

Bird's eye View



The Recovery Wing, Inc.

Volume 3, Issue 1 Spring Edition 2007

A non-profit charitable organization dedicated to the rehabilitation of orphaned, sick or injured songbirds, their return to the wild, and preservation of their habitat

Second Benefit Dinner Surpasses Last Year!

Our second annual benefit dinner and auction, held on March 25 at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington, was another resounding success! We sold over 160 tickets—surpassing last year's total and this year's event netted *more than \$18,000*.

Jayne opened with a presentation that explained how the Recovery Wing operates, which was filled with beautiful photos of some of the birds we have handled through the years, including a video of a Pileated woodpecker who still comes for handouts!

Our Emcee and auctioneer was Jim Gould of Farmington. Not only did he volunteer his time to host, but also donated a live auction package—the use of his boat and captain in Hilton Head, North Carolina.



Jayne graciously accepts a calliope hummingbird print purchased at the auction by her volunteers.

Some other fabulous live auction packages included an authentic Italian dinner for 8, hot air balloon rides, weekend getaways, and gardening assortments to name a few. We had an impressive display of breathtaking artwork for the silent auction along with birding supplies, jewelry, spa packages, museum, theater, and amusement tickets and much more.

Delicious appetizers, mouth-watering dishes, and enticing desserts were available while bidding for silent auction and raffle items continued.

The afternoon ended with a live auction and a few surprises. A last minute addition to the live auction items was a one-

of-a-kind drawing. The original print by Guy Gilchrist of Gilchrist Cartoonist Academy in Simsbury was of Snoopy, holding a Recovery Wing sign looking up at Woodstock in a nest with a splinted broken leg.

The drawing was sought after by 2 people, and while everyone held their breath, the bidding elevated to an incredible \$1,000. Much to everyone's amazement the winner, Jeff Hamel of Forestville Machine promptly turned around and presented the original print to Jayne. There wasn't a dry eye in the room!

To top it all off, The Recovery Wing volunteers purchased for Jayne a beautifully framed calliope hummingbird picture that she had coveted since it arrived at The Recovery Wing for the auction. The afternoon was filled with fun, excitement and was truly heartwarming.

The Recovery Wing extends a very big THANK YOU to all who attended, contributed financially, volunteered, and donated food or auction items.

Thank you also to our major sponsors: Maher's Paint and Wallpaper in Avon, J & L Plastic Molding in Wallingford, Representative Robert W. Megna of the 97th District, and Dr. Rodger Foster of

Southington Veterinary Associates for sponsoring the event and Academy Printing in Berlin for its printing services. A special thank you goes too to Aili Arisco and Cindy Davis, both of Cheshire, for their delicious handmade Italian desserts.

SAVE THE DATE

Sunday March 30
2008 @ 1:00 p.m.
at

The Aqua Turf
for our 3rd annual
dinner and auction!

President's Message

Dear Friends of The Recovery Wing –

It's hard to believe another year has gone by and Spring has sprung! 2006 brought some fantastic birds our way, including 36 woodpeckers, 29



swallows and swifts, and 11 ruby throated hummingbirds. We also cared for 4 species on the CT list of special concern, including common nighthawk, american woodcock, whip-poor-will, and brown thrasher.

The 2007 season looks to be a busy one! We anticipate caring for over 300 birds. As we welcome spring, we have already begun to receive into rehabilitation newly arrived migratory birds. We also hope to increase the number of educational programs we present. In March I made a presentation on rehabilitating woodpeckers to the CT Wildlife Rehabilitators' Association. In April, I presented Supporting CT's Migratory Songbirds Through Rehabilitation, Reducing Negative Impacts, and Landscaping to 2 garden clubs and The Basics of Songbird Rehabilitation to the volunteers at Sharon Audubon.

We thank all of you who attended and supported our benefit dinner and auction on March 25, as well as all of you who contributed throughout the year and in response to our devastating house fire this winter. Despite this setback we have experienced, we are still focusing our efforts to improve and expand upon The Recovery Wing.

Our gratitude and heartfelt thanks go out to all of you who support our mission of assisting songbirds in distress.

Sincerely,

Jayne Amico, President and Founder

Keeping Cats Indoors Isn't Just for the Birds!

There are more than 90 million pet cats in the U.S., the majority of which roam outside at least part of the time, plus countless stray and feral cats roaming our cities and towns. Scientists estimate that free-roaming cats kill *hundreds of millions* of birds, small mammals, reptiles and amphibians each year.

Cat predation is an added stress to wildlife populations already struggling to survive habitat loss, pollution, pesticides, and other human impacts.

The average life expectancy of an outdoor cat is just two to five years, while an indoor cat may survive for 17 or more years. Roaming cats are constantly in danger from:

Cars - Thousands of free-roaming cats are hit by cars each year and motorists risk accidents attempting to avoid hitting them.

