



"Aurora" VINS Barn Owl © John Sutton

## Wild Bird Rehabilitation

By Grae O'Toole, Lead, Wildlife Keeper

The last few years at the Center for Wild Bird Rehabilitation (CWBR) have seen constant change. Record-breaking annual intakes have happened for the past two years. This is in part due to the effect humans have on their environments. As birds try to adapt to coexist with humans, wildlife rehabilitation is becoming a more crucial conservation tool. Nearly 50% of all intakes in 2019 were due to human-related causes like cat attacks, collisions with windows and cars, and contamination.

In the last two record-breaking years, the rehab center has seen a 51% increase in number of patients. As the numbers grow, we will need to expand our capacity with more species-specific enclosures. Needed enclosures include another large songbird enclosure, with which we can encourage flight in our patients, and a waterfowl-specific enclosure with appropriate substrate and a pool that can reliably and efficiently filter the copious amounts of water needed to care for them properly.

With your help, we can make these plans a reality. Please consider a contribution to CWBR today and help us support the birds!

For more information about CWBR, visit:  
[vinsweb.org/wild-bird-rehab](https://vinsweb.org/wild-bird-rehab)



Join us online:  
**At-Home Education Resources**  
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Dark-eyed Junco



Baltimore Oriole



Eastern Meadowlark



Barn Swallow

# 3 Billion Birds

## VINS' Response to the Biodiversity Crisis

By Anna Morris, Lead, Environmental Educator  
& Caitlyn Robert, Environmental Educator

The October 2019 study showing North America has lost nearly 3 billion birds since 1970 rocked the scientific world. Representing a 29% decline in avian fauna in just 48 years, the loss is staggering. Birds play crucial roles in our environment, from pest control, to seed dispersal, to pollinating and providing food. Furthermore, birds are one of the best-studied groups of animals. These findings can only hint at the risks for other groups, including insects and mammals.

This should not just alarm us; it should call us to action. We encourage everyone to join VINS in taking steps to protect birds and their habitats. Our educational programming is a critical component of our response, in order to give visitors the information they need to coexist responsibly with birdlife. Our Center for Wild Bird Rehabilitation helps hundreds of birds recover from injuries each year, and reaches thousands of people through our wild bird rehabilitation direct line. We promote citizen science projects to facilitate community involvement in the research needed to address this crisis, are selling shade-grown coffee in the Nature Store, and are actively in the process of making every window on campus bird-safe by installing bird-strike prevention.

This summer, these efforts can come from individuals, but they will be more effective if communities work together to protect birds. We encourage everyone to garden with native plants, keep cats indoors, avoid pesticides, and use less plastic.

When you explore our Nature Center, talk to an educator to learn about more ways that VINS is helping. Visit [3billionbirds.org](http://3billionbirds.org) for more information about the biodiversity crisis.

**Make your home safer for birds! Visit our Nature Store:**  
[store.vinsweb.org/for-birds](http://store.vinsweb.org/for-birds)



### 7 SIMPLE ACTIONS TO HELP BIRDS

- USE LESS PLASTIC
- MAKE WINDOWS SAFER
- KEEP CATS INDOORS
- USE NATIVE PLANTS
- DO CITIZEN SCIENCE
- DRINK SHADE-GROWN COFFEE
- AVOID PESTICIDES

Wood Thrush  
Courtesy of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology

# New Field Trip to VINS

By Marie Soderbergh, Science Outreach Educator

This spring, VINS will launch a new Field Trip, *Forest Monitoring: Citizen Science Research*, featuring a long-term study on the health of our surrounding forest. Students will collect multiple data points, from tree measurements to the presence of fungi, all of which will help us better understand the condition of our forest, and how to best manage it for future generations.

For more information on our field trips, visit:  
[vinsweb.org/field-trips](http://vinsweb.org/field-trips)

# Remote Education Efforts

By Hannah Gelroth, Director, School Programs

Like everyone else, we are trying to adjust to a new reality in these uncertain times. We miss seeing you at the VINS Nature Center, in school classrooms, and at our outreach programs throughout the region. But we are still here for you, helping to connect you with the wonders of the natural world and the excitement of science.

We know parents and teachers are juggling many different things, trying to figure out new routines, and new ways of doing things. We have resources to help you, whether you are a teacher, parent, grandparent or someone just looking for an activity to get you safely outside while maintaining social distancing. Our Facebook page and our website both have lists of activities you can do at home, lessons you can include in your online classroom, and things to do that will get you outside, connected to nature. While we may be far apart, we can support each other in our online community.

For at home education resources, visit:  
[vinsweb.org/at-home-education-resources](http://vinsweb.org/at-home-education-resources)