

A Word from the Clinic

Spring is here! ☐

The Bird Center is thrilled to welcome back the Red-winged Blackbirds and other spring migrants, whose familiar calls we've missed during the winter months. As nature awakens, our team is wrapping up and implementing key winter projects, including expanded volunteer programs, a new baby bird identification guide, updated diet protocols, and more. This season, we're excited to have our largest team yet, with six full-time staff members and around 25 interns ready to help during baby bird season. **Last year was our busiest yet, with nearly 2,000 intakes!**

This year, we anticipate an even greater demand, as several other facilities for songbirds and waterfowl have closed, leaving us as the only rehab center in the area specializing in songbirds and taking in young waterfowl at a larger scale. Fortunately, we've planned accordingly—our expanded staff and volunteer programs give us confidence in our ability to meet the challenge. If you've been considering volunteering, now is the perfect time to start.



We've also made exciting improvements to our clinic space, including the addition of four new incubators, remodeled waterfowl runs, and an upgraded intake building to better accommodate waterfowl patients. With the continued rise of avian flu cases across the U.S., we are taking extra precautions to protect both the birds and our team. This summer, we will only be accepting orphaned ducklings to reduce the risk of spread, and we've implemented enhanced PPE requirements and new admit testing protocols in collaboration with the Michigan State Diagnostic Lab. These safety measures come with additional costs—**over \$5,000 in bird flu tests alone**—but they are essential in ensuring the highest standard of care for our patients while keeping the humans who care for them safe. Support from our community helps make this possible, and we're grateful for everyone who contributes to our mission.

Despite the challenges ahead, we are excited and ready for another season of making a difference in the lives of Michigan's wild birds. Thanks to our dedicated staff, volunteers, and supporters, we are entering this spring with optimism and determination. Together, we can give thousands of birds a second chance at life!

Marissa Jardine
Clinic Manager

House Finches are one of Michigan's most common backyard birds, often seen at bird feeders. They're also the most prone to a specific kind of conjunctivitis known as Finch Eye Syndrome. This male House Finch was recently brought to us with swelling in the eyes—a telltale sign of Finch Eye Syndrome.

After cleaning the area and medicating, he's already looking much better! Even though he appears healthy and can fly well, we'll continue his treatment for at least 21 days to ensure that the bacteria is eliminated from his system and cannot spread the disease to other birds. Finch Eye Syndrome often spreads at feeders, which is why it's so important to disinfect your feeders at least every two weeks with a 1-part bleach and 10-part water solution.

As we continue our efforts to rehabilitate and protect these beautiful birds, we kindly ask for your support. Your donations help cover the costs of medical care, food, and enrichment for our feathered patients. Thank you for your generosity!



[Donate Here](#)

Advocacy in Action

Policy Updates

Noteworthy developments include:

I. The 2025 **State of the Birds Report** [i], published every few years and compiled by scientists and conservationists made the following [key findings](#):

- 5 Years After Publication of Study Reporting 3 Billion Birds Lost in Last 50 Years, America Is Still Losing Birds
- Conservation Measures Work
- Bird-Friendly Policies Bring Added Benefits for People, and Have Broad Support

The takeaway is that although populations continue to decline after the wake-up call from the 2019 study, it's not all doom and gloom.

II. The Trump Administration is weakening protections for migratory birds, notably the "incidental take" rule. [ii] The issue is whether industry can be punished for unintentional killing of birds under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act; the long-held view is that they can be. "The rollback of protections under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act—long a safeguard against industrial hazards like oil spills and wind turbine collisions—marks a shift toward deregulation that prioritizes industry interests over conservation. Critics warn that this move not only threatens bird populations but could set a precedent for loosening other environmental laws, further weakening protections for wildlife in an era of accelerating ecological stress."

III. Piping Plovers: Bad news, not so bad news. The bird is critically endangered, with an estimated 80 nesting pairs as of 2023. About

half are in Northern Michigan, and a program at the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is crucial to their survival. However, this Administration's cuts to the NPS budget could have dire consequences. According to a former Deputy Park superintendent who retired in 2023, "plovers will die" if the park is forced to make drastic cuts. "Now, do I know 100% certain that X number of plovers will be killed? No, of course I don't... I know for certain that the chances are extremely great that will happen." [iii] Days later, however, the Michigan DNR announced it would increase its funding to compensate for the loss of federal grants. [iv]



