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Audubon Society of Rhode Island



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REPORT

VOLUME 55 • NO. 1 • WINTER 2021

CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE

WHERE SCIENCE BEGINS



AUDUBON KEEPS AN EYE ON NATURE



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Celebrating Science in 2021

It seems like so many of us are celebrating science these days. It is making headlines. From climate change to vaccines, fact-based information based on science is back in the mainstream. It is a welcome and much-needed change after several years of dismissal by the former Federal Administration. This issue of the Audubon Report shares some of the ways we practice and promote science in our work.

Audubon remains as committed as ever to our shared mission of protecting birds and other wildlife from the threats of habitat destruction and climate change. We welcome opportunities to work with partner environmental organizations to implement positive change in Rhode Island and re-build core policies such as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

We are also committed to reaching out to and working with diverse communities within Rhode Island. Together, we can create a strong, determined force of people relying on sound science-based practices in conservation, education and advocacy. It will take all of our voices and efforts to face the challenges of climate change.

Thanks again for your support,

Lawrence J. F. Taft

Where is Your Candle?

Last year while an owl program was underway at our Eppley Wildlife Refuge in South Kingstown, the power went out. The cabin there is old, and instead of more modern circuit breakers, fuses are used. They were obviously using a little too much power. For five minutes everyone sat in the dark while staff tried to replace the fuse.

They all thought, “the electricity will be restored shortly. I can be patient.” A few minutes more passed. People began to fidget. And then a woman said, “I have a candle here in my purse and some matches.”

A moment later a flame appeared, and the darkness receded. A sense of calm returned. Soon after the electricity was restored, and light once again flooded the room.

Endowments are like candles. They provide light and financial security in an uncertain future. And uncertainty has been more than prevalent this year. Audubon’s endowment has permitted us to keep working and even plan with confidence for the year ahead.

An endowment gives off rays of hope. You can create your own endowment within Audubon and be a candle of hope for generations to come.

Your foresight will provide wild and open places for all people to connect with nature. One of the finest things you can do within your charitable giving plan is to light an endowment candle. You can do it now with cash or securities, or later through your will or a trust. The paperwork is minimal compared to the satisfaction you will receive.



To obtain information on Audubon’s endowment program, please contact Jeff Hall, Audubon Senior Director of Advancement at 402-949-5454 x3017 or by email at jhall@asri.org.



WHERE SCIENCE BEGINS

KEEPING AN EYE ON NATURE

By Todd McLeish

Audubon Executive Director Larry Taft (right) and Audubon Senior Director of Conservation Scott Ruhren monitoring the property at Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge.

Several times each week from May through August, Cindy Dibble visits three sites in Narragansett and South Kingstown where Osprey are known to nest, and during each visit she watches the birds and makes notes about what she sees. She documents when the birds arrive on migration, when they mate, when they begin incubating their eggs, and when the fledglings make their first flight, among other milestones. All of her observations are then uploaded to Audubon's Osprey Monitoring Program website.

I'm just so fascinated by this majestic bird, said Dibble, a retired special education teacher who has been an Osprey monitor for three years. It's time consuming, but it's also fun. And when you're monitoring the same nest for several years, you get attached to the birds and you start to worry about them.

Dibble is one of nearly 100 volunteers who monitored about 200 nest sites last year for a program that was started by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management in 1977 and has been managed by Audubon since 2010. All of the data collected by the volunteers is compiled into an annual report that is shared with researchers to better understand the fluctuating populations of this once-rare bird.

The Osprey Monitoring Program is one of many science-based research and monitoring efforts undertaken by Audubon staff and volunteers each

year that are designed to gather information about wildlife and their habitats.

According to Executive Director Larry Taft, Audubon's three mission areas all rely on sound science—environmental education programs that engage thousands of students each year; wildlife monitoring and conservation best practices that Audubon uses to enhance its wildlife refuge properties; and science-based reports and data, like that collected by the Osprey monitors, used to formulate policy positions and advocate for those positions at the State House.

There are a lot of opinions out there, said Taft, but Audubon has always based decisions and actions on the facts as we know them. That goes way back to our early observations of declining bird populations, pollution, and chemical pesticide use like DDT. For Audubon to remain credible, we have to adhere to the science.

Despite Audubon's long-term commitment to science, its positions and practices are sometimes challenged by those with different motives, like those who continue to deny that the climate is changing and those changes are largely caused by human activities.

We want to continue to be the organization that people turn to and trust, with staff who have experience and know what they're talking about, Taft said. And we're trying to be more and more proactive on how we conduct our monitoring and the active role we play in conservation, not just for feel-

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WHERE SCIENCE BEGINS

Continued from page 3

good reasons, but to have a real and lasting impact in protecting birds and wildlife.

When developing policy positions, for instance, Audubon staff members refer to research papers, reports and other documents and then verify their accuracy before drawing conclusions.

As we move forward with pressing for the banning of neonicotinoids because of their effects on pollinators, we have to be careful of what we claim, said Taft. We need to make sure that science is backing us up. Too many times, people accept as truth something that is not well-researched and not well-documented. Science is a way of organizing information that is empirical.

Similarly, Audubon's education mission focuses on nature walks and other field trips and activities to enlighten children and families about natural history, and all of Audubon's educators are well-versed in the environmental sciences. Not only are the lessons science-based, but they also help children understand how to conduct science themselves.

A transect in the woods designed to count how many salamanders there are can help students document natural science facts and train them how to read data and analyze issues for themselves, Taft said. It's a way to discover the importance of monitoring nature. And we hope that activities like these, led by our education staff, will inspire some budding scientists.



Audubon Council of Advisors member Dave Gumbley monitors a bluebird box.

Audubon's commitment to science is most evident in its environmental monitoring and stewardship activities. Its wildlife refuges have actively supported natural science research for decades. Through numerous legacy projects, like the Kingston Wildlife Research Station (which got its start in 1956) and long-term bird and rare plant monitoring at sites around the state, Audubon has collected data and collaborated with a wide variety of partners to evaluate population declines, make management recommendations, and identify trends that could lead to environmental protection.

Habitat restoration is a perfect example. Decisions to restore habitat are based on a scientific understanding of habitat quality and the habitat

needs of targeted species. Before and after restoration, bird and plant monitoring is typically conducted to determine whether the restored habitat attracts and supports the desired wildlife.

At Audubon's largest refuge, the 1,100-acre Marion Eppley Wildlife Refuge in South Kingstown and Exeter, some of the habitat had become overgrown and the forests had matured so much that it was no longer attractive to early successional species like Blue-winged Warblers, American Woodcock, New England cottontails and several reptiles and amphibians. So a grant was acquired to fund restoration of 30 acres of habitat.

According to Scott Ruhren, Audubon's senior director of conservation, some trees and shrubs were cut to open up the canopy and allow a new generation of native trees and shrubs to grow.

Rabbit researchers in the Northeast know what kind of habitat and plant types are needed to attract New England cottontails, and observational studies have identified the preferred habitat of certain birds, he said. We know that when forests close in, you lose some bird species.

We also left the cut material on the ground to provide cover for animals. That messiness is exactly what the animals need, Ruhren added.

Based on research, we know a messy forest reduces herbivory by deer because they have a hard time getting over the debris. Which means that vulnerable plants might have a better chance to flourish in the face of the typically heavy influence of deer in the Northeast.

Since the restoration began seven years ago, Audubon's bird expert Laura Carberry, the manager of the Fisherville Brook Refuge in Exeter, has been conducting breeding bird surveys at Eppley each year to determine whether bird populations have changed in the desired way. And they have. The next step in the project is to further improve the habitat by monitoring and removing invasive species.

Audubon's newest science-based effort is called Forestry for Rhode Island Birds, a collaboration with the Northern Rhode Island Conservation District, the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Rhode Island Woodland Partnership to boost targeted bird populations through forest management on private properties in the state.

Kate Sayles, the forestry and agriculture program manager at the Conservation District, said the program aims to address declining forest bird populations by creating and implementing demonstration sites and silviculture projects that enhance forest bird habitat. At the same time, the program educates landowners and forestry professionals about the benefits of managing land for wildlife, focusing on a dozen selected bird species. These particular birds were identified as representing priority habitats needing conservation.

Working with URI ornithologists and other experts, we picked 12 bird species that are rela-



A volunteer monitors water quality at the Providence Stormwater Innovation Center last year.



Bird Banding: The Audubon Kingston Wildlife Research Station has been banding birds and collecting data for almost 70 years.



Members of the Youth Conservation League install bluebird boxes at the Maxwell Mays Wildlife Refuge in Coventry, RI



Audubon Council of Advisors member Steve Reinert leads a bird banding program with Providence students in Audubon's Urban Naturalist program.

tively easy to see or hear in the forest birds that are fancy enough to get folks attention and we plan forest habitat recommendations based on those species, she said. We then implement those projects on the ground.

