

The UK's leading specialist Bird of Prey rehabilitation organisation.



**RAPTOR
RESCUE**

Registered Charity No. 283733

An organisation dedicated to ensure that all sick or injured birds of prey are cared for by qualified persons and that whenever possible they are released back into the wild.



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In this issue:
➤Chairman's Chat
➤Treasurers Report
Crombie Countryside Park ➤
Survey Report 2005/06➤
➤and lots more

PLEASE NOTE; THIS IS NOT A 24 HOUR EMERGENCY SERVICE, IF YOUR CALL IS NOT ANSWERED AN ANSWER PHONE IS AVAILABLE, PLEASE LEAVE A MESSAGE AND SOMEONE WILL GET BACK TO YOU. ALL CALLS ARE CHARGED AT THE NORMAL RATE.

National Help & Advice Line: 0870 241 0609 –
Online www.raptorrescue.org.uk

Chairman's Chat

The AGM in October 2006 went very well. It was good to see old faces and new. Katrina Sullivan from Reaseheath College, Nantwich gave an extremely interesting and informative talk. Our eyes were opened to a harsh reality experienced in rehabilitation abroad.

We are now in 2007 and a flood of invitations have been sent for Raptor Rescue to attend the shows for fundraising. We will let you know in a further newsletter which ones we will be attending.

Just before Christmas Jane my wife and fellow trustee was asked by the Hawk Board to organise the rehabilitation area at the new Falconry Festival in July. She accepted the task and immediately said the first rehabilitation organisation to apply would be Raptor Rescue which of course came of no shock to the Hawk Board! This show is going to be very special up to now there are twenty six countries taking part. If you want to track its progress just log onto their website.

I am determined to raise the profile of the charity, I am going to arrange a meeting with the RSPCA, SSPCA and the RSPB, to discuss our combined rolls concerning bird of prey rehabilitation.

There has been a few hiccups over the rehabilitation course and it has been delayed slightly. Look for further information on the website or in the newsletter.

Look forward to meeting at the shows this year. Of course I wish all of our members and rehabilitators a very happy new year.



Dean Hemingway
Chairman



WELCOME to Andy Craven (left) who became a Trustee in October 2006. Andy is taking over responsibility as website administrator.

Raptor Rescue would like to welcome the following new members:

Ms Revena Swales from Herts
Mr Alan & Mrs Jean Jackson from Isle of Man (rehabber)
Mr Andrew Craven & family from Northwich (Trustee)
Seal and Bird Rescue Trust from North Walsham (rehabber)
Mr Geoffrey Wigan from Suffolk
Mr David & Fiona Johnson and family from Shetland
Jenny & Leslie Smith (Gentleshaw) rehabber
Mr Bill Stratton from Oxon (welcome back) rehabber

Raptor Rescue would also like to thank all those members who have kindly made a donation during 2006.

Treasurers Report of Accounts

<u>INCOME</u>	2004/2005	2005/2006
Balance brought forward at 1 September	27,315.48	28,105.63
Subscriptions	2,462.00	2,580.44
Sale of stock	2,167.34	2,518.95
Donations ¹	4,864.71	13,996.75
Income from seminar	0.00	610.00
AGM buffet	0.00	120.00
AGM fund raising/raffle	0.00	86.50
Interest on deposit account	460.27	394.06
Gift aid ²	0.00	971.88
TOTAL	37,269.80	49,384.21

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	Budget		
Aviaries & Equipment ¹	4,000.00	1,080.55	4,737.60
Rehabilitation	6,000.00	1,611.42	2,046.44
Administration ³	3,000.00	1,621.93	3,014.87
Shows ⁴	1,000.00	2,321.75	4,933.98
Meetings ⁵	500.00	558.84	1,002.49
Printing	1,000.00	0.00	74.73
Newsletter ⁶	1,500.00	1,829.68	1,072.47
Web site	500.00	120.00	167.00
Seminar	500.00	20.00	312.75
TOTAL	18,000.00	9,164.17	17,362.33

note 1 A donation of £10,000 was received from the Primrose Trust for the purchase of 4 portable hacking aviaries. The remainder to be used for printing the Information Pack and any balance put towards the new web site. These will not be paid out until 2006/07.

