

Name:



Photo: Courtesy of Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources

Injury to Female Falcon's Beak

The article below was posted to the RVA Falcon Cam website during 2023. Read the passage, then answer the questions that follow.

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Some viewers may have noticed that the beak of the female (95/AK) is currently more blunt than that of the male falcon. This is the result of an injury that occurred prior to the launch of the Falcon Cam. Though we have no way of knowing the specific circumstances that led to the injury, it was almost certainly caused by some sort of collision.

The sharp tip of hooked raptor beaks helps them to consume their prey by allowing them to tear off small bits of flesh. Even with the tip of her beak missing, the female appears to be in great body condition and is behaving normally, which indicates that she has been able to successfully feed herself. Despite the injury, we anticipate that she will still be able to contribute, along with her mate, to hunting for and feeding any chicks that are hatched. We also expect that, over time, the bill will regrow through the growth of the outer hornlike layer of keratin, the same protein that makes up human hair and fingernails. The extent to which the bill will look as it did originally will depend in part on whether the underlying bone was damaged.

At this moment we do not intend to intervene by attempting to remove the female for rehabilitation. There is currently no indication that intervention is necessary, and attempting to capture the bird at this urban site carries risks. In addition, removal of the bird would most likely lead to nest failure. We will be continuing to monitor her progress and will reevaluate this decision if needed.

1. Which word is a synonym for the word **blunt** as it is used in the first sentence?
 - a. large
 - b. dull
 - c. colorful
 - d. squeaky
2. Which word describes the usual or typical shape of raptors' beaks?
 - a. soft
 - b. smooth
 - c. rounded
 - d. pointed

3. Is the shape of a raptor's beak a physical or behavioral adaptation?

4. How did 95/AK's beak become injured?

5. Why didn't the scientists try to repair her beak?

6. What is the meaning of the word collision, as it is used in the last sentence of paragraph 1?
 - a. crash
 - b. agree
 - c. launch
 - d. blend

7. Is a peregrine falcon a carnivore, herbivore or omnivore?

8. Read the first sentence in paragraph two. What is the most likely meaning of **raptor** as it is used in the sentence?
 - a. prey
 - b. lizard
 - c. bird of prey
 - d. mammal

9. Which falcon parent hunts to find food for the baby chicks?

10. After reading the passage, what prediction can you make about the future of 95/AK and her beak?