

## A Tale of Two Owls (and the Hazards of Soccer Nets)

By Cindy Alverson

This story is about two great horned owls that were admitted to RAPTOR after having been caught in soccer nets: one this fall, and the other from the summer of 2008. Great horned owls becoming tangled in soccer nets is not a new problem. Once they are caught, they struggle to free themselves, often becoming more and more entangled. This frequently results in severe, and sometimes irreversible, injuries.

The first owl from Indian Hill did not suffer any fractures. Still however, it had soft tissue damage and a severely damaged tendon which rendered it flightless. The tissues were swollen, and the owl exhibited severe pain reactions.

From the day of admission, the owl was given pain medication as well as fluids and food. As the abrasions started to heal, daily physical therapy was performed to see whether there could be an increase in range of motion. Time will tell if this owl will be able to achieve a sufficient balance (with the limited range of motion that is possible) necessary for it to become glove-trained as an ambassador for an education center.

Our second owl fared much better. It was a huge, female great horned owl that was found tangled in a soccer net in West Chester. Fortunately, it did not suffer any permanent injuries and was able to be released after only nine days of rehabilitation care.

RAPTOR Inc. makes every effort to band the birds we rehabilitate before releasing them back into the wild. When a banded bird is recovered, the band's unique number is reported to the Bird Banding Lab, which gives us data, such as how far the bird had traveled and how long it lived from the date it was banded. In this case, the female great horned owl lived another 14 years due to RAPTOR's intervention – a wonderfully long life for a great horned owl!

Many people are unaware of the hazards posed by soccer nets for wildlife. As one part of our conservation message, we recommend following the Consumer Products Safety Commission (targeted for people) which advises to remove nets when games or practices are not in session. By taking this step, you would be doing a great service to help protect local raptors.

## Four Orphaned Eastern Screech Owls Return to the Wild

By Jackie Bray

On May 15, 2022, loggers in Pike County discovered four young Eastern screech owlets in a fallen tree. The loggers contacted the Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources, after which Pike County Wildlife Officer, Matt Van Cleve, brought the orphaned owlets to the Raptor Center. The owlets were thin and dehydrated, but otherwise unharmed from their harrowing ordeal. The owlets were stabilized and, since it was impossible to reunite the owlets with their parents, we prepared to hand-rear them.

The smallest owlet was placed with our Avian Ambassador, Athena. Athena has been a permanent resident at the Raptor Center since her admission in 2012 and she has proven to be an excellent foster parent. Allowing her to raise orphaned owlets is enriching for her and beneficial for the owlets.

Because she is older and has some disabilities, Athena was only given one owlet so that she would not become overwhelmed. Athena cared for the owlet until it fledged (i.e., took its

*See "Orphans" on page 5*



**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".

# Saw What? Saw-whet! Owls, That Is

By Kat Jenkins

The tiniest owls in North America, Northern saw-whet owls, are also one of the most secretive. Though they are one of the most common owls in our forests, they are not often seen. (One of the best ways to find them secreted in dense foliage is to look for mixed-species flocks of songbirds, who will mob the tiny predator in an attempt to drive it away.)

In fact, saw-whet owls are so rarely seen that they were once considered a species of special concern – but banding programs have helped scientists to gain a more accurate view of saw-whet owl populations. They are now believed to be abundant, with an estimated nesting population of approximately 2 million birds in the U.S.

## Tracking Secretive Saw-whet Owls

During migration, scientists play recordings of the male saw-whet owl breeding call so as to lure them out of the night sky and into specially-designed mist nets. Once netted, federally licensed banders carefully remove the tiny feathered creatures and place them gently in cloth bags. The owls are then transported to a banding station where they are weighed, measured, and have blood and feather samples taken, as well as being fitted with tiny, lightweight leg bands.

Interestingly, female saw-whet owls outnumber males by about 3 to 1 in banding programs, and nearly all of the males are juveniles making their first migration. This statistical discrepancy may be due to males maintaining a territory year-round – or because the call used to lure them is a male's breeding call. Researchers simply don't know.

Locally, Fernald Preserve offers Northern saw-whet owl banding, and you can participate – but spaces are limited and pre-registration is required. For information on the 2022 banding program schedule, call 513.648.3330 or visit <https://www.energy.gov/lm/visit-fernal-d-preserve-visitors-center>.

