

Raptor Enrichment Ideas

Updated 8/30/19

Don't forget to check out our [Enrichment Pinterest Board](#) and our [Perching](#) Board

EXHIBIT ENRICHMENT

- Areas that promote free flight.
- Variety of perching sizes (diameter) and locations (re-perching periodically can stimulate activity). See [Raptor TAG Newsletter 1.2](#) for articles on Quick Change Perching.

- Natural bathing opportunities (perches exposed to the elements, bath pans, sprinklers) for water bathing as well as perches receiving direct sun for sunbathing (especially after baths).

Bath pans should allow the bird to wade chest-deep in a pan large enough for them to fully sit and partially spread wings. Bath pans should not be placed in corners or next to fences to avoid wing injuries.

- Live plants - See [Browse List](#) Search (CTRL + F) the list for "bird"
- Plant trimmings for shade, screening, and rain cover. (Safe [Browse](#) list)
- Grass flats. (See: <https://pin.it/pzw43shcqi2ze3>)
- Water features: deep or shallow pools, running water, moats, sprinklers (See: [PVC Sprinklers](#)), etc.
- Variations in ground level (i.e., sentry mounds).
- Variety of substrates (shredded paper, pine shavings, pine straw).

- Sand, dirt, peat moss for dust baths.
- Nest boxes, logs, platforms, burrows (birds can "excavate" their own nest log if shavings or mulch are placed inside).
- Mud for nest building.
- Variety of feeding stations.
- Areas for escape from aggressive conspecifics or other species in mixed exhibits.
- Live Christmas trees (untreated/unsprayed)
- Swinging/dynamic perches (very popular!)
- Perching wrapped with different textures (vet/medi wrap, sisal rope, astroturf, carpet)
- varying perch/branch sizes
- Other perching ideas, visit our Pinterest board: <https://pin.it/q2mii4tojbpbct>
- Wood wool in dry pool
- magazines for shredding
- register/receipt rolls tied down or fixed on outside of fence
- clumps of sod
- piles of leaves
- Rotting logs to "squish"
- novel substrates- much, sod, pea gravel, etc...

DIETARY ENRICHMENT - keep in mind most raptors locate food by sight, not scent. If they are not used to foraging in novel enrichment, they may need visual aids.

- Diet Items- whole or chopped
 - Mice or Rats
 - Chicks
 - Rabbit
 - Beef Heart (a quick fan favorite. Picky eaters may need a couple of attempts to adjust. The tougher meat takes them longer to tear up.)
 - Quail
 - Ducklings
 - Fish
- Live prey
 - **Live insects** (mealworms and crickets) in PVC, paper bags, or TP tube feeders. (See: <https://pin.it/w27ww4ajrzerec>)
 - **Crickets** in water bowl.
 - **Fruit fly** generator.
 - **Crayfish** or crawdads
 - Dirt/sand bath with **mealworms**.
 - "Live" rocks (covered with **barnacles, seaweed, mussels, limpets**).
 - **Minnows** in a water dish
 - Live **fish, squid, lizards**, etc.
- For enrichment (many of these are ideal for beak maintenance):
 - Quail wings
 - Chicken wings or heads
 - Rat tails
 - Rabbit heads, feet, pelts
 - Calves (stillborn or otherwise)
 - Deer (including hide)
 - Goat
 - Horse heads
- Novel items
 - **Rabbit pelts** and **quail wings** for shredding.
 - **Rawhide** or **pigs ear**. Remove after an hour.
 - Hard boiled **eggs**. Scrambled eggs.
 - Canned **dog food**
 - **Knuckle bones**
 - **Dog tug toys**

