

Toronto Wildlife Centre Interim Report for Ontario Wildlife Foundation March 31, 2017



Saving Migratory Songbirds through Medical Care, Rehabilitation and Public Education September 1, 2016 to August 31, 2017

Project objectives:

- To provide rehabilitation and medical treatment to injured migratory songbirds found in the GTA and beyond and release them back to the wild once healthy
- To use patient stories to educate the public on the threats to migratory songbirds through TWC's social media channels, e-newsletter and blog

The Ontario Wildlife Foundation is Saving Songbird Lives!

Since the beginning of the grant period, over 300 migratory songbirds have been admitted to Toronto Wildlife Centre (TWC) for care. Many have suffered from head trauma, eye ulcers, fractured collarbones and keels - all common injuries that result from window strikes, the main reason why migratory birds are admitted to TWC during spring and fall.

As weather warms, we anticipate hundreds of additional migratory songbirds will be brought to our centre in need of help as their journey to their breeding grounds is brought to a halt the moment they collide with a building. Because of the generosity of OWF, life-saving help is available to these birds; medical treatment and rehabilitative care that will allow these delicate patients the opportunity to heal and continue on their migratory route when released back to the wild, healthy once again.

A Winter's Tale at TWC

While it is our aim to release birds back to the wild after treatment in time for their migration, in some cases patients are simply not healthy enough to make the long journey. Since they cannot be released during the cold winter months, they are overwintered at TWC and released at the appropriate time in spring. Caring for birds for months and months is challenging and costly; your support is invaluable in creating the capacity to feed, house, enrich and continue care for so many that miss their migratory trip - like this yellow-bellied sapsucker who was first admitted on October 22, 2016.

The member of the public who found this bird suspected that it hit the window of their apartment building. TWC's medical team assessed the bird to find it had suffered substantial eye trauma - a common injury in window strikes. The sapsucker was also mildly dehydrated, was experiencing poor leg use, leaning to the right and flying poorly.

After a week of pain medications, fluids for hydration and anti-inflammatories the bird's condition had improved; it was avoiding capture and perching but it would still be a long road to recovery before release back to the wild would be an option.



In November, TWC's medical and rehabilitation teams determined that the bird could not be released as it would not yet be able to survive in the wild. As its migration period was passing, the sapsucker was overwintered at TWC for continued care.

By January, the beautiful bird that had suffered such an impairing setback was now bright and alert and its weight was significantly up. On March 7th, the final okay was given by our team for release back to the wild, just in time for spring migration. The weather in March has not been optimal and our team continues to wait for a warm, sunny day to return this bird to its rightful place in the wild. In the meantime, this sapsucker has been placed in an outdoor aviary to acclimatize to the weather and prepare for life in nature, once again.



Springing Forward

The birds are coming and TWC has already treated and released the first migratory bird admitted in 2017 - an American woodcock, a species which typically fly through the city first each spring.

Not far behind them are golden-crowned kinglets like this one admitted on March 28th. This bird was brought to TWC by a FLAP (Fatal Light Awareness Program) volunteer; it had likely collided with a downtown Toronto high rise and was found on the sidewalk, puffy and not flying.

TWC's team has been treating this bird for corneal ulcerations (eye trauma). Even within the course of a few days, the kinglet's condition has been steadily improving and we have high hopes for its release back to the wild soon!

Spreading the Word on Migratory Birds

TWC's Public Education Program delivers presentations to members of the public on a wide variety of issues. Those listed below were focused on educating audiences on the prevalence of bird collisions with windows – one of the greatest threats to migratory songbirds – and the ways to mitigate risks.

