



birdcalls

Versatile and Dazzling, The Garden Room is Now Open

In fall of 2020, the National Aviary celebrated the completion of The Garden Room, a 9,000 square-foot event space overlooking Lake Elizabeth. With beautiful design elements offering a connection to nature, an industrial kitchen, innovative sustainability features, and access to a patio and garden, The Garden Room is a versatile, purposefully designed venue. A nearly 2,000 square-foot lobby leads to The Charity Randall Foundation Eagle Hall, which provides interior connectivity between the event space and the National Aviary's habitats.

The Garden Room is grand yet cozy, bookended by large fireplaces. Glass windows and doors incorporating bird-safe glass from Vitro Architectural Glass provide optional open-air access to an elegant terrace.

Viewed in profile, the vaulted roof of The Garden Room spreads like the upturned

wing of a bird in flight toward Allegheny Commons Park. Inside, energy-saving light refracting skylights that provide natural lighting and heating are both functional and eye-catching.

The Garden Room can accommodate 200 for seated dining with bookings available through 2023. While safety guidelines are in place, The Garden Room provides a gorgeous setting for physically distanced Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, showers, and small weddings. In the state-of-the-art kitchen, Atria's Specialty Catering prepares gourmet meals for events and brunches. The facility also includes new ADA-accessible restrooms, including an all gender restroom with an adult changing table.

The completion of The Garden Room was years in the making, with funding secured before ground was broken in December 2019. The careful planning of the dedicated project team including Perfido Weiskopf Wagstaff + Goettel and Jendoco Construction Corporation helped to bring the project to fruition, despite the uncertainty caused by the

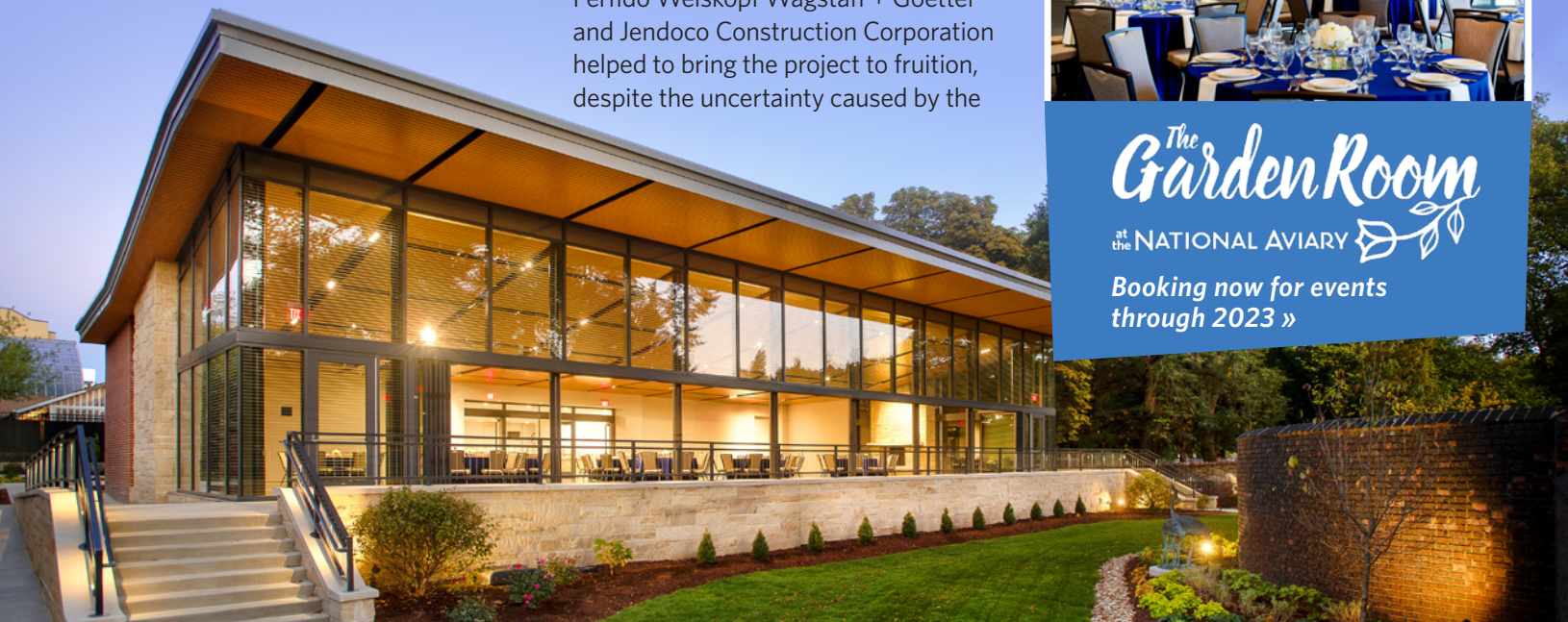
pandemic. Atria's Specialty Catering and Vitro Architectural Glass are sponsors of The Garden Room.

