
BIRD NOTES

AVIAN WILDLIFE CENTER, a New Jersey Nonprofit Corporation is dedicated to the conservation of native bird species through public education, field research, and wildlife rehabilitation.



2020 is a year for the history books in so many ways. We are thankful to have made it through the year and are grateful for all of the people that helped our communities function through the pandemic. Although wildlife rehabilitation was not found on a list of essential businesses, the Avian Wildlife Center was in full operation throughout the year. In fact, 2020 marked our 30th year of operation and surpassed previous years with 1,098 birds in our care. That number does not include all of the phone calls—an estimated 10,000—from all over the country. Since many facilities closed or reduced their hours during the pandemic and more people were home to witness the many challenges birds face, we did our best to resolve problems on the

These two mallard ducklings were hatched from eggs in our incubator. In 2020 we raised over 120 ducklings.

**A Record
1,098 birds
admitted in
2020**

phone or direct people to a resource closer to their home. When one person phoned us to say a nestling had fallen out of their palm tree, we correctly surmised they were not in New Jersey. After covering the basic steps to try we directed that person to a listing of California rehabilitators. Another phoned from Texas with a question about a Chihuahan Raven. She specifically wanted to reach out to us for advice as she heard of our reputation. Apparently Google is doing a good job of advertising the Avian Wildlife Center despite the fact that I have hung up the phone when Google calls asking us to advertise.

All of this was in a year when we had to reduce our volunteer team. It was essentially our family, one volunteer coming one day a week, and one intern. We are proud of what we accomplished under the circumstances, but this year emphasized the need to have a full-time employee.

Thank you to all the people that have contributed time, skills, funds, equipment, and helped to rescue a bird in need of aid. We could not do our work at the Avian Wildlife Center without you.



An early nestling—this Great Horned Owl chick fell 40 feet from its nest. With no low branches to secure a substitute nest, we brought it back to our resident owl to foster.



Grown and flighted, we returned the young owl to its natal territory.

EDUCATION

We did start off 2020 with doing our normal educational presentations, but as the pandemic spread and schools, events, and clubs closed their doors, we had to change our methods. Education is a part of our daily life with every phone call that comes with questions to be answered. We did start doing Zoom programs and are learning the technology “on the fly.” As experienced as our resident birds are to someone in the audience taking a photo, they have not figured out how to pose for a computer screen. While we work on that, we can still convey important information. And the plus with Zoom is we can connect with people from distant locations without the drive. If you are interested in scheduling a Zoom presentation, please contact us by phone or email. However, we look forward to returning to in-person programs when it becomes possible.



Summer intern Lisa Viviano holding a nestling Cooper's Hawk.

THANK YOU to the many people who assist us in various ways at the Avian Wildlife Center. We depend on **Dr. Karen Bullock** and her staff at **Wantage Veterinary Hospital** for medical assistance. **Dr. Laura Jaworski** has volunteered to provide essential orthopedic surgeries and has been busy repairing fractures and treating a number of our patients.

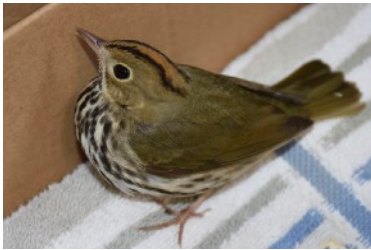
Brodhecker Farm has continued to help with our winter fundraiser selling sunflower seed. They grow the seed locally on their farm. People can buy directly from their store and ask that a portion of the sale go to the Avian Wildlife Center or pick up the seed at our location in Wantage. It is a win for the birds all around with a nutritious food for the birds in your yard and support for the ones in our care.

A special acknowledgement to our volunteers that helped through the year rescuing injured birds, getting supplies to us, and doing whatever was asked.

What is Involved in Rescuing a Bird

First and foremost is educating people to contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator immediately if they come across an injured bird. In northern New Jersey there are only two options: Avian Wildlife Center and The Raptor Trust. The sooner we get an injured bird or can even resolve a problem with a phone call, the better the outcome.

A complete list of rehabilitators in New Jersey is available on the NJFishandWildlife.com website.



This Ovenbird was brought in after crashing into a window.

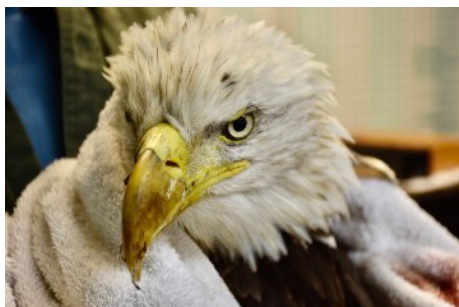
Next step is capturing and containing the bird. Again, we can offer advice on the phone; please do call. Safety for both the person and the bird is important. Putting a box or tub over a bird on the ground is one method to contain it. Some animal control officers will help with bird capture. We have to reserve our rescue trips for situations that require our expertise or we would not be available to answer the phone and treat the birds in our care. If you are interested in helping with bird rescue, please contact us for more details. When it comes to containing a bird, cardboard boxes with a cloth on the bottom

to cushion the bird works well for most. Make sure to close or cover the box. Never put a wild bird in a wire cage.

