

INTRODUCTION

Raptor Rescue was founded in 1978 by a group of falconers in the North West of England. They were concerned that there was no recognised specialist organisation able to treat the large number of sick or injured birds of prey that came into care.

Since inauguration, **Raptor Rescue** has evolved into the UK's foremost organisation dedicated to ensuring all sick and injured birds of prey are cared for by suitably qualified people and wherever possible released back into the wild. In the intervening years **Raptor Rescue** has moved from being a group of concerned individuals to become a Registered Charity, number 283733, with a board of Trustees responsible for control and management.

Since it was set up **Raptor Rescue** has continued to grow steadily and has been instrumental in caring for and rehabilitating many thousands of birds of prey. This has been achieved by establishing a national network of rehabilitators and experienced carers to undertake the demanding task of treating the birds that come into care each year.

The main aims of **Raptor Rescue** are:

- to promote high standards of rehabilitation and care for birds of prey.
- to treat and rehabilitate raptors as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- to establish centres of excellence for rehabilitation throughout the UK and Ireland.
- to ensure that raptor casualties are handled by competent people.
- to correctly diagnose and treat any ailment, seeking veterinary advice as necessary.
- to provide adequate and suitable housing during essential confinement.
- to comment, as a body, on any impending government legislation relating to raptors.
- to collate and store relevant information and data for future reference.
- to provide specialist training and awareness courses.
- to provide a central source of emergency assistance for the public.

In pursuing these aims **Raptor Rescue** places great emphasis upon conservation and raising public awareness of our native birds of prey and owl species, and also provides financial support to established rehabilitators to assist with collection and treatment of birds, purchase of specialist equipment and veterinary costs.

The Trustees and rehabilitators from **Raptor Rescue** maintain close working relationships with a wide range of organisations including British Trust for Ornithology, Independent Bird Register, RSPCA, RSPB, Wildlife Centres, the Police, local Veterinary Surgeons, DEFRA, Animal Health, The Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly Government, Scottish SPCA and the Hawk Board.

Raptor Rescue provides direct assistance to the public who may find an injured or sick bird of prey or owl through:

Raptor Rescue National Help and Advice Line on: **0870 241 0609**

Raptor Rescue web page: www.raptorrescue.org.uk

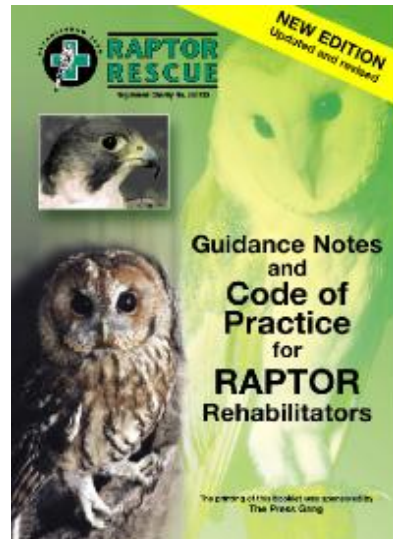
It has always been a major priority for **Raptor Rescue** to promote high standards of care and responsibility for the treatment of injured and sick birds of prey.

Changes to the Wildlife and Countryside Act prompted the **Raptor Rescue** Trustees to become the first organisation concerned solely with birds of prey to establish written standards and a code of practice for raptor rehabilitators. After extensive consultation with active rehabilitators, carers, avian specialists and veterinary advisors, both from within and outside **Raptor Rescue**, the Charity published the first *Guidance Notes and Code of Practice for Raptor Rehabilitators* in the UK that set out minimum standards and working practices.

The initial 36-page booklet published in 1999 was welcomed by all people and organisations involved in work with wild raptors; so much so it has required a number of reprints and each time it has been reviewed, updated and revised.

The Guidance Notes and Code of Practice is now in wide circulation across the world and has resulted in contacts from Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, India, Italy, Malta, Romania, South Africa, South Korea and Spain.

Similarly, in the UK, copies have been provided to major political parties and to Government departments as well as to leading organisations, such as Scottish SPCA, RSPCA and the Hawk Board. The publication has also been recognised from submissions to the Animal Welfare Bill consultation process as the leading set of standards for raptor rehabilitation.



The Code of Practice also introduced the **Raptor Rescue Accredited Rehabilitator** Status and the minimum requirements to achieve approval.

This new **Rehabilitation Handbook** that includes the **Raptor Rescue Code of Practice**, has been produced so that all the information to aid rehabilitators can be held in a central file and easily located. It has been specifically designed for use with an A4 ring binder to simplify the process of maintaining it up to date. Each page has a unique number and issue status for this purpose. The production of this document has been possible by sponsorship from the Primrose Trust, for which the trustees of the charity are grateful.

RAPTOR RESCUE CODE OF PRACTICE

All **Raptor Rescue** rehabilitators should adhere to the following recommended Code of Practice.

- Provide a high standard of suitable accommodation for all raptor casualties.
- Maintain the correct levels of first aid equipment and food in order to deal with all probable casualties.
- Maintain a good working relationship with a local veterinary practice.
- Maintain a good working relationship with the local Police Wildlife Officer.
- To ensure that casualties are only handled by competent people.
- To ensure that the welfare of all casualties is paramount and that no bird is allowed to suffer unnecessarily.
- To ensure that all birds are fully recovered before their release back to the wild.
- To maintain an accurate record of each casualty, including treatment and the outcome.
- To submit completed records, when requested, to the Charity for analysis.

The Scottish Government has already issued Codes of Practice for livestock (cattle, sheep, pigs, equidae, laying hens and meat chickens) and plan to issue codes on cats, dogs and rabbits. At this point in time (September 2009) they have no plans to issue one for Raptors.

The Welsh Assembly Government has produced Codes for cats, dogs and equines, with a rabbit code to be published shortly. There are no plans at present to develop a Code for birds of prey.

In England, Defra plan to introduce codes of practice, made under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, on 6 April 2010 on the welfare of the following: (i) cats; (ii) dogs; (iii) equidae; (iv) privately kept primates; and (v) gamebirds reared for sporting purposes. There are no plans at present to develop a Code for birds of prey.

The following organisations have given their permission for Raptor Rescue to include their logo in this publication.

IBR



Predatory Bird
Monitoring Scheme

SCOTTISH SPCA
Scotland's Animal Welfare Charity



**PARTNERSHIP FOR ACTION AGAINST
wildlife crime**



The Trustees would like to acknowledge that the following departments and organisations have been consulted and provided appropriate comments for various parts of this publication.

Animal Health (Wildlife Licensing & Registration Service)

Defra

Department of Environment, Northern Ireland

National Wildlife Crime Unit

Natural England – Wildlife Licensing Unit

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

Scottish Government – Animal Welfare Team

Scottish Government – Species Licensing Team

Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals – Wildlife Hospital

Welsh Assembly Government – Animal Welfare Branch

The following are Raptor Rescue Accredited Wildlife Hospitals



THE HAWKING CENTRE



Ryedale
Rehab



Seal & Bird Rescue
Trust



**GENTLESHAW
WILDLIFE CENTRE**