Lead funding for The Garden Room was provided by the Richard King Mellon Foundation, with additional funding provided by The Charity Randall Foundation, Hillman Foundation, Eden Hall Foundation, Allegheny Regional Asset District, Allegheny Foundation, Allegheny County, Jack Buncher Foundation, The Charles M. Morris Charitable Trust, Robert and Mary Weisbrod Foundation, and original National Aviary Board of Trustees member Michael Flinn and his wife, Eileen Flinn, both long-time supporters of the National Aviary. ■



The
Garden Room
at the NATIONAL AVIARY

Booking now for events
through 2023 »





From the Director

NATIONAL AVIARY
PITTSBURGH, PA

The National Aviary inspires respect for nature through an appreciation of birds.



Looking Ahead with Hope

The past year has been one of the most challenging years that the National Aviary has ever experienced — one that required agility, hard work, and the support of our entire community. When we closed our doors in March of 2020 to help do our part in slowing the spread of COVID-19, we could have never predicted that they would remain closed for over three months. Nor could we

predict additional closures as the year wore on. From the beginning, however, we did know that the high-level care of our birds would not be compromised, and our mission to inspire respect for nature through an appreciation of birds would not stop.

We worked diligently to create a plan for the National Aviary to remain viable despite a significant loss of revenue. We remained adaptable while keeping the health and safety of our visitors, staff, and volunteers at the forefront. We adopted a new operating model with enhanced safety protocols, while still offering immersive experiences for our community, creating deep connections with birds and the natural world.

We used the challenges of the pandemic as an opportunity to share our mission with new audiences. We quickly launched online education programs for learners of all ages, providing a connection to nature and to others at a time when many of us were quite isolated. We developed successful philanthropic campaigns that were vital in ensuring a future for the National Aviary and even launched an online gift shop during the holidays. The Aviary's critical work now reaches international audiences and these new innovative programs help to fund our mission.

We also celebrated a major milestone that was years in the making: the completion of The Garden Room, a new all-seasons event space that offers stunning views of the surrounding garden and park, seamless connectivity to our immersive habitats via The Charity Randall Foundation Eagle Hall, and ample space for events and education programs.

The completion of The Garden Room is remarkable, especially during such a turbulent year. This new space positions the National Aviary for growth and enables us to reach more people with our mission into the future.

This past year has demonstrated the resiliency and adaptability of the National Aviary, and it has also highlighted that we have the most amazing members, friends, donors, staff, volunteers and board of directors, who continue to help us along our way. Change has been our only constant, and the challenges of the pandemic are far from over. Our new operational model continues to limit our daily capacity, which allows for us to operate as safely and responsibly as possible, but this also limits our funding from admissions, programs, and events. Your support of our programs and your generous philanthropy over the past several months has allowed us to continue to rise to meet the pressing economic challenges and to continue to deliver our mission. The generosity of our vibrant community throughout this pandemic is nothing short of spectacular.

We know that nature — birds, in particular — can offer comfort and connection. During this time of uncertainty, that connection is needed now more than ever. And the National Aviary needs you — our members and friends — now more than ever.

