



Second Stories

SECOND CHANCE WILDLIFE CENTER'S NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2024

MIGRATORY BIRDS & SECOND CHANCE ARE ON THE MOVE!

Every year, millions of migratory birds embark on incredible journeys across the United States – with many passing through Maryland. These remarkable travelers navigate through changing landscapes, adverse weather conditions, and countless human-caused hazards to reach their seasonal destinations. Unfortunately, their journey is not always smooth, and many of these birds find themselves in desperate need of expert help.

At Second Chance Wildlife Center, we are dedicated to providing these resilient creatures with skilled emergency care, species-specific diets, proven physical rehabilitation and strengthening exercises, and safe release in time to join up with the others making these epic travels that are essential for species survival.

We, too, are preparing for a big move as we push forward toward completion of what will be Second Chance Wildlife Center's new, larger, custom-designed wildlife rehabilitation facility in Clarksburg, Maryland.

Although backlogs in utility crew schedules and supply deliveries have caused frustrating delays out of our control, we are hoping to have the facility ready for us to start moving in medical equipment and supplies in January 2025 with animals arriving shortly thereafter. On the bright side, patient admissions are often lowest in January and February and this timing will mean fewer animals will need to be transported to the new location while in our care. It will also be an amazing way to kick-off celebrations for our 30th anniversary as a beloved and trusted non-profit.

PREPARATION & PLANNING:

Birds prepare for migration by building fat reserves for energy (some even experience a shift in their internal organs to make room for these reserves), adjusting their behavior, and/or altering their sleep cycles to allow for rest in-flight. They need to ensure they have the stamina to make the journey and adjust to the environmental conditions they'll face.

Similarly, a wildlife rehabilitation facility like ours needs to thoroughly prepare our infrastructure, standard operating procedures, and other resources for a move to a new location, and we must build up our reserves for expenses that will certainly arise in a new facility with increased patient capacity. Although SCWC's journey will only be about 14 miles north of where we are located now, the amount of planning and preparation involved has felt like planning a journey of thousands of miles – all while simultaneously caring for current patients. Our small but mighty team has proven their stamina, and you can help to ensure they will have the tools and other resources needed for their new work environment.

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Native to the eastern half of the United States, woodcocks migrate to the southeastern U.S. for winter, with some individuals remaining there year-round. Others travel as far north as Canada during breeding season. Migrating primarily at night, they often need SCWC's help after flying into buildings and striking windows.



ABOVE: New clinic building before siding installed (solar powered security camera in foreground). BELOW: Artist drawing of completed clinic building.



Board members and staff make frequent site visits and engage with contractors on an almost daily basis to keep this unique building project moving forward. Here you see the extensive wiring needed for species-specific climate control and lighting in each animal care room.

Donate online today at www.SCWC.org or help us avoid service fees with a check mailed to:
Second Chance Wildlife Center 7101 Barcellona Dr, Gaithersburg, MD 20879

NAVIGATIONAL SKILLS, STRATEGY, SETTLEMENT & INTEGRATION

Migratory birds use a combination of innate instincts, environmental cues, and learned experiences to navigate. They might follow landmarks, use the sun and stars, or rely on magnetic fields. Evidence suggests that some birds may even use their sense of smell to assist with migration. They often adapt by altering their routes or timing based on the conditions they encounter. When storms push them off course, they must adjust. Upon reaching their destination, migratory birds need to find suitable nesting sites, establish territories, and integrate into the new environment. They need to ensure they have the resources and conditions necessary for survival and reproduction. They may arrive exhausted, but they must immediately get to work.

With our new facility project, we at SCWC have faced challenges navigating our way through unexpected delays, the complexity of creating such a unique facility, and more. Our ability to quickly and strategically adapt to challenges has been critical to-date, will continue to be crucial for a smooth transition, and is essential for staying on course far into the future. We, too, will have to get immediately to work when we open the doors at our new facility, and our team must quickly prepare for our busy spring Baby Season. For SCWC, successful relocation will lead to long-term growth, increased reach, and greater positive impact for people and wildlife through our hands-on clinical actions and educational efforts.



Eastern populations of Green Herons migrate south from late summer to fall through Florida and the Caribbean, eventually setting in Central and northern South America.



Ruby-throated Hummingbirds migrate to North America for breeding, with some flying directly across the Gulf of Mexico - a journey that can take 18 - 24 hours!



Many raptor species migrate south to Mexico and Central America for winter and are tracked by volunteer "citizen scientists" to measure population statistics.

HOW YOU CAN HELP BIRDS ON THE MOVE!

Migratory birds traveling through our area count on SCWC for life-saving help when needed – but we need your support to provide essential resources for high-quality care, successful rehabilitation and release.

With our new facility funded and soon to be completed, **our focus now is on raising operational funds to support our current patients (including the migratory birds starting to arrive now) and establishing a solid financial foundation for the expected – and unexpected – to come in our first 2 years at the new location.** If you have ever moved to a different home or relocated a business, you understand that surprises will arise no matter how much you plan. Furthermore, increased capacity at our new facility means we must prepare to serve more animals resulting in increased expenses for food, medications, supplies, and other essential resources.

Our MILLION DOLLAR MATCH CAMPAIGN is still taking place – with a generous donor matching every unrestricted dollar donated to Second Chance before the end of 2024 up to ONE MILLION DOLLARS (whichever comes first). We are currently less than halfway to our match goal, meaning that your gift today and at the critical holiday fundraising season will count toward the match and will be doubled!



Thank you for your continued support and for helping us ensure that migratory birds and other wildlife receive the care they need during their incredible journeys. We'll continue to update you on our patients and on our journey to the new facility via emails, newsletters, and social media ([Facebook.com/SCWC.org](https://www.facebook.com/SCWC.org) and [@SecondChanceWildlifeCenter](https://www.instagram.com/SecondChanceWildlifeCenter) on Instagram).