Among the targeted birds are Pine Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Red-eyed Vireo, Scarlet Tanager, Wood Thrush, Eastern Wood-pewee, Pileated Woodpecker and Barred Owl. All are experiencing declines in their global populations and require large tracts of contiguous forest for breeding.

Three demonstration sites have been identified a woodlot in Foster managed by the Rhode Island Forest Conservators Organization, the Norman Bird Sanctuary in Middletown, and a private landowner in Richmond where forest management techniques that support birds can be showcased. At each site, Ruhren surveys plants and bird habitat characteristics and Carberry surveys birds before and after the management steps are taken to highlight how bird populations change.

It s all about showing the foresters what good management looks like, Sayles said. Foresters don t typically focus on songbirds, so the key is to get them to look for important habitat features the birds need and to make recommendations based on that. It s to get them to use birds as another important informational tool in their forest management plans.

The second component of the program involves enrolling private landowners interested in managing their forested lands. Ruhren and Carberry have already conducted surveys at about 25 properties in two years and made recommendations to foresters developing management plans for those sites.

It s a no-brainer, as far as I m concerned, Ruhren said. If you re interested in maintaining your forest well, then most of what you re likely to do is going to help the birds.

Most of the forest in Rhode Island is privately owned, so this is allowing us to get in there and give these forest owners a reason to protect their forest, added Carberry. We re working mostly with 10- to 20-acre plots and trying to encourage the owners to keep them intact.

Not all of the landowners who initially enroll in the program end up implementing the recommendations, but the program still provides them with an education about how their forest management decisions affect wildlife.

It s important for folks to recognize that the birds and the forest are connected and to start thinking that way, to look at birds as a filter to understanding our woods, Sayles said. We want people to get comfortable with the idea of cutting trees, because a managed forest is a healthy forest, and we re going to need all the help we can get to ensure our forests and birds are resilient.

The science behind the Providence Stormwater Innovation Center at Roger Williams Park, which Audubon leads in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, Providence Parks Department and



Nearly 100 volunteers monitored approximately 200 Osprey nest sites last year for Audubon.

Roger Williams Park Conservancy, is equally varied and robust.

The Center is demonstrating strategies for improving urban water quality and associated wildlife habitat through the use of innovative stormwater practices. A wide range of infrastructure has already been installed at the park to reduce stormwater contaminants from entering the ponds and degrading water quality. These structures and practices are also being used to provide hands-on training for municipalities, engineers, construction companies and scientists who will learn from the successes and failures of their design, implementation and maintenance.

As Rhode Island faces more intense and frequent storms due to climate change, the impact and management of stormwater will become ever more critical, said Taft. Data collecting is in the early stages, but Audubon is proud to lead a project that will impact towns and cities around New England.

Over 40 projects have been installed in the Park to filter contaminants and treat stormwater runoff. Rain gardens have been constructed to treat stormwater by pooling water on the surface and allowing filtering and settling of suspended sediment as the water flows into the ground. Buffer plantings and bioswales have also been installed to treat stormwater and improve water quality, and a reduction in impervious surfaces pavement also aids the process. A key element of the project

is monitoring water quality in the Park s ponds as well as when water enters and leaves the Park to learn if the infrastructure improvements have had the desired effect. All of this work is being coordinated by Audubon staff member, Ryan Kopp.

Audubon has always participated in and relied on science, and turned to research by experts to help inform our management practices, our stance in policy, and the kind of materials we offer in our educational programs, concluded Taft. That commitment to science continues with the Stormwater Innovation Center. Per our new strategic plan, science is front and center at Audubon. It s part of who we are, and always will be.

“Audubon has always based decisions and actions on the facts as we know them. That goes way back to our early observations of declining bird populations, pollution, and chemical pesticide use like DDT. For Audubon to remain credible, we have to adhere to the science.”

Audubon Executive Director
Larry Taft

CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE OCEAN STATE

As temperatures and sea levels rise, and unstable climate patterns increase, humans, birds, animals, fish and plants will all struggle with ecosystem change. Issues of the 2021 Audubon Report will highlight several climate-threatened bird species and their habitats.

Forests and Tanagers

By Laura Carberry and Scott Ruhren

As scientists study how forests respond to climate change, many conclude that negative impacts to sensitive forest bird species will occur.

Although there is more forest habitat now than 200 years ago, the forest composition has changed. Some dominant trees like the American chestnut are gone and invasive vines, shrubs, and trees are more common. Introduced insects and pathogens are on the rise. These negative pressures could be worsened by a changing climate.

The Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*) a neotropical migrant bird, offers examples of how climate change is affecting some forest species. Their populations are heavily impacted by habitat fragmentation caused by forest disturbance and shrinking size due to human activities. This leads to Brown-headed Cowbirds taking over increasing numbers of tanager nests. Fragmented forests also tend to experience increased rates of predation and a warmer, windier microclimate.

Scarlet Tanagers are listed by the National Audubon Society as “climate threatened.” It is predicted the tanager range will experience a 93% shift from 2000 to 2080 and shrink by 26% in that time given predicted climate changes (National Audubon Society, 2015).

Many birds time their migration to maximize reproduction. This is achieved by arriving when their highly nutritious insect prey is most abundant for nestlings. Juvenile birds raised during this time are heavier and have higher survival rates. Warmer temperatures have led birds to return and breed earlier, but the warmer temperatures also have led to caterpillars emerging sooner. If the timing of insects and birds do not match up, it can be disastrous for birds. The species can survive a year or two out of synch, but a continuation could lead to a population collapse.

Invasive species and disease outbreaks in forests can also be elevated due to climate change. They can reduce the canopy layer and the health of the native trees or increase forest fragmentation. These disturbances can also disrupt the nesting of the Scarlet Tanager and other species.



Additional New England Climate-threatened Forest Bird Species:

- Wood Thrush
- Black-throated Green Warbler
- Pine Warbler
- Worm-eating Warbler
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- Whip-poor-will

WHAT CAN YOU DO?



Purchase green power to heat and cool your home and insulate it well.



Reduce energy use. Drive less (walk, bike and use public transportation) and create an energy-efficient home.



Support land conservation. Forests remove CO₂ from the atmosphere, provide shade to keep the landscape cooler, and are critical habitat for birds and wildlife.



Landscape and garden with native plants that provide food, cover and nesting materials for birds and wildlife.



Stay informed. Support legislation and community efforts that reduce carbon emissions. Sign up for advocacy emails by contacting Meg Kerr (mkerr@asri.org)

Audubon's Legislative Priorities for 2021

By Meg Kerr, Senior Director of Policy

Act On Climate 2021

Our top priority is reintroducing and passing the Act On Climate bill from 2020 (H7399 Sponsors: Rep. Blazejewski, Chair Abney, Chair Bennett, Rep. Carson, Rep. Ruggiero) and S2165 (Sponsors: Sen. Euer, Chair Lynch Prata, Chair Conley, Chair Sosnowski, Sen. Goodwin).

This bill will require Rhode Island to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions 100% by 2050. Act On Climate will bring the state in line with the mandatory, enforceable greenhouse gas emission reductions already in place in neighboring Massachusetts and Connecticut.

The Act On Climate Bill also updates the Resilient Rhode Island Act of 2014 in two important ways:

It updates our climate targets in accordance with the latest science regarding what is needed to avert climate disaster, setting the 2035 mandate at a 50% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the 2050 mandate at a 100% reduction.

It requires accountability and transparency by making the state's carbon emission reductions binding. If the state fails to follow the law, Rhode Islanders can enforce climate action.

The Ocean State Climate Adaptation and Resilience Fund (OSCAR) (2020, S 2194 (Sen. Lynch Prata) / H 7165 (Rep. Vella-Wilkinson). OSCAR would be funded by a \$0.05 per barrel fee on petroleum products imported by ship into Rhode Island. (There are 42 gallons in a barrel.) This fee equates to 1/10th of a cent per gallon of fuel. It is estimated that OSCAR would generate approximately \$1,900,000 per year to fund important adaptation projects throughout the state with no impact to the state budget. Audubon would prioritize investing this money on salt marsh restoration efforts to protect Saltmarsh Sparrows and other wildlife.

Protection of Forest Habitat and Solar Siting

Audubon believes that Rhode Island needs to promote the rational development of renewable energy to meet the state's greenhouse gas reduction goals and mitigate climate change while also protecting critical habitats. Audubon opposes the destruction of Rhode Island's forest and other habitats to meet our renewable energy goals. We believe that renewable energy projects should be sited on brownfields, landfills, gravel pits, rooftops and other developed areas. We also believe that the state needs to put policies in place to accelerate the protection of critical unprotected forest habitat areas.

