



A Word from the Clinic

The Bird Center has experienced many exciting changes this year, including the expansion of our pole barn efforts, which highlight our ongoing commitment to providing rehabilitation to Michigan's waterfowl. This year, we ran water lines to our pole barn, giving us running water, and we'll soon have a washer and dryer for waterfowl laundry. Additionally, we've installed water hydrants throughout the property, which will help us provide better care for our rehab patients in outdoor flight cages more efficiently. All of our young songbirds spend at least two weeks in one of our sixteen flight cages before being released back into the wild.

With Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) here to stay, we've also upgraded our intake building to safely accept waterfowl and other HPAI-risk patients, such as crows. This allows us to care for these at-risk birds while keeping our existing population safe by quarantining them. We've also added two educational birds to our programs: Clementine, the Baltimore Oriole, and Martha, the Mourning Dove. These birds help us teach the importance of protecting songbirds, an important part of our mission.



We had our busiest summer yet, admitting more than 1,900 patients—our highest number to date—in our 20 years as the Bird Center. While these are exciting times, it wouldn't be fair to overlook the losses we've faced this year. We said goodbye to our beloved volunteer rehabilitator and board member, Colette, and our long-time educational ambassador, Blue the Blue Jay. As we look to the new year, we will continue to honor the warmth and positivity they brought to the center as we expand and improve the care we provide to birds.

With other facilities in Michigan restricting bird intakes or closing their doors, we are facing the reality of being the only southeast Michigan rehab facility taking in baby songbirds for the 2025 season. We anticipate that next year will be our busiest yet, and we couldn't do it without the continued support of our donors, volunteers, and community.

Happy 2025! □

Marissa Jardine
BCM Clinic Manager

Celebrating 20 years!

It's been twenty years since our visionary founder, Carol Akerlof, began the Bird Center's legacy of healing and hope for our beloved songbirds. Back in 2004, she created a haven for orphaned and injured birds in our first home on Mary Street...and inspired a small but mighty team of volunteers to join her in caring for them 24/7.

We've grown so much since then! From just a handful of dedicated, caring folks, we've expanded into a team of nearly 60 dedicated rehabbers, interns, and volunteers. Carol's mission is forever in our hearts and takes flight with every feeding, treatment, and release.

We couldn't be more excited to continue this vital work for another twenty years...and beyond! Our goal is to release every bird healthy and free back to their natural habitat—and to improve the quality of life for songbirds throughout the state of Michigan through rehabilitation, advocacy, and education. But we can't do it without your support.

Since we first opened our doors in 2004, donations from songbird supporters like you have helped the Bird Center of Michigan soar. Can we count on you to help us soar for 20 more?



[Donate Here](#)

Advocacy in Action

Owl vs. Owl: An Ethical Dilemma

Is it justified to kill members of one species to save another? At a recent meeting, BCM board members grappled with that question.

Some of you may remember the Spotted Owl controversy from the 1980s and 1990s. The spotted owl lives in old growth forests in the Pacific Northwest. The species was facing extinction, primarily from habitat destruction due to logging. In 1990, the Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) listed the spotted owl as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The listing was controversial, pitting industry against environmentalists. It generated a firestorm of opposition [i].

Nearly forty years on, the spotted owl is still listed as threatened and its population continues to decline.

According to FWS, the greatest threat now (and for about 15 years), is the barred owl. The FWS Lethal Barred Owl Management Plan (Plan) [ii], released in July 2024, is generating more controversy and opposition. The main protagonists are the environmentalists versus animal welfare proponents. The Plan calls for the killing of between 450,000 and 500,000 barred owls over the next 30 years.