Animal Attacks - Torn ears, scratched eyes, abscesses, internal injuries, diseases, and sometimes death result



Photo: Marge Gibson

Cat attack is 1 of the Top 5 Reasons for Songbird Admissions!

from encounters with dogs, other cats, and wild animals like raccoons, coyotes and foxes.

Human Cruelty - Each year, animal shelters and veterinarians treat cats which have been shot, stabbed, or set on fire. Unsupervised cats may be captured and sold to research laboratories or used as "bait" to train fighting dogs.

Overpopulation - Unaltered free-roaming cats are the single most important cause of cat overpopulation, resulting in millions of cats being euthanized each year.

Disease - Outdoor cats risk exposure to fatal diseases, including rabies, feline leukemia, distemper, and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV).

Please help put an end to the suffering of both cats and wildlife by keeping your cat indoors!

Thanks to the American Bird Conservancy for its Cats Indoors! Campaign, from which this information was extracted. For more information about this and other bird conservation issues, please visit their website at www.abcbirds.org.

Adopt a Baby Songbird!

Cover the cost of raising one baby songbird by making a donation of \$50.00 or more. This donation will entitle you to a color photo of your adopted baby songbird and an invitation for you to be present at its release. Please fill out and return the form below. Pick your species! Choose a 1st & 2nd choice:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Baltimore Oriole (comical): _____

Northern Flicker (gorgeous): _____

Eastern Bluebird (so sweet): _____

Chipping Sparrow (feisty): _____

Please mail the completed form with your check to: The Recovery Wing, 1024 Mount Vernon Rd., Southington, CT 06489, or (860) 276-8433.

Or, if you would prefer to make a contribution toward The Recovery Wing's summer operating costs, please use the enclosed card. You can rest assured that all of your tax-deductible donation goes directly to the care, feeding and housing of orphaned, sick and injured songbirds.

We Couldn't Do It Without You!

Space limitations preclude us from continuing to print the annual list of our wonderful donors in this newsletter. However, our website will soon be updated to include this list.

Nonetheless, we extend our thanks and gratitude to all of you who so generously respond with your donations - these contributions allow us to continue to help songbirds in distress!

Thank you also to the **Main Street Community Foundation**, of Bristol CT, for its generous grant of \$1,065 toward the purchase of an Intensive Care System, containing an incubator and medication nebulizer. This equipment allows us to keep our babies and compromised birds in humid warmth and to administer medications more effectively through a nebulized mist.

In addition, the Recovery Wing's success is due in large measure to the individuals and businesses who support us with their advice, services and products.

Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to **Dr. Theresa Cianciolo and staff** at Kensington Bird and Animal Hospital and to **Dr. Rodger Foster and staff** at Southington Veterinary Hospital, for their incredible support throughout the years with medical services and advice.

Our ongoing thanks to **Tim McMullen and staff at Academy Printing** in Kensington who work with us in printing our stationery, brochures and this newsletter.

And again, we extend our appreciation to **Kelly Klein** of Madison for her continuing computer software support and the design, editing, and layout of our publications, including this newsletter. Truly—thank you all,

Board of Directors

Jayne Amico, President
recoverywing@cox.net

Mary Claire Doyle, Vice President

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Tips & Tricks to Attracting Eastern Bluebirds

Beautiful sky blue, sporting an orange breast, eastern bluebirds with their warbling melodic call and their dependence on manmade nest boxes, have captured the hearts of many people.

Bluebirds can be attracted to open country habitat, such as open woodlands, meadows, orchards and farmland edges. But don't be discouraged if you do not meet these requirements. I have been surprised by some of the more wooded areas bluebirds have set up house in.

In my opinion, the biggest hurdle in attracting and having bluebirds nest is controlling house sparrow populations. English (house) sparrows are cavity nesters, and are very aggressive. House Sparrows are small enough to enter any hole that a bluebird can, and are so aggressive that the bluebird will be chased away.

Since house sparrows are a non-native species, it is legal for you to control them, by removing any nest, eggs or bird. But if your neighbor next door is allowing house sparrows to breed, your chances of reducing the population are slim. If you can start a group effort in your area of attracting bluebirds and deterring house sparrows, your success is much more certain.



Male Eastern Bluebird Photo courtesy of Paul Fusco

Close monitoring of the nest box is essential to knowing and controlling when a house sparrow is evident. On nest boxes that have a single entry hole, if a house sparrow catches the bluebird unaware he can trap them in the box, kill them and their young, and then build his nest on top of them.