IV. Canada Geese policy reversal: BCM's board is studying a recent decision by the Michigan Natural Resources Commission to reverse ~40 years of non-lethal conflict resolution. Changes to the Resident Canada Goose Management Program, effective in 2025, require rounding up the geese and gassing them, with plans to then distribute them to food banks. [v]

□ Piping plover, Jim Hudgins/USFWS, Public Domain, <https://www.fws.gov/media/piping-plover-19>

[i] <https://www.stateofthebirds.org/2025/>

[ii] <https://www.ehn.org/trump-administration-weakens-protections-for-migratory-birds-2671316601.html>

[iii] <https://www.woodtv.com/news/michigan/expert-funding-cuts-could-spell-doom-for-great-lakes-piping-plover/>

[iv] <https://www.mlive.com/environment/2025/03/michigan-will-foot-the-bill-for-piping-plover-monitoring-after-feds-yank-funding.html>

[v] https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/-/media/Project/Websites/dnr/Documents/Boards/NRC/2024/September-2024/Signed_09WCO2024_Info.pdf

New Volunteer Programs

Wildlife Hotline Volunteer

We are thrilled to announce the launch of our Wildlife Hotline Volunteer Program! This role is perfect for individuals who love engaging with the public and educating them about wildlife.

Volunteer Duties Include:

- Answering phone calls and text messages
- Entering patient information into our WRMD database system
- Keeping our reception area organized and welcoming

Training:

- Two virtual training sessions
- One group in-person training session
- One-on-one reception shift with a staff member

Wildlife Rescue & Transport Volunteer

We're expanding and refining our Wildlife Rescue & Transport Volunteer Program. This year, we're breaking down our transport lists by counties to ensure you receive

notifications only for the areas you're interested in—no more messages about locations 1.5 hours away if they aren't convenient for you!

For more information about these exciting new volunteer programs, visit our website at <https://birdcentermi.org/volunteer/>.



Volunteer with us!

If you're **16 or older** and you'd like to share your time with our injured and orphaned patients, please fill out the application on our website.

[Apply Here](#)

Cuckoo for Hornworms

One of the patients we're currently overwintering is this beautiful juvenile Black-billed Cuckoo. In contrast to an adult's red eye rings, this young bird still has a plain brown color surrounding her eyes.

In the wild, Black-billed Cuckoos eat a plethora of fuzzy caterpillars, which can be tricky to recreate in captivity. Throughout the winter, we've continued to offer her a wide variety of substitutes, including hornworms. Many birds around Michigan love to feast on the plump green garden visitors, including

woodpeckers, jays, bluebirds, blackbirds, and even orioles!

If you appreciate our efforts to save Michigan's birds, please consider donating to help cover the rising costs of nutritious insects and worms, ensuring our insectivore patients receive the highest quality diet possible.



[**Donate Here**](#)

Symposium in Seattle

In February, two of our incredible staff members, Marissa and Maria, attended the annual National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association's Symposium in Seattle, Washington. They engaged in informative lectures and participated in two workshops, connecting with fellow rehabilitators from Michigan, across the United States, and Canada.

These annual conferences provide invaluable ongoing education and learning opportunities, allowing our staff to stay updated on the latest advancements in wildlife rehabilitation. By exchanging knowledge and ideas with other professionals, we can ensure the best possible care for our patients!



Shop our Wishlists

Wishlists aren't just for Wednesdays! Make a direct difference in the lives of our feathered patients by donating much-needed supplies from our Amazon and Chewy wishlists.

amazon

wishlist



Amazon Wishlist

You can donate supplies to be delivered directly to the Bird Center by making a purchase from our Amazon wish list.

[Shop our Amazon Wishlist](#)

chewy
GIVES
BACK

Shop Our Wish List
to donate supplies directly
to our organization.

[Donate Now](#)

Chewy Wishlist

Supporting our feathered patients just got easier with our Chewy wish list!

[Shop our Chewy Wishlist](#)

Wreath Watch

The Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles, and Killdeer are back! All have been spotted on the Bird Center property in the past few weeks, and you know what that means - spring and baby season is right around the corner!

Each spring, we receive calls about birds nesting in decorative door wreaths. If you'd rather avoid being unable to use your front door for 4-6 weeks due to the federally protected status of active bird nests, we recommend removing your spring floral wreaths from your front door. Otherwise, you may come out one morning to find a nest with eggs inside!

Alternately, check your wreath daily to remove any beginnings of a nest that has formed to discourage nesting in your wreath. Once a nest has eggs in it, it is deemed active and should not be removed from its location.



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!

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Donate: birdcentermi.org/donate





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