

## A Word from Our President

Most of us spent the pandemic lockdowns of 2020 more confined and immobilized than at any time in our lives. Not true for birds!

A recent study based on 4.3 million observations by birders in the US and Canada was assembled by the [Cornell University Lab of Ornithology](#). The results were astounding! With the lack of human presence and traffic, birds changed their behavior rapidly. Hummingbirds seen near airports tripled. Bald Eagles moved into counties with stricter lockdowns, and the number of Red-tailed Hawks rose in urban centers. Warblers and sparrows were observed in higher numbers, significant as these two families account for almost 50% of the 3 billion birds lost since 1970.



This signals hope for the future that even minor changes to our human activity may result in positive changes for bird populations. Of course, this most recent reprieve for wildlife was short-lived. Our native songbirds once again are threatened by habitat loss due to development, domestic animal predation, pesticides, window collisions and artificial light which interferes with migration.

It is an uphill battle...

The Bird Center of Michigan hopes to meet these challenges to our native songbirds this year, and for many years to come, through the expansion of our facilities, staff and knowledge. Every injured and orphaned bird deserves quality medical care, but to make an impact on bird populations in general, we must educate and build awareness in the human population. We are hopeful for the future. We invite you to grow with us!

**Dana DeBenham**  
Board President  
Bird Center of Michigan

## Collision Consequences

This Northern Flicker was brought into our clinic due to a collision injury. Sadly, this beautiful bird passed away a few days after intake due to severe head and spinal trauma. Collisions are one of the leading reasons why birds are brought to the Bird Center clinic.

We do not euthanize collision cases



on arrival, because although the bird has endured severe head trauma due to the collision, there is no way to know the true extent of it. No bird is the same and no window strike is the same, and we cannot look inside their head. With treatment, some birds are able to regain their ability to self-feed, fly, and get released back into the wild, while others are not. It can sometimes take days for collision symptoms to arise. This is why we

treat rather than automatically euthanize upon arrival.

According to the North American Breeding Bird Survey, Northern Flicker populations decreased by nearly 50% between 1966 and 2012. It is estimated that this number will continue to increase by 1.5% every year. Collisions, along with domestic predators such as cats, have aided in the destruction of the population of these wonderful birds.

Window decals can greatly prevent window strikes. For more information on how you can help prevent window collisions, please visit <https://abcbirds.org/glass-collisions/>.

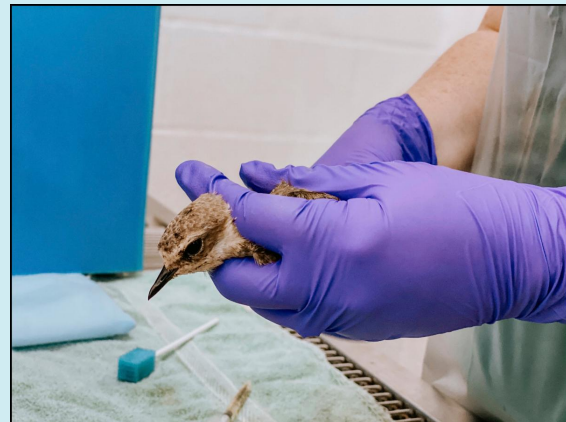
Their lives are depending on us!

[Donate Here!](#)

## Advocacy in Action

Our primary mission is to care for injured and orphaned songbirds and release them into the wild. However, we also keep an eye on news, laws, and policies that impact birds and other wildlife and take positions when appropriate. We provide this information to you as part of our educational work.

This month we want to update you on several events that impact birds in our state and beyond:



**Sandhill Cranes:** In March, the Bird Center joined with 29 other organizations to oppose a resolution pending in the Michigan Senate calling for a Sandhill Crane hunt. We objected because there is no sound science to justify hunting these beloved birds. Although SR 20 has not been considered by the full Senate, the Michigan Natural Resources Commission will have a presentation on Sandhill Cranes at its October 14th meeting. While no vote will be taken, this signifies movement forward on an effort advocated by only a minority of Michigan residents to remove the birds' protected status. We are joining Michigan Audubon and other organizations in a letter to the NRC and to the governor, strongly opposing any effort to remove these protections. As of this writing, the letter is still being finalized. We will share it with you at a later date. [Read the March 2, 2021 coalition letter to the Senate Committee.](#) Michigan residents can [take action here.](#)



**Oil Spills:** Ever since 1989's Exxon Valdez disaster, we've had to become accustomed to periodic spills that impact wildlife, including birds, and their habitat. Images of oiled birds are hard to forget. Early this month, reports of an oil spill in California's Orange Co. surfaced. Wildlife incident reports are available [here](#) and are updated daily. The threatened Snowy Plover is one of the birds most impacted (pictured above). In 2010, the Enbridge pipeline oil spill impacted the Kalamazoo River near Marshall, MI, and many animals such as this goose.