note 2 We were able to reclaim income tax paid on donations made where the individual had signed the Gift Aid. Some were backdated to 6th April 2000

note 3 This increase was mainly due to the purchase of two laptop computers and a donation to the IBR for taking over the National Help Line.

note 4 Improvements were made to the show stand as well as the need to hire a van for some shows. A large investment in stock items was also made.

note 5 All catering and room hire charges have increased this year. We also had to pay £95 to the guest speaker. Were as there was no charge the previous year.

note 6 The number of newsletters were reduced from 3 to 2 hence the reduction in both printing and postage costs

I would like to thank all the members for renewing their membership and for any donations made. I would also like to thank the fundraisers for all their continued hard work raising funds for the Charity.

Carol Davidson - Treasurer

Crombie Countryside Park

Crombie Countryside Park is situated 5 miles north east of Dundee, Scotland. I was a seasonal countryside ranger there for the summer of 2006. The park is more geared for conservation rather than recreation like its sister park (Monikie Countryside Park, 2 miles south). The park makes an attractive stopping point for wandering raptors and both goshawks and ospreys have been sighted on previous years. The ospreys have been known to take brown trout from the reservoir, though no ospreys have been sighted so far this year.



I'd often patrol the park by driving along the reservoir in a speedboat. The reservoir itself stretches 2 miles and surrounds a large island where many wild fowl and roe deer safely spend the night. While on the boat, I watched an oystercatcher frantically mob a buzzard. I couldn't see anything in its talons so I presume that it may have got too close to the oystercatcher's eggs or chicks that were on the shores of the island.

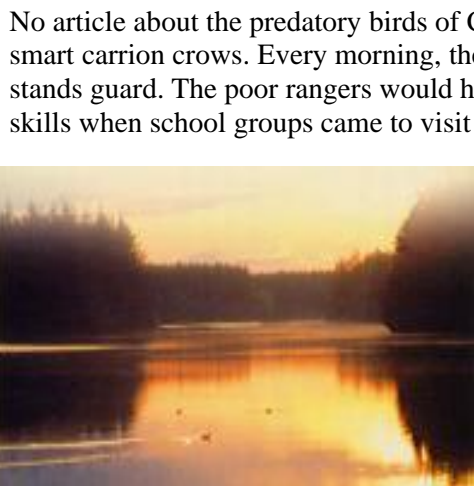
Buzzards are the largest birds of prey that you are likely to encounter in the park. Even now there are still people who think that they've seen an eagle when a buzzard soars overhead. They truly have earned the 'Tourist Eagle' nickname. I would come upon many buzzard 'kill sites', and even a couple of 'favourite' sites on some of the most remote areas of the park where the buzzard has taken its prey to be plucked of feathers or fur. Rabbits were as popular a prey item as you'd expect, although one buzzard I had unintentionally disturbed had flown off with a woodpigeon. The pigeon probably flew down to the aqueduct and was caught unawares by the opportunistic buzzard. Even more unexpected was the time I stumbled across a buzzard who seemed to be drinking from a puddle in the middle of one of the park's back roads.

The most dramatic incident that happened to me occurred outside the park. I was driving home along a back road at night when I saw a large dark shape on the side of the road. Visibility was poor, but not yet dark enough that I couldn't see without a torch. As I drove closer to the object, it suddenly revealed itself to be a buzzard who took off and flew straight towards the windscreen of my car! I put on the brakes, but both of us were moving too fast to avoid a collision. The buzzard quickly changed its direction and took off my left wing mirror. Luckily my left wing mirror is faulty and can be knocked off just by leaning on it, even so it happened really quickly and was a bit of a shock. I got out the car and fixed the mirror back on. When I looked round, the buzzard was standing in the middle of the road, watching my every move. It then took off and flew straight in my direction! I crouched by the side of the car and it changed its direction and landed on the wall a few metres beyond the car. Although by now I was fairly convinced that the buzzard was okay, I was determined to make sure by getting a bit closer. So I got back in the car and slowly drove up to where it had landed and got out the car. I gently walked up to it and paused as it watched me and then it just flew off.

