

# Bird's Eye View



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Mount Vernon Songbird Sanctuary is a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to the conservation of migratory songbirds through education, rehabilitation, and preservation of their habitat.

# Mount Vernon Songbird Sanctuary, Inc.

## 2010 - Fifth Anniversary Benefit Dinner & Auction Our Best Ever!

Once again, friends and family of the Mount Vernon Songbird Sanctuary gathered at Plantsville's Aqua Turf Club for the fifth annual fundraiser. This year was our best ever! 175 attendees enjoyed the food and lively bidding for over 300 items as part of a live and silent auction, as well as raffle. Bidding was certainly exciting this year since many beautiful baskets and unusual items were available. The event netted just over \$26,000, about half of our anticipated operating cost. "I am so grateful for the continued support of our friends. We couldn't survive without them." said our President Jayne Amico.

For the first time, Damon Scott from WTIC 96.5FM was the event emcee and auctioneer. He directed the afternoon's activities with a quick-tempoed wit. Each of the ten live auction items he presented this year were well-received and greatly contributed to the afternoon's success. They included two luxurious beauty packages; a personalized skincare analysis from Paula Moynahan, MD, as well as a



basket of groundbreaking skincare products from Dr. Nicholas Perricone, MD, FACN. Bonterra Restaurant of Southington donated a fabulous five-course Italian dinner with wine pairings. Once again, bidding was high for the famous Italian dinner with Filomena and Michael Arisco of Cheshire. Two getaways were auctioned; a weekend in Newport from Cheryl Moran, and a Long Island Cruise with Captain Joy Sherman of Joy Ride Charters. Also among the popular items was a new llama hike from Donna Zurstadt and John Papotto as well as an evening of wildlife watching with Dave Rosgen.

This year, raffle items included a Sunset Birding tour certificate with shorebird book package, a decorative and functional owl-nesting box, a decorated ceramic birdbath, a SIRIUS satellite radio, a limited edition print of the Australian Black-eared Miner by artist Ken Gilliland. A hummingbird basket, a well-received stained glass songbird panel, and finally a dine out in Cheshire with 8 certificates was available. Every possible taste and interest was considered in nearly one hundred themed baskets that lined the walls. The crowd enjoyed bidding on an amazing variety of items while dining.

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## Happy Spring!



Our first baby season has kicked off under our new name and mission statement.

In keeping with our new mission I have already admitted 11 Eastern bluebirds, three American woodcock and three red-bellied woodpecker orphans. Adult birds have been arriving as well. They have been hit by cars or have flown into windows. Those include a Ruby-throated hummingbird and a Baltimore oriole.

During the off-season I spoke to various garden clubs and organizations presenting the program, "Supporting CT'S Migratory Songbirds, through Rehabilitation, Reducing Negative Impacts and Bird-Scaping" spreading the word on songbird conservation.

Our nest box program on private lands appears to be off to a great start this spring. We currently have twelve nest boxes at Mount Southington Ski area with ten currently occupied. Bluebirds, tree swallows and black-capped chickadee are our current tenants!

At Rabis's field we have eight nest boxes all being occupied by the same three species! We are thrilled to host the black-capped chickadee in both locations as their numbers have also been declining. A big thanks to volunteer Sandi Brunoli for her efforts in monitoring the nest box program! (continued on page 2)

(President's Message from page 1)

I continue to be forever grateful to everyone who generously donates time, supplies or money, enabling the sanctuary to carry on. I can honestly say that there is no greater joy for me than to see the fruition of all our efforts. Baltimore orioles visiting the feeders, chimney swifts in the chimney, bluebirds feeding their young by the pond, the list goes on and on.

It truly is a sanctuary for migratory birds!

Sincerely,

President

[jayne@mvssanctuary.org](mailto:jayne@mvssanctuary.org)

(Benefit Dinner from page 1)

The special appeal and flatscreen TV raffle this year raised \$2,495. The money will be put towards the purchase of one acre of land to expand the sanctuary property for the future generations of songbirds.