2021 Legislative Priorities

1. Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) must step up to assist with communicating the importance of forests for climate resilience and habitat. Audubon will support RIDEM recommended policies to protect critical forest resources.
2. Amend existing renewable energy laws to de-incentivize development on green-fields. We have identified three priorities:
 - 1) Close the 10 megawatts (MW) loophole. The state's Virtual Net Metering Program (VNM) caps projects at 10 MW. However, projects are built on contiguous parcels creating projects as large as 60 MW, often on forested parcels.
 - 2) We oppose expanding the VNM program until the siting issue is resolved.
 - 3) Expand the Renewable Energy Growth Program (REG) as it includes incentives for certain land use types. We will support other policy and legislative recommendations directed at this issue.

Pollinator Health and Habitat & Pesticide Management

Pollinators are declining worldwide. The RI Wildlife Action Plan lists the rusty patched bumble bee, the yellow-banded bumble bee, the monarch butterfly and 10 species of silkworm and sphinx moths as pollinator species of greatest conservation need. Pesticides used for the control of mosquitoes and other widespread problem insects, as well as homeowner use of over-the-counter pesticides, contribute to the decline. Loss of habitat and climate change also impact their populations.

Audubon has worked for several years on issues related to pollinator health and habitat. This work has consistently identified DEM's limited capacity to manage and monitor pesticide use in the state. Audubon Board Member Dr. Charles Clarkson led the development of the state's Breeding Bird Atlas and has spoken about declining bird numbers in Rhode Island, matching trends seen world-wide. Research is showing a link between pesticide use, particularly neonicotinoids, and impacts on birds.

2021 Legislative priorities: reintroduce and pass 2020 neonicotinoid ban 2020 S 2403 (Miller, Conley, Coyne) and H 7425 (McNamara, Speakman, Caldwell, Bennett, and Kislak)



Optics Drive to Support Young Birders a Success!

Thank you to all who donated new or gently-used binoculars.

The Ocean State Bird Club (OSBC) and Audubon Society of Rhode Island collected 36 pairs of gently-used and new optics to provide opportunities for young birders in urban communities. Plenty of youth have expressed an interest in birds and nature, but their families cannot afford expensive optics. Audubon and the OSBC will be working with the Providence Parks Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership to determine where the donations will be allocated. This organization works with Providence youth to develop an interest in nature and birds.



Help Send a Kid to **AUDUBON SUMMER CAMP**

Please donate TODAY! Summer is right around the corner.

How did you spend your playtime as a child?

Did you go outside and explore the woods or play in your yard? Did you run through the grass playing games, look for frogs in a nearby pond, or maybe build a fort? For most adults, the connection to nature began with positive, childhood experiences. By contrast, today's children are spending less and less time playing outside.

Many families cannot afford to send their child to Audubon Summer Camp.

You can help to get a child outside and experience nature this summer. Your donation of \$275 will allow a young camper to hike through the woods, explore the shore, get up-close with cool critters, make messy crafts and have lots of healthy, outdoor fun.

All Kids Should Go to Summer Camp

Help us send 100 kids to Audubon Summer Camp. It's an experience that connects youth with nature and makes their summer special. Your generous donation of \$275 will send one child to Audubon Camp for one week. Summer is right around the corner! Please donate today to the Audubon Summer Camp Scholarship Fund and make a difference in a child's life.



"I am going to help send a Kid to Summer Camp!"

Please accept my donation for a camp scholarship

Please charge my credit card

___\$550 (2 children) ___\$275 (1 child) ___\$137.50 ___\$69 Other \$_____

NAME _____

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CARD NUMBER _____

EXPIRATION DATE (MM/YYYY) _____

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SIGNATURE _____



You can also donate online at asri.org

Please make check payable to: Audubon Society of Rhode Island • Mail to: Audubon Scholarships, 12 Sanderson Rd., Smithfield, RI 02917

2021 AUDUBON SUMMER CAMP SCHEDULE

Audubon Camp gets kids ages 2½ to 12 outside to explore a variety of habitats and provides a safe environment to have lots of FUN in nature.

Note: All Audubon 2021 Camps will be held in Bristol, RI.

July 5 – July 9, 2021	July 12 – July 16, 2021	July 19 – July 23, 2021	July 26 – July 30, 2021	August 2 – August 6, 2021	August 9 – August 13, 2021
Explore the Shore Ages 5-6 9am-3pm	Dinosaur Days Ages 5-6 9am-3pm	Explore the Shore Ages 5-6 9am-3pm	Habitats, Homes & Hideaways Ages 5-6 9am-3pm	Explore the Shore Ages 5-6 9am-3pm	Habitats, Homes & Hideaways Ages 5-6 9am-3pm
Creatures of the Deep! Ages 7-9 9am-3pm	Survival Challenge Ages 7-9 9am-3pm	Coastal Adventures Ages 7-9 9am-3pm	Wildlife Trackers Ages 7-9 9am-3pm	Creatures of the Deep! Ages 7-9 9am-3pm	Survival Challenge Ages 7-9 9am-3pm
Early Birds Ages 2.5-4 9am-12pm	Fledglings Age 5 9am-12pm	Marine Biology Camp Ages 10-12 9am-3pm		Marine Biology Camp Ages 10-12 9am-3pm	Birds of Prey Ages 10-12 9am-3pm

For more information and to register, visit: audubonsummercamp.com

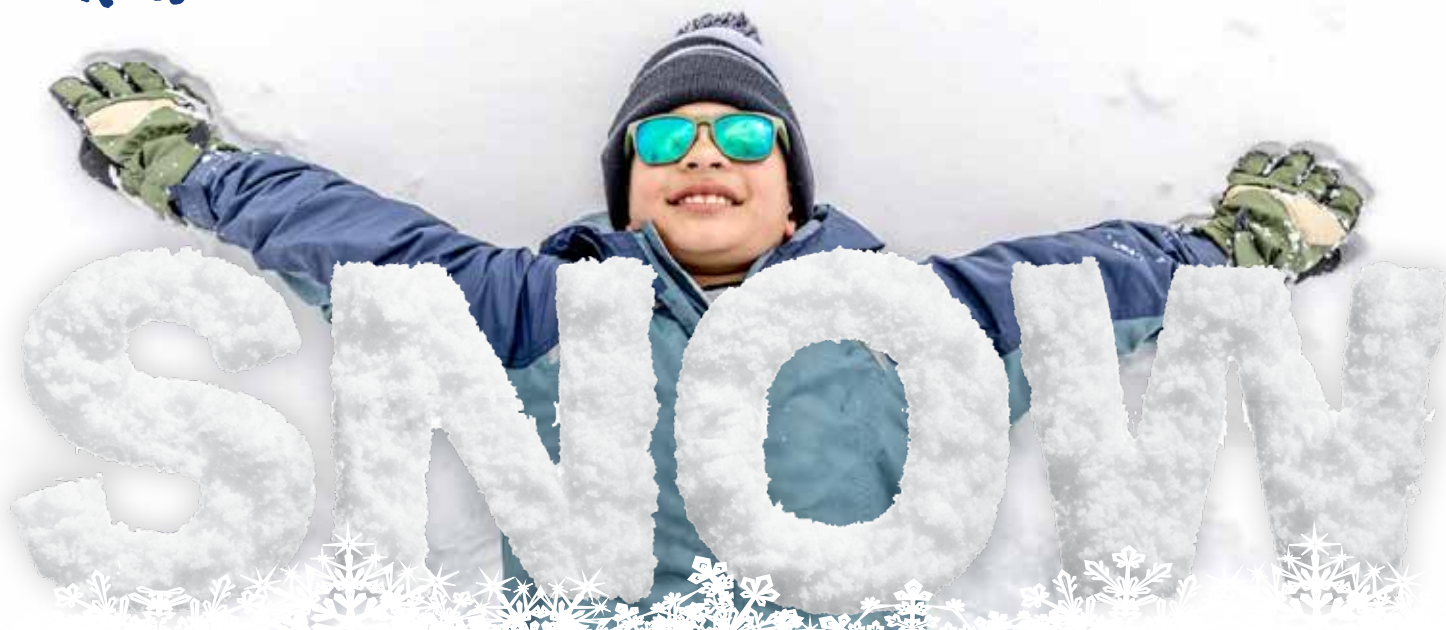
CAMPERS NEED TENTS!

Help Audubon Provide a Safe Environment for Kids During COVID-19

Due to COVID-19 safety guidelines, Audubon needs sturdy outdoor tents this year that offer shade from the sun and protection from the rain. For \$800, three tents can be purchased and set up on Audubon grounds. Games, crafts, animal interviews, story times, lunch and other activities can all be enjoyed safely outside under these tents. Your donation will help Audubon keep campers safe and engaged in nature all summer long!

Make your donation at: asri.org/tents





SNOW SCIENCE:

Snow begins as a speck of dust or salt that rises into the sky. As it reaches the clouds, water molecules start to attach to it. This droplet grows as more and more water molecules connect. When the droplet cools, it freezes into an ice crystal. Over time, it grows heavier and begins to fall. Continued condensation changes the crystal's shape as it falls from the clouds into warmer air where many clump together to form snowflakes.