## Know Them When You See Them

These tiny predators (about the size of a soda can, or about half the size of an Eastern screech owl) have a cat-like face with bright yellow eyes in an oversized head, with densely feathered feet and tiny needle-like black

talons. They are brown and white mottled, with white streaks on the head and a white "V" between the eyes. Juveniles have a cinnamon chest, a solid brown back, and also sport the identifying white "V" between the eyes.

And while saw-whet owls look adorable to humans, they are anything but cute to the small mammals that make up the majority of their diet – mice, voles, shrews, and even bats, as well as juvenile chipmunks, gophers, and squirrels. During migration, they may also add small songbirds to their diet – which explains why songbirds will do their level best to drive the saw-whet owl away when they discover its hiding place.

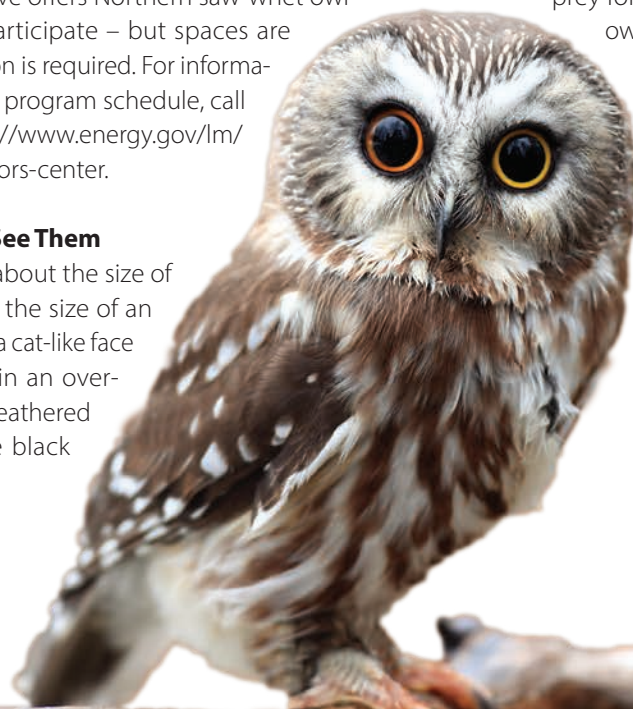
Saw-whet owls are cavity nesters, choosing sites anywhere from 8 to 40 feet above ground – and they don't excavate their own nest sites. They often select cavities created by large woodpeckers, and then they lay clutches of between 4 and 7 eggs atop existing material – woodchips, twigs, moss, hair, fur, small mammal bones, and so on. They also readily use provided nest boxes. The male provides nearly all the food during incubation and brooding, though the female joins in the hunt as the owlets – and their appetites – grow.

When prey are abundant, male saw-whet owls may take more than one mate, and you can hear their mating calls as early as January in their breeding range. Females respond to the high-pitched "too-too-too" call with a shorter, quieter call of their own. Once they've found each other, the male will fly in circles around the female about 20 times before landing next to her and presenting a prey item.

As with many other species in nature, saw-whet owls are also prey for larger raptor species, including other species of owls, hawks, and falcons.

## What You Can Do

The mature stands of forest trees that are the saw-whet owls' preferred breeding grounds are under immense pressure from logging and development. Working to protect forest habitat, and, in your own back yard, allowing dead trees to remain standing to provide nest cavities where feasible (obviously not ones in danger of falling on your house), are two simple ways that you can help to protect these tiny fierce creatures.



Saw-whet owl (stock)

# RAPTOR Incorporated Hosts 1st Annual Raptor 5K Walk/Run

By Jackie Bray

On September 11, 2022, RAPTOR Inc. hosted our 1st Annual Raptor 5K Walk/Run at Miami Meadows Park in Milford, OH. All proceeds from the event support local bird of prey conservation.

We started the event by taking a moment to recognize the significance of the date and to acknowledge the service and sacrifice of our first responders. Representatives from Miami Township Fire & Emergency Medical Services served as our honored guests and assisted us with the release of a rehabilitated, local red-tailed hawk and with the start of the race. The event also included an awesome raffle and an after-party featuring personal encounters with our magnificent Avian Ambassadors.