As we look to the year ahead, I invite you to continue to engage with our programs, philanthropic campaigns, and events — both virtually and in person. Join us to explore our immersive habitats, stop by The Garden Room, and take time to appreciate the remarkable birds that call the National Aviary home! Your support is what makes our mission possible. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Cheryl L. Tracy
Executive Director

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A Tropical Retreat Awaits at the National Aviary

An island getaway may be out of the question this winter, but a tropical retreat is within reach at the National Aviary. Connect with nature on a journey through warm, expansive habitats where birds fly freely. Enhanced safety protocols, including timed entry tickets, a mask requirement, and frequent disinfection of surfaces allow visitors to experience immersive habitats and beautiful birds.

The world of birds can be a retreat from trying times, and connections with nature can be comforting. For families, a visit to the National Aviary is an opportunity for learning and engagement close to home.

Experience birds in new ways with daily programs, included with admission and designed with physical distancing in mind. Watch a playful colony of African Penguins at mealtime during a Penguin Talk, see gorgeous birds fly in front of a cascading waterfall during a Tropical Rainforest Talk and Feeding, and go on a Flamingo Island Adventure in the Wetlands! Get a ticket to meet the birds of the Amazon rainforest in Amazing Amazon, presented AAA Travel, an interactive bird show where colorful macaws and a Toco Toucan fly by!

Animal Encounters elevate a visit to the National Aviary and deepen a connection to nature. Animal Encounters now include general admission, and start at only \$16 more, making it easier than ever to have a personal experience with a sloth, flamingo, penguin, or bird of prey!

The National Aviary's thoughtfully planned enhanced safety protocols follow the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Allegheny County Health Department. A timed entry ticketing system keeps capacity low and allows ample room for physical distancing in expansive tropical habitats. Protective face masks must be worn over the nose and mouth at all times by visitors, staff, and volunteers. Staff and volunteers undergo a health risk assessment and temperature check before the start of each shift. Hand sanitization stations are available throughout the facility, and surfaces are disinfected regularly throughout the day.



A world of warm, lush habitats awaits!

**Purchase timed entry tickets
at aviary.org.**





Daily Schedule Included with Admission

10:30 am **Penguin Feeding and Talk**
Penguin Point

11 am **Through May 2**
Amazing Amazon 
Presented by 
Helen M. Schmidt FliteZone™ Theater


1 pm **Flamingo Island Adventure**
Wetlands

1 pm **Tropical Rainforest
Feeding and Talk**
Tropical Rainforest

2:30 pm **Through May 2**
Amazing Amazon 
Presented by 
Helen M. Schmidt FliteZone™ Theater

3:30 pm **Hang with the Bats**
Canary's Call
Presented by 

4 pm **Penguin Feeding and Talk**
Penguin Point

 = requires additional ticket/fee

Uncompromising Care During Difficult Times



Guam Kingfisher

This past year was unlike any other and dramatically altered the rhythms of daily life. But, even in the midst of a pandemic, nature carried on, and care for the animals who call the National Aviary home went on uncompromised.

Closing a zoo is not as simple as turning off the lights and locking up — not when animals still need to be fed, eggs are still being laid, and chicks are hatching and taking their first flights.

The essential staff of the National Aviary continued to provide the highest quality care, despite the challenges of a closure that lasted over three months. Their incredible work is reflected in successful hatchings and remarkable recoveries for birds facing medical conditions.

In the early days of the pandemic, a **Victoria Crowned Pigeon** chick fledged the nest, joining parents Isabella and Ferdinand in the Tropical Rainforest. This pair recently fledged their tenth chick at the National Aviary. The lush greenery of their habitat closely resembles the Victoria Crowned Pigeon's native New Guinea, contributing to this pair's success as parents.



Victoria Crowned Pigeon

Wild birds on the Mariana Islands face an uncertain future, but recent hatchings offer glimmers of hope. In the spring, two **Guam Kingfishers** hatched. Each hatching is a milestone for this extinct-in-the-wild species.

In December, the doors of the National Aviary closed once more in following a statewide order during a surge of COVID-19 cases across the nation. The first ever fledging of an endangered **Mariana Fruit-Dove** at the National Aviary was a bright spot during this time. The little chick is one of only 44 of its species in human care.

