

Rescue. Rehabilitate. Release.

Established in 1990, The Medina Raptor Center is a leading raptor rehabilitation facility in Ohio. Our purpose is to rescue, rehabilitate and release injured and orphaned raptors. We specialize in birds of prey and treat over 400 birds each year. All receive individual attention, appropriate veterinary care, physical therapy, training and conditioning before returning them to the wild.

MRC is a non-profit 501© (3) organization and permitted by State and Federal Agencies. We operate solely on donations of time and funds and supplies.

Medina Raptor Center

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Spring 2016 Newsletter

News from the Mews

by Laura Jordan

Grass is getting greener and I have been hearing and seeing honey bees at the bird feeders and in my maple trees. I suppose they are helping to open up the buds and in that process getting some needed nourishment. Our bluebirds are looking at the new boxes and our tree swallows are also looking for a place to raise a family. The swallows glide and dance through the fields like little miniature falcons.

This is breeding season for birds in our area. It is not an easy task for bird parents who must contend with competition for food, erratic weather, predators and habitat destruction while rearing their babies. We can help by understanding the behavior of these parents and modifying our behavior to improve their chances of successfully rearing another generation.

The Spring Housing Rush

Wild Red-shouldered Hawks and Barred Owls share a wonderful three acre pine forest habitat at the Center. The diurnal hawks and nocturnal owls can coexist in the same territory, but in breeding season they feel the need to set boundary lines. We are privileged to follow the dynamics involved in territory formation high above us and the

inevitable arguments that arise every year over hunting rights in these areas. The two local Red-shouldered Hawks take center stage with their deafening screams and acrobatic dips and diving flights. The less flamboyant “who cooks for you” hooting of the Barred Owls rises in volume and intensity.

Shrinking Habitats Impact Breeding

Unfortunately, the shrinking habitats around us intensify territorial fighting and arguing among our feathered friends. At the Center we are seeing more patients with injuries from these events.

We are also seeing more human/raptor conflicts. Raptors recognize their own territory, not ours, so unwelcome encounters may arise at times. Red-shouldered Hawks will be aggressive when protecting their young, about a six week period ranging from egg laying through fledging. They can be alarmed by humans walking about the area, mowing the lawn or just getting the mail and may resort to harassing the two-legged intruders in “their” territory. You can reduce these encounters by modifying your own behavior. If getting the mail in the morning alarms a resident

hawk, change your routine and get it at night or drive your car to the mailbox. Carrying an umbrella above your head is another effective method to keep the birds high and away when walking about your property.

Tolerance for these protective behaviors for a short time will help us to coexist. The good these birds do for us outweighs the bad. They help keep rodent populations down and keep us from being overrun with mice, rats, chipmunks, shrews and moles.



Read new articles and stay updated on our patients on our website:

medinaraptorcenter.org

And remember to like us on Facebook!



Amazing Spring

Spring Storms

Weather can greatly impact the breeding season. Violent spring storms can dislodge nests and create additional problems for Eagles, owls and other nesting birds. Severe storms can flood the dens of Screech Owls and Barred Owls forcing out the youngsters where they become easy prey to hungry ground dwelling predators such as raccoons, opossums, fox and coyotes. Nests are often destroyed by raccoons at night leading to a deadly outcome for the chicks. Eaglets are sometimes preyed upon by Great Horned Owls. Songbirds are always at risk from anything larger than they are. Blue jays, crows and starlings will raid nests as will raccoons and house and feral cats.

Human Activity

Humans are, often unknowingly, some of the worst enemies of songbirds and raptors because we often cut down trees in the spring. Dead or dying trees and bushes are home to many songbirds and raptors. According to state and federal it is illegal to deliberately destroy an active songbird or raptor nest. Every spring people bring in baby birds when their nest is dislodged during spring clean-up and landscaping operations. Please remember that an active nest may be hidden in trees and bushes you are planning to trim or remove. Carefully survey shrubs and trees before trimming them during nesting season. Unless a tree is dangerous, leave it as is or postpone its removal to give these growing families a chance to thrive. For more information on the laws please visit the US Fish and Wildlife website and look up the Migratory Bird Treaty Act or the Ohio Revised Code Title XV CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES Chapter 1533 Hunting and Fishing, Section 07.

Approaching an active nest can have dire consequences even in circumstances we may regard as completely unthreatening or unintentional. For instance, watching momma robin feed her youngsters is an unforgettable experience, especially if momma has provided you with a front row seat by building her nest in a wreath on your front door. Unfortunately, your presence, if too close or too frequent for momma, can be highly agitating. If she becomes too stressed she might leave to protect herself and the nest will fail. Hopefully, the parents will learn from their mistakes and choose a better location next time. This applies to all wildlife, not just birds.

It is important to remember that humans are seen as large walking predators by wildlife and all wildlife prefer their privacy. These parents can't differentiate between a human that is merely curious about their babies and a predator that is going to attack them. This is where rehabilitators often find themselves caring for orphaned wildlife. We have firsthand experience with this at the Medina Raptor Center because we receive hundreds of calls about abandoned babies every year and have raised a large number of these babies as well.



