

Breakdown by Species of Birds Treated through Nov 2

Eastern Bluebird	25
American Robin	20
Chimney Swift	18
Northern Flicker	15
Red-bellied Woodpecker	10
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	9
Baltimore Oriole	8
Barn Swallow	8
Downy Woodpecker	7
House Finch	7
Northern Mockingbird	7
Hairy Woodpecker	6
American Goldfinch	5
Eastern Phoebe	5
Cedar Waxwing	4
Chipping Sparrow	4
Cliff Swallow	3
Gray Catbird	3
House Wren	3
Northern Cardinal	3
Pileated Woodpecker	3
Tufted Titmouse	3
American Woodcock	2
Black-capped Chickadee	2
Common Grackle	2
Hermit Thrush	2
Mourning Dove	2
Scarlet Tanager	2
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2
American Crow	1
Belted Kingfisher	1
Blackpoll Warbler	1
Black-throated Blue Warbler	1
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	1
Blue-winged Warbler	1
Bobolink	1

Eastern Kingbird	1
European Starling	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1
Killdeer	1
Northern Waterthrush	1
Pine Warbler	1
Red-eyed Vireo	1
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1
Song Sparrow	1
Tree Swallow	1
Veery	1
Virginia Rail	1
White-throated Sparrow	1
Willet	1
Wood Thrush	1
Total	212
A snapshot of the difference	
The Recovery Wing, Inc.	
has made on the area's bird	
population.	
Released	144
Died	31
Dead on Arrival	1
Euthanized	29
Transferred	2
Pending	5
Total	212
Release Rate	68%

The Recovery Wing, Inc.

2008 Season

(to date)



This Blue-winged Warbler is one of the birds we took in this year which are DEP-listed as a species in Greatest Conservation Need in CT. He was returned to the wild on July 10.

So far during 2008,
The Recovery Wing has admitted
212 sick, injured or orphaned
migratory birds, totaling 51 species.

As of November 2, we have
released 144 of them back into the
wild, a success rate of 68%!

Species listed in bold are those which are listed by the CT DEP as species in Greatest Conservation Need (GCN) in its Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy document. More than 37% of our admissions were species of Important, Very Important or Most Important need of conservation in one or more of CT's habitats.

Which warbler was this one? Now we know.

On June 13 a woman called about a tiny baby bird she found in the road, too young to fly. There were no parents nearby. The baby was calling and calling for food. She described the bird to me but I could not identify it. I asked her to put the calling baby up to the phone. I knew I had never raised this particular baby bird before --the call was unfamiliar.



Another GCN listed bird.

A short time later the woman arrived. I knew right away it was a warbler, but was uncertain as to what type. I thought possibly Yellow Warbler. The one thing I did know was that it was not a Pine Warbler because I had just raised one. Baby warblers do not commonly come into rehabilitation because most warblers nest away from humans and our homes. During spring and fall migration, however, we occasionally receive injured adults from window strikes, car hits or cat attacks.

Warblers are tiny, with most not weighing more than 10 grams! Our mystery warbler weighed 5 grams when it arrived. Being so tiny, this little one was going to require frequent meals – it soon became apparent that this warbler would prefer them every 10 minutes! It was obvious that it had missed a few meals, and it would take some time to trust that the meals would continue.

As the warbler developed wing bars and a white outer tail band, combined with a buzzy begging call, I was fairly certain that it was a Blue-winged Warbler. This warbler is one of the Very Important species on DEP's GCN listing, declining due to degradation and loss of its preferred streamside habitat.

I held the bird until it molted into its beautiful first year plumage and confirmed its identity. Once released, it returned for handouts regularly, until one day while feeding the noisy warbler, an adult Blue-winged Warbler showed up. They flew off together. Happily, that was the last time I saw that beautiful warbler as I knew it was now in good company.

Woodcock Chick times Two!

On June 27th we received a call from Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton. The center had accepted two orphaned American Woodcocks found next to their road-killed parent. Woodcocks are declining in CT and are listed as a Very Important GCN Species by the DEP.

I had never raised orphaned woodcock, but while waiting for the chicks to arrive, we stocked up on earthworms – adult woodcocks' main diet item — from the local bait shop.

Woodcock chicks are incredibly cute! Once stabilized, we filled a shallow dish with dirt and earthworms, and waited to see what would happen. The chicks made no attempt to self-feed. So I picked up an earthworm with forceps and offered it to one of the chicks. The chick eagerly grabbed for it and eventually swallowed it down, as did its sibling. Soon they were picking up food on their own.



So cute!!

In just two weeks the chicks grew to over 40 grams, becoming earthworm eating machines. They continued to grow rapidly and were moved to an outside flight cage. My goal was to release them at about 7 weeks of age, about the same age as they would have become independent in the wild. We discovered that woodcock chicks are incredibly playful! For the next five weeks, they spent most of their days playing, with a little bathing and preening thrown in, and don't forget eating!

While these chicks were mostly independent, only needing shelter, food and water, we all grew quite fond of them. I have decided that woodcock chicks are one of the sweetest baby birds I have ever raised. On the day of release, I admit these two little birds were very hard to say goodbye to!



The playful pair.
Photo by Paul Fusco

All Three Out of the Catbird Seat . . .

Each July 4th with everyone outside enjoying the holiday, they are sure to come across some babies in trouble. July 4th also happens to be my birthday; each year I wonder what gift Mother Nature will bestow. This year it was a nest of Gray Catbirds from a tree that had been cut down.



July 4th – Mother Nature's gift.

These catbirds were injured. All were breathing heavily, a sign of pain or internal damage. Examination of the first nestling found a fractured humerus. The second nestling had a probable pelvic fracture. My heart sank at how badly injured these catbirds were. I could not find any obvious injuries on catbird #3.

Even stabilized, they did not want to eat. I managed their pain, continued to offer fluids and kept them on heat. Several hours later, with me getting anxious, catbird #3 finally opened his mouth for food. I no sooner placed a cricket its mouth when the two siblings also began gaping for food. Yay! With a meal fed to all, healing could begin.

When fledged I moved them into small mesh housing with room to move around but not fly. The wing-injured catbird was still not using the wing, and the pelvic-fractured catbird could not bear any weight on that side. Not a good sign! Thankfully the remaining catbird was now bright-eyed and healthy; it was moved outside to a flight cage.

Eventually, I moved the now healed catbirds outside with their sibling. Much to my surprise, the wing-injured catbird could fly, and the other was perching. Amazingly, the young birds continued to improve to the point of release! They returned for handouts. Each time I saw them my heart filled with joy, watching them live their lives that they came so close to losing.

Gray Catbird is an Important species on DEP's GCN listing, due to loss of the shrubby inland wetland habitat that it prefers. We are happy to have returned these three to the wild!