**Migratory Bird Treaty Act:** Better news on this front! We reported several months ago that a new rule proposed by the previous Administration would significantly weaken this bedrock law, over 100 years old, by limiting prosecutions to actions which *intentionally* cause injury or death to birds and would not prohibit those that *incidentally* caused harm. The current Administration had signaled it was not in favor of the new interpretation. In late September, it formalized a rule that restores protections under the Act to penalize unintentional actions by drilling, construction and other industrial activities. (It is not clear, however, that the new rule will apply to the Orange County spill, which occurred before the new rule officially goes into effect and thus liability of those found responsible for the spill may be limited.)

*Snowy Plover Image Credit: Kyra Mills, UC Davis*

*Oiled Goose Image Credit: [USEPA Environmental Protection Agency](#)*



*Image courtesy of Brant Georgia. BCM Intern*

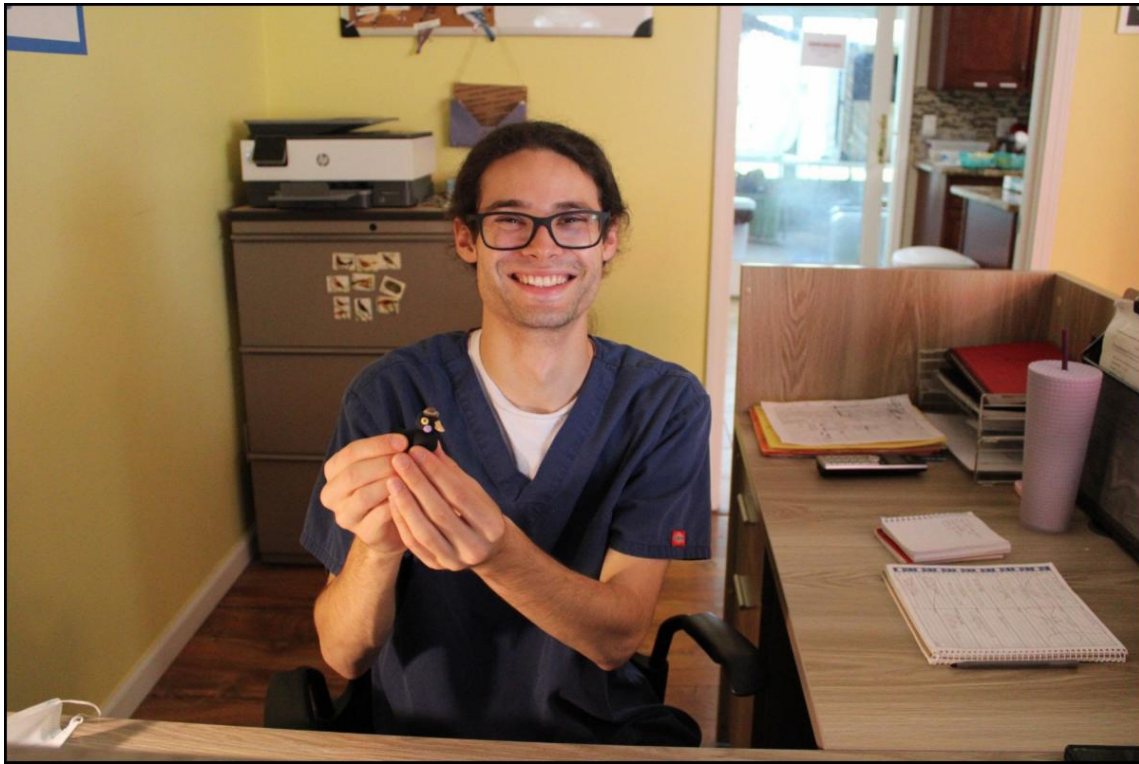
## Meet the Team!

*Meet our Rehabilitation Supervisor, Dominick Fenech!*

Dominick first started at the Bird Center in the summer of 2019 as a wildlife rehabilitation intern. He has learned invaluable information about rehabilitating wildlife, and has further expanded his already vast appreciation and knowledge of birds.

Dominick currently works at the BCM clinic as a wildlife rehab supervisor, where he

assists management and trains and oversees interns and volunteers. He is a very talented photographer and birder, and is always our go-to person when we have questions regarding rare bird species identification and natural history.



One of his favorite memories at the BCM is releasing a Virginia Rail. Dominick states, "As an avid birdwatcher, this species is known to be extremely secretive, so to finally be able to see this bird up close and successfully rehab and release it after it collided into a car was an amazing experience that I will never forget."