In June, a beloved member of the **African Penguin** colony finally returned home after a long illness. Dottie spent months in the Avian ICU at the National



Wattled Curassow

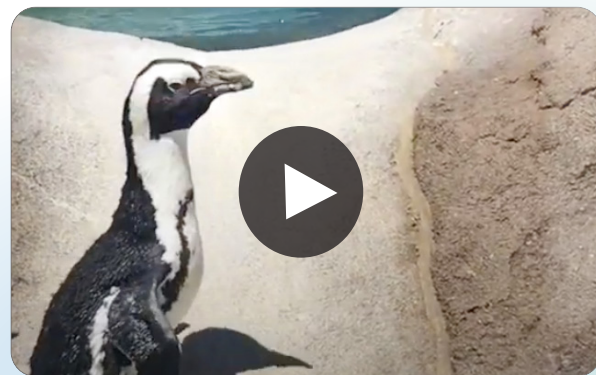


Mariana Fruit-Dove

Aviary recovering from pneumonia and a mass in her chest. She grew stronger thanks to human-grade medicines and intensive nursing, but it was the company of her life-long companion, Stanley, that brought back her spirited personality. With his company, Dottie made a full recovery and returned to Penguin Point.

Last summer, aviculturists noticed that Joanie, the **Wattled Curassow** with a big personality, seemed sluggish. Veterinary staff found that Joanie was in kidney failure and had a stomach condition. A diagnosis like this could be devastating for an older bird. The team was determined to give her the best possible chance for recovery. With a new treatment protocol, human-grade medicines, and her favorite foods (pineapple ice cubes), she recovered. Healthy and strong, Joanie returned to the Wetlands habitat she has called home for over 20 years.

The National Aviary's commitment to caring and the support of a generous community of donors helped bring extinct-in-the-wild chicks into the world, nursed beloved birds back to health, and made milestones like an endangered species' first fledging possible. ■



See Dottie's amazing recovery and triumphant return to Penguin Point!

Leading the Way to a SAFE Future for African Penguins

The world's penguin species are facing serious challenges, and most are in rapid decline. African Penguins are no exception. In just two decades, the species has experienced a decline of nearly seventy-five percent. The causes for this decline are multifaceted, and addressing them requires a comprehensive approach. The time to act for African Penguins is now. In assuming leadership of the Saving Animals From Extinction (SAFE) program of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) for African Penguins, the National Aviary is now taking the lead in keeping them safe from extinction.

Dr. Patricia McGill, the African Penguin SAFE Program Leader and Senior Conservation Scientist at the National Aviary, is leading the collaborative effort of AZA zoos and conservation organizations. In this role, Dr. McGill will enhance this international effort to make an impact at home and abroad.

Through the Species Survival Plan® (SSP), zoos and aquariums work together to keep African Penguin populations in human care healthy and genetically diverse, and to share

information discovered in these populations to support wild and rehabilitated penguins in Africa. As a member of the SSP steering committee for African Penguins, National Aviary Senior Aviculturist Chris Gaus plays a key role in this AZA-wide collaboration. Across the African Penguin's range in South Africa and Namibia, SAFE collaborates with conservationists working on solutions to pressing problems for the species.

Some projects are short-term, focused on stopping the decline and saving the last breeding birds. African Penguins nest in burrows made of guano along beaches and rocky shores. Guano mining for human use and erosion of islands forces penguins to nest in the open, reducing successful hatchings. Artificial nest burrows have been designed to mimic the temperature and humidity of a guano nest, and show promise for use in degraded habitats. SAFE is working to fund the creation and deployment of these nests. A second historic issue has been

oil spills and disease outbreaks; SAFE is engaged in disaster preparedness efforts, training teams to respond to oil spills and disease outbreaks and improving outcomes of such disasters. Tremendous collaboration with groups within South Africa and Namibia, sharing knowledge, expertise and experience across the globe, is ensuring success.

Other critical challenges require longer-term solutions. Over-fishing has led to a reduction in availability of the fish African Penguins rely on. Using monitoring technology, SAFE can track the movement of penguins to identify important sites throughout the life of a penguin. This information can guide conservation efforts for years to come.