Barred owls are native to the eastern U.S. For years, the Great Plains was a barrier to their migration, but human development and other factors have allowed them to move westward. By the 1970s, they were in spotted owl territory and competing with them. According to the FWS, which considers the barred owl to be invasive:

Barred owls are larger, more aggressive, and more adaptable than northern spotted owls. They displace spotted owls, disrupt their nesting, and compete with them for food. Researchers also have seen a few instances of barred owls interbreeding with or killing spotted owls. Because the spotted owl is already struggling due to its reduced habitat, the effect of the barred owl's presence is an added stressor. An already vulnerable population has a much more difficult

time withstanding dramatic changes in the ecosystem such as the encroachment of a competitor. [iii]

In 2009, FWS convened a Barred Owl Stakeholder Group, to determine whether killing barred owls was ethical and whether it could be done humanely. It was led by wildlife ethicist William Lynn, who published an Ethical Brief in 2011 [iv]. The group ultimately concluded that killing barred owls may be necessary to save spotted owls, but FWS (1) must research nonlethal barred owl removal methods, and (2) develop a strict protocol to assure quick, painless deaths.

Earlier this year, Lynn responded [v] to the current Plan:

Today, Lynn says the latest strategy is “wrong on multiple accounts,” pointing to the fact that the FWS didn’t call for renewed ethical considerations—despite the plan being scaled up so significantly.

He’s not alone in his opposition. In their spring letter [vi] to Secretary Haaland, the 75 animal rights organizations opposed to the plan argued that the strategy is unworkable at the proposed scale. They also argued that barred owls should no longer be considered an invasive species just because they once lived on the other side of the country. The strategy “victimizes a native species engaging in range expansion because of climate disturbance,” the letter read.

For his part, Lynn also argues that the benefit to the spotted owls doesn’t seem great enough to justify the killing of the barred owls.

Two lawsuits have been filed this fall challenging FWS’s Plan to kill barred owls, in federal courts in Washington state and Oregon, alleging, among other claims, violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. [vii]

The Bird Center was asked to sign a letter opposing the Plan. Our board reviewed the available information and had lengthy discussions. Members agreed it was not an easy question, and that people of good faith could have differing opinions on the matter. In the end, the Board voted to oppose the FWS Barred Owl Plan, and to sign the letter in opposition. Reflecting the complexity of the issue, the vote was not unanimous.

□ Top: Spotted Owl, Ray Bosch/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

□ Bottom: Barred Owl, David Roelofs/Bureau of Land Management

[i] For example, a popular T-shirt at the time bore the message: “Save a Logger, Eat an Owl”

[ii] <https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2024-07/final-eis-barred-owl-management-strategy.pdf> (last visited December 14, 2024)

[iii] <https://www.fws.gov/project/barred-owl-management> (last visited December 14, 2024)

[iv] Lynn, W. Barred Owls in the Pacific Northwest: An Ethics Brief, Nov. 2011, revised Jul. 2012, <https://www.williamlynn.net/pdf/lynn-2012-barred-owls.pdf>

[v] Harford, A., Owl Vs Owl, Sierra Magazine, May 2024, <https://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/owl-vs-owl>

New T-shirt Designs

Our flock of interns has been soaring with creativity lately, hatching some creative new t-shirts for our Bonfire store! New designs include the American Robin, the Common Grackle, the Cedar Waxwing, and two special designs in honor of Blue, our sweet ambassador Blue Jay we said goodbye to this fall.

Support our feathered friends with a purchase from our Bonfire store! A portion of your purchase will go directly to the Bird Center of Michigan to benefit the injured and orphaned birds in our care.



Bird Center of Michigan | Official Merchandise

A portion of your purchase from our Bonfire store will go directly to the Bird Center of Michigan to benefit the injured and orphaned birds in our care. Thank you for your support!

[Shop Now](#)

Swift Success

This past summer was our best yet for rehabilitating Chimney Swifts, and it's even more special as we celebrate our 20th anniversary! Over the years, we've become one of the few wildlife rehabilitation centers in Michigan equipped to care for these captivating aerial insectivores due to their specialized care requirements.

Young swifts need to be fed every 20 to

30 minutes for up to 14 hours a day. They energetically chatter and thrash their heads back and forth as they receive each meal, which consists of delicious tweezersful of mealworms!