I'm sure that this buzzard was an immature bird that may not have learnt that roads can be very dangerous places. Even so, I'm really impressed that it flew straight at me after hitting the mirror. This particular location is a hot spot for buzzards as a few weeks later I would have to slow down and allow two buzzards to attempt to fly off with a squashed pheasant. In the end, they gave up and flew away towards the forest. As well as the regular call of buzzards, the call of the sparrowhawk can be heard. The most you are ever likely to see of these stealthy raptors would be just fleeting glimpses, but myself and a couple of the other rangers got more than a glimpse of one juvenile, even if it did not originally come from the park. An elderly couple from Dundee had left a phone message saying that they were coming to drop off an injured young bird of prey, most likely a sparrowhawk. They arrived with the hawk inside a large cardboard box. Although the Ranger Service does not normally deal with injured wildlife we decided to have a look. One of the rangers (an experienced bird ringer) opened the box and a juvenile sparrowhawk lunged out and grasped his arm with its talons leaving a small scar. It flew away and landed on a nearby tree, where it waited for approximately an hour under the constant bombardment of angry songbirds. Songbirds flying away as fast as they can from feeding stations were often a good indicator that the local sparrowhawks were nearby.

The resident kestrels became very noisy during mid August. The young kestrels seemed to be learning about their surroundings. During my training earlier this year, I heard about how last year a kestrel was rescued from starvation. It had been seen on the same tree branch for a few days and had not moved. An expert was called in to climb up and find out what the problem was. It had been looking for nest material and had unfortunately chosen to take some wire, which had got caught on the branch. The kestrel's leg had also got tangled on the wire. She made a full recovery and was released back into the park.

The only owl species that I'm aware of in the park is the tawny owl. Out of about half a dozen owl nest boxes that are scattered around the park, owls have used only one this year. During the night, tawny owls can be as vocal as buzzards. They were particularly loud when we had organised a bat walk (when we take visitors out to see wild bats flying along the reservoir). Many visitors were surprised to hear that even these agile bats could end up as a snack for the owls. The reservoir shores were oddly a good site to find pellets, though I'm sure that not all of them belonged to owls despite the presence of bones in them.



No article about the predatory birds of Crombie Countryside Park would be complete without mentioning the super smart carrion crows. Every morning, they would jump in the bins and empty them of their contents while one crow stands guard. The poor rangers would have to clean up the mess they left behind. The crows adjusted their foraging skills when school groups came to visit the park. As the children would have to do a small amount of walking, they would have to leave their bags behind in a marquee. While they were gone, one crow would stand guard and the other crow would open their pack lunch bags and fly off with their lunch! After we found out what had happened, we had to inform all visiting school groups about the crows and request that all food be put inside bags that could be zipped up and that the marquee entrance be tied shut. To be honest, I wouldn't be surprised if one of these days the crows learnt how to undo the zips!

Mike Sedakat

Change of Address

If you are a rehabber and move house to a new address, please don't forget to contact the secretary in order for us to send you a new rehabber form, as it is your facility that is approved not the person.



BIRD FLU

As we are again in the middle of the bird flu season it is good practice to keep records of any birds that you take to a fund raising event.

Record the date, location of the event, the birds taken, the time you left and the time you returned.

Can You Help!

Each year Raptor Rescue attends a number of events throughout the country like the Falconry Fair and Game Fairs, to raise funds and promote the charity.

Jane and Dean Hemingway are always looking for help at these events and if you can help they would like to hear from you. The Charity will reimburse your entry fee to any event if you spend the whole day helping out.

If you would like more information, please contact Jane or Dean on 01565 654292. A full list of events and dates will be in the next Update.



Keith Takes the Plunge!

Trustee Keith Woodhead received a call from the Independent Bird Register and asked if he could go and rescue a bird of prey hanging in a tree in a park near to where he lives.



The park in question was just three miles from where Keith lived, so he gathered up his gear and set off. He arrived to find the bird in question was a tawny owl, which was caught up in fishing line and hanging from a tree on an island in the middle of a lake.

There was an RSPCA officer already on the scene and when Keith asked what he had done in order to rescue the bird, he told Keith that he had radioed for the RSPCA Midlands boat.