TRY THESE ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE IN THE SNOW:

Catch a Snowflake

You can catch a snowflake by simply holding out your hand, but it will melt quickly. Would you like to keep a snowflake for observation? Place a dark piece of fabric or paper in your freezer for 15 minutes then take it outside and catch snowflakes on the dark surface. Examine them with a magnifying lens. What types of crystals are falling in your backyard?

Snow Art

To get creative in the snow, fill a spray bottle with water and food coloring of your choice. Head outside and start spraying a masterpiece on the snow. Remember to switch up the colors!

Make a Snow Gauge

Did you ever wonder how much snow falls in your neighborhood? Make your own snow gauge to find out. Tape a ruler to the inside of an empty coffee can. At the start of the next snow storm, put the container outside in an open area away from trees and buildings. When the storm ends, check the ruler to find out how much snow fell. Is it the same as the weather report?

Snow Melt

How much water is actually in snow? You will need three containers that are all the same size. Fill one with water, one with ice cubes and one with snow. Make a prediction about how much water will be left after the snow and ice cubes melt. It may take a little while for melting to occur. Use a measuring cup to determine how much water is left in each container.

Frozen Bubbles

On a cold winter day with no wind, take a bottle of bubble liquid and wand outside. Blow bubbles as big as you can and see what happens to them in the cold!



FUN FACTS:

- ❄️ During the Blizzard of 1978, 38 inches of snow fell in Woonsocket, RI – the most recorded in State history.
- ❄️ The most snow recorded in the U.S. during a 24-hour period was 75.8" in Silver Lake, Colorado in April 1921. That's more than 6 feet!
- ❄️ On May 9 & 10, 1977, North Foster, RI received 12.1" of snow. That's a lot of snow for springtime!
- ❄️ MythBuster: Not all snowflakes are different! A scientist in 1998 found two snowflakes from the same storm that were exactly alike.



THE SEVEN MOST COMMON TYPES OF SNOWFLAKE:

Each forms in different temperatures & conditions.



Hexagonal Plates are the most common, a six-sided flat crystal with designs on their surfaces.



Hexagonal Columns are six-sided cylinders with either flat or pointed ends.



Capped Columns are hexagonal columns with hexagonal plates on either end.



Needles are long, slender six-sided columns looking like tiny bolts of lightning.



Stellar Crystals are the classic star-shaped flake with six branches, having simple to elaborate designs.



Spatial Dendrites are feathery stellar crystals with other branches projecting from each of the six original branches.



Irregular Crystals is the catch-all category for other shapes.

Wildlife Monitoring: Woven Into Our Work

I often get questions from folks about what else I do besides lead bird walks. My responsibilities as a naturalist and refuge manager vary greatly. One day I may be clearing trails and the next leading a birding trip to Block Island. In this issue of the Report, we talk about some of the science and research that Audubon is involved with, and that too can fall under my area of responsibility.



I am currently involved with a monitoring program called Forestry for Rhode Island Birds. It's designed to educate landowners on the benefits of managing their property for forest-dependent birds. Currently 55% of Rhode Island is forested, and the majority of that land is privately owned. With Rhode Island becoming increasingly fragmented due to urbanization, it is critically important to educate landowners on the importance of keeping their property intact and advising them on how to manage it for wildlife.

The Rhode Island Woodland Partnership reviews applicants each year and selects several properties to be part of the program. In June, I visit each property that has been selected and complete bird surveys. The number of point counts depends on the acreage, but I try to cover the entire property if able. For a point count, I stand in one location for 10 minutes and listen and observe any birds. I record how many species and how many individuals of each species were found in that area. Ultimately we are looking for any of 12 targeted species that have been prioritized by the program. But we do count all birds found.

Landowners are much more likely to steward their land when they know what species are dependent on it. They are often surprised to hear what we have to report. Following my bird point counts, my Audubon colleague Scott Ruhren conducts a plant and habitat survey. Together we issue a final report and recommendations.

I have had some wonderful experiences being out in those woods, but my most memorable was one when my daughter came along. It was a large site with 8 point counts. That's a lot of walking and listening for a kid. Toward the end, my daughter decided that bushwhacking through the forest wasn't that much fun. So, when we came to a clearing, I asked her to sit quietly on a rock while I did my last survey. After a few minutes I heard her calling and glanced over and noticed the bushes moving as something bounded away. They were little coyote pups! While I was observing birds, they came out to observe her! She was ecstatic after such a close encounter with these two curious coyotes. They are lucky to have such a safe haven, and I reported the sighting back to the landowner.

I am grateful to be part of this program. It not only provides a wonderful opportunity to survey on some spectacular private lands, but also to meet and build relationships with the landowners that care for these wild spaces. With their help and preservation, we are aiming to slow the decrease in forest bird populations and encourage land stewardship for all wildlife.

Notable Works Honors Audubon

Notable Works Publication and Distribution Co., Inc. is a local non-profit arts organization founded in 2007 to raise awareness for environmental and social concerns through the arts while providing a venue to local musicians, artists, composers and poets.

Noreen Inglesi (Artist in Residence) and Bina Gehres (Director) approached Audubon staff with the music for *The Earth is in our Care*, suggesting that the message worked well with Audubon's mission and asked to collaborate together on a video.

As they learned more about our organization, they also created a second piece, *Tribute to the Audubon Society of Rhode Island* which focuses on the balance of nature. Audubon again collaborated with pictures, video and guidance on the project.



Follow these links and enjoy the pieces by Notable Works:
Tribute to Audubon: youtu.be/q_AYCarI8QE
The Earth is in Our Care: youtu.be/wNI2zAROKH4

AUDUBON NATURE TOURS & PROGRAMS

March – May 2021 For more information and to register, visit the events calendar at www.asri.org.

SAFETY NOTICE: Face masks and social distancing are required for all programs. Participants must bring their own masks.

BIRDING WITH AUDUBON

Advance registration is required for all programs.

AUDUBON PRIVATE BIRDING AND NATURAL HISTORY TOURS

Get out in nature...it's the safest place to be!
Let an Audubon guide take your group of up to four people on a private two-hour natural history or birdwatching tour in Southeastern New England.
Visit asri.org/private-nature-tours for details.

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRD WALKS

Locations determined weekly and will be sent to registered participants in advance. *Every Wednesday through June 2021.*

SUNDAY MORNING BIRD WALKS WITH AUDUBON

Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium, 1401 Hope Street, Bristol, RI;
Every Sunday Morning through May, 2021, 8:30–9:30 am.

BIRDS THAT LIKE BARK

Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, 301 Brown Avenue, Seekonk, MA;
March 6, 2021; 10:00 am–12:00 pm.

BEGINNING BIRDING – VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

Two Sessions Offered.
March 9, 16, 2021; 10:00 – 11:00 am; March 11, 18, 2021; 6:30–7:30 pm.

BIRDS OF THE EAST BAY BIKE PATH VIRTUAL WORKSHOP AND IN-PERSON BIRDING WALK

Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium, 1401 Hope Street, Bristol, RI; Virtual Workshop *March 26, 2021; In-person Birding Walk May 21, 2021; 7:00–8:00 pm.*

WOODCOCK WALK

Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, 301 Brown Avenue, Seekonk, MA;
March 26, 2021; 6:30–8:30 pm.

A BIRDS-EYE VIEW OF PROVIDENCE PARKS – VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

March 31, 2021; 7:00–8:00 pm.

WOODCOCKS AND WINE

Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge, 99 Pardon Joslin Road, Exeter, RI;
April 9, 2021; 6:30–8:30 pm.

WATCHING WOODCOCKS

Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, 12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, RI;
April 9, 2021; 7:00–9:00 pm.

BIRD SONGS AND CALLS FOR BEGINNERS – VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

April 27, 2021; 6:30–7:30 pm.

FRIDAY MORNING BIRD WALKS IN MAY

Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge, 99 Pardon Joslin Road, Exeter, RI;
April 30, May 7, 14, 21, 28, 2021; 8:30–10:30 am.

MAY BIRD WALKS AT CARATUNK

Four Dates Offered.
Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, 301 Brown Avenue, Seekonk, MA;
May 2, 9, 16, 23, 2021; 7:30–9:30 am.

BIRD BANDING

Four Dates Offered.
Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium,
1401 Hope Street, Bristol, RI;
*May 8, June 12, July 10, August 14, 2021;
9:15–11:15 am.*

BIRDING WITH KIDS

Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, 12 Sanderson
Road, Smithfield, RI;
May 8, 2021; 9:00–10:30 am.

BIRDING THE UPLANDS

Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, 12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, RI;
May 22, 2021; 9:00–11:00 am.

PURPLE MARTINS!