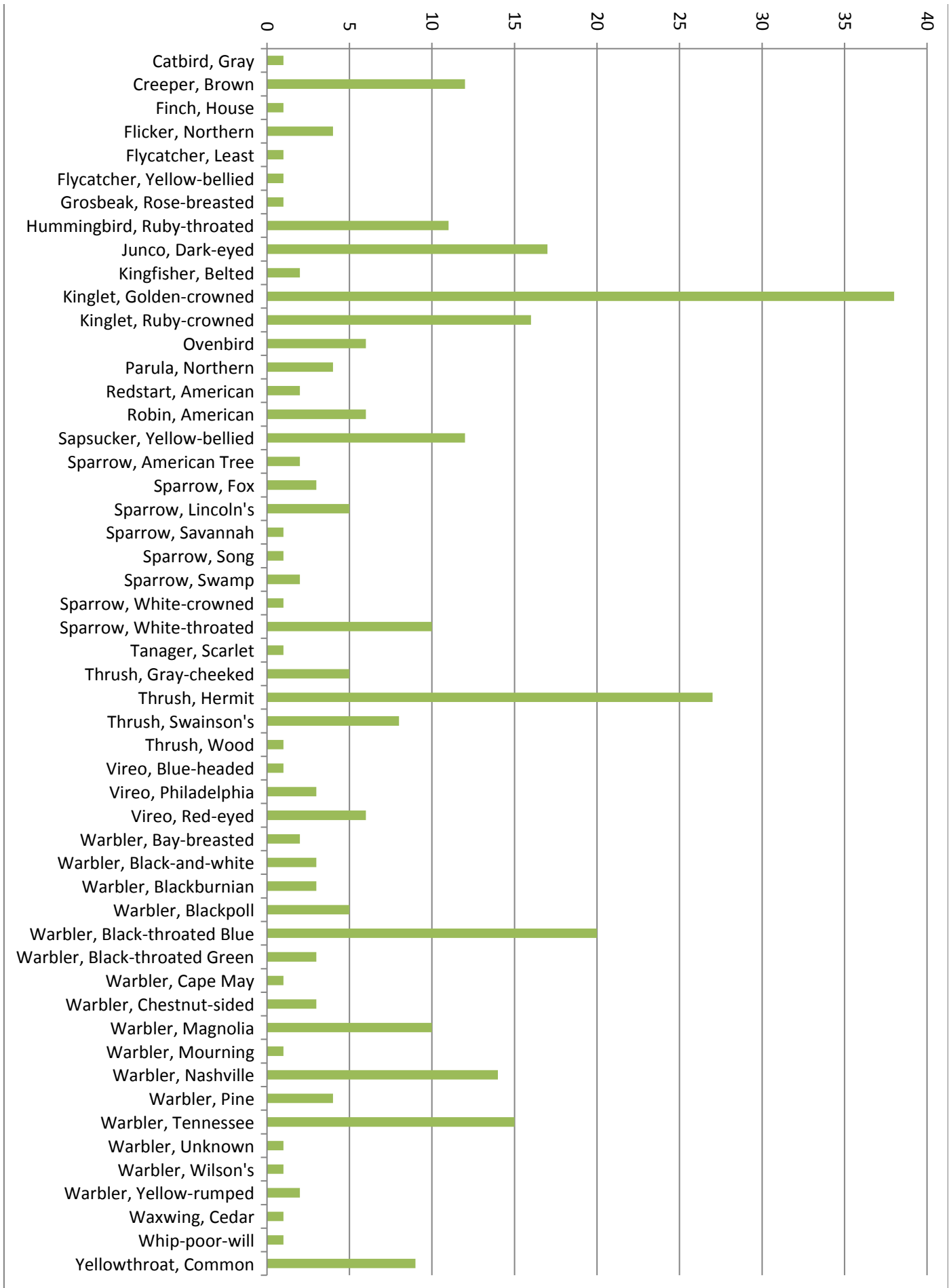
From companies wishing to make their buildings more bird-friendly, to retirees wanting to help birds in their spare time, to youth who are inspired to make schools and homes safe for birds, our audiences received the facts about threats to migratory songbirds and practical tips for making our built environment bird-friendly.

- March 8th – Hydro One, 100 in-person attendance, additional 100 people on video-conference
- March 14th – Teddington Retirement Home; 50 people
- March 16th – Menkes (Real Estate Company); 15 people
- March 20th – Richmond Hill High School; 50 people grade 12 students
- March 21st – TCV Scarborough (retirement group for Bell employees); 30 people



Species by Numbers Admitted Since September 1, 2016

Funding from OWF has helped birds from the following species:



TWC Recognizes OWF For Your Generous Support!

Posts shared through Twitter, Instagram, Youtube and Facebook (with links) recognizing OWF

September 9, 2016

Montage video shared through social media highlighting OWF's support and featuring songbird patients
<https://www.facebook.com/torontowildlifecentre/videos/10154545010453656/>

October 4, 2016

Short video of songbirds being released back to the wild after treatment during fall migration shared through social media, noting support of OWF
<https://www.facebook.com/torontowildlifecentre/videos/10154620376608656/>

March 29, 2017

Short video of American woodcock (the first migratory bird admitted to TWC in 2017) being released back to the wild after treatment. Support of OWF recognized.
<https://www.facebook.com/torontowildlifecentre/videos/10155210520703656/>

Additional Songbird Social Media Posts

October 28, 2016 "One of the biggest songbird releases this year! #fridayfeeling"
<https://www.facebook.com/torontowildlifecentre/posts/1015470136732>

November 18, 2016 Video - "This golden-crowned kinglet was recently released to continue their fall migration! Kinglets are insectivores, in the wild eating wasps, bugs, flies, beetles, plant lice and insect eggs. In the video you can see the kinglet catching fruit flies in care! #helpfeedwildlife"
<https://www.facebook.com/torontowildlifecentre/videos/10154770188608656/>

December 22, 2016 "Meet the songbirds that are staying at TWC this winter"
<https://www.facebook.com/torontowildlifecentre/posts/10154887859768656>

Sharing Stories

October 16, 2016 from Altona Forest "This little chestnut-sided warbler came in during 2012's fall migratory season after hitting a window. #throwbackthursday"

October 27, 2016 "This little chestnut-sided warbler came in during 2012's fall migratory season after hitting a window. #throwbackthursday"

November 4, 2016 from FLAP "Although we are at the tail end of migration, we are still finding unfortunate birds whose migration journey has come to a crashing halt..."

February 3, 2017 "The Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary has revived the city's biodiversity. #fridayfeeling"

TWC E-News

December 22, 2016

"Help feed wildlife. It's officially winter and some of us might be getting ready to head someplace warm. Unfortunately, there are songbirds who won't be able to travel south for the holidays" (article on overwintering migratory songbirds featuring an overbird and thushyanthy's thrush)

Thank you OWF, for giving the birds so much to "Tweet" about!