Chimney Swifts consume about a third of their body weight in insects daily. At the peak of the swift population in our care, we were feeding our patients nearly 7,000 insects each day just to meet their nutritional needs.

As we celebrate two decades of caring for Michigan's birds, a donation of \$20—in honor of our 20th anniversary—can help provide up to 5,000 insects to feed our insatiable insectivore patients. Thank you for supporting our mission!



[Donate Here](#)

How far we've come!



Take a stroll down Memory Lane—or Mary Street, in this case—to the tiny building where thousands of injured and orphaned birds received vital care from 2004 until 2021.

When our founder, Carol Akerlof, established the Bird Center of Washtenaw County, injured birds were often nursed back to health in volunteers' homes, with Carol's careful guidance and support always available. In 2004, a grant enabled the Bird Center to move

into a small building at 926 Mary Street in Ann Arbor. However, this building also served as a local polling station. Before and after each election, staff and volunteers worked tirelessly to transport our feathered patients to and from a temporary location, often the training room at the Ann Arbor Animal Hospital.

In 2021, the Bird Center relocated to a spacious property in Saline, where we continue to expand our rehabilitation efforts. The small polling building at 926 Mary Street, where countless birds were healed, has since been demolished, but its legacy lives on.

As we celebrate our 20th anniversary, we extend our heartfelt thanks to the dedicated staff, interns, and volunteers who performed extraordinary work within those humble walls. Their unwavering commitment to Carol's mission of saving birds has shaped the Bird Center of Michigan into what it is today!

Support Our Flock



Behind every rescued songbird, there's a dedicated team.

Our staff and interns work tirelessly to provide expert care to every injured or orphaned bird who comes through our doors. From delicate treatments to careful monitoring, they're committed to giving these beautiful creatures a second chance.

But we can't do it alone.

As the BCM kicks off our 20th year of saving birds, many wildlife rehabilitators are stretched thin. With limited resources and increasing demand, some local rehabbers may be unable to accept feathered patients during spring migration and baby season—when birds need our help the most.

As we face the potential of being the only songbird rehab in southeast Michigan, we need your help to ensure we remain fully staffed and equipped to help injured and orphaned

birds in need. Your \$20 donation, in honor of our 20th anniversary, will help fund essential staffing costs, ensuring we have the expertise to continue saving countless lives.

[Donate Here](#)

2024 Wrapped

Our 2024 Wrapped is in! Over 1,900 birds listened to our soothing songs of compassion this year, and our top unique species admitted just proves what we already suspected—we're Swifties!



Top Species Admitted

- 1 Mallard (401)
- 2 Robin (310)
- 3 Mourning Dove (201)
- 4 House Finch (92)
- 5 Wood Duck (79)

Top Unique Species

- 1 Chimney Swift (29)
- 2 RT Hummingbird (19)
- 3 American Woodcock (9)
- 4 Ruddy Duck (4)
- 5 Hooded Merganser (4)

Minutes Saving Birds

222,540



birdcentermi.org

Total Birds Admitted

1,932
(and counting!)

Contact Info

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

Clinic Phone: 734.761.9640

For donations, sponsorships, or business-related concerns, contact our administration email:
admin@birdcentermi.org

For volunteer opportunities, contact our volunteer

email: volunteer@birdcentermi.org



To check on a bird you rescued, please email intakes@birdcentermi.org with the bird's ID number and date of rescue.

For a list of licensed wildlife rehabilitators in Michigan, please visit the Michigan DNR website: <https://www2.dnr.state.mi.us/dlr/>



We appreciate your support!

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

Clinic Location: 7800 Platt Road • Saline, MI 48176

Phone: 734.761.9640

Website: birdcentermi.org

Donate: birdcentermi.org/donate



Bird Center of Michigan | P.O. Box 3718 | Ann Arbor, MI 48106 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!