The top three male and top three female runners received a unique handmade ceramic mug created by Whistle Stop Clay Works and gift certificates to Tri-State Running Company. We wish to thank these sponsors and our other event sponsors - Hadronics, The Animal Eye Institute, Whistle Stop Clay Works, Wild Birds Unlimited – West Chester, Children’s Meeting House, Angel’s House of Music, and Tri-State Running Company – for their generous support.

Lastly, we wish to thank the 146 runners who participated in the event and the numerous RAPTOR Inc. volunteers who worked so hard to make the event such a success. This year’s medals and t-shirts featured images of a great horned owl. Which local raptor species will be featured next year?

**Thank you to our event sponsors: Hadronics, The Animal Eye Institute, Whistle Stop Clay Works, Wild Birds Unlimited – West Chester, Children’s Meeting House, Angel’s House of Music, and Tri-State Running Company.**



Miami Township Fire & EMS help get the event underway.



5K Winners from left to right: Women’s 3rd Place Amber James, Women’s 2nd Place Andrea Glassmeyer, Women’s 1st Place Karoline Schultz, Men’s 1st Place Anthony Brown, Men’s 3rd Place Jason Meyers, Men’s 2nd Place Colin Reusch. (All photos RAPTOR)

## Going up?

By Cindy Alverson

Thank you to Dylan Brown of Boy Scout Troop 635. He recently completed his Eagle Scout Project at RAPTOR Inc. Dylan’s project was to build a staircase to provide easier access for volunteers and guests from our overflow parking area located in the field below our facility.

Working with RAPTOR Inc. volunteer, Mike Wood, Dylan completed a detailed sketch of the 24-foot staircase, staked out the area where it was to be installed, and ordered supplies. Over the course of three workdays, Dylan and his team cut the wood for the steps, dug the staircase foundation, assembled and laid out the steps, used rebar to secure it to the hillside, and laid gravel for each step. Going the extra mile, he also trimmed a nearby bush adjacent to the steps.

Volunteers and guests to our monthly Open House have already appreciated the easier access.



Bottom to top: Luke Bourgraf, Collin Gummow, Ethan McCann, Vincent Walker, Drew Partin, Joshua Bryant, Dylan Brown, and Andrew Klenke (Photo by C. Alverson)



Blue (photo by J. West)

## Notes in the Field

By Jordan West

Meet Blue. Blue is a juvenile female red-tailed hawk, who fledged earlier this summer. Blue was found in need of help and spent some time in rehab at RAPTOR, Inc. She was marked blue under her tail feathers as a way to be able to distinguish her from other juveniles already in rehab, hence the nickname. She also was banded before her return to the wild.

We actually attempted to foster her with a red-tailed hawk family that I am very familiar with. They didn't take to her like we had hoped they would, but they tolerated her presence in close proximity to the nest location for a couple of weeks. After the usual trial and error, Blue learned to hunt on her own. I watched her fail numerous times before successfully hunting a large mole, and then another, and so on.

Once she learned to hunt, I began to see less and less of Blue, and I became uncertain of her whereabouts and well-being. A week or so passed with zero sightings of her and then I happened to see other photographers post at a local park of a banded bird

that certainly looked like her. Thanks to the band and blue tail markings, which have not yet faded away, we were able to easily confirm that it was indeed, Blue.

She's already traveled 10 miles (and maybe more by now), learned to hunt and sustain herself, and is showing the resilience that will be needed to survive her first year of life. Surviving the first year is no easy feat for raptors. I certainly hope to see her again someday, or at least hear of her continued journey from other birders and photographers who may encounter her in the field.

Hoping the best for this gorgeous red-tailed hawk.

### **Notes Concerning the Care at the Raptor Center (a Glimpse Behind the Rehab Curtains)**

A call was received on May 24 from a construction worker at a plant which was being demolished in Middletown. He had found a young hawk hopping on the ground in the area which had been bulldozed a few days earlier. With no adults or siblings found,

the orphaned bird was transported to the Raptor Center for care.

We faced a challenge with the rehabilitation for this young hawk—it had lost both its family and its home, and it was thin and unfed. After a few days, the fledgling hawk was able to keep food down and it started to eat on its own. With its feathers nearly grown in, the hawk was moved to an outside mew so it could start moving among the perches and flying short distances. Because the hawk shared a flight enclosure with another young immature hawk, a small blue mark was placed on the underside of its tail so that we could accurately identify it.

