Volunteer Information Packet

Volunteering with Cascades Raptor Center

Thank you for taking the time to read this volunteer information packet. Once you have read it, if interested in volunteering, please fill out the application corresponding to the team for which you are applying. Currently, Cascades Raptor Center has full-time staff, part-time staff and a dedicated group of amazing volunteers all working towards the organization's mission. Our volunteers come from many different backgrounds with varying levels of experience. What we are really looking for are people with a passion for wildlife.

We recognize that volunteering at Cascades Raptor Center may not be the right fit for everyone. By allowing the avian ambassadors to experience choice and control, we show respect for their lives and welfare. Because of this, volunteers have very limited physical contact with the raptors. Instead, they support the birds by educating visitors and caring for the birds in a hands-off fashion.

About Volunteering

Requirements for all volunteers:

- Must be 18 years old or older.
- All volunteers are highly encouraged to stay current with the latest Flu & COVID vaccines, and must be up-to-date on their tetanus vaccination.
- Those with English as a second language must have a 90 or above on TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language).
- Must sign a waiver stating that you have not had any felony convictions in the past 5 years and are not required to register as a sex offender.

Desirable characteristics of a successful volunteer:

- Great verbal communication skills and dependability
- Teamwork, dedication
- Openness to receive and give constructive feedback

- Positive perspective
- Willingness and ability to learn

Communication and teamwork are a necessity! The birds, staff and your fellow volunteers **depend** on your reliability, honesty, adaptability, and openness. Thus, notifying staff in advance of absences, actively seeking coverage for your absences, and scheduling a make-up shift are expected and greatly appreciated. Work is accomplished during set shifts, either on your own, or with a small team of volunteers.

Learning to be an effective volunteer at the Raptor Center takes time. Staff members work closely with you while you learn the basics and the reasons behind center protocols. Even the simplest task can have layers of complexity of which you may be unaware and frankly, it's often critical that tasks are done as requested – the health (physical and mental) of birds depends on it! Questions are always appreciated. It truly takes a village at Cascades Raptor Center – and the absence of one person can make all the difference in the lives of birds in our care. Be honest about what you are able to give and do and be sensitive to the unique situation of working with living, wild animals. Those things will earn respect and admiration from staff and fellow volunteers, and the birds will demonstrate appreciation in their comfort level with you.

Important Information

Evaluation

At Cascades Raptor Center we believe in constantly improving the level of care we provide. To this end, feedback is an important part of our process, and all volunteers will undergo two evaluations early on in their volunteer experience (the first after four shifts, the second after eight). These evaluations will also be an opportunity for volunteers to give feedback to staff about their experience. After the second evaluation, staff will determine whether, or not, to extend the term of the position based on performance.

Death and Euthanasia

We are not a no-kill or sanctuary organization. Raptors are apex predators which means that they must be in top physical condition in order to survive. Some patients come into our clinic with injuries so severe that they die despite our best efforts, or their prognosis of survival in the wild is so poor, we make the difficult decision to euthanize them. Please know that this is something that staff does not take lightly. Many considerations are taken into account before the decision to euthanize a bird is made. Euthanizing of patients is done humanely by an experienced staff member.

We also euthanize feeder animals so that the birds in our care can receive fresh food. Rabbits and mice are euthanized throughout the week. If this process is something that you are not comfortable with, you will not be asked to do it. Those willing will be taught how to euthanize safely and humanely.

Photo & Social Media Policy

You are encouraged to take pictures of the work that you do up at the center. In fact, we love when you share those photos with us, as we have used many volunteer shots on our social media pages,

newsletters, etc. Our goal is to be always professional, and a single picture can sometimes be misinterpreted, make it look like we consider these birds 'pets,' or simply do not represent well the work we do. While you are in the public areas of the center, you are welcome to take photos and share them with family, friends or to social media. However, if you take photos behind-the-scenes, (i.e., in the hospital, Mouse Barn, inside rehab or resident aviaries, etc.) or of rehab patients (rescues, releases, treatments, etc.), we ask that you get express permission from a staff member before sharing them publicly on social media. Cascades Raptor Center retains the right to ask you to remove any images off social media at any time.

Volunteers should not comment on behalf of the center on social media, to press, or to members of the public without staff consent.

