

Keep in touch with
eWing at www.asri.org



Audubon Society of Rhode Island

REPORT



WHAT WOULD
AUDUBON DO
WITHOUT YOU?

Turn to page 17

VOLUME 57 • NO. 4 • WINTER 2023

CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE



THE BIG FIX

Giving to Audubon in 2023 has had a major
impact on making nature more accessible

AUDUBON SOCIETY
OF RHODE ISLAND
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
2023-2024

OFFICERS:

President:
David Caldwell Jr.

Vice President:
Tina Duhaime

Treasurer:
Patricia Thompson

Secretary:
Don Heitzmann

DIRECTORS:

Stephanie Beauté
Katherine Burnham
Jameson Chace
Laura Landen
Thomas Lisi
Kathleen Melbourne
Amy Moses
Stephen Porder
Emily Murphy Prior
David Riedel
Leslie Samayoa
Richard Staples, Jr.
Sara Sweetman
Carol Lynn Trocki
Olinda Urizar-Mendez
Michael Viveiros
Emily Westcott
Shawen Williams
John Woulfe

**COUNCIL OF ADVISORS
2023-2024**

President:
Candace Powell

Dickson Boenning
Abigail Brooks
Nicholas A. Califano
Christian Capizzo
Trudy A. Coxe
Meghan Frost
Joan R. Gardiner
Christopher R. Greenman
David Gumbley
Peter Lisle
Samuel H. Hallowell, Jr.
J. William H. Harsch
Katherine Irving
Keith Killingbeck
A. Max Kohlenberg
Robert Parker
Suzanne Paton
Steven E. Reinert
Julia Randall Sharpe
Everett Stuart
Frederick J. Vincent
Cynthia J. Warren

From the Desk of the Executive Director

The Year of the Birds



In 2023, Audubon made significant strides in avian research, stormwater management, pollinator conservation, and enhanced accessibility to our refuges. I want to reflect on the remarkable year that has passed and share our ambitious goals for 2024.

- Our Avian Research Initiative positioned Audubon at the forefront of research in New England, truly marking 2023 as the “Year of the Birds.”
- We recognize the pressing issue on climate-induced rainstorms and flash floods, and our leadership at the Stormwater Innovation Center in Providence has been key in developing nature-based solutions for climate resiliency.
- Pollinators, the essential workers of our ecosystems, face dramatic declines in their populations. We are committed to restoring native species to our properties by creating pollinator-friendly habitats and the Audubon Palmieri Pollinator Garden in Bristol serves as a living laboratory to study and support pollinator health.
- Audubon’s advocacy efforts led to a significant win in forest protection through new legislation for solar siting.
- Inclusivity in environmental education is paramount and Audubon educators have developed accessible nature-based programming that is inclusive to all learners.



For 2024 and beyond, our focus areas include **Accessibility, Biodiversity, and Climate Resiliency.**

Accessibility is a core commitment for Audubon and a 2024 initiative will make our facilities easier to access for all. That means improved and bilingual signage and maps at Audubon wildlife refuges, additional benches, and more accessible trails to lower the barriers of getting people outside and engaging with nature. Resources at the Caratunk Wildlife Refuge will become a hub for our outreach in Pawtucket, Central Falls, and Providence, ensuring that nature is within reach for all Rhode Islanders.

Biodiversity remains a priority, involving avian research, pollinator habitat conservation, and advocating for the ban of neonicotinoid pesticides. Audubon protects thousands of acres of forested land using science-based habitat management plans. The organization looks to acquire over 500 acres for conservation in 2024.

Stormwater management is vital for climate resiliency. The Stormwater Innovation Center, with leadership from Audubon, is working to implement green infrastructure solutions across the state. Audubon also leads efforts to transform landscapes and promote healthy, vibrant habitats for wildlife in yards and communities across Rhode Island.

I would like to express my gratitude to Audubon’s dedicated staff. Their unwavering commitment and tireless efforts make our growth and success possible. A special thanks also is extended to the Audubon board members for their active participation and leadership in the past year.

Your contributions, whether in the form of time, financial support, estate planning, or advocacy, are the lifeblood of our organization and the true force behind our achievements. To meet growing challenges, we must diversify our funding sources and continue to seek greater support.

I’m optimistic about our future and look forward to working together to make our shared vision of a greener Rhode Island a reality.

Good birding,

Jeffrey C. Hall
Executive Director

Cover photo by Richard Staples: Properties Director Laura Carberry (left) with Betsy Walker on the new footbridge at Parker Woodland Wildlife Refuge.



THE BIG FIX

Giving to Audubon in 2023 has had a major impact on making nature more accessible

By Betsy Sherman Walker

Audubon summer campers learn about snakes at the Caratunk Wildlife Refuge in Seekonk.

