



A Word from Our President

Happy Holidays from the Bird Center of Michigan!

As I reflect on 2021, it seems incredible that just one year ago, the BCM was without a home. What a year it has been!

Through the support of the bird-loving community (and at times through sheer grit, determination and luck!), we secured a wonderful new home in Saline, MI, with room to grow our mission to meet the ever-increasing demand for wildlife rehabilitation.



From that moment in January, it was a scramble all winter long to turn this circa 1976 family home into a songbird facility. We built walls to provide a public reception area. We added basement floor tiles (carpet and bird care don't mix!). We changed bedrooms into an exam room, a baby nursery, and an adult care room, all completed just in time to welcome a new team of interns and the flood of orphaned patients for the spring Baby Season! Now we have turned our focus outdoors to build much needed pre-release enclosures. Already we have converted an old duck pen into three aviaries, we are working on adding two more on the pole barn porch, and we are planning to build a bank of four flight pens in the spring.

Sadly, this fall we lost our beloved founder and friend, Carol Akerlof. It is a blessing that Carol was able to see our new home and how far we have come since our humble beginnings in her spare room two decades ago. Our focus now is on the future.

In March, we changed our name to the Bird Center of Michigan - reflective of our broadening scope to help songbirds in need. In total, we have cared for well over 1500 birds this year, a 50% increase from just a few years ago, and we know that trend will continue. We face 2022 with hopes that we can meet the need and the demand and will have the resources to do so.

On behalf of all the birds and the Bird Center of Michigan team, thank you to our volunteers and donors who have supported us on our journey this year. We simply could not do it without you.

We wish you and your family happy holidays and a blessed New Year!

Dana DeBenham



A Crow's Rehab Journey



This juvenile crow was admitted to the clinic with a broken tarsometatarsus, the lowest leg-bone just above the foot.

Due to the nature of the injury (an isolated break with a deep laceration), the time of year, and the age of the bird, it is suspected that another crow or group of crows may have caused the injury.

Crows form small family groups made up of a breeding pair and their most recent offspring, along with older siblings who sometimes stay up to five years, to help raise the young. These groups work as a team and search for food together - but they don't like sharing beyond that inner circle.

Being as intelligent and social as they are, crows will recognize outsiders and other families in their territory and attack to keep control. It's possible that this young crow who was still learning his way wandered too close to a rival family.

Food scarcity, prompting one family to venture into another's area, could have resulted in a fight. Luckily, this crow escaped and a rescuer was able to bring him in. On his own with that type of injury, the crow would have been subjected to a long and painful end.

Initially, the staff feared the break may be too severe to mend - the wound went far into the leg and was dangerously close to a joint. After receiving pain medication and time to stabilize, treatment was determined to be possible. The leg was then splinted and we administered a calcium supplement to encourage bone growth. The splint had to be changed regularly and the wound needed to be cleaned while it healed. Slowly yet surely, the crow was using the injured leg more and more, able to put weight on the splint without damaging the break any further.

The foot took longer to regain movement and grip but as the break healed, he was starting to perch again. He had been kept in a small, safe enclosure during early recovery but it became clear he would need extra space to stretch his wings and use his legs more. He was moved to his own room in the clinic with plenty of natural perches and enrichment to keep him occupied while he remembered how to use that leg.

Finally, the last splint was removed and mobility and strength of the leg continued to improve. He was moved to our outdoor enclosure for lots of flight practice and fresh air in order to re-acclimate to the wild before being released. He has done very well in rehab and it wouldn't be possible without the generosity of our donors.

We appreciate your gift of life to the birds at the Bird Center of Michigan, and we're sure they are grateful, too!



Image courtesy of Brant Georgia, BCM Intern

Meet the Team

Meet the Bird Center of Michigan's long-time license holder and board member, Sherri Smith!

Sherri began rehabbing songbirds in 1990 in her Ann Arbor home. She had always had a love for all animals, especially woodpeckers, robins, and blue jays. By conducting her own research and attending workshops and conferences, Sherri soon became very knowledgeable in the field of wildlife rehabilitation and ecology. After deciding to make it official, she obtained her wildlife rehabilitation permit through the [Michigan Department of Natural Resources](#).

Through a mutual friend, Sherri met the Bird Center of Michigan's founder, Carol Akerlof. They worked together and learned from each other on how to best care for the injured songbirds of Michigan.

Thank you, Sherri, for all of your hard work!



Did you know?



How to Help Birds in Cold Winter Weather

Don't worry about your backyard birds during frigid winter weather. Learn how to help them by providing food, water and shelter. Whether it's hot or cold, raining or snowing, birds have to adapt and survive the weather conditions. Here are a few...