- Paper
 - **Phone book** with pages crumpled and diet stuffed inside (see: <https://pin.it/44p3Julio36tv2r>)
 - Cover rat/fish with **newspaper**. Wrap part of diet in paper.
 - **paper mache** piñatas (made with flour and water) with diet
 - **Paper bags** with food in it. Scatter around or hang. Hang on outside (or top) of mesh/fence so they have to shred to get to it.
 - **Paper streamers**
 - **Raffia** (with care in its application)
- Cardboard
 - **Egg carton** with food in different sections. Can hide food in paper in each section. (leave top open or off) (see: <https://pin.it/i54e6u3hvhaw2z>)
 - **Box** with part of diet in it. Leave open, close partially, or close and cut holes in it for them to stick heads inside. (Bonus if you paint it like a carcass!)
 - **Large tube** with part of diet stuffed in it with paper.
 - **TP tubes** with diet (see: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/780530179141927201/>; or <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/780530179141771650/>)
 - Forage **cups**: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/780530179141771921/>
- Pinecones
 - **Pinecones** or sticks smeared with peanut butter then rolled in seeds.
 - **Pinecone** with BOP meat. (See: <https://pin.it/65pixjtfp5jras>)
 - Large box with **pine cones** inside with diet in it or on pinecones.
- Plants
 - Non toxic **flowering browse**. See [browse list](#) Search (CTRL + F) the list for “bird”
 - **Boughs** from trees. Hide pieces of diet in branches.
- Ice
 - **Ice blocks** with food frozen inside.
 - **Ice cubes** with food in it.
 - Crack an **egg** into each cell of an ice tray and freeze. (See: <https://pin.it/vsajrw5z4of26o>)
 - Large **frozen fish head**
- PVC feeders
 - <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/780530179142335754/>
 - <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/780530179141927255/>
 - Kerplunk feeder: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/780530179141771644/>
- Puzzle feeders
 - <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/780530179142335740/>
 - <https://pin.it/pmlto3rd5fli2>
 - <https://pin.it/le2emzdxjhchym>;
 - <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/780530179142192321/>
 - <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/780530179142085592/>
 - **Firehose** feeder: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/780530179141771635/>
 - **Muffin tray** with balls in each section. Hide food under just a few.
 - **Tire** with sections cut out: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/780530179141771769/>
 - **Suet feeder** with mice or a “meatball” in it.
 - Large **boomer ball** with diet on and around opening.
- Novel feeding methods
 - **Carcass** feeding (whole or partial calves, deer, rabbits, goat, horse heads)
 - Kong Toy stuffed with diet, whole prey (rat, chick, etc)
 - **Hol-ee Roller** balls (stuff with diet or paper) such as [this](#)
 - **Several feedings** throughout day (unpredictable times, am and pm)
 - **Scatter feeding**- Place part of diet in different spots in mew (perches, floor, stumps).
 - **Hide food** under browse, or in holes drilled in stump or log.
 - Weave **rat tails** in a swinging wreath in the enclosures.
 - Feed **on the glove**.
 - **Suet cage** with diet
 - Tie food item to a pole: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/780530179141927250/>
 - Floating forage bowls: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/780530179141771624/>

- Turf mat or spaghetti mat with diet underneath

Food Enrichment for Vultures

- Items that encourage natural foraging behavior, that encourages them to stick heads inside of “carcasses” or use their feet to stand on/stabilize items while shredding
- Items they have to tear open
- Mock carcasses (paper mache, molded fiberglass)
 - a. See fiberglass zebra carcass example from Zoo Atlanta:

<https://www.zoochat.com/community/media/lappet-faced-vultures.152442/>

- Whole carcasses, such as stillborn calf, fetal pig, or roadkill or bow-hunted deer (roadkill can be frozen per vet recommended time- many facilities will xray roadkill or hunted deer to verify it is free of lead bullet fragments. Use proper precaution handling in areas with Chronic Wasting Disease.)