It is a mild, breezy day in early October, suggestive of pumpkins and foliage, and there is learning in the air. Community Education Coordinator Lisa Maloney is welcoming three classes of energetic kindergartners from the Croft School in Providence to a field trip at the Caratunk Wildlife Refuge in Seekonk, Massachusetts. The theme for the morning activity is “Sensory Safari.” Standing in front of the group in the white barn, Maloney addresses them with a blend of Sesame Street camaraderie and kindergarten-style gravitas.

Maloney explains that Caratunk is a wildlife refuge, “a place where we protect trees, plants, and animals.” She adds, “Today we’re going to do activities to test your senses and see how you compare to other animals. Senses are important to us and to animals,” she explains. “Some animals are super-hearers or super see-ers.”

Teachers, parents and children then follow Maloney outside. “We’re going to test our senses, as we walk along the trail,” she tells them. For one of the mothers there that morning, family outings to Caratunk have become a regular thing. “We didn’t know this place existed till COVID,” she told me. “We think it is a hidden treasure.”

For both Executive Director Jeff Hall and Senior Director of Education Lauren Parmelee, this is a shining example of the impact of donorship. They have a shared vision for Caratunk, which Parmelee describes as “a place near the city for kids and families to get outside and explore nature. We are looking for Caratunk to be an accessible and welcoming location for all, with a focus to reach communities in Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls.” A year ago, it might not have been that easy.

Sometimes the most monumental, impactful things can grow from the most unexpected beginnings—in this case, a phone call and the simplest of questions: What do you need?

Hall had just walked out of his office and was headed to the parking lot on a Friday afternoon in January 2021, when the telephone on his desk rang. He went back inside to answer it; on the other end of the line the caller introduced himself, explained that a family member, Helen Bracket, had passed away—

and that in handling her estate he was in the process of exploring worthy causes. He asked the executive director, “what do you need?”

At the top of Hall’s mind was the Caratunk Wildlife Refuge and an expensive Clivus composting toilet. The conversation took some twists and turns, always returning to the topic of Caratunk. Hall came up with an inventory of needs—the toilet was just the tip of the iceberg. Caratunk needed updates to the teaching facilities and new student chairs and tables, outdoor exploration tools for young summer campers, picnic tables that were wheelchair accessible, transportation scholarships for children in underserved communities, and new appliances for an outdated kitchen area. He told the caller that this wildlife refuge, with its signature White Barn, had been the original education facility for nature programming at Audubon. It was still very popular with locals for hiking and provided a home for summer camps. But the facility was showing its age and had taken a hit during COVID. The desire to lavish some much-needed attention on it—with some much-needed capital—was strong. “From there,” Hall said, “the conversation led to fixing infrastructure, increasing the number of camp scholarships, lengthening the camp sessions, and more.” It basically became a conversation about how much it would cost to update Caratunk and return it to the first-rate environmental education center it had been.

“This was Jeff’s vision,” Parmelee explains, “to turn Caratunk into an accessible Nature Center, specifically for school field trips, summer camps, and year-round programs for residents of Providence and other nearby communities. The Nature Center and Aquarium in Bristol is big and inviting,” she added, “but may be hard to get to for people in other areas of the state.”

By the end of 2023, the estate of Helen Bracket, who grew up in Seekonk and worked for years with children from underserved communities, will have made gifts totaling \$250,000 towards the items on Hall’s Angels List. Audubon received other substantial bequests in 2023 as well. “We’re very blessed that way,” said Hall. “People are passionate about protecting birds and nature, and they understand the importance of conservation, protecting nature for future generations.”

Please turn to page 4



Audubon 2024 Wish List

Donate Today and Support an Audubon Project!

In 2024 our focus will be on accessibility, biodiversity, and climate resiliency.

Learn more about our projects and initiatives by visiting asri.org/wishlist.

Clockwise from left: Summer campers go ponding at the Caratunk Wildlife Refuge. The new MOTUS Tower is installed at the Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium. Students in Cumberland High School's special education program explore Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge as part of the Taking Root Initiative.

This could be called Audubon's year of the Big Fix. From Caratunk to a new footbridge at the Parker Woodland Refuge in Coventry, and gravestone repairs at the Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge in Exeter, many of the gifts have gone towards maintenance, repairs, and upgrades. Likewise, the Nature Center in Bristol now has an expanded and more accessible pollinator garden, a newly installed state of the art MOTUS bird tracking tower—a game changer for Director of Avian Research Dr. Charles Clarkson and has received additional funding for the remarkable "Taking Root" initiative, devoted to making Audubon's trails and programs, its birds and its bees, accessible to nature lovers of all capabilities. Bringing nature to all.