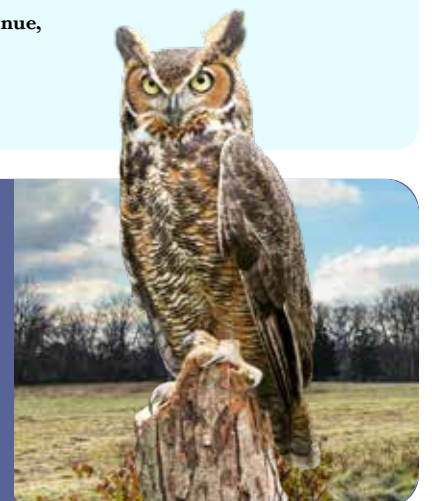
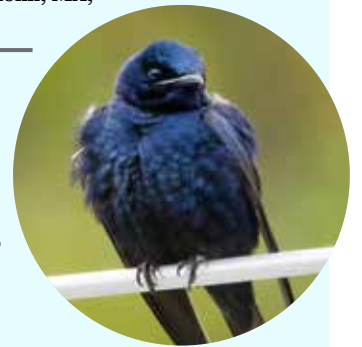
Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, 301 Brown Avenue, Seekonk, MA;
May 29, 2021; 2:00–4:00 pm.

BLUEBIRD WALK AND TALK

Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, 301 Brown Avenue, Seekonk, MA;
May 30, 2021; 8:00–10:00 am.

NESTING BIRDS AT CARATUNK

Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, 301 Brown Avenue,
Seekonk, MA; *June 6, 2021; 8:00–10:00 am.*



HAWKS & HOOTS

May 15, 2021

Audubon Nature Center and
Aquarium, Bristol, RI

Get up-close to hawks and owls in small-group stations, safely distanced throughout the grounds of the Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium. Talk with Audubon educators who care for these birds, learn about their amazing adaptations, and discover the habitats they call home. Advance registration is required; tickets will not be sold at the door.

Morning Session 10:00–11:45 am; Afternoon Session 1:00–3:15 pm
Register online through the events calendar at www.asri.org.

AUDUBON NATURE CENTER AND AQUARIUM

1401 Hope Street (Route 114), Bristol, RI

PROGRAMS, LECTURES & WORKSHOPS FOR ADULTS

SUNDAY MORNING BIRD WALKS WITH AUDUBON

Every Sunday Morning through May 2021, 8:30 – 9:30 am.

HIDDEN BEAUTY: A CELEBRATION OF LIFE UNDER THE WAVES ART EXHIBIT BY ISABELLE CADENE

March 2–April 25, 2021, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm.

FEEDING THE BIRDS WORKSHOP

March 7, 2021; 1:00–2:00 pm.

SEA GLASS JEWELRY WORKSHOP

May 8, 2021. 11:00 am–12:30 pm.

FAIRY HOUSES FOR ADULTS

March 20, 2021; 1:30–3:30 pm.

STONE WALLS WALK AND TALK

Lecture by Leigh Schoberth.

April 24, 2021; 11:00 am–12:00 pm.

FAIRY GARDENS FOR ADULTS

May 2, 2021; 2:00 pm–3:30 pm.

COUNTING THE BIRDS OF THE FOUR SEASONS

Art Exhibit by

Amy Veldman–Wilson.

May 2–June 30, 2021; 9:00 am–5:00 pm.

BIRD BANDING

Four Dates Offered.

May 8, June 12, July 10, August 14, 2021; 9:15–11:15 am.



FAMILY PROGRAMS & CLASSES FOR CHILDREN

CITIZENS BANK FREE FAMILY FUN DAY

Thanks to Citizens Bank, the Nature Center and Aquarium is open free to the public the first Saturday of every month. Join us for nature stories, animal discoveries, hikes and more. No need to register!

March 6, April 3, May 1, 2021; 10:00 am – 3:00 pm.

LI'L PEEPS

This popular program introduces children ages 18 months to 2 years to the delights of nature.

March 25, April 1, 8, 15, 29, May 6, 2021; 10:00–10:45 am.

APRIL SCHOOL VACATION WEEK

Join Audubon for crafts, nature stories and animal interviews! Special programs for children ages 6+ are also available each day at 11:00 am. Visit the events calendar for details.

- Monday, April 19: Binocular Basics for Families
- Tuesday, April 20: Powerful Pollinators
- Wednesday, April 21: Cooking for the Birds
- Thursday, April 22: Wetland Exploration
- Friday, April 23: Turtle Races

HAWKS AND HOOTS

May 15, 2021; See page 12 for details.

MEMORIAL DAY NATURE ACTIVITIES

Bring the kids for up-close animal encounters, hikes, crafts and games. May 31, 2021; 10:00 am–2:30 pm.

Meet Lucy & Zach!



Register online through the events calendar at www.asri.org or call (401) 949-5454 ext. 3014.

POWDER MILL LEDGES WILDLIFE REFUGE

12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, RI

See page 12 for Powder Mill Ledges Birding Programs.

THE ECOLOGY OF VERNAL POOLS

March 3, 2021; 7:00–8:30 pm.

PYSANKY WORKSHOP

March 20, 2021; 10:00 am–12:00 pm.

CREATING SPACES FOR POLLINATORS

March 31, 2021; 7:00–8:30 pm.

APRIL SCHOOL VACATION WEEK

- *Life Under a Log*: April 20, 2021; 11:00 am–12:30 pm.
- *Drawing in Nature for Families*: April 20, 2021; 2:00–3:30 pm.
- *City Hawk: The Story of Pale Male*: April 21, 2021; 11:00 am–12:00 pm.
- *Raptors Rock!* April 21, 2021; 2:00–3:30 pm.
- *Totally Turtles!* April 22, 2021; 11:00 am–12:00 pm.
- *Earth Day Photo Scavenger Hunt* April 22, 2021; 2:00–4:00 pm.
- *Froggy Fun*: April 23, 2021; 11:00 am–12:00 pm.
- *Build Your Own Bird House*: April 23, 2021; 2:00–3:30 pm.
- *Meet a Live Raptor and Refuge Walk*: April 25, 2021; 1:00 pm–3:00 pm.

MAKE YOUR OWN: FLOWER & PLANT PRESS

May 22, 2021; 2:00–4:00 pm.



APRIL SCHOOL VACATION WEEK!

April 19 – 23, 2021

Audubon Nature Center
and Aquarium, Bristol

Audubon Powder Mill
Ledges Wildlife Refuge,
Smithfield

Join Audubon for springtime fun! Meet cool critters, head out on the trails, and even build a bluebird house!

Special programs and activities are available each day.

Visit the events calendar at asri.org for details.



CARATUNK WILDLIFE REFUGE

301 Brown Avenue, Seekonk, MA

See page 12 for Caratunk Birding Programs.

WHITE BARN STORY TIME

Three Dates and Nature Themes;
March 4, April 1, May 6, 2021; 2:00–3:00 pm.

FROGGY NIGHTS AT CARATUNK

March 19, 2021; 6:30–8:30 pm.

SPRING NATURE WALK

March 21, 2021; 1:00–3:00 pm.

WILDFLOWERS, BEES & SPRING BUTTERFLIES

April 10, 2021; 10:00 am–12:00 pm.

VERNAL POOL WALK

April 11, 2021; 1:00–3:00 pm.

AQUATIC OBSERVATIONS

April 20, 2021; 10:00 am–12:00 pm.

RAPTORS ON THE REFUGE

Two Dates Offered.
April 22, May 5, 2021; 1:00–3:00 pm.



FORT WILDLIFE REFUGE

1443 Providence Pike (Route 5), North Smithfield, RI

FROGGY NIGHTS

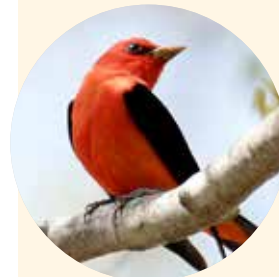
April 14, 2021; 7:00–9:00 pm.



NEW!

AUDUBON VIRTUAL BIRDING

Join an online birding workshop! Learn from the experts safely at home, then take your new birding skills to the next level by joining an in-person Audubon birding walk. See page 12 for birding walks. Register online through the events calendar at asri.org.



BEGINNING BIRDING – VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

Two Sessions Offered.
March 9, 16, 2021; 10:00–11:00 am.
March 11, 18, 2021; 6:30–7:30 pm.

BIRDS OF THE EAST BAY BIKE PATH

Virtual Workshop and In-person Bristol Birding Walk.
Virtual Workshop March 26, 2021; 7:00–8:00 pm.
In-person Birding Walk, Bristol, RI; May 21, 2021; 7:00–8:00 pm.

A BIRDS-EYE VIEW OF PROVIDENCE PARKS – VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

March 31, 2021; 7:00–8:00 pm.

BIRD SONGS AND CALLS FOR BEGINNERS – VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

April 27, 2021; 6:30–7:30 pm.