After gaining nearly one-half pound, and more experience flying, it was banded and released close to another family of young red-tailed hawks. At its young age, its food-begging vocalizations normally would invite foster adults to treat it as one of their own. That did not occur in this particular case, but the young hawk still managed to survive and thrive.

# Does Your Employer Have a Matching Gifts Program?

A matching gifts program is an easy way to double – or even triple – your contribution to RAPTOR Inc.

A matching gift program is a corporate philanthropy initiative that rewards employees' charitable donations. After an employee, and in many cases, a retiree, makes a donation to an eligible non-profit, the employing company fills out a matching gift submission request (based on eligibility criteria). This additional matching donation is usually done through the company's human resources department or an online company portal.

A matching gift is a great way to maximize your gift to your favorite non-profit. Companies like to do this because it is a structured way to support the good work in their communities. Advertising their support of a non-profit shows corporate social responsibility and is an important factor in how the public perceives companies.

If you have requested a matching gift from your employer, please inform us at [raptor@raptorinc.org](mailto:raptor@raptorinc.org), so that we know to expect the matching gift. There also is a verification process which RAPTOR Inc. may need to complete.

The following companies offer matching gift programs:

- Apple
- American Express
- Avon
- British Petroleum
- Coco-Cola
- Disney
- Duke Energy
- Exxon Mobil
- General Electric
- Google
- Hewlett-Packard
- Home Depot
- Honeywell
- Johnson & Johnson
- Microsoft
- PepsiCo
- Soros Fund Management
- Starbucks
- State Farm

Beside matching gifts, some companies match volunteer hours with funds. For example, for every 5 hours that an employee volunteers, Google will donate \$50 dollars to the nonprofit organization.

So please check with your company today to see if your employer offers gift opportunities. It's a good feeling, when you know that you have doubled the impact you made on RAPTOR Inc.

## An Infrequent Patient: Saw-whet Owl

By **Cindy Alverson**

On March 5, 2022, RAPTOR Inc. admitted for care an infrequent visitor as a patient, an adult Northern saw-whet owl. The small owl was found in a residential yard in Union, KY. Weighing less than 3 ounces, the owl was thin but in relatively good body condition.

With a wing droop suggesting a fracture, x-rays by Dr. Anne Manharth, DVM revealed a fracture to one of the bones of its shoulder girdle. This type of fracture usually heals well—cage rest and oral anti-inflammatories (followed by physical therapy) can usually lead to

a full recovery and the smooth flight needed to be released back into the wild.

Although the healing for this owl took longer than anticipated, this saw-whet owl did get back to its normal weight and it eventually did fly well. Before release, the owl was banded (to provide data, if the owl is found in the future) and released back to Kentucky.

Considered to be a less-common bird found in Kentucky, our data were submitted to the Kentucky Ornithological Society Bird Records Committee for documentation.



*Before release (Photo by M. Alverson)*

## Orphans *(continued from page 1)*

first flight from the nest box), then the young owlet was reunited with its siblings.

Once the owlets were flying well, they were given the opportunity to catch live prey. Each mastered the task quickly and after three months of care, the owlets were banded and released in Goshen, OH, on August 19, 2022.



*Owlets on admission (photo by Bray)*



*Athena with owlet (photo by Bray)*

## Tributes

- In Honor of **Samantha & Aaron Perlman** from *Liz Warren-Novick*
- In Honor of **Robert Dahlhausen, DVM** from *Lafeber Company*

## Upcoming RAPTOR Public Appearances

Please see <https://raptorinc.org/programs-open-to-the-public/> for a listing of our public programs.

## RAPTOR Wish List

RAPTOR Inc. needs the following items for our bird care facility:

- Dog Food (dry, for large dogs)
- Duct Tape
- Gas Gift Card
- Latex or Nitrile exam gloves (any size)
- Office Max Gift Card
- Paper towels
- Stamps (Forever)

To donate any of these items, please email RAPTOR at: [raptor@raptorinc.org](mailto:raptor@raptorinc.org) or call 513-825-3325.

Thank you for all of your donations, including those who donate through the Amazon Wish List! Due to changes at Amazon, we unfortunately no longer receive information on the names of Wish List donors.