"This year we've been fortunate, we've received generous donations," was the first thing Properties Director Laura Carberry said to me in the parking lot of the 870-acre Parker Woodland Wildlife Refuge, prior to our trail walk to get a look at the new footbridge. It was a \$5,000 project, overseen by Carberry and executed by Audubon conservation staff, the Youth Conservation League, and a group of volunteers, that almost didn't happen—until an anonymous donor came through with \$4,000. The final \$1,000 was a gift from the software firm Dassault Systèmes in Johnston. The bridge is sturdy, a study in rustic elegance. Handrails run its entire 156-foot length, and it is so long that from one end it actually curves and disappears into the woods. One almost expects to see a troll climbing out from underneath.

Last summer as the project was getting underway an enthusiastic Carberry emailed Hall an early update. "I just wanted to let you know the conservation crew has started to work on the Parker Woodland Bridge," she wrote. "This is a huge project. Thank you so much for your support. Without the funding from our donors, it never would have happened. My staff is so excited to see the progress we are making," she added. "It really shows what a great team they are."

As we walked Carberry described her responsibilities managing Audubon's 9,500 acres of protected properties across the state—and the challenges of priority lists when most of what is needed is so unglamorous. Infrastructure is not a particularly glamorous topic, and funding for crucial repairs and updates are often the hardest to come by.

Hall would agree. "Our refuges are constantly changing. Forests and fields are growing, weather can create challenges, and limbs fall and block trails," he says. "When we don't have the resources, projects get sidelined. We exist because people want nature," says Hall. But, he adds, "people tend to think, 'nature's free.'"

Carberry, who stepped into the Director of Properties position last April, spoke passionately of "the importance of having access to trails and preserving

our forests" and explained that "every Audubon wildlife refuge is really unique in the habitat and wildlife it protects." Her job is to keep them open, safe, accessible, and inviting. To do this she relies on a small army of volunteers—trail monitors and troubleshooters. Tuesdays are Conservation Days. Audubon staff, TerraCorps members and volunteers all meet to discuss repairs and, if necessary, select a project to team up on. The work can include conservation projects, repairs and maintenance needs on our many wildlife refuges. "Volunteerism is philanthropy as well," Hall tells me.

"I like supporting groups that are streamlining, that put their money where it needs to go. Audubon, checks all the boxes. They're efficient, impactful, hardworking, and passionate."

– Mary Ann Cofrin
Audubon Donor and Supporter

Former Audubon Board Member and Master Gardener Terry Meyer also understands the impact of volunteerism. She recalled that in 2018, the Palmieri Pollinator Garden in Bristol came together when Audubon received funding from the Vivian J. Palmieri Trust for a memorial garden. Around the same time, renowned landscape architect John Gwynne approached Audubon with a vision for a garden that would demonstrate to the public how to "rewild" suburban landscapes. According to Garden Coordinator Katie Schortmann, "a little patch of land in Bristol" was turned into a stunning pollinator garden filled with native plants and wildlife habitat. Meyer volunteered to work with Gwynne and she brought together a team of URI Master Gardeners. Soon, she and Nick Califano – a fellow board member and master gardener - were coordinating teams of volunteers.

This year, Audubon was approached by the Providence youth organization DownCity Design, proposing a project for middle school students to create and install an all-access raised garden bed. "The results made gardening infinitely more accessible to staff and visitors," says Schortmann. The new bed was designed to be accessible for children and those who use a wheelchair or might want to sit while gardening.



Students from the Paul Cuffee School in Providence examining a grasshopper in a magnifying bug box at the Caratunk Wildlife Refuge.

A bumper crop of plants has been donated by Meyer over the years, she has funded educational pollinator signage and been instrumental in supporting the upcoming symposium in April 2024 on “Transforming the Landscape.” Like Meyer, most garden volunteers are passionate about their work and return year after year to ensure that the garden remains a thriving habitat for pollinators - and a place for visitors to learn about wildlife.

Mary Ann Cofrin has also been an active supporter of reestablishing native habitat for pollinators and has funded critical work on Audubon wildlife refuges across the state to support healthy pollinator populations. Just this past summer she was instrumental in providing funds for an Audubon intern to work on public outreach and complete research on native bee populations.

Cofrin has been an Audubon supporter since 2018, when she made a donation and Hall subsequently gave her a call. Their conversation has continued for years. As a donor, Cofrin is more apt to wait for a cue about what is needed, do her own research on the topic, and then respond with abundant generosity. “The need may be something that wouldn’t necessarily be on my radar,” she says. “But it can be very important, so I listen carefully to what the current needs are.” Her reach extends throughout the organization.