Feather Policy

Possession of native and/or migratory birds or their parts or products (feathers, eggs, nests, physical artifacts like feet or talons) without a permit is a violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (16U.S.C. 703-712), the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940 (amended in 1962) and the Endangered Species Act of 1973. These Acts prohibit 'take, transport, sale, barter, trade, import and export, and possession' of native and/or migratory birds, making it illegal for anyone to possess native and/or migratory birds and native and/or migratory bird parts - including molted feathers - without a permit. Cascades Raptor Center has permits for possession of birds for rehabilitation, birds for education, for the eagles on exhibit, and for the eggs, feathers, skeletons, and other artifacts we use in education. We can exchange such artifacts with other permitted facilities but cannot provide them to <u>any</u> individual, even to Native Americans with possession permits for religious purposes. All of our eagle feathers and cadavers must be transferred to the US Fish & Wildlife Eagle Repository for distribution to Native Americans. **Theft of feathers (or other parts or products) jeopardizes the state and federal licenses and permits that allow Cascades Raptor Center to operate. Individuals found taking feathers will be reported to the proper state and federal authorities and immediately dismissed from the center.**

Government Officials Policy

If any local, state, or federal government official arrives at the center; please be polite, radio senior leadership staff, and refrain from any discussions or small talk. This could include state police asking for assistance with a possible poaching case, to USDA arriving for an unannounced inspection or something else altogether.

Use of Personal Headphones, Earbuds, and Audio Devices Around Live Animals Policy

To ensure the safety of our staff, volunteers and the animals under our care, the use of personal headphones, earbuds, and headsets is highly discouraged while working within the immediate vicinity of live animals. Those who need audio stimulation may listen to something in one ear so long as you are still aware of, and can react to, the following:

- The birds may exhibit being uncomfortable, stressed, or anxious through auditory cues (e.g. clacking, moving perch to perch, vocalizing). You must be aware of these cues at all times.

- Staff must be able to get ahold of you via direct communication, or radio, to communicate instructions, safety alerts or other emergency situations.

Cascades Raptor Center is not responsible for damaged, stolen, or lost items (like earbuds) if a volunteer chooses to use them during their shift.

For those working on special projects requiring hearing protection, we recognize that communication will be limited while wearing PPE, and that these volunteers may not always be aware of their surroundings.

Injuries and Zoonoses

Injuries*:* Working with any animal, especially those who are scared or in pain, has inherent risks of injury. You will be trained by staff or an experienced volunteer in raptor body language. Knowing this will help keep both you and the birds safe. While working in our clinic, you will be taught appropriate handling and restraint techniques with the correct equipment. Most injuries sustained at the Raptor Center are unrelated to birds, like shutting your finger in a door or tripping over a hose. For these reasons, being aware of your surroundings and paying attention will keep you safe. We also require that you are up-to-date on your tetanus vaccination.

Zoonotic diseases are diseases which are shared by humans and other animals. The following table lists common zoonoses with their causes and preventive measures. **All prospective volunteers are expected to read and understand this section in order to sign the waiver which is part of their application.** For more information on typical carriers, symptoms in both humans and other animals, and some treatments, check the IWRC *Basic Skills 1AB* manual, other references cited, or online.

Please note that this list includes zoonotic diseases carried by mammals as well as birds. For your peace of mind, do know that most bird ectoparasites will not stay on you, or bite, even though they may amble around on you for a while - and that they are not typically the parasite carriers mentioned below, which are more likely to be found on mammals.

THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR KNOWLEDGE! Health safety starts with some very basic concepts:

- *Keep clean! Wash thoroughly* after handling animals or cleaning aviaries. *DO NOT prepare your food or eat in animal care areas* or where animal plates have been placed or washed.
- *Dispose of animal remains and wastes* in a sanitary, secure way. Wash feces-contaminated feeding utensils or dishes away from the food preparation area, in the dirty sink.
- *Minimize contact with the animals*, limiting it to what is needed to accomplish the task at hand.
- *Know the animal.* Normal appearance and behavior of animals can be learned. Be especially careful of unusual behavior until its cause is clear or special precautions can be taken.
- *Rid the animal of potential vectors* (endo- and ecto- parasites) immediately. This is important not only for <u>your</u> health but also that of other animals in care.

