



# Flights of Fancy Newsletter

## Rock-a-Bye Babies

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*Rock-a-bye baby, in the tree top.  
When the wind blows, the cradle will  
rock.*

It's early spring in Kansas, and that means it's time for baby great horned owls to be hatched.

*When the bough breaks, the cradle  
will fall, and down will come baby,  
cradle and all!*

The recent weather has inundated us with orphaned baby owls. During the last week in March, south-central Kansas experienced some typical spring winds that broke some boughs and brought baby owls tumbling to the ground.

The first two were found in a cemetery, in Wellington. The next day, two more were found at the base of a tree in Clearwater. A fifth was found in Winfield.

Last weekend's surprise blizzard brought us another three reports of baby owls blown out of nests. This means we have EIGHT extra mouths to feed—hungry, demanding, growing mouths.

The babies will be fed with a hand puppet that looks like a great horned owl adult. But once they start flying, it's time for the hunting lessons to begin.

To simulate the open fields where they would normally hunt, we take a large container (like a horse trough) and place some grass and straw in the bottom. Then we put live mice in the grass. The fledglings will have to learn to find and catch these mice in order to eat. Once they are able to do that successfully, we will be com-

fortable releasing them back into the wild.

Below are pictures of our new babies. Their care is going to cost a lot, due to the large amount of food they will require; to donate to our "Rock-a-Bye Babies" fund, see the last page of the newsletter.



## I'm in the Mood for Love

In the cold, dark of the Kansas winter, while most animals are snuggled warm in their nests or dens, great horned owls get in the mood. The males begin to court the females as early as mid-December. Just like a human male, when a great horned owl male sees a female he fancies, he will bring her gifts to win her love. But instead of flowers and candy and diamonds and pearls, an owl will bring food as proof of his ability to provide for a family. Sometimes more than one male will be competing for the same female. When that happens, the female will choose the male who brings her the largest prey item: in humans, we call this "the one with the bigger bank account." We human girls know all about that. It's interesting to see that some traits don't vary much from species to species.

## A Mother's Job is Never Done

Annie, our resident barred owl, has made a nest and laid eggs again this year!

Of course, nobody has informed her that without a male owl involved in some way, her eggs will not hatch. But we'd rather not interrupt her bliss at this point (we think she would not take kindly to it, at any rate).

But she is very proud of her nest and her eggs and has proven to be quite a vigilant

parent! Despite the recent snowstorm, she bravely stayed on her "nest" to keep her eggs nice and warm—she even refused the food left out for her!

If we get an orphaned baby barred owl in this year, we will remove the eggs and put the baby in the nest for her to care for. This is not the first time she has raised an orphaned baby owl and despite her rather outspoken dislike of female visitors to Eagle Valley, she

makes an excellent foster mother!

The photo to the right shows Annie on her nest after the early spring blizzard blew through the area.



## Coming Up Next...

Where we'll be over the next month:

- Peterson Elementary
- Lawrence Virtual School (Lawrence, KS)
- Independent School
- Heartland Home School Association

- Wheatland School (McPherson, KS)
- Country Christian Church School (Halstead, KS)
- K-State Veterinary Program

Also, we will be on-hand for the dedication of the new gymnasium at Bishop Carroll High

School on April 26th.

And on April 28th, we will be doing an Earth Work Shop at the Sedgwick County Extension Office.

Maybe we'll see you there!

## Food and Money Donations Needed

With close to 10 extra babies to feed, Eagle Valley is desperate for assistance with our food bill.

There are three ways you can help:

1. Use the form on the last page to send your donation for the Rock-a-Bye Babies Fund. These mon-

ies will be used exclusively for food and veterinary care for the spring babies.

2. Visit our website (see last page) and send a donation directly to us via Paypal. You don't have to have a Paypal account to do so—a credit card works just fine too.

3. Click on the link to the left to purchase a gift certificate from Rodent Pro! This gift certificate will allow us to purchase food directly from one of our suppliers—the quickest and easiest way to help us out!

[\*\*CLICK HERE\*\*](#)  
to purchase a gift certificate from Rodent Pro!

## Eagle Valley Raptor Center

927 N. 343rd Street W.  
Cheney, KS 67025

Phone: 316-393-0710  
E-mail: [raptorcare@aol.com](mailto:raptorcare@aol.com)

Visit our website:

[www.eaglevalleyraptorcenter.org](http://www.eaglevalleyraptorcenter.org)

Caring for Nature's  
Orphaned and Injured Wildlife



We really need your help this month! We already have almost ten orphaned baby owls and we know we're going to get more calls as the spring season progresses. Use the donation form below or visit our website:

[www.eaglevalleyraptorcenter.org](http://www.eaglevalleyraptorcenter.org)



Name

Address

Phone

Email address

Yes! I'd like to help!

- Add me to your mailing list
- I'd like to volunteer or help with special projects.
- I am interested in Board of Directors/Committee membership
- I'd like to schedule a school/church program or tour of Eagle Valley's facilities
- Enclosed is my donation for the Rock-a-Bye Babies Fund:  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_