African Penguins face many challenges, but collaboration and engagement from conservationists, zoos, and animal lovers worldwide can ensure a SAFE future for these beloved birds. We are proud that leaders of this effort are right here at the National Aviary. ■

First-time parents Buddy and Holly just welcomed a chick in early January! Learn more about the new chick!



Honor a loved one or celebrate your love of penguins with a Penguin Plaque.

Your Name

With limited plaques available, engrave your name on an elegant brass plate that will hang in Penguin Point for all to see.

[Learn more about Penguin Plaques »](#)

Connecting to Nature, Virtually

Through education programs with schools, community groups, and visitors, the National Aviary helps to foster a connection between animals and people. Meeting an animal up close and getting to know it can inspire a deeper commitment to caring for its wild counterparts.

Education is fundamental to the National Aviary's mission and helps to fund the work the Aviary does every day to save birds and protect their habitats. In-person education programming was stopped due to the pandemic, but the National Aviary's education staff quickly launched CyBIRD, a new virtual

tune in to a suite of engaging programs. Staff read nature-inspired children's books in the company of flamingos, penguins, and Red, the Scarlet Macaw who inspired Reading with Red and Friends. Aviary After School provided an exciting extra-curricular experience for school-aged learners. As classrooms went virtual, teachers could bring the National Aviary's most popular programs to students virtually.

education platform, filling a need and creating opportunities to reach new audiences.

Early in the pandemic, families at home could

The new lineup of virtual programming drew households and classrooms from around the country, and even from the United Kingdom!

The National Aviary continues to develop new and engaging programs for lifelong learners. From anywhere in the world, participants can ask an ornithologist their burning questions about birds, get a behind-the-scenes look at the National Aviary's Teaching Hospital, or learn step-by-step to paint a beautiful bird portrait from the comfort of home.

What was once an obstacle is now an opportunity for bird lovers of all ages around the world to connect with nature and each other. PA Cyber is the National Aviary's Virtual Education Sponsor.



Virtual Events for Lifelong Learners

Saturdays - February 20, March 20, April 17, May 22
Brushes & Birds Virtual Art Classes
featuring Maria DeSimone Prascak of Maria's Ideas;
MariasIdeas.com
11 am EST

Create a masterpiece without ever leaving home with fun virtual painting classes for all ages! Learn to paint an animal portrait with step-by-step instructions from local artist Maria DeSimone Prascak of Maria's Ideas; MariasIdeas.com. No painting experience required. Optional material kits are available for purchase.

[See each month's featured species and register here!](#)

[Paint a Hooded Merganser in March!](#)



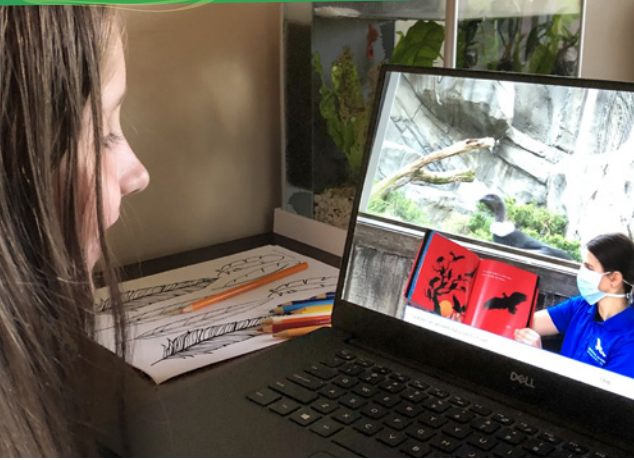
March 20
Bird Lovers Virtual Trivia with Threadbare
7 - 8:30 pm EST

Put your knowledge of all things avian to the test during this virtual trivia night! Gather virtually with other bird enthusiasts in the comfort of your home and see how much you know about birds from around the world. Before a fun night of trivia, a cider expert from Threadbare Cider will walk guests through a tasting of two popular ciders: Sweet Guava and Bouquet de Rosé. Both bottles are included in the Bird Lovers Trivia Bundle, sold separately.

