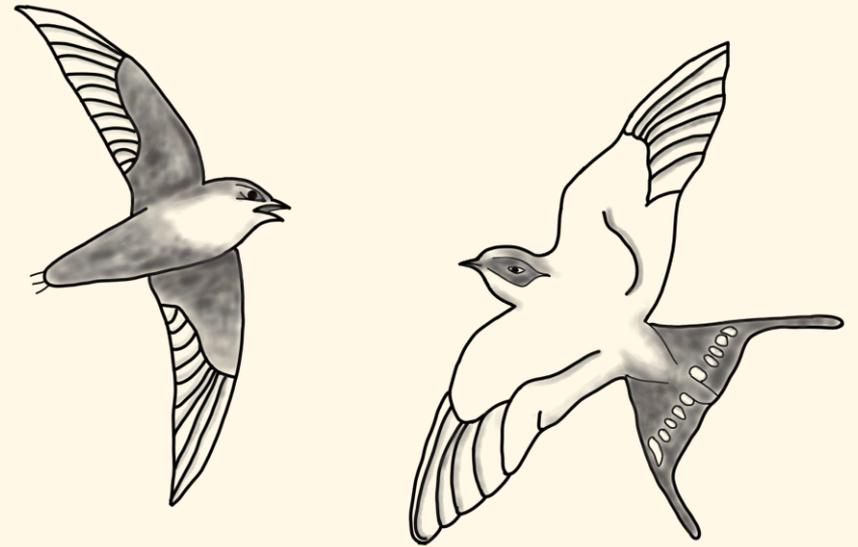


Flight Plan Rehab *Gazette*



*Eastern Prickly Pear
Marc's Hillside Gardens*

September
2025

Swallows and Phoebes!



As anticipated in the *Gazette's* July issue, the remainder of the summer brought more swallows of various species – mostly Barn Swallows, along with an occasional Tree or Cliff Swallow (below left).



Orphaned Eastern Phoebes, a few of which are shown to the right, continued to be raised here in large numbers.

Two of them played unexpected roles as short-term foster parents for other species (see story on pp. 3-4)!



Kshanti Greene



Unidentified Hatchlings

As had been the case earlier in the summer, we were occasionally called upon to raise newly-hatched birds that could not be identified at the time they were rescued.

Misfits Rehab



One “tiny naked pink” bird had originally been brought to our friends at [Misfits Rehab](#). Upon arrival here, the “TNP” was set up in our new brooder. The bird begged at first, but grew weaker, and seemed to lose its will to live.

Acting on impulse, Diane tucked the tiny orphan into a nest with two Eastern Phoebe nestlings. The hatchling crawled underneath one of them, snuggling in as if beneath its natural mother. The phoebe tolerated the newcomer!



Over the next few days, three more young orphans – two Barn Swallows and another unidentified “TNP” joined the phoebes’ foster family (story continues on next page).

Hatchling Foster Family, cont'd.

The second unidentified hatchling appeared to be the same species as the earlier one. Well before their feathers had emerged as identity clues, their begging calls were recognized as those of House Sparrows.



The older phoebes fledged from the nest approximately one week after the first "TNP" had joined them, but by then, the younger orphans did not require brooding. The swallows and sparrows remained friendly!



A week after these photos were taken, the four birds were released, with the two species going separate ways.

Kingbirds!

Eastern Kingbirds had made a nest in a boat moored on one of the Belgrade Lakes! When the owners wanted to use the boat in early August, the nest could not remain active, so the orphaned birds were sent here to grow up.



Kshanti Greene



And grow up they did . . . but not quite in time to join local kingbirds, who had already left nearby areas to begin their migration.

We gave our birds a head start by releasing them on August 24 at Scarborough Marsh, where other kingbirds had recently been posted on **eBird**.

Special Feature: Chimney Swifts!

Kshanti Greene



Our first clutch of orphaned Chimney Swifts arrived on July 16, just a few days after Flight Plan's July Gazette was posted.



Several more clutches arrived by the end of that month, referred by or transferred from collaborators that included the [Acadia Wildlife Center](#), [Avian Haven](#), and [MDIFW](#) personnel.

At very young ages, swifts like those shown to the right may look more like reptiles than birds!



But as shown on the next page, they soon matured into the sleek and graceful appearance of older swifts.

Chimney Swifts, cont'd.



These birds are nearly ready for release! Swifts shown here as well as on the previous page were released on August 7, 10, 13, 16, and/or 31 (see next page for release photos). In all, 34 birds raised here were released!

We thank Kevin Scully, whose scouting guided release of our fledglings into swifts in evening social flights in the skies over Waldoboro.

Chimney Swift Release August 16



All photos by Kshanti Greene

Song Sparrows

Three nestlings that arrived on August 11 were orphaned when the shrub hosting their nest was cut down. At first, Diane thought they were Chipping Sparrows, but Marc was not convinced!



Nestlings of some sparrow species are similar in appearance . . . but as these birds matured, it soon became obvious that they were too large to be chippies!

The juvenile Song Sparrows were released on September 2, and over the next couple of weeks, we often saw them foraging in the grasses near the edge of our woods. By the end of the month, we were seeing groups as large as 20 that presumably included our original three.



Vireos

One of our last orphans of the summer was a young Red-eyed Vireo, fetched from the rescuer by our friends Sue and Mike, who met us for the August 16 Chimney Swift release. With no heat source available on short notice, Diane kept the hatchling warm under her shirt on the way home.



Two older vireo nestlings soon joined the newcomer. After the youngest left the nest, the three were often in proximity.



But the more mature birds soon lost interest in the youngster, grew restless in the Sunroom, and started to squabble. The littlest one was still being hand fed when the older birds were released on September 10. That last vireo was released on the Autumn Equinox, September 22, marking the official ending of “baby bird season” at Flight Plan.



Turtles!

Meanwhile, in Flight Plan's Reptile Division, occupants of the Turtle Center had continued to come and go. One Painted Turtle's return to his home river is shown below in stills captured from the release video.



Release Images:
Angie Foster



Hatchling Turtles



Baby bird season was starting to wind down in August, but baby turtle season was just getting started!

Eggs removed from female Snapping and Painted Turtles killed by cars had been placed in our reptile incubator in June. They began to hatch late in August.



After a few weeks' head start here, they were released in the watersheds of their moms' recovery locations.

Help Appreciated!

Assistance with care-giving, provisioning, transporting, and photography were provided by Flight Plan's 2025 summer teammates Kshanti Greene, Terry Heitz, Deb Huard, Sue Stone, and Julie Vaillancourt.



Kshanti Greene

On behalf of Flight Plan's avian and reptile patients, we extend heartfelt thanks to folks contributing funding in support of these efforts!

What's Up Next at Flight Plan?



Most of the avian species in which we specialize have already left Maine for their wintering grounds in warmer climates! Activity here will slow down this fall, but we'll remain available for injured stragglers, the few bug-eating and other songbird species that remain here into winter, plus the occasional turtle that might need more recovery time before release.

If not before, you'll hear from us early next year with a 2025 retrospective featuring the year's rehabilitation and financial summaries, plans for 2026, and some spring and summer case stories that we've saved for that document!



*Until then,
Diane
& Marc*

