



Congress of the Birds

149 Congress Ave
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Support H-7222 – Rodenticide Ban and Municipal Pilot Program

Submitted by: Sheida Soleimani, Founder & Executive Director, Congress of the Birds

Dear Representative Casey and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sheida Soleimani. I am an artist and an Associate Professor at Brandeis University. But most relevant to why I am here: I am a federally and state-licensed wildlife rehabilitator, and the Founder and Executive Director of Congress of the Birds — Rhode Island's only clinic dedicated exclusively to the rehabilitation and release of wild birds.

I am going to assume that most people in this room have never held a bald eagle. Not seen one from far away. Not through binoculars. Held one.

Felt the weight of one in their arms. Felt how heavy a body becomes when it no longer has the strength to hold itself upright.

In 2025, we admitted an adult Bald Eagle. Just like one that arrived a year before her, she died shortly after arriving at our clinic, in my arms.

Following her death, we sent out samples for toxicology. The report came back showing staggering levels of second-generation anticoagulant rodenticide in her liver.

These poisons stop blood from clotting. Once they're in the body, bleeding begins internally — slow, invisible at first. And then even something small — a branch, a collision, a hard landing — becomes catastrophic.

By the time they reach me, their mouths are pale. Their breathing is shallow. Their bodies feel different in my hands — not just injured, but collapsing from the inside.

I part the feathers to push subcutaneous fluids, and find deep purple bruising spreading across the skin beneath. I open their beaks and see blood pooling, thin and unwilling to clot. I inject Vitamin K into muscle. I run fluids. I place them in oxygen.

And sometimes — most times — it is not enough.



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Earlier this year, two students from Brown University called me about a Barred Owl sitting on pavement near the Faculty Club. It was the middle of the day — a nocturnal owl exposed to the sun, barely reacting to people walking by. Next to him was a rodenticide bait box.

This was the third owl found in that same location.

When I arrived, the student who called me — the head of the Brown Birdwatching Club — told me that seeing a Barred Owl had always been on his life list. This was not the way he imagined it.

When I picked the owl up, his body was limp but trembling. His eyes half open. Blood dripped from his mouth onto my exam table and did not stop. Beneath his feathers, his entire body was bruised. He died within hours.

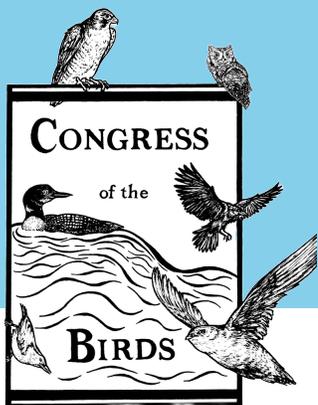
In 2025 alone, Congress of the Birds admitted 134 raptor patients — owls, hawks, falcons, vultures, eagles. Every single one of them was treated for second-generation anticoagulant rodenticide exposure. That is the baseline assumption under which I practice raptor rehabilitation in Rhode Island: if a bird of prey comes through our doors, I assume poison is already in its system— because it always is.

And already in 2026, we have admitted 27 raptor patients — significantly more than we had at this point last year. The numbers are not slowing down.

These poisons do not stay where they are placed. They move. They accumulate. They travel quietly through the food chain.

The rat eats the bait. The owl eats the rat. The poison does what it was designed to do—only now it is inside something we never intended to kill.

An owl can eat hundreds — sometimes thousands — of rodents in a year. They are not the problem. They are the solution.



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And yet I keep watching them unravel from the inside.

H-7222 offers a phased and thoughtful path forward — supporting municipalities in adopting wildlife-safe alternatives, restricting access to these poisons, and moving us toward methods that do not dismantle the ecosystems we depend on.

This suffering is preventable. Please pass H-7222. I am asking you to make it so fewer birds die in my hands.

Thank you,

Sheida Soleimani

Founder & Executive Director, Congress of the Birds