## Amazon Wish List

RAPTOR Inc. is listed on the Amazon Wish list. For a complete listing of all of the items we use for rehabilitation, and to provide our volunteers with all of the necessities they need to care for our birds, please visit our website, [raptorinc.org](http://raptorinc.org).

Click on the tab Support Us (not the dropdown) and click on the Amazon Wish List Icon midway down the page. This will take you directly to the RAPTOR Inc. Wish list.

If any of these wish list items are purchased, they are shipped directly to our RAPTOR Inc. facility in Milford. How easy is that?

## Financial Contributions

Thanks to the following individuals and groups for their recent financial contributions to RAPTOR Inc. for the third quarter of 2022.

### Osprey Level \$1,000 to \$9,999

Farrell, Donna  
Kroger Cmty rewards  
Miller, Jo and John

Hays, Jeff & Lisa  
Holmes, Marcia & Rich  
Leach, Robert & Wendy

Gibson, Robert  
LaTour, Michael  
Neill, Priscilla  
Puthoff, Harry  
Ratliff, Jamie  
Ready, Amy & Scott  
Sachs, Bill

Anonymous  
Biedenbach, Kathy  
Bray, Jackie  
Egan, Emily  
Einson, Steve  
Graves, John  
Leach, Wendy & Robert  
Lucas, Joe  
Puthoff, Harry  
Watts, Allen  
Wright Brothers, Inc.

### Peregrine Level \$500 to \$999

Blum, Virginia  
Flierl, Peggie  
Green, Leslie  
Hanneken, William & Margaret  
Haynes, Richard & Nancy

### \$100 to \$499

Conner, Richard  
Coy, Keith  
Cross, Lindsey  
Davish, Peggy & Stephen  
Dubell-Smith, Gina  
Gates & Hueber, Susan & John

### In-kind Donations

Alverson, Marc  
Alverson, Tammy

## RAPTOR Inc. Leadership, Staff, and Communications

### RAPTOR Inc. Board

President: Marc Alverson  
Vice President: Dan Begin  
Treasurer: Robert E. Smith  
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Trustee: Rosie Ayers  
Trustee: Bob Dahlhausen, DVM  
Trustee: Jeff Hays  
Trustee: Joe Lucas  
Trustee: Open position  
Trustee: Open position

### 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.  
(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

### 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".

### 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

# RAPTOR Inc. is Here to Serve You!

The end of the year is fast approaching and that means we will be reaching out to remind you that it is time to renew your membership (if you have a student, hawk, owl or eagle membership). As you reflect on why you are a member and what RAPTOR Inc. has done for you, please note that this organization is not only about raptors—we are about serving you!



Found an injured raptor?  
Call us; we want to help you.



Want to help prevent raptor injuries and meet new people? Join us for our litter pick-up four times a year.



Want to know about raptors and conservation?  
Visit one of our public presentations listed in the newsletter.



Want to have a fun afternoon and see some cool birds? Come to an Open House; we would love to meet you!



Want to be a part of our good work?  
Renew your membership today!

Renewal is easy. Go online: <http://raptorinc.org/raptor-support/membership/> or mail the completed membership form included with this issue.

## 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 a stunning Raptor note card set

**Eagle and Lifetime Memberships (below) also include perks from the levels above.**

**\$100 Eagle Membership**  
plus receive a 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) \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

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

Check if you prefer postal delivery of Wingbeats

I would like more information about making a planned gift to RAPTOR Inc.  Please call me |  Please email me

I have already included RAPTOR Inc. in my will or estate plan.  Please call me |  Please email me

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.!

## Sponsor a Banded Raptor

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

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

If the bird you sponsor is recovered, you will be notified of the date and location of the recovery.

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

- American Kestrel: \$50
- Eastern Screech Owl: \$50
- Cooper's Hawk: \$50
- Barred Owl: \$50
- Red-shouldered Hawk: \$50
- Great Horned Owl: \$50
- Red-tailed Hawk: \$50

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

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

In the event your selection is not available, we will contact you to arrange an alternative. Sponsoring a bird is tax deductible. All proceeds benefit RAPTOR Inc. Complete this form, enclose a check or money order, and mail to: RAPTOR Inc., 961 Barg Salt Run Road, Milford, Ohio 45150

*Thank you for your support of RAPTOR Inc.!*