Register online through the events calendar at www.asri.org or call (401) 949-5454 ext. 3014.

Eastern Bluebird Status and Recovery in Rhode Island

The stunning colors of Eastern Bluebirds (*Sialia sialis*) are easily recognized. They have long been associated with happiness, the awakening of spring, and the beauty of nature. Yet, there is so much more to this small and colorful bird.

At Audubon wildlife refuges, we have been protecting and monitoring bluebirds for decades. As is common for many bird species, we have watched their populations fluctuate over the years. Science and nature can be unpredictable.

Bluebird populations have risen and fallen for centuries largely because of human activities. Woodlands cleared by indigenous people for settlements and agriculture, and the smaller farms of European settlers helped bluebirds thrive. However, their numbers decline in areas with large farms and expansive fields without cover, nest sites or food available.

In the mid-twentieth century, as a result of European Starlings and House Sparrows (introduced species that use bluebird nest sites) bluebird numbers declined further. The notorious pesticide DDT made things worse, lowering their reproduction rates. Banning the use of DDT and nearly 60 years of nest box installations and monitoring by conservation groups has helped the recovery of the species. According to current data in Partners in Flight, there are approximately 22 million bluebirds worldwide and now Eastern Bluebirds are officially listed as a species of “least concern.”

This current healthy population status is also correlated with habitat conservation and management of grasslands. Bluebirds are habitat specialists, preferring open fields with scattered shrubs, which are in national decline. The species will occasionally venture into open forest edges but are predominantly a grassland bird.

Audubon staff and volunteers monitor nearly 200 nest boxes at eight wildlife refuges. Bluebirds are cavity nesters but are unable to build their own holes; they readily use man-made boxes. Nesting pairs compete with Tree Swallows and occasionally House Wrens as they struggle to rear their young. In late winter, prior to bluebirds nesting, Audubon staff inspect, clean and repair current boxes and add additional ones where needed. We clear out old nest material, mouse bedding and wasp nests. This helps reduce parasites, pathogens and competitors for the homemaking bluebirds.

In a good year, a bluebird pair can rear up to three broods of nestlings. Weather, food supply and competition with other birds influence nest success. Cool wet weather can be deadly for nestlings. Early summer droughts can reduce food supplies.

Bluebirds are year-round residents in southern New England. Primarily insectivores, they swoop down to the ground to catch prey. Their diets switch to fruits and seeds in the winter. Consequently, bluebirds need year-round habitat in Rhode Island.

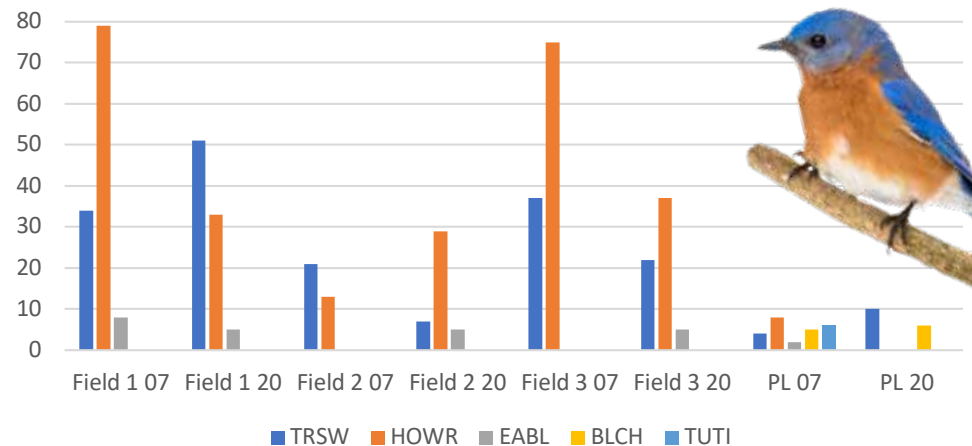
It is not yet known how climate change will affect Eastern Bluebirds. Research in other areas such as plant life cycles, fruit production and insect populations, suggest that Bluebird food supplies could change. This highlights the need for continued habitat protection and education. What conservationists now call forest “messy edges” provide food and shelter for Bluebirds and many other animals. This is one way to buffer effects of climate change and ensure the continued success of this wonderful bird.

There are two other species of bluebirds in North America, Western Bluebird and Mountain Bluebird, but, except for rare occasions, only the Eastern Bluebird occurs in New England.



Brian Rutherford

Total number of birds fledged by location at Caratunk Wildlife Refuge in 2007 and 2020.



(TRSW Tree Swallow; HOWR House Wren; EABL Eastern Bluebird; BLCH Black-capped Chickadee; TUTI Tufted Titmouse). The locations are Field 1 (21 boxes), Field 2 (16 boxes), Field 3 (11 boxes) and the powerline (PL) right-of-way (3 boxes). Though bluebirds are observed throughout the refuge, reproduction rates remain low. House Wrens and Tree Swallows continue to fledge the most offspring.



Watch for Eastern Bluebirds at these Audubon Wildlife Refuges that are open to the public.

Audubon Wildlife Refuge	Bluebird Boxes
Caratunk, Seekonk, MA	51
Fisherville Brook, Exeter, RI	50
McIntosh Refuge, Bristol, RI	2
Maxwell Mays Refuge, Coventry, RI	6
Parker Woodland, Coventry, RI	17
Powder Mill Ledges, Smithfield, RI	21
Touisset Marsh, Warren, RI	9



Peter Green

Beach, Clean Water and Green Bond goes to the voters on March 2

Please Vote YES!

Rhode Island residents will vote on the \$74 million 2020 Beach, Clean Water and Green Bond at a special election on March 2, 2021.

Voters will have the option to vote by mail, vote early, or visit a polling place on March 2. The Secretary of State will send every Rhode Island voter a mail ballot application with postage paid return. Applications should have arrived the week of January 18. Early in-person voting begins February 10 and will end at 4 p.m. on Monday March 1. The Special Referenda Election will be on Tuesday March 2, 2021 and polling places in each town will be open.

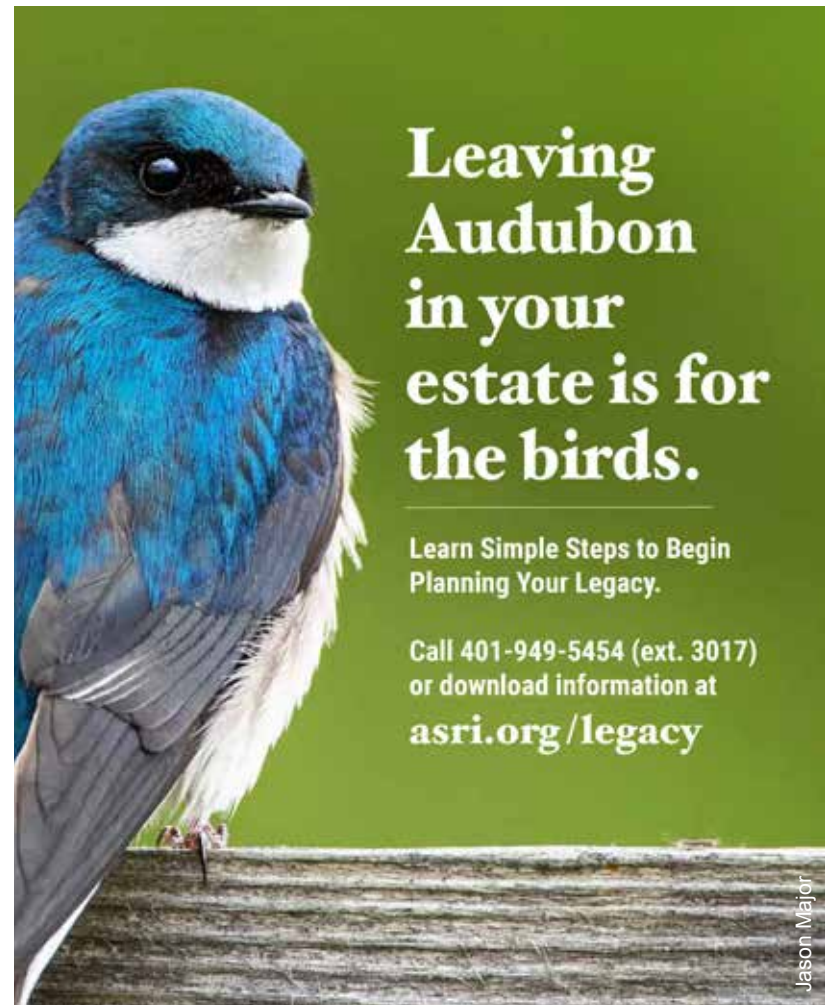


Over a Decade of Service at the Caratunk Wildlife Refuge – Audubon Thanks Volunteer Milton Chow

Milton Chow of Seekonk has been volunteering with Audubon at the Caratunk Wildlife Refuge for over a decade, putting his skills as a master gardener and skilled carpenter to good use. In 2020 he was instrumental in maintaining the new pollinator garden and rain garden at the refuge. He also assisted with trail maintenance and built a beautiful work table for Caratunk out of reclaimed, donated lumber. Over the years he has assisted with many projects, including the design and construction of a turtle exhibit and a wooden stand for a 70-gallon fish tank, even donating the lumber for the project. Caratunk is fortunate to have such a skilled and enthusiastic long-time volunteer.