NOVEL ENRICHMENT/SOCIAL ENRICHMENT

- Plants
 - Non toxic flowers and browse.
 - See [Browse List](#) Search (CTRL + F) the list for “bird”
- Social enrichment
 - Behavioral training.
 - Group exhibit for colonial animals.
 - Mixed species exhibit.
- Fruit/vegetables
 - Large item for shredding like lettuce or cabbage heads, zucchini, broccoli, melons, ears of corn with the husk, eggplant, pumpkins, day-old stale bread, phone books, newspaper, celery heads (offer these items alone or with diet stuffed in it)
 - Fruit kabobs.
 - Whole fruit or vegetables (especially large heads of lettuce or cabbage) stuffed with diet.
 - Corn on the cob.
 - Pumpkin (can hide food in carved out holes)
 - Whole watermelon (or carve and stuffed with diet)
 - XL zucchini
 - Corn husks
 - Whole bananas for peeling
 - Broccoli heads
 - Dried corn stalks
- Paper
 - shredded newspaper in shallow trays
 - Brown bags (no handles) empty or stuffed with newspaper, shredded paper, or other shredable items.
 - Paper braids (brown paper or paper towels) or chains (use TP tubes to make chains) <https://pin.it/njk4g2oqlpce6e>
- Paper pom poms
- Paper streamers
- Cardboard boxes stuffed with wool or sticks or leaf litter.
- Hole punch paper plates and string up (avoiding tangle hazards)
- coffee filters
- Phone book (no food).
- Paper bag with paper crumpled or shredded in it.
- streamers
- Cardboard boxes and egg cartons.
- Piñatas stuffed with shredded paper <https://pin.it/gdnd5zmuy6xtqf>
- Visual enrichment
 - Garden pinwheels
 - shatter-proof mirror or mirror on outside of fencing
 - Visual barriers
 - Dried palm fronds woven into fencing for barrier
 - TV
- Auditory enrichment
 - Wind chimes <https://pin.it/m7fnjqvywn5vd>; <https://pin.it/7awptxc654yodn>
 - bells
 - Hang a bunch of spoons, other silverware, long cooking spoons, key chains together. They dangle and jingle just like keys! <https://pin.it/53iojj4uuvagqj>
 - Recorded vocalizations of same or similar species (equal size or smaller species).
- Tactile
 - Scrub brush heads
 - AstroTurf

- Dirt/dust bath (no food).
- Novel stimuli
- Man on the glove/Walk on zoo grounds.
- Perch in new areas while cleaning exhibit/mew
- Plants/browse
 - Pine cones wrapped in wool or plain.
 - Grapevine wreath (craft stores or dollar store)
- Toys
 - Whiffle balls, tennis balls.
 - Holee roller.
 - Small cat toys with bells
 - Bells/Chimes/Metal spoons
 - Stuffed animals (supervised)
 - Make a jingle ball (xs boomer ball with holes and washers inside)
 - Thistle rope knot toys (supervised)
 - Long, knotted dog rope toy ropes (supervised)
 - squeaky toys, float in pool
 - Wooden toys.
 - Rubber toys.
- Miscellaneous
 - Bubbles
 - wool
 - empty Gatorade bottles
 - Fur
 - snake sheds
 - sheets or blankets hung up outside enclosure (or inside enclosure with supervision)
- Feathers.
- Dust baths (play sand or chinchilla dust)
- Scent trails (“Black vultures, king vultures and condors must rely on vision alone to find carrion. Turkey vultures belong to a small group in the genus *Cathartes*—which includes two Central and South American species called the lesser and the greater yellow-headed vulture. All three of these birds find carrion through smell.”
 - <http://insider.si.edu/2017/12/scientists-in-awe-of-huge-olfactory-bulb-found-in-turkey-vulture-brain/>)
- Nesting material- sticks, branches
- Water
 - Larger pools
 - dripping water/water misters
 - floating ice cubes with or without food in a pool
 - Float a bowl in water with diet
 - Water play: wave machines, misters, running water, pools, etc.
 - PVC sprinkler
 - <https://pin.it/smic5ftvIm4dza>
 - Float novel items in pool
 - <https://pin.it/ulxe5zkluw3v5v>