Please Consider the Birds This Spring and Summer

Visitors to the outstanding park systems in Medina, Cuyahoga, and Lorain counties may be fortunate enough to spot an Eagle feeding her young or come upon a Great Horned Owl with owlets in the nest or taking flight for the first time. Large and fierce as they seem, raptor parents also may become stressed when humans approach an active nesting area. These are already some of the most dangerous times for the young. Remember these birds have incredible vision and what seems far to you is way too close for the raptor, especially when they are protecting their young. By stepping back and watching them through binoculars or a scope you are helping them become successful parents.

Enthusiasm is contagious and the more we learn about our natural world the more we will want to protect and preserve it. We all want to enjoy the world around us and share with as many people as possible, and we should! Share your knowledge in a responsible manner and be mindful of the impact your words can have. Remember that by respecting the necessary space between you and active nests you can help reduce the stress on wild parents as they raise their young. Make a point to gather those special moments with your children and teach them to enjoy every moment in the woods while leaving the smallest footprint possible.

Pesticides, Food Chains and Biomagnification: A Tale of Unintended Consequences

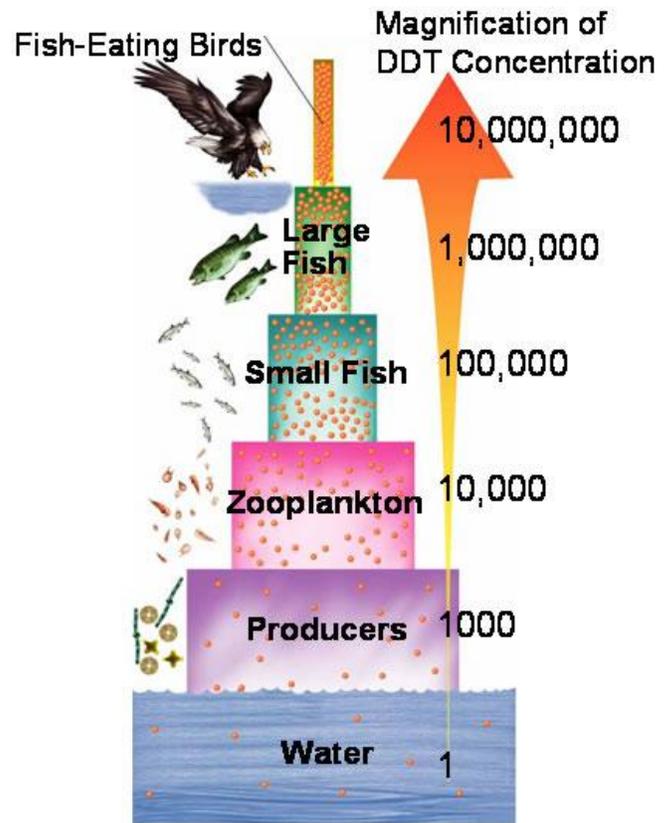
Over 5.5 billion pounds of pesticides are used annually throughout the world. Although they help feed a growing population and reduce the incidence of diseases such as malaria, their impact on diverse and complex global ecosystems can generate unanticipated and serious consequences. An example of this is the infamous pesticide DDT which decimated many bird populations through a process known as biomagnification. It is a result of pesticides remaining in the bodies of organisms after being ingested. The pesticide becomes more and more concentrated as it moves up the food chain and more of the tainted organisms are eaten by those at the top of the chain such as humans, raptors and other predators.

The degree to which a pesticide can be concentrated in biomagnification is illustrated in a study* of large numbers of grebes that were dying on a lake in California after it was sprayed with DDD (a close relative of DDT) to control a growing gnat population. The concentration of DDD in the lake water was less than .02 ppm, which is not toxic. However, when organisms living in the lake were tested the concentration of DDD in the tissues rose at each level of the food chain. Plankton, at the bottom of the food chain, had concentrations of 5 ppm while small fish, which feed on plankton, had levels between 30-400 ppm. Larger predatory fish, feeding on the smaller fish, had DDD levels at 2,500 ppm. Autopsies of the grebes who were feeding on the larger fish had DDD levels 125,000 higher than the lake water.

Biomagnification raised the pesticide concentrations in this ecosystem from below toxic levels in the lake water to lethal amounts in predators at the top of the food chain. It is most likely to occur with pesticides which persist in the environment and are neither degraded nor excreted by organisms which ingest the toxins while feeding in that environment. The consequences of biomagnification need to be considered in the design and development of new pesticides to reduce the impact of unintended consequences.

Please visit our website to learn more about the biomagnification effect on raptors and other birds.

medinaraptorcenter.org/habitat-preservation



Fowl need bugs and worms.

Shorebirds need fresh water.

Raptors need birds and rodents free of pesticides.





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HOW YOU CAN HELP

Bird sponsorship information is available online at MedinaRaptorCenter.org. Checks should be made out to the Medina Raptor Center and mailed to PO Box 74, Spencer, OH 44275.



_____ SPONSOR A BIRD \$50

Bird Name _____

(SEE WEBSITE FOR BIRD'S NAMES)

_____ BALD EAGLE SPONSORSHIP \$200

_____ One Year Newsletter \$10

_____ DONATION (specify amount) \$_____

Your Name: _____

Your Address: _____

Email: _____

Your Phone Number: _____

There are many ways to support Medina Raptor Center: Sponsor an educational bird, visit Amazon.com and view our Wishlist, check out Amazon.smile, or make a monetary donation through Paypal.



Thank you for your support!