Milton Chow near the pollinator garden at Caratunk, which he helps to maintain.



Leaving Audubon in your estate is for the birds.

Learn Simple Steps to Begin Planning Your Legacy.

Call 401-949-5454 (ext. 3017) or download information at asri.org/legacy

Jason Major



the Audubon Nature shop

This shop is for the birds!

**Bird Feeders and Accessories
Field Guides and Binoculars
Children's Books, Educational Games,
Toys and More!**

Members Receive 10% Off Purchases in the Bristol and Online Audubon Nature Shops!

**Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium
1401 Hope Street, Bristol, RI
Shop online at www.asri.org**

Butch Lombardi

Thank You!

PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION

The companies listed below have demonstrated their significant commitment to the quality of life in Rhode Island and to conserving natural habitats through stewardship and education.

- AMC Narragansett Chapter
- BB&S Lumber
- Botanical Center Conservancy
- Citizens Bank
- Cox Communications
- CVS Health
- Dassault Systemes
- DBVW Architects
- Fidelity
- Green Energy Consumers Alliance, Inc.
- Harbor Bath and Body, LLC
- Lyons & Zaremba, Inc.
- MetLife Auto & Home
- New England Dispatch Agency
- NEC Solar
- Partridge Snow & Hahn LLP
- Pawtucket Red Sox
- People's Power and Light
- R.I. Beekeepers Association
- Target
- United Natural Foods, Inc.
- Van Liew Trust Company
- Whole Foods Market

GIFTS IN HONOR

The people listed below have been honored by family and friends who found a gift to the Audubon Society of Rhode Island to be the most meaningful way to celebrate someone important in their lives.

In Honor of: Dwight Barrett
From: Marie Barrett

In Honor of: Lisa Betcher
From: Janice Hebert

In Honor of: Rochelle and Jeff Blease
From: Kelly and Neil Fandel

In Honor of: Joan Briggs
From: Dave and Heidi Briggsler

In Honor of: Weston Davis
From: Linda O'Brien

In Honor of: Nancy Ellis
From: Jan Thibodeau

In Honor of: Karen Kemp
From: Daniel Kemp

In Honor of: Henry Meyer
From: Leah and Joe Loberti

In Honor of: Deborah Mongeau
From: Deborah J. Smith

In Honor of: Murthman Babies
From: Jessica Crossman

In Honor of: Grammy Roseen
From: Caitlin Roseen

In Honor of: Todd Sabelli
From: Elizabeth Saunders

In Honor of: Elizabeth Schumann
From: Robert Del Gizzi

In Honor of: Kim Westcott
From: Cornelia Thornburgh

In Honor of: Kathy and Steve Zebriggski
From: Dave and Heidi Briggsler

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF RHODE ISLAND 1897 SOCIETY

Named for the year of the Audubon's founding, the 1897 Society honors those whose leadership gifts enable the Audubon Society of Rhode Island to advance its mission of protecting birds, other wildlife and their habitats through conservation, education and advocacy. Our donors can take satisfaction that their contributions have an immediate and lasting impact on the people, wildlife and natural beauty of Rhode Island.

The 1897 Society celebrates donors who give annually at the \$1,000 to \$10,000+ level as special contributors to our ongoing mission and shall be recognized at the following levels:

Leader — \$1,000 to \$2,499

Benefactor — \$7,500 to \$9,999

Advocate — \$2,500 to \$4,999

Visionary — \$10,000+

Conservator — \$5,000 to \$7,499

If you wish to join the 1897 Society and help promote the values and mission of Audubon, please visit asri.org/leadership or contact Jeff Hall at 401-949-5454 ext. 3017.

In recognition of their philanthropic charity, members of the 1897 Society enjoy a variety of exclusive benefits, including invitations to member-only events and special communications.

MEMORIALS

Memorials serve and support the conservation and protection of Rhode Island's environment. During the past quarter, the families and friends of people listed below have chosen to remember their loved ones through a gift to the Audubon Society of Rhode Island.

In Memory of: Dick Bowen
From: Anne Bowen

In Memory of: Rachel Carson
From: Kevin and Mardee Carson

In Memory of: Inez Craig
From: Barbara Carnes
Carolyn Hricko
Daniel and Ruth Wyttenbach
Deb and Sue Flanders
George Kroening
Montana Polans
Pam Asquith

In Memory of: Jack Doherty
From: Michael and Margaret Alexander

In Memory of: Patricia M. Dwyer
From: Catherine Cressy and Mike Russo

In Memory of: Daniel Elkins
From: Karen Elkins

In Memory of: David Ford
From: Kathy and Pierre Irving

In Memory of: Richard Gingras
From: Alice Susi
Barbara Culver
Brian Hunter
Julie Latessa
Kimberly Samways
Lawrence and Beth Berman
Leigh Martin and Al Crisfield
Liza Wasser
Maureen Alger
Patricia Alger
Patricia Allard
Phyllis Kasonik

In Memory of: Charles Greenhalgh
From: Jane and Larry Ransom

In Memory of: Michael Hadala
From: Wendy Braga

In Memory of: Marie and Al Hawkes
From: Anthony and Dale Zampini
Harold and Brenda Bibb
Mario and Andrea Mattia
Marjorie Hurd-Casbarro

In Memory of: Frank Hughes
From: Arlene and Haywood Hartwell

In Memory of: Dick Jocelyn
From: Christine Jocelyn

In Memory of: Duane Kelley
From: T. Christine Stevens

In Memory of: Jerry Marcom
From: David and Cathy Resler-Denman

**In Memory of: Maxwell Mays and
Daniel J. McCombs, Jr.**
From: William and Claire Chatto

In Memory of: Phanny Monty
From: Tina Zartman

In Memory of: Lottie Murphy
From: Mrs. and Mr. Patricia A Thompson

In Memory of: Thomas Pitts
From: Nick and Ene Vogel
Dale and Cindy Quilling
Dr. Rhonda Ketterling
Catherine Simone
Gregory Ahlijian

In Memory of: Pokey Turtle Deluxe
From: James Marsden and Barbara Zimmer

In Memory of: Mercedes Quevedo
From: Donald Corder and Jean Cavanaugh

In Memory of: Susan M. Romano
From: Ronald L. Gelineau

In Memory of: Dolores and Harry Snyder
From: Cheryl Snyder

In Memory of: Chili Tapscott
From: David Tapscott and Gail Epstein

In Memory of: Christine Thormodsgard
From: Nancy Kirsch

In Memory of: Jane Trytten
From: Jennifer Gottschling

In Memory of: Marion Ward
From: Ann Stone

In Memory of: Gurdon Wattles
From: Jackson and Lea Angell
Martin and Charlotte Sornborger

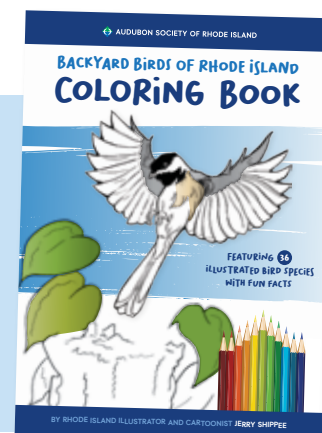
In Memory of: Richard Yund
From: Virginia Folick
Warren and Debbie Prell

NEW! AUDUBON SOCIETY OF RHODE ISLAND BACKYARD BIRDS COLORING BOOK

Featuring 36 beautifully illustrated bird species with fun facts by West Warwick, Rhode Island artist and cartoonist Jerry Shippee.

A Wonderful Gift Idea for All Ages!

Only \$9.99. Size 8.5" x 11" with 36 pages to color. Order online! Just visit asri.org and click on "Nature Shop."



*Planning a
Celebration
or Special
Event?*

Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium

Located in historic Bristol, Rhode Island, just 30 minutes from Providence, Newport, and Fall River, the award-winning Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium is one of Rhode Island's most unique meeting venues. With beautiful trails, award-winning exhibits and aquarium, large meeting, reception, and outdoor patio space, the Nature Center provides a setting that will captivate guests.

Ideal for weddings, showers, or the site of your next business meeting or off-site retreat.

For availability and reservations, visit asri.org and click on *services* or contact Anne DiMonti at (401) 949-5454 x3116 or adimonti@asri.org.