[Sign up here to put your bird knowledge to the test!](#)



Explore habitats with an educator while discovering interesting facts about the species who call the National Aviary home. Learn about the National Aviary's conservation efforts to protect birds and their habitats around the world. Available for \$19.95, or included with a Virtual Membership!



Virtual Education

Thursdays through April 15 Aviary After School for Families

4 pm EST

Young nature lovers around the country can meet weekly to learn about the wonderful world of birds and their habitats and make connections with other students! Each virtual session is themed and includes an educational component, a guided craft or activity, and plenty of time for discussion between participants and National Aviary experts. Participation in all sessions is encouraged.

[Learn more and register here!](#)

Tuesday, April 13

New! Careers in Veterinary Medicine: Veterinary Careers Spotlight

5:30 - 7 pm EST

Learn what it takes to become a veterinarian from Dr. Pilar Fish, the National Aviary's Senior Director of Zoological Advancement and Avian Medicine. During this intensive seminar designed for teens and college students, gain insight into the field of veterinary medicine, learn tips for navigating on the journey through veterinary school, and discover the unique and rewarding aspects of a career in avian medicine. A practicing veterinarian since 1994, Dr. Fish has worked throughout Africa and Latin America teaching avian medicine and assisting wildlife rehabilitation centers. Your student can jumpstart their future in veterinary medicine with this amazing opportunity to learn from one of the nation's foremost avian veterinarians!

[Register here!](#)

Wednesdays in March & April Virtual Birding with Bob Mulvihill

11 am EST

Take a deep dive into the world of birds, their behavior, their habitats, and their conservation with National Aviary Ornithologist Bob Mulvihill. Explore the mysteries of bird migration and birdsong, learn to identify tricky birds like sparrows and fall warblers, and understand the important role birds play in a thriving and healthy ecosystem.

[Learn more and register here!](#)



Looking for a gift for Mom, Dad, a grad, or just because?

Symbolically adopt a beloved National Aviary
animal like a sloth or an owl!

[Learn more](#)



In-person Events At the Aviary

Sundays beginning February 14 Brunch in the Garden featuring Atria's

Spend a relaxing Sunday in the elegant setting of The Garden Room, the National Aviary's new event space offering beautiful views of the surrounding garden and park. Sip a refreshing mimosa and savor delicious offerings from Atria's Specialty Catering in a grand yet cozy space. A prix fixe brunch will be served to each guest by Atria's staff. Capacity limits allow ample space between groups in the spacious Garden Room, and enhanced safety protocols including a mask requirement are observed by all guests and staff.

Multiple seatings available
\$55/adults; \$35/children 12 and under
Includes general admission
Reservations required; space is limited.
Purchase tickets at aviary.org

[Register here!](#)

February 27 & 28 Flamingo Fest 10 am - 3 pm

The National Aviary's annual celebration of all things flamingo returns! Enjoy a fun and engaging story time, make colorful crafts, and take in the sights and sounds of the Wetlands during a Flamingo Island Adventure feeding talk!

Included with admission
Purchase timed entry tickets at aviary.org

March 27 & 28 / April 2 & 3 Eggstravaganza 10 am - 3 pm

Hop over for an egg-themed scavenger hunt through the National Aviary's immersive habitats, enjoy a special story time with a chance to meet a beautiful bird, and more!

Included with admission
Purchase timed entry tickets at aviary.org

April 24 Earth Day Celebration 10 am - 3 pm

Connect with nature in the National Aviary's expansive habitats and learn how you can be a good steward of our planet. Watch a fun story time with a special bird visitor, and win a prize for completing a "green"-themed scavenger hunt!

Included with admission
Purchase timed entry tickets at aviary.org

Out and about...

Birdwatching Kayak Tours with L.L.Bean

Sunday, April 18 9 am - 12 pm EST
Sunday, May 16 8 am - 11 am EST

See birds differently: from the water! The National Aviary is teaming up with L.L.Bean to offer birdwatching tours by kayak for both seasoned and new kayakers and birdwatchers. Grab a pair of binoculars, head to North Park Lake, and learn about birds from National Aviary experts. L.L.Bean's professional and experienced guides will offer a brief 10-15 minute on-land instruction on kayaking equipment, basic strokes, and safety guidelines. L.L.Bean will provide all necessary equipment, including kayaks, paddles, safety floatation devices, and L.L.Bean Discovery Binoculars.

