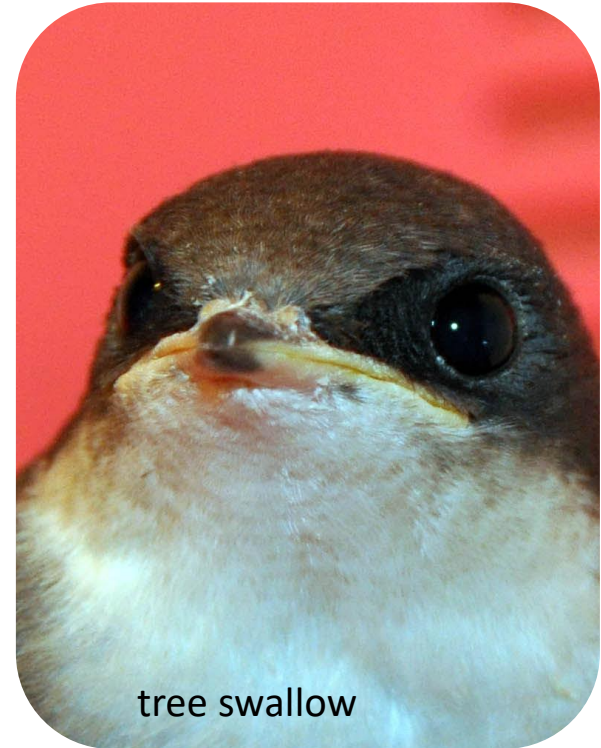


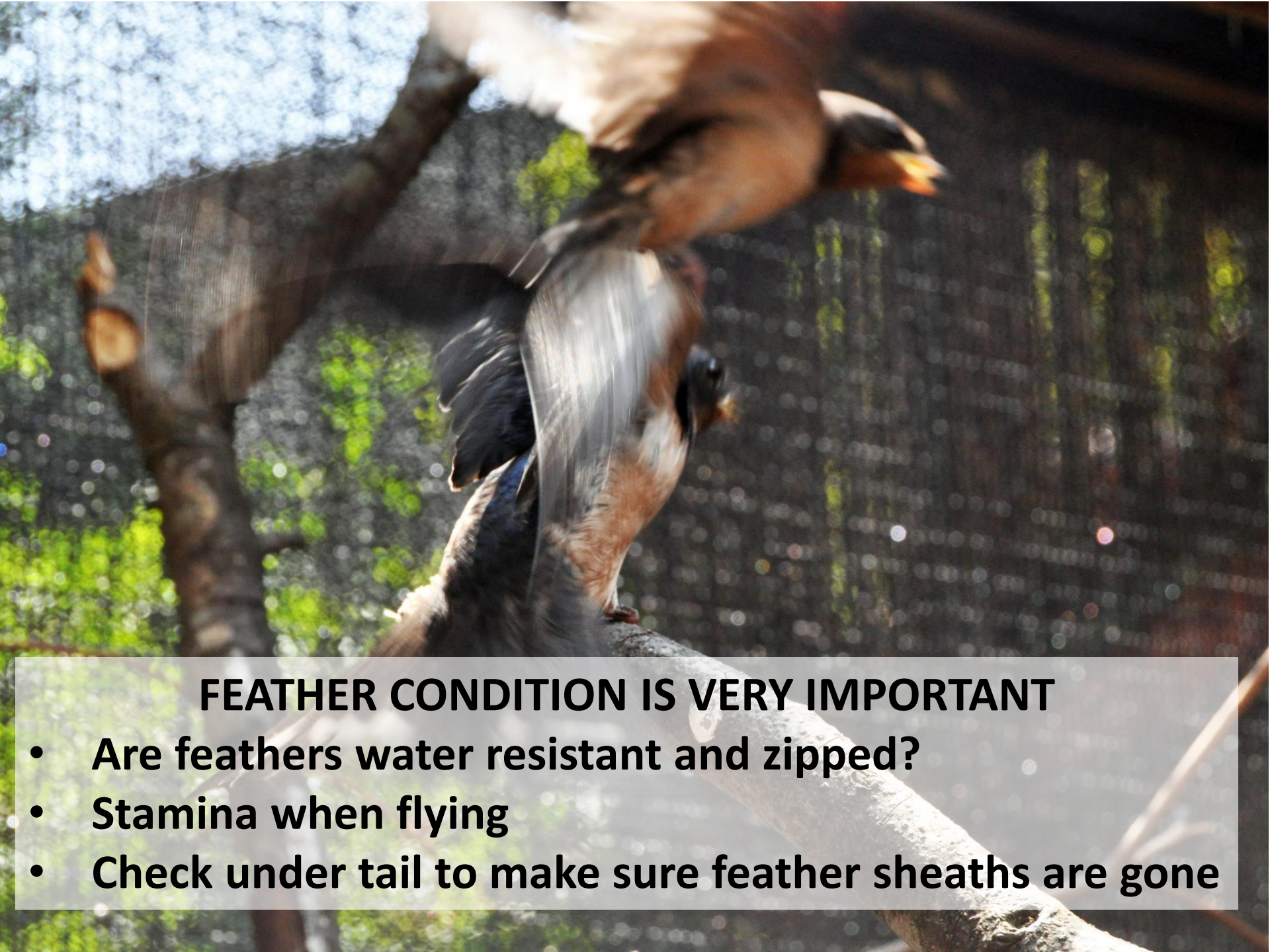
Release Criteria for Songbirds

by Maureen Eiger

THE BASICS

- Flange at corner of mouth is nearly gone.
- Weight exceeds or at least equals adult body weight for that species.
- Good muscle tone
- Shows appropriate behavior towards people.
- Fully recovered from any injuries.
- It is independent and behaves like the adult of that species of bird should behave.





FEATHER CONDITION IS VERY IMPORTANT

- **Are feathers water resistant and zipped?**
- **Stamina when flying**
- **Check under tail to make sure feather sheaths are gone**



NON RELEASABLE

Eastern Bluebird

Was fed Kaytee Exact
Hand Feeding Formula.
Molts primary wing
feathers after first year.

Check molt pattern - try not to overwinter