Keith could tell that the tawny was in some distress and asked the RSPCA officer if he knew how long it would be before the boat arrived. The officer was not able to say as there was only one boat in the Midlands so it could be some time before it arrived.

Some local fisherman told Keith that the lake was fairly shallow and he could probably wade across. Keith being prepared for any eventuality adorned his waders and set off across the lake. The further out he went the deeper the water became until reaching the top of his waders he decided to turn back.

Keith again asked the RSPCA officer how long it would be before the boat arrived. Again, the RSPCA officer could not say how long it would be. Keith pointed out to him how distressed the bird was and that immediate action was needed. Keith asked him to get on his radio and find out where the boat was. The officer said he could not do that and when Keith asked him why he went and locked himself in his car.

Knowing he was not going to get any help from the RSPCA there was only one course of action left to Keith, stripped off to his underpants and waded into the lake.

It must be pointed out at this point that it was late October, so not the best time to go for a dip in a lake.

He swam across to the island only to find he could not quite reach the tawny so then had to pile up a load of old branches to make a platform to stand on to reach it. He successfully got the bird down from the tree and then had to swim back across the lake while holding the bird above the water.

The RSPCA boat never turned up and the officer never got out of his car after Keith's daring rescue. A cold and wet Keith took the tawny home where it was detangled checked over and released.

If there was a Raptor Rescue award for dedication above and beyond the call of duty, then Keith would win it hands down. He must be highly commended for his actions that cold October day.



How I Got Started – John Welsby



It was 1993 and I was looking for a bird to start hunting, I was looking for a female Red-tail, something robust so to speak as I was a novice and mistakes were bound to happen. After a couple of months we found a breeder in Penrith with two birds for sale, one of each sex. I phoned the breeder and made arrangements to go up the following Tuesday, the Monday night I never slept, I was like a kid at Christmas. My wife thought I was mad. Tuesday arrived and off we went, arriving long before the appointed time, we sat at the end of the road to the breeders for one and a half hours, we got some funny looks from passing motorists who had passed us several times. We finally get there and go to see the birds, which were still with mum and dad. I was asked which one I would like and had no hesitation in choosing the female, and so I had my bird. Next job was choosing a name for her, I went through every name you could think of but one stuck and kept coming up time after time and that was “ Jess “ short and sweet so Jess it was.

After training we put our birds up to moult, having been around animals and a keen bird watcher I was of the opinion that they need company just like humans. Stuck in an aviary for six months was not an ideal life for such an intelligent bird so out she went every day that we could for walks over our hunting ground. I sat down one day to read my Falconers magazine when I came on the advert for “Raptor Rescue”.

This was what I was looking for, some way to do good and a way of introducing Jess to other people. As it happened there was going to be a medieval weekend in my local town so I decided to write to Mick Robins, the then secretary for RR, and ask if I could enter as a Falconer and see how much money I could take for RR. Fancy asking if a charity would like some money, any way Mick was delighted and wrote a letter giving me permission to collect money for RR. And so started my search for a Medieval Falconers out fit, it was a no go so only thing was make my own.

Easy said than done, I butchered a very good leather jacket to look like a waist coat, dyed a shirt Lincoln green, stuck tassels on a pair of suede boots and lastly the trousers, tights were out because my legs are not built for them. These were the talk of the house and I had my leg pulled over them for many a week after. I wanted them baggy so they hung over my boots like the ones the Three Musketeers wore. When I say they were brand new and cost 50p you will have some idea of what they looked like, even the shopkeeper asked Sandra not to tell folk were she got them.

The big day came, it was June 18th 1994 and bitterly cold, when I say I had my long johns on that's how cold it was. With my green open fronted tent as a backdrop, adorned with various lures, and straw bails as a compound adorned with various literature and a ten litre ice cream tub as a collecting box we sat and waited.