[Register here!](#)

Birding Expeditions with Bob

8:30 - 11:30 am EST

Sunday, March 28
Waterfowl Tour at Lake Arthur

Saturday, April 10
Pymatuning State Park

Saturday, May 8
Presque Isle State Park

Meet up with National Aviary Ornithologist Bob Mulvihill for physically distanced outdoor birding adventures throughout Western Pennsylvania. Learn techniques to enhance your birding skills and explore birding spots that may yield great opportunities to see birds native to and migrating through the state. This is a meet up-style program; participants travel independently to the locations.

[Register here!](#)



A Team Effort to Help a Tiny Bird Heal

by Dr. Pilar Fish, Senior Director,
Zoological Advancement and Avian Medicine

From massive constructions of sticks and leaves weighing many hundreds of pounds to intricately woven cups of grasses and moss balanced on a tree limb, nesting is an innate behavior for every bird species. Many birds use thin fibers like webbing, grasses, and animal fur to build their nests. It can be delicate work, and it is common for a bird to end up with fiber entwined around its leg. In the wild, birds in this situation can become trapped in the nest, or even lose a leg.

Thankfully, birds in human care like those at the National Aviary can receive the prompt attention they need when they find themselves entwined during the natural process of nest building. The task of caring for a bird in this state can be as simple as snipping the material away from the leg, but it can also be a very complicated procedure, especially when the patient is incredibly tiny.

And Tasi, a male Bridled White-eye, is an incredibly tiny patient! Weighing in at only eight grams with a head the size of a blueberry and a body the size of a grape, Tasi

is among the smallest birds at the National Aviary.

Tasi is also a very important bird. Native to the Mariana Islands, Bridled White-eyes are endangered, facing the threat of the same invasive snake species that decimated the populations of the Guam Rail and Guam Kingfisher. Tasi is part of a Species Survival Program that acts as a safeguard against the extinction of the species.

Aviculturists noticed that Tasi, a very active and dynamic little bird, had nesting material entwined around his leg. With extreme care, the delicate little bird was moved to the National Aviary's Avian Hospital for an evaluation. The injury had happened quickly, and the fibers were wound tightly. Surgery would be the best option for Tasi.

Performing surgery on a bird as small as Tasi, whose legs are about the size of a toothpick, would be a delicate procedure. For two hours, a team of veterinary staff worked to repair Tasi's leg using microsurgical tools, and created a custom cast for him, using the best human-

grade treatments to promote healing and layering tiny strips of bandages and medicated dressings.

Veterinary staff removed the cast in order for Tasi to receive a specialized treatment to promote healing, then painstakingly reconstructed it every week. While the process was slow and exacting for the team of veterinary staff caring for Tasi, the cast did not slow down Tasi! He perched and preened, ate heartily, and sang constantly to the veterinary staff and the other birds in the Avian Hospital.

After six weeks, Tasi's cast was removed, and his leg had healed completely. With physical therapy, Tasi regained full function of his leg. It took teamwork, and Tasi's indomitable and resilient spirit, to help this little bird heal. ■



A Comeback for Guam Rails

In late 2019, the Guam Rail became the second bird species to come back from being classified as Extinct in the Wild when it was downgraded to Critically Endangered. By the late 1980s, only 21 Guam Rails remained on Guam after an accidentally introduced invasive snake species devastated the island's birds. These precious birds, known as ko'ko' by the people of Guam, needed help urgently.

Decades of cooperative breeding programs have helped the species rebound to the point that small populations could return to islands near Guam. The National Aviary has sent the highest number of Guam Rails to the islands of Cocos and Rota of any North American zoo. In late 2020, another eight Guam Rails that hatched at the National Aviary were released on Rota, joining a thriving population and offering hope for this species.

Catch a glimpse of a Guam Rail during a visit to the Tropical Rainforest! ■



**Want to support the National Aviary while enjoying the great outdoors?
Look for details this spring on how you can do both!**

DONOR SOCIETY »

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