nationally renowned jewelry artist Dana Schneider donated a sterling silver owl pendant, which, when it sold for \$325, captured the highest price for a silent auction item. MRC would like to extend a huge “thank you” to all our

volunteers who donated such beautiful items to the auction and to everyone else who helped out that were not mentioned.

Guests also got to visit with some of the raptor centers favorite avian ambassadors, including Migisi, a Bald Eagle; Mischief, an Eastern Screech Owl; Captain Jack, a Barn Owl; Feathers, a Kestrel; and Sky, a Red-tailed Hawk. Missy Jordan was the events mistress of ceremonies, and Liz Leach was an organizational linchpin.

## **Baby Season**

This is one of the most interesting rehab seasons in many years. While we've seen many baby songbirds, we have been dealing with lots of baby raptors – fourteen Screech Owls, fifteen Red-shouldered Hawks, two Cooper's Hawks, four Barred Owls, a Great Horned Owl and a Barn Owl. Fortunately, most of the baby raptors come in because they have fallen from the nest or been abandoned. There are few serious injuries.

So our job is to treat the injuries, and help these birds to grow up as a bird of prey to be released back into the wild. First of all, this means providing the appropriate food for these birds. For the first couple of weeks, the raptors must have a specialized diet. It takes a lot of time to prepare and time to individually feed each baby raptor. Soon they are eating on their own and experimenting with using their wings. Before long they are ready to go outside to a flight cage where they must attend “mouse school”. We have to make sure that each bird can hunt and kill on its own.

The Screech Owls started arriving in May. Sometimes we got a whole nest of Screech Owls – other times, it was a single chick. Every one of them was in good health and every one making the distinctive whirring-purring sound of a screech owl. The Screech Owls are so small that we are not surprised when they escape from one of the hospital cages to fly around the room. The solution to this is to give them more room to fly in the inside flight cages. The first four Screech Owl arrivals have completed mouse school with high marks and are ready for return to the wild.

We've had a couple of fledgling Red-tailed Hawks who have been injured. We are treating the foot and wing injuries with great hopes that the birds can be released.

In between all the baby raptors, we have started to see nests of baby songbirds. While the baby raptors need to be fed twice a day, the baby songbirds require feeding every several hours. Thank goodness we have help from our summer intern, Kim Sage and Chelsea Barattini.

We're always amazed at the amount of food required by the babies. This year, we are using 200-300 mice a day for the baby raptors and large amounts of chopped fruit for the baby songbirds.

We know baby season doesn't last long so we are caring for them as we watch them grow up to raise the next generation of raptors.



## How You Can Help . . . Sponsorship Programs



Want to become directly involved in the rehabilitation of injured and orphaned birds? You can by becoming a sponsor of one of our seventeen program birds. Our program birds consist of the following: the Owls (Mischief, Aurora, Aspen, Ella, Boris, Captain Jack and Cricket); the Hawks (Lazarus, Sky, Red, Cloud and Orion); the Others (Matilda, the Turkey Vulture; Henrietta the Great Blue Heron; Victory, Pitt Stop and Half Pint, the Peregrine Falcons and Feathers, the Kestrel and Migisi, the Eagle). For a \$50.00 annual sponsorship, you will receive a certificate of sponsorship with a photo of the bird of your choice. For a \$100.00 annual sponsorship, you will receive a certificate of sponsorship, a photo of the bird of your choice except the eagle and will have the opportunity to come to the Medina Raptor Center to be photographed with the adopted bird. For a \$200.00 annual sponsorship you will receive a certificate of sponsorship and a photo with our Eagle, Migisi.

Visit us on the web at [www.medinaraptorcenter.org](http://www.medinaraptorcenter.org) and view our wonderful program birds. Your gift will go toward the purchase of food and medications for your bird. All contributions are tax-deductible. By sponsoring one of our program birds for yourself, your group or school, or as a special gift for someone else, you are personally involved in our rehabilitation and educational efforts. You can download a sponsorship form from our website for your convenience.

The Medina Raptor Center does rehabilitate birds. Raptors are our specialty but we also are able to help songbirds and ducks and Herons, Green and Great Blue and any other heron that needs help and all wild swans except Mute Swans.

When there is room we will take **baby** squirrels and woodchucks (our new favorites) and rabbits. We are not permitted to rehabilitate the following: raccoons, fox, opossums, coyote, deer, or fawns.



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