I could not believe what people were doing, not just putting the odd pound or penny in the box they were, without a lie tipping, their purses in. I was also charging 20p to have a photo taken with Jess, who I was very proud of as she never bated or showed any sign of distress whatsoever she was perfect. It was over two day's and the second day was not as busy as the first but when we counted up how much we had taken we were astounded, just over £200.00 it was amazing, Mick Robins was delighted when I told him but my next event only yielded £8-00 bit of a come down after my first attempt. So after my first event I joined RR and in 2000 I became an Approved Rehab having been doing Rehab work from 1998 in which time to date have taken in 122 birds.

Sadly I lost Jess in 2001, she became egg bound laying her first egg and one burst inside her infecting her stomach, and she died at the vets on Sunday April 8th. Aged eight, words cannot explain my loss; the first is always the best. But, along with a new show stand, I have a new Red-tail Hawk “ Jester “ who is doing splendid work bringing in the coppers for RR, he is five and I hope I can spend many more years with him, helping to help other raptors less fortunate.



The rescuers

FOUNDED by a group of falconers in the North West in 1978, Raptor Rescue is a national charity with an established reputation in wildlife rehabilitation and falconry.

The organisation has a national network of rehabilitators and other experienced carers, such as local man John Welsby, who take on this time consuming work.

But a great deal of resources are still required to pay for housing, feeding, veterinary help and transportation.

Main sources of revenue are public donations, fees from lectures and, of course, membership subscriptions.

Founded in 1978 to help provide the special care needed by sick and injured birds of prey, the charity treats hundreds of birds each year.



Photo ID Cards

In a world where big brother is watching and identification issues can cause problems, Raptor Rescue as decided to issue all rehabbers, collectors and anyone involved in fund raising, an identification card signed by the Chairman.

The purpose of the card is to ensure that the public can be at ease in knowing that they are dealing with an official from Raptor Rescue.

All those issued with the credit card sized identification card will be expected to carry it with them whenever they are on Raptor Rescue Business.

Would all rehabbers, collectors and anyone involved in fund raising please let me have a colour head and shoulders photo of themselves. Please send with your name and address by e-mail if possible to steve&carol.rr@btinternet.com or by post to Steve Davidson, 28 Victoria Road, Great Sankey, Warrington, WA5 2ST. Your card will be sent by return post.



Ryedale Rehab

Ryedale Rehab is situated in the heart of North Yorkshire and is run by Jean Thorpe an approved rehabber for Raptor Rescue.

Jean who has been looking after wildlife for the past 20 years is a regular on the Zoo Vet at Large series.

Ryedale doesn't just take in birds of prey but anything that needs Jean's loving care and attention. Every year Jean can handle up to 60 birds of prey.



Jean sends RR a copy of the newsletter she produces, pictured above with a marsh harrier.

This little owl was run over by a car just after leaving the nest and sustained a broken leg. After the broken leg was fixed the bird had a stay at Ryedale and was then successfully released.

Mystery bird – this bird was involved in a road accident and died from its injuries. Some thought it was a Honey Buzzard, some a Common Buzzard and some thought it was some kind of Eagle, they hope the identification will be resolved.

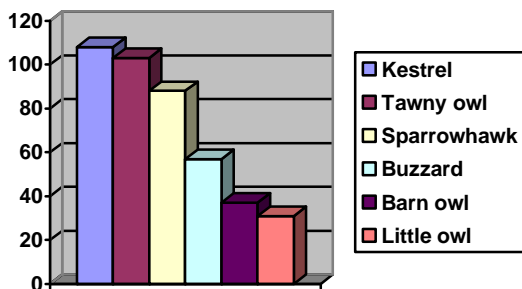
2006 saw Jean caring for 25 Tawny Owls, 10 Barn Owls, 3 Little Owls, 1 Short-eared Owl, 2 Buzzards, 3 Marsh harriers, 9 Sparrowhawks, 9 Kestrels and 1 Merlin.