Suggestions to control house sparrows –

- ◆ Place nest box in an open area as far away from buildings as possible
- ◆ Stretch monofilament line on either side of the opening of the box which may deter house sparrows from entering
- ◆ Trap and remove any male house sparrows
- ◆ Close or remove the nest box until Mid March, reducing the chance of a house sparrow claiming it for the winter
- ◆ Do not use seeds that have millet, milo, corn and other fillers
- ◆ Do not scatter seed on the ground

There is nothing more heartbreaking than opening up a box of just about ready-to-fledge baby bluebirds to find them dead and buried under a house sparrow nest. If you are not going to closely monitor your nest box and control house sparrows, then it is best to not put up a bluebird box.

At the Recovery Wing we prefer using slot boxes which have a slotted opening under the roof instead of a single entry hole. This allows a bluebird to vacate the box instead of

being trapped inside if a house sparrow attempts to enter.

This, however, does not save any young inside but does allow adults to escape unharmed. I strongly recommend the slot box if you have house sparrows in the area.

Bluebirds usually start nesting by mid-March to early April. Their nest is cup-shaped and neatly woven with grass and sometimes pine needles. The female usually lays 4 to 5 light blue eggs. The incubation period for bluebird eggs is 12 to 14 days. The young remain in the nest 18 to 21 days before they fledge.

We recommend you do not open the box after 10 days, as disturbing the young can result in them leaving the box before they can fly well, reducing their risk of survival. Once the young have fledged, immediately remove the old nest which will reduce nest parasites if present.

The female will build a new nest for the next clutch. Bluebirds usually have two broods per season, but some, like our resident pair, may have three!

We also attribute our success with bluebirds to the feeding of live mealworms. We have a bluebird feeder that we keep filled with mealworms at all times for them, year round. Bluebirds are very sensitive to rainy weather. During rain storms the insects bluebirds eat are not available. If rainy weather persists, bluebirds may abandon incubation or young in order to save themselves from starvation.

Feeding mealworms when natural foods are not available can be very important during rainy weather for their survival and also for keeping them nearby so they do not leave the nest box vulnerable.

In addition, while the female is incubating the eggs she can quickly go to the feeder, fill up, and return to incubation. Feeding mealworms year round keeps our bluebirds in the area all winter long. Good luck!

The Recovery Wing has named Melissa Baston of Cheshire as our new website administrator. Please visit us often at www.therecoverywing.org to see what's happening each month. Please contact Melissa at 860 276-8433 with any comments or suggestions about our website.

Bird's eye View

The Recovery Wing, Inc.

2006 Admissions Totaled 283 Birds of 49 Species. We have released 181 of these birds so far!

American Robin	36	Tufted Titmouse	6	Rose Breasted Grosbeak	2
Northern Flicker	18	Mourning Dove	5	Wilson's Snipe	2
Baltimore Oriole	15	Red Eyed Vireo	5	Bank Swallow	1
Barn Swallow	15	Song Sparrow	5	Black Capped Chickadee	1
Chimney Swift	14	Brown Headed Cowbird	4	Common Grackle	1
Gray Catbird	14	Cliff Swallow	4	Common Nighthawk	1
American Goldfinch	11	European Starling	4	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	1
Eastern Bluebird	11	Hermit Thrush	4	Northern Waterthrush	1
Ruby Throated Hummingbird	11	Killdeer	4	Red Winged Blackbird	1
Chipping Sparrow	10	Northern Mockingbird	3	Scarlet Tanager	1
House Finch	9	American Woodcock	2	Whip-Poor-Will	1
Cedar Waxwing	8	Belted Kingfisher	2	White Throated Sparrow	1
Downy Woodpecker	8	Brown Thrasher	2	Wild Turkey	1
Northern Cardinal	8	Common Yellowthroat	2	Wood Thrush	1
Carolina Wren	7	Eastern Phoebe	2	Yellow Warbler	1
Red Bellied Woodpecker	7	House Wren	2		
House Sparrow	6	Pileated Woodpecker	2	Total	283

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(860) 276-8433

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Fun Facts about Eastern Bluebirds

- Eastern bluebirds can be taught to come for mealworms by either whistling or calling as you throw mealworms on the ground or fill your mealworm feeder.
- Did you know that Eastern bluebirds can hover for short periods when attempting to catch an insect or remove a berry?
- Eastern bluebirds are called ground-sallyers. From a low perch, they locate prey on the ground, drop down and catch it, then fly back up to their perch to consume it.
- During courtship the male bluebird will feed the female to show her what a good provider he is. The male will also feed her while she is in the box incubating the eggs.
- Eastern bluebirds dine on crickets, beetles, flying insects and also fruit, especially during the winter months.
- Eastern bluebirds are long distance seed dispersers for Eastern Red Cedar, an important winter food source of berries.

Keep up to date with the latest happenings at The Recovery Wing by visiting us at www.therecoverywing.org. If you prefer to receive your newsletter online in color & save postage, please email us @ jayne@therecoverywing.org.