- *DO NOT work where mosquitoes, fleas, or other parasites are present without protection*, e.g., a repellant. (Please do not spray repellant on your hands, where it might contaminate feathers.)
- *If you become ill,* be able to tell your doctor on what dates and with what species of animals you worked. Also, know the identity of other people working with you so they can be contacted, either to check for similar symptoms or to inform them of a potential problem (e.g., ringworm).
- ***Immuno-suppressed people should NOT be working around wild animals!***

Zoonoses related to Wildlife Rehabilitation

DISEASE	ROUTE	PRECAUTIONS	CARRIERS
Bacterioses			
Chlamydiosis (psittacosis, ornithosis)	Inhaling dried, aerosolized feces	Keep environment clean; dispose of feces ASAP; good personal hygiene & proper PPE	Pigeons, raptors, finches, companion birds
Campylobacteriosis	Fecal/oral, direct contact with contaminated water	Good personal hygiene & proper PPE	Coyote, mink, hoofed mammals, birds
Salmonellosis	Fecal/oral	Good personal hygiene & proper PPE	Most animals, including birds, reptiles, mammals (common in opossums)
Leptospirosis	Direct contact with infected animal, urine, or urine contamination of soil, water, food	Good person hygiene	Most mammals, esp, rodents, skunks, marine mammals
Tularemia ("Rabbit Fever")	Ectoparasite bite; direct contact with broken skin/eye; improperly cooked meat	Good personal hygiene; wear gloves when doing necropsies; use insecticides when ectoparasites are seen; don't rub eyes with dirty hands	Rabbits, 100 other mammals, some birds
Lyme Disease and *Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever*	Tick bite or handling of tick; bite of infected animal	Use proper insecticide when ectoparasites are seen; good personal hygiene	Deer and other mammals
Plague	Flea bite; direct contact with infected tissue	Use proper insecticide when ectoparasites are seen; good personal hygiene	Rodents, other mammals with fleas

Mycoses (fungus)			
Ringworm	Direct contact; handling of infected material (bedding, clothing)	Good personal hygiene; laundering contaminated material	Mammals
Aspergillosis (not usually spread from animal to human but common to both)	Inhalation of spores (common in environment)	Ubiquitous organism (usually a problem only for debilitated or immune-suppressed humans); good housing cleaning – no damp bedding or moldy food; wear mask when doing necropsies; good ventilation	No direct animal vectors but most commonly found in waterfowl and raptors
Candidiasis (yeast infection)	Contact with secretions of infected animal	Good personal hygiene (usually a problem only for people on antibiotics); good housing cleaning	Any
DISEASE	**ROUTE**	**PRECAUTIONS**	**CARRIERS**
Viruses			
H5N1 (Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza)	Direct or prolonged contact with infected birds, dead birds, or feces. Consumption of undercooked meat and raw dairy products. Aerosolized virus particles.	Avoid direct or prolonged contact with infected or dead birds. If contact necessary, wearing proper PPE (eye protection, gloves, gown) while handling and through washing of hands, footwear, and articles of clothing after exposure.	Primarily waterfowl, wading birds, shorebirds, domestic fowl, raptors but any bird could be infected.
Rabies	Infected body fluid entering wound	Avoid being bitten; use gloves if have scratches or cuts on hands and rabies is possible or suspected; wash <u>any</u> bite or contact area with soap and water immediately & seek advice from a medical professional.	Any warm-blooded animal
Hanta Virus	Inhalation of aerosolized urine and feces of affected rodents	If cleaning areas with signs of wild rodents, first spray surfaces with a bleach solution; wear PPE	Deer mice, voles, other wild rodents
West Nile Virus	Bite of infected mosquito; very slight possibility of transmission from infected birds	Get rid of standing water; stay inside at high mosquito activity times like dawn/dusk; use repellants; wear long sleeves; use gloves when	Mosquitos

		cleaning aviaries of infected birds	
Parasitoses			
Baylisascaris procyonis or *columnaris* (raccoon or skunk roundworm)	Fecal/oral	Good personal hygiene & proper PPE; wear gloves when cleaning raccoon or skunk cages; de-worm all incoming raccoons/skunks; do not launder feces-contaminated bedding with any other material; DO NOT USE RACCOON OR SKUNK HOUSING FOR ANY OTHER SPECIES	Raccoons, skunks
Mange	Direct contact	Good personal hygiene	Mammals
Protozoan Zoonosis			
Giardia	Fecal/oral	Good personal hygiene & proper PPE	Waterfowl, wading birds, sparrows, other birds; beaver, other mammals

Sources:

Jan White, *Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation 1AB,* 1988; International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council; pp 98-103.

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