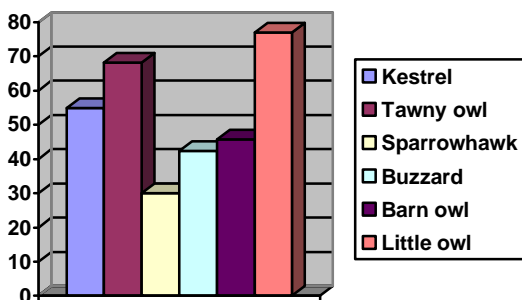
Survey Report for 2005-2006

This year we received returns from 31 of our rehabilitators (9 of which were nil returns) and a monthly report, from June, of the birds handled from our National Help line via the IBR. We handled a total of 497 birds, 16 captive bred, 30 Red Kites for relocation and 38 wild birds where the outcome was unknown. The analysis below is based on the wild casualties where we do know the outcome. I have not included the usual spreadsheet with numbers as not everyone provided me with all the data requested and this would therefore not show a true comparison.

The numbers for each species are: Kestrel (108), Tawny Owl (103), Sparrowhawk (88), Buzzard (57), Barn Owl (37), Little Owl (31), Red Kite (12), Peregrine (5), Long-eared Owl (4), Merlin (4), Hobby (3), Marsh Harrier (3), Short-eared owl (2) and Osprey (1). Overall we released 51%, euthanased 22% with 23% dying and 4% still in care at the time of the survey.

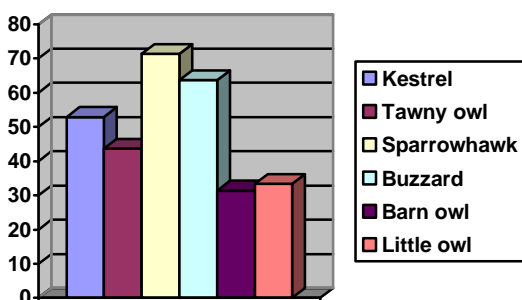


Of the birds (left), those with 12 or fewer are too small to show any meaningful further analysis. The top six species do show some interesting, but perhaps not unexpected results.



The graph (left) shows the percentage released for each species. The most successful being Little and Tawny Owls whilst the worst are Sparrowhawks and Buzzards.

As part of the survey rehabilitators were asked to identify the possible cause of the injury and looking at the number that died or were euthanased having come in as a result of unnatural injury and road accident.



The graph (left) shows that Sparrowhawks and Buzzards have the least chance of survival after a road accident or unnatural injury. The most likely to survive are the three species of owl.

I would welcome any comments about the above results and wish to remind all rehabilitators who have equipment on loan from the charity that it is a condition of the loan that you submit an annual return when requested.

We returned 51% of wild Casualties back to the wild.

Benefits of Membership

Membership of Raptor Rescue is open to anyone with an interest in birds of prey that wishes to support the Charity.

Annual membership fees are divided into three categories:

Junior Members (Under 16) £7.50

Household Membership (One address) £15.00

Wildlife Centre Membership (Raising own funds) £25.00

Application forms are available from our web site.

Our rehabilitator members are entitled to reclaim all legitimate expenses incurred in collecting, transporting, feeding and treating casualties. *

Medical equipment and other items are regularly distributed to our rehabbers at little or no cost. All we ask in return is that reports are submitted for inclusion in the Newsletter and that details of all birds treated are made available for our Annual Surveys.

Subject to certain conditions, financial assistance may also be available from our Central Funds for expenses incurred whilst rehabilitating WILD raptor casualties.

* Details of the conditions covering reimbursement of expenses are available on request.

National Help & Advice Line

0870 241 0609

The aim of the telephone helpline is to provide assistance to anyone who encounters an injured bird of prey. Once the relevant details have been provided, callers can be given basic instructions on how to care for the casualties temporarily, whilst efforts are made to contact local rehabilitators or experienced individuals who can collect the bird and transport it safely to specialised care facilities. When this is not possible, the Charity is often able to provide contacts for veterinary surgeon or other local help.

PLEASE NOTE: The National Help & Advice Line is NOT a 24-hour emergency service. However, an answerphone is available outside of normal operating hours. All calls are charged at the national rate.

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Pictures

Front Cover – Steve Davidson

How I Got Started – John Welsby

Ryedale Rehab – Jean Thorpe

PLEASE NOTE: Whilst every effort has been taken to ensure the accuracy of this publication, no responsibility for loss occasioned to any person as a result of any statement contained in it can be accepted by the author or publisher. Comments made by the author(s) do not constitute advice. The guidelines we issue are advisory only and have no force in law.

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