As we wrap up another successful fundraiser, we thank our very supportive sponsors: Forestville Machine, The Hartford Society Room, Academy Printing, Mahers Paint, Dana Bartone & Co., Natures Way, Anthony Jacks, Bonterra, The Miller Family, State Rep. Robert Megna, Donna Cwikla, and Two Guys in Jackets.

Finally, many thanks to the Mount Vernon Songbird Sanctuary volunteers who generously contributed items, solicited donations, created baskets, wrote letters, prepared bid sheets and coordinated the event.

We truly appreciate the generous support of everyone helping us to make our fundraiser a great success. Thanks to everyone's wonderful efforts Mount Vernon Songbird Sanctuary can continue our mission for another season!

## SAVE THE DATE

Sunday, April 3, 2011 from 1:00 - 5:00 pm

The Aqua Turf Club in Southington for our 6th Annual Dinner & Auction!

### Ruby-throated hummingbird is released after eight months in rehabilitation!

On September 17th Tufts University transferred an immature male ruby-throated hummingbird to MVSS. Upon examining the bird it was apparent that the bird had been on the ground unable to fly. In its attempt to fly the bird had damaged most of its flight feathers by beating them repeatedly against the ground.



My heart sinks any time I see a hummingbird with broken primary flight feathers. A molt was going to have to be forced, which means pulling out the broken feathers so the follicle will be stimulated to replace the removed feather. The difficult part is housing the bird in a situation that will keep it from attempting to fly while the feathers are growing.

So for the next two months I pulled out the broken feathers and kept the bird as still as possible in shoe-box-sized housing. By the end of this time the bird was

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### Attracting Barn Swallows (Hirundo rustica) to your property

This beautiful swallow has a bluish-black upper side with a buffy to orange underside and a dark rufous throat. They have long pointed wings and a long forked tail making them easy to identify from other swallows. The long forked tail gives them great maneuverability and a gracefulness in the air that is amazing to watch! You can find barn swallows foraging low over fields and ponds during the summer months. They arrive in CT around May 1st and start gathering in large roosts preparing to migrate by the end of August.

As CT continues to develop land it seems that farms are the areas being targeted. Not only have the swallows lost nesting sites but also the open farmland to forage for insects.



If you live in an open area with surrounding fields or ponds then you may be able to help this beautiful and beneficial bird. You can do this by giving the bird access to any sheds or barns on the property by either leaving

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(Hummingbird from page 2)

beginning to lift off as high as his housing would allow and it was time to give him some more room.

He was moved to larger housing to assess his capabilities. The bird then revealed why he was on the ground beating his wings. He was unable to fly or hover for an extended period of time. He showed the classic shrimp-like posture that usually results from a collision with a window; a back/spinal injury.

Over the winter Hummy, as I called him, continued to improve slowly, gradually increasing the length of time he could hover in the air. I scoured nurseries for flowers and kept a supply of live fruit flies for him to practice fly catching.

Spring arrived and it was time to move him to a large outside flight cage. Hummy was now sporting a bright red gorget and a feisty attitude. After several weeks of living outdoors and proving himself capable he was released.

I openly admit to having become quite attached to this tiny little survivor that I tended for eight long months. With great pleasure I watched him fly off to explore the world once again!



(Barn Swallows from page 2)

a window or door open. I have also seen nests built on top of floodlights under house eaves and under porches on top of light fixtures.

If you are going to build to suit, use unpainted rough-cut wood, since their mud nests will not adhere to a smooth surface. The nest is usually built on a vertical surface just slightly below the ceiling. Nesting ledges or swallow cups can be built when the building is painted or has smooth wood.

The droppings of the swallows will be directly under the nest. The nestlings will back up to the edge of the nest and defecate over the edge. Placing newspaper under the area will contain the droppings.