Dominick is a great asset to the Bird Center and is always striving to go above and beyond in the care of our feathered patients. Thank you for all you do, Dom!

Check out Dominick's bird photos on [Instagram!](#)

## Wildlife Service Announcement

While faux spider webbing is a fun way to decorate your home for Halloween festivities, this type of decoration can actually be quite dangerous for all wildlife! This is the time of year that rehabilitators receive numerous calls regarding animals caught in these types of decorations.

# Wildlife-safe Halloween Decorations:

Ensure decorations do not have loops or strings that wildlife can become entangled in.

Ensure all motion-activated noise and light decorations are not near nests or dens.

Ensure wires are inaccessible to prevent rodents from chewing through them.



[birdcentermi.org](http://birdcentermi.org)

Please remember to check your webbed decorations frequently for trapped animals. If you happen to find a tangled critter, please be sure that once an animal is untangled, to contact a licensed rehabilitator, even if the animal seems to have recovered.

Thank you for caring about wild lives!

## Caught Off Guard

This fledgling Goldfinch was brought to the Bird Center due to being dog-caught.

Fledgling birds are among the most susceptible to being caught by animals. They are still in the process of learning how to fly and don't know how to effectively avoid predators.

Thankfully, this little one is very feisty and is being treated with antibiotics to prevent any possible infection that may arise.

This Goldfinch's prognosis is good at this time. Thank you team and gracious supporters!



[Donate Here!](#)

## Events at the Bird Center of Michigan

## Thank you, Volunteers!

On September 26th, over 40 volunteers were able to enjoy our volunteer celebration with good food, good company, and delicious fresh grape juice made from our very own grapes. A Bald Eagle even glided over the Bird Center while everyone was outside enjoying the day!

The BCM wouldn't be able to operate successfully without the help of so many incredible people who generously share their time with us. We love our volunteers!



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## Carol Akerlof - A Celebration of Life

Thank you to everyone who attended the Celebration of Life for our Founder, Carol Akerlof, on October 2nd at the Bird Center of Michigan.

In lieu of flowers, Carol's family has requested that memorial contributions be made to the Bird Center of Michigan.

We will be establishing an Education Fund to support Carol's passion and legacy.

To contribute, please visit <https://gofund.me/e7af6ecf>.



Carol's legacy will soar for generations to come!

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## Backyard Gardening Day

This dynamic team of volunteers, led by Audi and Ashley, continues to amaze us! With the help of these two U of M grad students, our volunteers adorned the Bird Center's back yard with native plants during our gardening event on October 9th!

Their research and organization has allowed us to provide habitat for birds and other wildlife using Michigan native plant species.



Thank you ALL for your commitment to wildlife and the Bird Center of Michigan!

## Did You Know?

Leaves are not litter.  
They're food and shelter for bees,  
butterflies, beetles, and more.  
Tell your friends and neighbors to just  
**#LeaveTheLeaves**

**bc**  
birdcentermi.org

## "Tailless" Cuckoo Tale

This Yellow-billed Cuckoo came in with minor lacerations on his back. We are treating him with pain meds and antibiotics.

This Cuckoo is missing all of his tail feathers except one. This may be due to being cat-caught or being kept in a wire cage, before being brought to the Bird Center.

Birds caught by animals often have feather loss due to the trauma of their injuries. Feather loss is especially common in Cuckoos. Most birds molt in a single session, while



Cuckoos molt in three different sessions, making their feathers more fragile.

This Yellow-billed Cuckoo will stay at the Bird Center until he regrows all of his feathers, which may take some time!

Thank you, donors, for supporting our efforts!

[Donate Here!](#)

## It's easy to contact us!

For bird-related questions, concerns, or emergencies, please contact our rehabilitation clinic by phone or email:

**Clinic Phone:** 734.761.9640

**Clinic Email:** [clinic@birdcentermi.org](mailto:clinic@birdcentermi.org)

For donations, sponsorships, or business-related concerns, please contact our administration email:

[admin@birdcentermi.org](mailto:admin@birdcentermi.org)

For volunteer opportunities or events, please contact our volunteer email:

[volunteer@birdcentermi.org](mailto:volunteer@birdcentermi.org)



## Thank you, feathered friend supporters!

**Donations/Mailing Address:** PO Box 3718 • Ann Arbor, MI 48106

**New Location:** 7800 Platt Road • Saline, MI 48176

**Phone:** 734.761.9640

**Website:** [birdcentermi.org](http://birdcentermi.org)

**Donate:** [birdcentermi.org/donate](http://birdcentermi.org/donate)