[Read more](#)

www.birdsandblooms.com

Gull Sees Again

Thanks to the rescuer for transporting this juvenile Ring-billed Gull, who was admitted to the Bird Center after presenting neurological symptoms. He was found in a busy apartment complex parking lot, which led the staff to believe the injuries likely came from a vehicle strike.



His right eye was injured, he was very unsteady on his feet, and generally uncoordinated from the trauma. He wasn't able to fly due to his lack of motor-function.

Hardly able to walk, he was prescribed meds to ease the pain while he regained his composure in the weeks to come. He was given a nice-sized enclosure and plenty of fish and fruit to eat. Despite his energy and overall strength, he was not self-feeding. He received hand fed formula to prevent him from losing weight. He received eye drops for his injured eye and antibiotics to reduce any swelling that might be hindering his movement.

Thankfully, once his eye's condition and coordination started to improve, he became more apt to eat on his own! He especially enjoys eating live minnows and goldfish from a water dish, which was a relief since it's always better to give the patient options and control over their environment when possible, rather than having to force-feed. The staff placed as many perches as possible along the ground and soft terrain for his webbed feet.

Along with this upgrade in habitat, the staff set up a camera to monitor the gull's natural behavior. It's extremely valuable to observe an animal without them knowing, since a rehabber's presence is enough to put them on guard. With the camera the staff is able to tell how the gull is doing while at rest, and it can reveal symptoms he might otherwise hide as a defense mechanism. It's a tool that will allow the staff to better help the birds by providing an accurate hands-off exam of the patients.

The most recent treatment the gull has been receiving are daily swims in a bath the staff fills for him. These baths function as both enrichment and a form of occupational therapy. The gull obviously enjoys swimming circles in the water and dunking his head playfully! Plus, the added stimulation and reduced weight on his legs should be great for his continued recovery. He has even begun flying again - he is slowly reclaiming the use of his wings and has been seen taking off multiple times, getting enough lift to reach the higher perches in his room.

Thank you for giving this young gull the opportunity to live in the wild again!



[Donate Here](#)

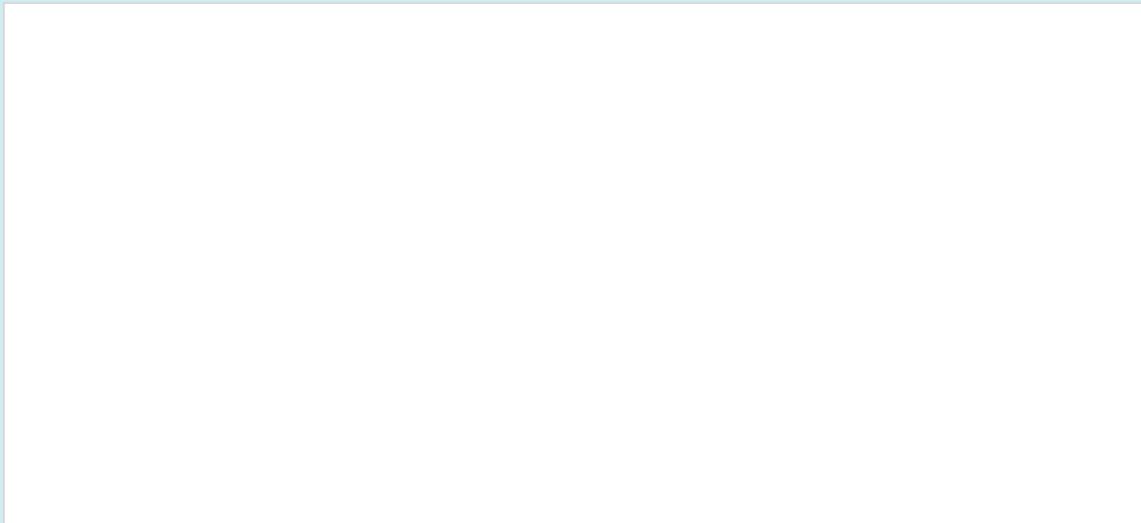
BCM Apparel Now Available

We're incredibly excited to share our new Bonfire apparel store! You can now show your support for the Bird Center of Michigan with style!

<https://www.bonfire.com/store/birdcentermi/>

Our new apparel store features Bird Center of Michigan t-shirts, hoodies, sweatshirts and more, and a percentage of your purchase will go directly to the songbirds in our care.

Thank you for your support!





Bird Center of Michigan | Official Merchandise | Bonfire

Saving songbirds since 2004. The Bird Center of Michigan (formerly Bird Center of Washtenaw County) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that runs solely off of donations...

[Read more](#)
www.bonfire.com

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

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

admin@birdcentermi.org



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

volunteer@birdcentermi.org

We appreciate your support!

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

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