

# Injured bald eagle treated and successfully released into wild

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An injured bald eagle underwent an operation at Iowa State University's College of Veterinary Medicine in March to repair its fractured wing. Credit: Dr. Mary Sarah Bergh

A rehabilitated bald eagle that underwent surgery earlier this year at Iowa State University to repair a broken wing has made a successful recovery and was released back into the wild on Monday.

The adult male [bald eagle](#) suffered a serious injury in a collision with a vehicle in Marshall County, but an operation in early March at Iowa State University's College of Veterinary Medicine saved the bird's injured right wing.

The bald eagle was released back into the wild at McFarland Park in Ames on Monday.

Dr. Mary Sarah Bergh, a veterinary surgeon and assistant professor of veterinary clinical sciences, performed the procedure to repair the fracture with an external skeletal fixator, or a medical device that stabilizes the bone so it can heal properly.

"The operations gave the bone strength and rigidity while it healed," Butler-Bergh said. "For some time after the [surgery](#), we immobilized the wing by taping it against the bird's body and slowly reintroduced flight as the bone became stronger."

Following the surgery, Saving Our Avian Resources, an Iowa-based organization dedicated to protecting raptors, helped rehabilitate the eagle by feeding it, administering medication and providing a safe environment to strengthen the injured wing. Twelve weeks later, the bald eagle had recovered from the surgery and was healthy enough to be released.

"I think the bird is definitely ready to be released and go on to have a long, healthy life," Bergh said. "Hopefully we never see it again because it's doing so well."

It was the second operation Bergh has performed to save a bald eagle, she said. The other took place in 2010 after a similar incident in which an eagle was hit by a car. Both surgeries went according to plan, and the [birds](#) made recoveries, she said.

"It's a wonderful experience operating on these magnificent birds and then seeing them recover," Bergh said. "I'm lucky I've gotten to experience it twice."

Provided by Iowa State University

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