Fall 2020 Communications Intern: Camilla Ledezma

In the summer of 2020, Yale University sophomore Camilla Ledezma reached out to Audubon to inquire about a communications internship. With strong interpersonal skills, experience with video and social media, and unlimited enthusiasm, she became an important member of our team this fall.

A Providence native, Camilla looks to major in Environmental Studies and Psychology at Yale. In her youth, Camilla would frequently visit Audubon's Nature Center and Aquarium with family and friends. Walking down the boardwalk to the shore, she would revel in the serenity of the landscape, wishing to learn more about the nature around her. This curiosity, cultivated during those visits, has inspired her to study the environment specifically, interactions between people and the natural world.

Camilla offered fresh perspectives and insight this fall, especially regarding environmental justice issues. Her experience with online communications and social media were put to good use as the Annual Meeting turned virtual and Audubon's new strategic plan was introduced. Audubon thanks Camilla for her passion, curiosity, and creativity. She was a welcome addition to the communications team as we faced so many challenges in 2020, and we look forward to staying connected with her as she pursues an environmental career.



Rhode Island Birding Trails

*Over 60 Places to Watch Birds
in the Ocean State*

Published by the Audubon Society of Rhode Island

Three separate trails: Northern Rhode Island, Southern Rhode Island and East Bay and the Islands • All locations easily accessible

Find out where the birders ... bird!

Order Now \$14.95

Order your copy at ribirdingtrails.com or purchase at the Audubon Nature Shop in Bristol.



Wildlife Cam - Images from the Audubon Refuges

These photos of whitetail bucks were captured in October 2020 at the Audubon Lathrop Wildlife Refuge in Westerly. Audubon has unobtrusive wildlife cameras on wildlife refuges across the state. Located well off the trails in remote locations, they are used to monitor wildlife and any activity on the properties. It is always fun to see what creatures are out and about on the Audubon Wildlife Refuges.



NEW! Check out the Animals in Winter activities!



Perfect for homeschoolers, virtual classrooms, science projects and outdoor explorations! Visit Audubon at Home, our online site that encourages nature discovery in your backyard. Audubon educators have developed over 20 nature themes, each containing natural history and science projects, educational games, videos, animal interviews, crafts and more!

Visit asri.org and click on "learn" and "Audubon at Home."

TWICE THE FUN
= BECAUSE =
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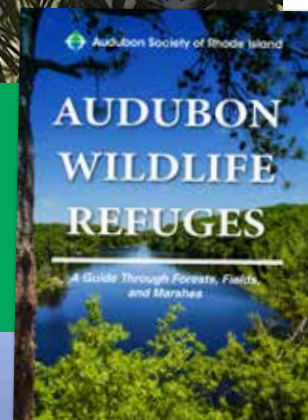
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Darwin the Diamondback Terrapin

Audubon has a busy new resident at the Nature Center and Aquarium. Darwin, a male diamondback terrapin, is approximately six years old and very fond of human interaction. He arrived this spring from the Wildlife Clinic of Rhode Island, surrendered after several years as a pet. It is believed he was originally taken from the wild, and could live for 40 years or more with Audubon.

Diamondback Terrapins populations have been severely impacted by the international pet trade and loss of habitat. Rhode Island populations are carefully monitored. Their appearance varies, no two turtles are exactly alike in coloration and pattern. These terrapins are extremely strong swimmers with very large and flat back feet, helping them move around in areas with tidal changes and strong currents.

Darwin has started to greet visitors in program appearances and is sure to become a popular ambassador for Audubon.



Camilla Ledezma

We are a Community Committed to Science

Editorial by Meg Kerr, Senior Director of Policy

Children are full of questions about the world around them. Why is the sky blue? What are clouds? Where do the squirrels and chipmunks go when it snows?

Adults often try to answer these questions with facts recalled from biology, chemistry and physics classes taken long ago. In school, teachers strive to expand children's understanding of the world by teaching them how to carefully observe nature and how to test hypotheses with experiments and measurements. But classroom experiments can only take children so far, and inevitably we ask students to use and understand information that they cannot test for themselves.

I have been trained as a scientist and hold undergraduate and graduate (MS) degrees in biology. I was taught about the nature of scientific inquiry and how our knowledge builds over time. Research papers get published that test previous assumptions and push scientists' shared understanding of the world around us. What was fact 10 years ago might still be considered true today, but it might be revised or discarded entirely as we collect new information and advance our understanding. Almost every scientific paper ends with the conclusion that more research is needed to be fully confident that the results reported are true.

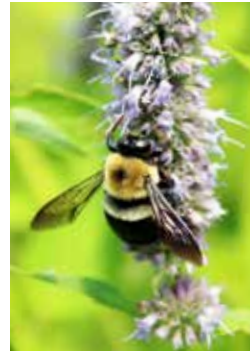
I remember the solar system that I built in elementary school from Styrofoam balls of varying sizes, ending with Pluto at the end. Tiny Pluto that lacks the gravitational power to guarantee full planet status, has since been changed to dwarf and taken off the official solar system planetary roster.

Changing our minds about what category Pluto belongs to is one type of scientific shift, but what happens when changing scientific guidance has impacts that we experience in our daily lives? I never seriously questioned the scientific basis for medical advice until I started my family. Pregnant women make regular visits to a health care provider where they are measured and weighed and given strict instructions on what to eat, how much weight to gain, when to exercise and when to stop exercising. While their body is changing, women try to do the right things to ensure a healthy baby. But over the course of my pregnancies, the advice changed. Never drink coffee. It's OK to drink some coffee. Gain 40 pounds. Gain 20 pounds. Stop exercising. It's OK to exercise.

It became clear to me that the science, the medical facts, were not as certain as I thought they would be. Medical science is based on experience and how the population

responds to various treatments. The advice you receive when you visit a doctor for any condition will be the best information that is known at the time. But each person is different, which means that the standard set of health recommendations may not be a perfect fit for each unique body, and recommendations will probably change over time.

Science can be a noun—it's our existing evidence and understanding about how the world around us works. But science is also a verb—it's the way that we actively pursue and apply new information. Understanding and accepting science requires faith in scientists, institutions of higher learning, and the government. As we are currently battered by both a pandemic and climate change, it's not hard for me to understand why many people are skeptical about vaccines or the need to quickly switch away from the burning of fossil fuels. When the world seems unknowable, alternate facts can make some feel more secure or provide comfort.



“Together, we form a community that supports facts and promotes the advance of science. We are in this quest together, working from a shared desire to understand more about the world around us and the birds and animals that share our planet.”

Meg Kerr, Senior Director of Policy

In this context, Audubon's job is to be an honest but humble broker of facts and information. We build trust by admitting that we are sometimes wrong, that today's information is based on our best understanding of the world. We ask that you hold us accountable and correct us when we make mistakes or should consider an issue in a different light. We ask you to share your knowledge, your wonderings, and your doubts. Together, we form a community that supports facts and promotes the advance of science. We are in this quest together, working from a shared desire to understand more about the world around us and the birds and animals that share our planet.



AUDUBON SOCIETY OF RHODE ISLAND REPORT

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Please pass this copy on to a friend or recycle. Thank you.

The Report is the Audubon Society's member newsletter and updates members on the current issues and actions of the Society, its staff and volunteers. We encourage your participation and you may send items that will be considered for publication to: Hope Foley, Managing Editor, Audubon Society of Rhode Island, 12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, RI 02917 or by email to hfoley@asri.org.

Spot the Beetle, Stop the Beetle

Help prevent the spread of Asian Longhorned Beetle. When hiking the trails, look for signs of the beetle.

For more information on how to detect this destructive invasive insect, visit www.asri.org and click on "conservation."



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May 7, 2021

BID FOR A CHANCE TO WIN
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- Banding of Peregrine Falcon Nestlings
- Private Raptor Photography Session
- Be a Raptor Handler for a Day
- Banding of Saw-whet Owls
- Celebrate with a Raptor Birthday Party
- Private Birding Walk
- And much, much more!



*Auction Catalog available May 3, 2021 for preview.
Watch our website for details.*



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AUDUBON SUMMER CAMP



Nature discovery,
science, hikes, live
animal visits, games,
crafts and...lots of
outdoor fun!

...It's What Summer Camp Should Be!

See page 9 for the 2021 Summer Camp Schedule.

For more camp information and to register, visit: audubonsummercamp.com

NEW!

VIRTUAL BIRDING WITH AUDUBON

Join an online birding workshop!

Learn from the experts safely at home,
then take your new birding skills to the
next level by joining in-person Audubon
birding walk. See page 14 for details.

Register online through the events calendar at asri.org.



HAWKS & HOOTS

May 15, 2021

Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium,
Bristol, RI

Get up-close to hawks and owls in small-group stations, safely distanced throughout the grounds of the Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium. Talk with Audubon educators who care for these birds, learn about their amazing adaptations, and discover the habitats they call home. Advance registration is required; tickets will not be sold at the door.

For details and to register, visit the events calendar at www.asri.org.