When a bird is brought to our Center, we will record information from the rescuer. Any details about the circumstances and location are useful. An initial exam is done to determine immediate needs of the patient. Fluid therapy, oxygen therapy, wound treatment, bandaging, medications, and temperature adjustments in an ICU may be done upon admission depending on the bird's condition. Our focus is to provide the bird with treatment to reduce pain and stress while determining a plan for care to return our patient to the wild.



A Red-tailed Hawk receives oxygen treatment in our ICU

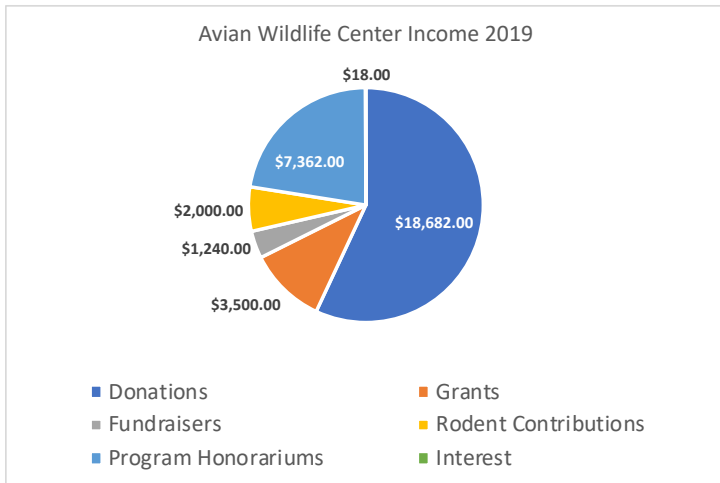


Some of our patients in 2020: Cedar Waxwing and Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Bald Eagle, Green Heron

Donors Make our Work Possible

We would have an impossible time accomplishing most of our work without the support from our donors. Although licensed by the government, the Avian Wildlife Center does not receive any funding from government entities for its work. Individuals provide the majority of our funding. Donations are tax-deductible. The chart below shows income breakdown in 2019 with the dark blue portion representing the amount from individual donors.

Finances in 2020



We are still finalizing the financials for 2020, but know that it will show a significant decrease in Program Income and Fundraisers due to the pandemic. Also, the company that was donating rodents to many rehabilitators suddenly halted all contributions in 2019. While our budget increased, our income became even more dependent on individual donations.

In order to meet the needs of the birds (food, medicine, housing) in 2020 we had to adjust our budget. In a year when we needed a full-time employee the most, we had to eliminate the seasonal position. We also had to put our facility expansion plans on hold.



Hungry Gray Catbirds brought to our Center after their nest tree was cut down.

Food is our biggest expense and one we cannot do much to cut without impacting the birds. In 2020, the food expense alone was over \$26,000.00. Thankfully donors came through in this challenging year, and we were able to provide for the record number of birds.



American Robin nestlings looking to be fed.


How to Help

Simple steps to help the birds in your yard (and a healthier environment for you)

- Plant native plants — less work to maintain and more likely to provide food for the birds
- Keep cats indoors — cats will be safer from hazards, healthier, live longer, and can watch wildlife from the window without doing harm
- Apply bird-visible tapes or stickers to windows to prevent birds from crashing into the glass. The Avian Wildlife Center sells the products pictured on the right for a fundraiser.
- Avoid cutting trees and trimming bushes during nesting season. Nests are hidden and often not found until the cutting has been done. Nesting season has started.



Ways to Support the Avian Wildlife Center

There are many ways to support our efforts. Monetary donations are always appreciated and allow us to purchase the supplies most needed. We do have a PayPal link on our website for online donations. Another way to donate is through the Amazon Smile program by designating the Avian Wildlife Center as your chosen charity. A portion of the purchase price of qualifying items will be deposited to our account. 

There are also some low or no-cost items we can always use including newspapers, grape vines for perches, and duckweed. Last year during the pandemic and the ensuing empty store shelves, purchasing paper towels became impossible. It is hard to describe the joy and relief we had when donors bought rolls of paper towels. In the midst of nestling season, paper products are precious commodities.

Most importantly, we appreciate people like you who care about our native wildlife and help us spread the word about its importance in our world and ways we can improve our home habitats for them and for us.



Newly released Barred Owl

Visit our Facebook page and Instagram for updates.