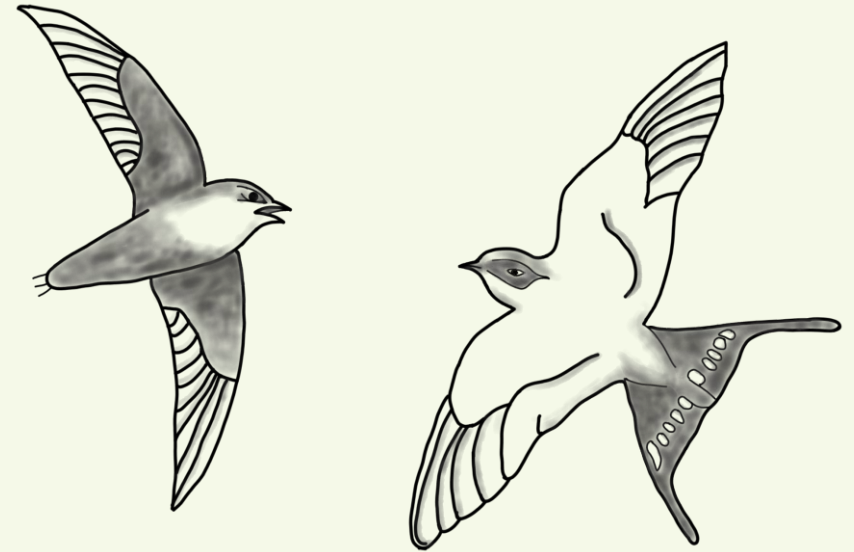


Flight Plan Rehab



Gazette

*June – mid July
2026*

Since you last heard from us . . .

Most of the birds featured in our May newsletter were released in the first week or two of June. An exception was the bird shown to the right - the “Mystery Hatchling” Chipping Sparrow (p. 9 of the [May Gazette](#)), who stayed around to befriend another youngster.



Admitted on June 7, the second “Chippie” of the summer is shown to the left and also below beside a nestling Song Sparrow, the slightly larger bird with the red mouth.



The three sparrows were released here on June 24, and have been seen since, foraging alongside wild counterparts.

Julie Vaillancourt

Eastern Phoebe: First Release

Phoebes were a frequent admission in June, with the first clutch of the season, admitted at the end of May and released June 16, as shown in these photos (KG)!



More phoebes would be arriving shortly, but meanwhile

. . . there were Robins!

We weren't expecting to raise any more American Robins, but couldn't say no to a call for help about a nest built in a backhoe that had to be used.

An attempt was made to create a nearby alternative setting for the nest, but the adults did not return.



Rescuer Photo



And so, the hatchlings came here to grow up – and seemingly in no time, they had graduated from a substitute nest indoors to the Flight Cage outdoors!

They were released on July 1.



Eastern Phoebes!

June was definitely Phoebe Month! On one particular day that month, we had 45 in care, which was almost as many as our phoebe total for 2025!



KG



Phoebes may be orphaned for a variety of reasons – frequently, their nests have fallen from an insecure location or have been damaged inadvertently in a construction project.

Phoebe story continues:

In one case, an adult had been found dead near a nest. When the rescuer looked at the baby birds, they were unmoving and presumed dead. The next day, she went back to remove the remains, and to her astonishment, one of the nestlings moved when she touched it!

It was late in the day when she called back with this update, but she knew someone who was willing to drive them to [Misfits Rehab](#) in Auburn for emergency overnight care. Expert triage by our colleagues there saved them, and Deb picked them up the next morning.

Such behavior is typical of frightened nestling phoebes: they hunker down, shut their eyes, and “play dead.” But some gentle persuasion is all that is needed to revive them – once they learn that they are going to be fed, normal nestling begging behavior quickly appears!



Julie Vaillancourt

Phoebe story cont'd. again:

Extremely social as youngsters, they are known for pile-ups in captivity . . .



KG



. . . though there may be occasional squabbles over mealworms!



They will readily befriend other species – like this singleton Barn Swallow.

An American Toad



One of our most interesting Herptile patients was an American Toad injured by a weed wacker. Upon arrival here on May 26, the animal had a fracture of the left rear leg and wounds on that foot.

Marc splinted the fracture and dressed the foot wounds. He created a comfortable recovery habitat, kept it stocked it with live insects, and stepped back to let Nature work her magic. In time, thanks to the regenerative abilities of the species, all injuries healed, and the toad was released "good as new" in mid July.

Neonate Sparrows

These tiny House Sparrows were orphaned on their first day of life, when their nest was dislodged in a construction project. An attempt was made to create a substitute nest, but the parents did not accept it.



Rescuer Photo

Thanks to emergency care given by a long-time friend and skilled associate, all four of the birds that had hatched the previous day survived their first night.



One of Diane's special skills is raising songbirds from the egg, and when she was asked to take on this clutch, she readily agreed. Sadly, one bird died en route from Portland, but three hatchlings arrived alive on July 11.

Specialized nutritional support based on their age, species, and the aftermath of starvation for part of their first day of life has been successful so far (as this issue is put to bed, they are five days old)!



More Turtles

By the middle of July, we had admitted 26 car-hit turtles in 2026. All but one had been Eastern Painted Turtles, several of which had been sent here for extended recovery after surgical repairs by Dr. Avery Berkowitz at [Maine Wildlife Rehabilitation](#).



The Snapping Turtle shown above is in a separate pool recovering from a jaw fracture (mended by Dr. B) complicated by a much older injury.

At the time the photo below was taken, there were nine Painted Turtles in our large pool – but most of them were submerged.



Swallows!

The early days of July brought an influx of swallows of various species. The familiar Barn Swallow (photo to the right) was prominent among them!



One of the more unusual admissions was a Northern Rough-winged Swallow, rescued as a youngster from a street in downtown Auburn!



Rough-wingeds are cavity nesters that can take advantage of almost any hollow space, including some created by humans — even urban drainpipes!

The species gets its common name from the structure of the adult male's flight feathers, which are said to have a "file-like" feeling to a human finger drawn along the edge.

Swallow story continues:

Several Cliff Swallows (listed as Threatened here in Maine), were admitted during the heat wave of July 2-4.



Thick mud cavity nests built under the eaves of metal roofs may have overheated, prompting some birds to vacate nests before their flight feathers had fully matured.

As various individuals gained flight ability, they formed a mixed species flock, preferring the highest portions of our octagonal flight cage.



Help!

Welcome assistance with bird care, food preparation, photography, laundry, habitat furnishings, and transportation has been provided in this time frame by Genny Benites, Danielle Cummings, Victor Detmer, Deb Huard, Kshanti Greene, Lee Shane, Kappy Sprenger, Sue Stone, Julie Vaillancourt, Tanna & Steve Witkin, and Dawn Wood.



As always, we appreciate the collaboration of our wildlife rehabilitation colleagues and our working relationship with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, especially Keel Kemper and Mackenzie Roeder.



Having passed our 2025 total of 195 birds on July 6 of this year, we are most appreciative of funding in support of these efforts!

What's Up Next at Flight Plan?



If June was the Month of Phoebees, so far at least, July has been the Month of Swallows! Our large flight cage had been officially dubbed "Swallowville" by the second week of the month.

Most if not all of the swallows currently in care will have been released by early August. Orphans of the last of the aerial insectivores to breed here in Maine, Chimney Swifts, should begin to arrive here soon!



Stay tuned for our next issue, likely to be posted in late August!

Until next
time,

Diane
& Marc