NON RELEASABLE

Common Grackle

Pinched off feathers.
Came in as a fledge,
will molt all it's
feathers before fall.



ABILITY TO FIND AND EAT APPROPRIATE FOODS



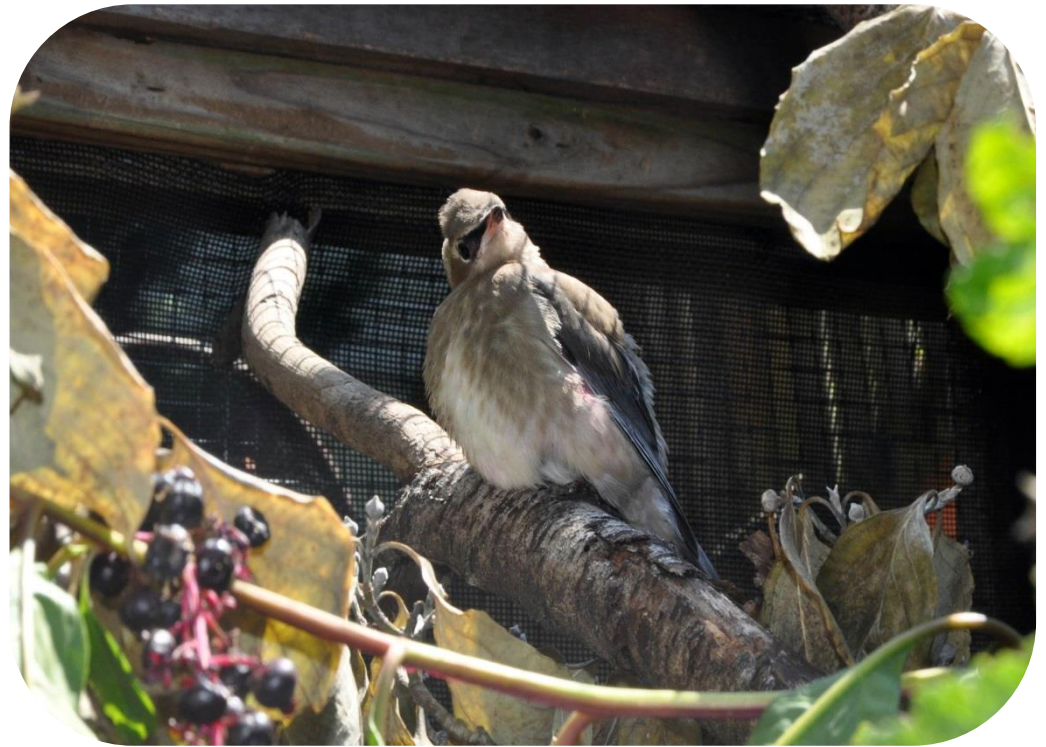
EATING AND FORAGING LIKE AN ADULT BIRD

- Eat bird seed from feeders or seed heads
- Catch crickets
- Catch fruit flies or flying insects
- Tear off or bite fruit from branches
- Crack open sunflower seeds
- Dig up worms/bugs and eat them from dirt



BIRD HAS ACCLIMATED TO BEING OUTDOORS

- Bird spent at least 2 weeks in an outside aviary
- Hears other birds and their songs and predator calls
- Takes a bath
- Drinks water from bowl or leaves
- Perches on natural swinging branches
- Looks for cover in bush/brush pile or weeds
- **Has experienced rain, wind and sunshine**



TIME TO GO!?