Barn swallows build a mud-based cup with some grasses and other soft materials. If you do not have a pond or accessible muddy area nearby then you can place a tray of mud next to the entrance to the building to make nest building easier and further entice them.



Here at the Sanctuary we already have barn swallows inspecting the pavilion and are hopeful that this will be the year the barn swallows move in!

## **Board of Directors**

**Jayne Amico, *President***

**Kate Bryers, *Vice President***

**Cheryl Moran, *Treasurer***

**Valerie Depaolo, *Secretary***

**Eryen Lalonde, *Member***

### **We Couldn't Do It Without You!**

Please accept our heartfelt thanks and much gratitude to all who so generously support our efforts in a variety of ways. It is due to your contributions that we can continue to assist migratory songbirds!

We owe a very special thank you to Dr. Rodger Foster and staff at Southington Veterinary associates, and to Dr. Theresa Cianciola and staff, at Kensington Bird and Animal Hospital, for their very generous support throughout the year with medical services and advice.

Our thanks to Art Kramer, who once again has been hard at work this spring repairing and securing the outdoor flight cages so that they are safe for the upcoming season.

Last but not least, we would like to extend our appreciation to Sandi Brunoli who is assisting with the private lands nestbox program which is growing in leaps and bounds!

# Mount Vernon Songbird Sanctuary, Inc.

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***In 2009, Admissions Totaled 247 Birds of 46 Species  
We have released 154 (62%) of these birds back into the wild!***

Cedar Waxwing	24	<b>Ruby-throated Hummingbird</b>	6	<b>Northern Rough-winged Swallow</b>	
<b>Chimney Swift</b>	21	Pine Siskin	6	Blackpoll Warbler	
Downy Woodpecker	18	Red-bellied Woodpecker	5	<b>Yellow-throated Vireo</b>	
Eastern Bluebird	17	<b>Bank Swallow</b>	4	<b>Cliff Swallow</b>	
<b>Northern Flicker</b>	15	Killdeer	4	<b>Eastern Kingbird</b>	
Barn Swallow	12	Tufted Titmouse	4	<b>Common Tern</b>	
House Finch	12	Northern Cardinal	4	<b>Hermit Thrush</b>	
Eastern Phoebe	9	Red-winged Blackbird	4	<b>Magnolia Warbler</b>	
American Goldfinch	9	<b>Great-crested Flycatcher</b>	3	Northern Mockingbird	
Black-capped Chickadee	8	<b>Dark-eyed Junco</b>	3	<b>American Woodcock</b>	
<b>Baltimore Oriole</b>	7	Mourning Dove	3	<b>Rose-breasted Grosbeak</b>	
American Robin	7	<b>Wood Thrush</b>	2	<b>Yellow-rumped Warbler</b>	
<b>Gray Catbird</b>	7	Common Grackle	2	<b>Yellow Warbler</b>	
Carolina Wren	6	Chipping Sparrow	1		
Tree Swallow	6	Red-eyed Vireo	1		

***Species listed in bold are species with the Greatest Conservation Need (GCN), according to the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection***

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## ***2010 FUN FACTS ABOUT BARN SWALLOWS***

### ***DID YOU KNOW THAT...***

- Barn swallows feed almost exclusively on flying insects?
- Barn swallows have a distinctive long forked tail making it easy to identify
- A barn swallow's long forked tail enables it to maneuver gracefully in the air and helps males attract mates
- Barn swallows use mud and grass to build their nest
- Barn swallows can be found in open areas, such as farmland and often around water
- Barn swallows nest on man-made structures, under bridges or eaves and inside sheds and barns

Keep up to date with the latest happenings at Mount Vernon Songbird Sanctuary by visiting us at [www.mvssanctuary.org](http://www.mvssanctuary.org). If you prefer to receive your newsletter online and save postage, please email us at [jayne@mvssanctuary.org](mailto:jayne@mvssanctuary.org)