

**Illinois Raptor Center**  
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*The IRC is a 501 (c)(3) private nonprofit organization serving the wildlife and people of Illinois with wildlife rehabilitation and conservation education since 1991.*

Reminder: IRC will be there!  
**Starved Rock Eagle Days**  
"Flock to the Rock"  
January 28 & 29, 2012



**Meet our daily volunteers.**  
Lynda and Don Morris  
Lori and John Yotter  
Denise Parcell  
Carla Jordan  
Heather Logan  
Tracey Maras  
Elizabeth Curtis-Robinson and Intern  
Jennifer Tucker-Draper

**Workday volunteers** frequently include:  
Cathy Rice,  
Dennis Cunningham,  
Judy and Gene Seyfert  
and Dale Wilson.



*I always wondered  
why somebody  
didn't do something  
about that!*

*Then I realized  
I was somebody!*

(If you can't join us...support us!)

REMINDER: Let us know  
if you change your  
mailing or e-mail address.

# Wing Over Newsletter



Dear IRC Friends and Contributors,

First of all – thank you! You see if it weren't for you, the Illinois Raptor Center would not exist and you would not be receiving this newsletter. The pictures you see here would not have been taken. The permanently injured White Pelican would not have a new home in a zoo, the Red-shouldered Hawk wouldn't have regained its flight and the Barred Owl would not have returned to the Sangamon River floodplain. They would be dead without the second chance at life that you gave them.

If it weren't for you, thousands of people would not have had the opportunity to take part in, and learn from, IRC's environmental and conservation education programs.

If it weren't for you, twenty-five non-releasable raptors that call the Illinois Raptor Center home would not have a place to live. They all would have perished and thousands of school children would never have gotten a chance to meet them personally and marvel at their beauty.

If it weren't for you, fifteen acres of property would still be a hideous dump site and insects, rabbits and birds would not have enjoyed the past summers in a beautifully restored prairie.

Several young people have been successful in gaining admission to college and even obtaining employment in the wildlife and conservation fields specifically because of their internships and volunteerism at the IRC. These young people would not have had those opportunities if it weren't for you.

The IRC holds Raptor Camps, Owl Prowls, Raptor ID workshops and much more is in the development stages as we work to connect children and adults to nature – live, up close and personal. But there would be no local programs of this complexity if it weren't for you.

So as we head into the holiday season and reflect on all the things we are most thankful for, please know that the Illinois Raptor Center is thankful for YOU and your generosity.







**Barn Owls** are one of the most magnificent owls that we have in Illinois. The Great Horned, Barred, Short-eared, Long-eared, Screech, Snowy and Saw-whet Owls are in the Strigidae family. Barn Owls are in the family of owls called the Tytonidae. Tytonidae do not have feathers down to their toes. They have heart shaped facial disks instead of round facial disks. And they have one serrated talon on each foot. This talon is used for “preening” or grooming. Young students were once asked what color is a Barn Owl feather. One child’s answer was “burnt marshmallow.” That is brilliant! That is exactly what the feathers look like!



We were honored once again this year for the opportunity to rehabilitate orphaned Barn Owls. Three owlets were homeless after their nest tree in southern Illinois was destroyed. It wasn't possible to make a replacement nest. The IDNR transferred the chicks to us. Barn Owls are Illinois state endangered so it is very important to get them back out to the wild and to the place where they were found. Since Barn Owls are nocturnal, there is no way to monitor them at night. So we put trail cameras in their flight cage to get a better idea of their flying and hunting skills. The photo at the top left is one of the trail camera photos.

The 3 Barn Owls were successfully rehabilitated and returned to their original home. A video of the release of each owl is on our Facebook page. You do not have to be signed up for Facebook to view our page. The link is <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Illinois-Raptor-Center/54956777082>. Scroll down to the September posts.



**This little falcon**, a juvenile male American Kestrel, was a late chick and a late bloomer. He is a very small little guy. Because of his tameness, dossal demeanor and lack of showing any real hunting skills, we know that he could not survive on his own in the wild. He will be joining our education program.

The little raptor we are holding next to him is a juvenile male Sharp-shinned Hawk. Sharp-shinned Hawks are in a raptor family called Accipiters. The largest Accipiter is the Goshawk, the middle sized is the Cooper’s Hawk and the smallest is the Sharp-shinned Hawk. All are forest hunters. Their hunting style is short, quick bursts of speed to ambush and catch their prey (birds) in midair. The Cooper’s and the Sharp-shinned for the most part look exactly alike except for the size.

This little Sharpie received veterinary care to repair a broken wing. Unfortunately, and to the sorrow of everyone who met him, he did not survive the procedure. But his life was not in vain. He will be educating people about his species for years to come. This picture showing the size difference between the two smallest birds of prey you can find in Illinois is priceless.



The IRC had several Turkey Vultures come into the center this year. The last two that we had gave us an opportunity to photograph an older bird with a younger bird. As you can see, younger birds have black fuzz on their heads and their beaks are black. As they get older and lose the black fuzz, their head appears to get redder and their beak turns ivory.

Both of these Turkey Vultures were released after a little TLC from the IRC. They were released on-site. Once there were 20 vultures sitting in an old dead tree about 200 feet from the center’s front door. You can see that picture on our Facebook page. And... Illinois Audubon Society held the opening night of their fall gathering here. We were thrilled to watch 46 Turkey Vultures circling overhead that night. A group of Turkey Vultures is called a “wake.” The sighting was entered into the Illinois Audubon field notes for the weekend!



The Eurasian Collared Dove is being seen more and more lately. It is commonly misidentified as the native Mourning Dove. It was introduced to the Bahamas in 1975, spread to Florida, and is expanding its range across the USA. They are established in many states now. The one pictured here came from downtown Decatur. It was ran over by a car and had to be euthanized. They are slightly larger than a Mourning Dove but smaller than a pigeon. Keep your eyes open for that “dark collar” when birding.



We are so grateful to have received a grant for new incubators for our hospital! As you can see from the picture to the left, our incubators units no longer control the heat and we are running heating pads inside the units. Thanks to this grant, we will have new units by next baby season!

The grant is titled Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund – Maintenance of Wildlife Rehabilitation Facilities That Take Care of Threatened or Endangered Species Grant and is funded through the Illinois Wildlife Preservation fund check-off on the Illinois 1040 state income tax return.

This grant is designed to keep those wildlife rehabilitation facilities that take care of threatened or endangered species in good repair. The IRC has been very fortunate to have received grants to run a new water line to the raptor mews, to replace an old freezer and to purchase replacement locks for the cages over the last three years. If you were one of the generous taxpayers who donated to the Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund check-off on your IL 1040 – **THANK YOU!**

**2012 is going to be a very exciting year!** In fact, it may be the most exciting year since we opened the facility in 1994. Stay with us! Stand by us! We are going to do wonderful things!  
Jane Seitz, Executive Director & Jack Nuzzo, Program Director



**Reminder: Illinois Raptor Center - Raptor ID 3 Part Series**  
(1) Peregrine (2) Red-tailed and (3) Barn Owl  
January 19th, February 16<sup>th</sup> and March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012  
6 PM to 7 PM @ Adam’s Wildlife Sanctuary, Springfield  
\$25 for entire series in advance or \$10 walk-in fee  
Call Jo Fessett at 217-544-BIRD for reservations.