RELEASE DECISIONS CHECK LIST

- Who can be released together?
- Is it a flock or solitary bird?
- Short migrant or long distant migrant?
- Habitat specific?
- Time of year?
- Soft release vs hard release?
- Is it a local backyard bird?
- Carrying capacity of location?
- Did you check the weather report?



RESEARCH & UNDERSTAND EACH SPECIES

SHOULD “SINGLES” BE RELEASED TOGETHER?

In the fall most birds are usually found in loose mixed flocks.

- Barn swallows and rough wing swallows are often found together.
- Sparrows, cardinals and finches can usually be released in the same place.
- Most warblers, flycatchers and vireos use the same habitat.



Be careful of releasing “bully birds” like mockingbirds, blue jays, and grackles in the same area as other birds. Crows need to go back to their family group or new group of fledges that is formed.

**IS IT A FLOCK OR SOLITARY BIRD?
SHORT MIGRANT OR LONG DISTANT MIGRANT**



WAXWINGS, MARTINS, SWALLOWS AND SWIFTS ALWAYS RELEASED INTO A FLOCK



HABITAT SPECIFIC BIRDS – TIME OF YEAR

Release where found depending on time of year.
Or in proper habitat or staging area for that species
Is elevation important?



The screenshot shows the eBird website interface. At the top left is the eBird logo with a bird image. To the right is the ZEISS logo with the tagline "We make it visible". Below the logo is a navigation bar with links: Home, About eBird, Submit Observations, View and Explore Data, and My eBird. A yellow banner below the navigation bar says "Welcome to eBird" and "Where your bird sightings make a difference!" with a "Register as a New User" button. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column has a section titled "Birding News and Features" with a link to "Animated migration maps created with eBird data". Below this is a paragraph about Avian Influenza and a map of the Western Hemisphere. The right column has a section titled "TOP REGIONS: Most Checklists Submitted During August 2006 (Updated 7 Aug)" with a list of states and their checklist counts. At the bottom of the right column is a section titled "Regional Projects Near You:".

eBird

ZEISS
We make it visible

Home About eBird Submit Observations View and Explore Data My eBird

Welcome to eBird
Where your bird sightings make a difference! [Register as a New User](#)

Birding News and Features

[Animated migration maps created with eBird data](#)

The recent rise in the occurrence of [Avian Influenza](#) has focused attention on the importance of bird migration. Since eBird collects data throughout the year, it has quickly become one of the best sources of migration data. Researchers at Cornell University's Department of Computer Science and Theory Center recently used eBird data from the [Avian Knowledge Network](#) to explore the patterns of bird migration in the northern parts of the Western Hemisphere. They developed an animated mapping application to provide a visualization of the patterns of migration. Some of these animated maps are now available to eBird users.



[Are you really making Casual Observations?](#)

We've noticed at eBird that many observers are choosing the "Casual Observation" methodology when in fact they are actually conducting more rigorous types of surveys while birding. Casual Observations are of limited value because there is little effort information required, which allows them to be used in fewer analyses because we know less about how you went birding. It's important to let us know what kind of effort you put into making your observations. Please read on for a better understanding of the eBird methodology choices, and to learn how to make your data most valuable.



TOP REGIONS: Most Checklists Submitted During August 2006 (Updated 7 Aug)

- [Pennsylvania -- 603](#)
- [Texas -- 445](#)
- [Wisconsin -- 414](#)
- [New York -- 235](#)
- [California -- 224](#)
- [Washington -- 106](#)
- [Florida -- 83](#)
- [Ohio -- 81](#)
- [Virginia -- 75](#)
- [New Jersey -- 70](#)
- [Michigan -- 67](#)
- [Georgia -- 63](#)
- [Maryland -- 54](#)
- [Tennessee -- 50](#)
- [British Columbia -- 48](#)
- [Colorado -- 48](#)
- [Vermont -- 48](#)
- [Massachusetts -- 44](#)
- [Arizona -- 39](#)
- [North Carolina -- 39](#)

Regional Projects Near You:



SOFT RELEASE VS HARD RELEASE



- Depends on who and what lives in your neighborhood.
(cats/hawks/people)
- What time of year and how old the birds are that you are releasing. Often they just get chased off.



- Consider their dependency and easy habituation for certain species.

IS IT A “LOCAL” BACKYARD BIRD?



WHAT IS THE CARRYING CAPACITY OF YOUR LOCATION?



FINAL THOUGHTS

- Network with other bird rehabbers.
- Make friends or contacts with bird club members.
- Sign up for some bird list-serves.
- Create a backyard bird list.
- Look up and read about each species you get in.
- Remember it is just as important for their survival, where and how you release your rehabbed bird.

QUESTIONS?