This year, Cofrin indeed listened, and as a result the MOTUS tower was installed last April in Bristol as part of the Audubon Avian Research Initiative. At first, she was skeptical. “I heard they were thinking about installing a tower,” and I thought, ‘Oh no, a tower?’ She was imagining something as large as a cell-phone tower. Cofrin quickly got up to speed and realized how small, in reality, the tower was. (According to Clarkson, about the size of a rooftop TV antenna.) Cofrin then learned that birds would have to be tagged in order to be detected, which also left her a little wary. “I came to understand the disturbance to the birds is minimal, and the importance of all the data tracking will be enormously beneficial in the long run.” It’s important and Cofrin was all in. MOTUS (Latin for “movement”) towers are located across the globe, with over 30 countries participating in data collection. “Rhode Island is a main artery for migratory birds in the Northeast,” Cofrin added “and the East Bay was one place that was missing a tower.”

Just six months in, Clarkson says the MOTUS tower has dramatically upped Audubon’s game in the study of birds and how they are faring in a rapidly—scarily—changing environment. “Migration is always a big question, and we are slowly figuring out their paths and survivorship. At the end of the day,” he adds, “it is still the biggest unexplained phenomenon in ornithology.” The tower, he says, gives us a little peek under the hood. “The more we learn, the

Please turn to page 21

NATIVE POLLINATOR PROTECTOR INITIATIVE

By Katie Schortmann
Audubon Garden Coordinator / Environmental Educator



Generous donations allowed Audubon to continue efforts to protect pollinators throughout the state in 2023.

- Educational aspects included farmers market outreach, school programs, and public speaking events at Barrington Public Library, Land & Water Summit, and the Warwick Wildlife Conservation Commission Pollinator Seed Exchange.
- Printed handouts were disseminated to encourage conversations about neonicotinoid pesticides and informed consumer practices when shopping for garden plants.
- Three new educational signs were installed in the Palmieri Pollinator Garden in Bristol.
- A total of 300 native plants were purchased, grown, and planted to increase pollinator habitat on four Audubon wildlife refuges and in Roger Williams Park. Through a collaborative effort, Roger Williams Park also installed a native pollinator garden with plants purchased and grown by Audubon.
- A summer intern was hired to do public outreach as well as create an inventory of the bee species found within the Palmieri Pollinator Garden.

We saw great success with the initiative in 2023 and will continue next year with continued support from Audubon members and supporters like you! If you would like to learn more about native plants and gardening for wildlife, please attend one of Audubon’s garden programs. Visit the events calendar at asri.org/calendar.



Clockwise from top left: Bee in the Palmieri Pollinator Garden, Former Board Member Terry Meyer working in the garden, students learning about pollinators, the new raised garden bed designed and funded by DownCity Design, Audubon Garden Coordinator Katie Schortmann starts a field trip with a story about bees.

MOTUS Tower Update: 125 Birds and Animals Detected

As of October 10, 2023, the MOTUS tower installed at the Nature Center and Aquarium in Bristol has detected 125 tagged animals as they transited overhead during migratory movements.

While detections have mostly been of birds, there have been multiple bat detections, including both Gray and Little Brown Bats. These species are considered near-threatened (Gray) and endangered (Little Brown) due to severe population declines. Tracking information from MOTUS towers aids in the creation of effective management plans for these species.

Some recent detections at our tower include:

- An American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), which, after being detected by our tower on 2 October, made its way down the East Coast, where it was last detected at Cape Charles, Virginia on 9 October.
- A Prairie Warbler (*Setophaga discolor*), one of Audubon's Responsibility Birds, detected first in Canada near Banff National Park in Calgary on 9 June was detected by our tower in Bristol on 23 July.
- A Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*) detected by our tower on 28 July made its way to Quebec, Canada in mid-August before heading west to Newgate, Canada. The bird then turned east and flew to St. Louis, Missouri where it was detected on 27 September.
- A Blackpoll Warbler (*Setophaga striata*) that was tagged in Colombia on 12 April and flew due north was detected at towers in MD and NY before being detected in Bristol on 1 October as it started its southbound migration.

Coming Soon! A new exhibit in the Nature Center and Aquarium will focus on the MOTUS Tower and provide information and updates on the birds.

Volunteers Needed! Help Audubon Track Bird-Window Collisions

Each year in the United States, as many as 1 billion birds die from flying into windows. Over 250 million of these fatalities (44%) occur in residential areas. To reduce these collisions, it is essential that we better understand the problem.

Audubon is collecting data on bird-window collisions in Rhode Island and your help is essential. By collecting simple data on window strikes and reporting it to Audubon, you will provide important information that can be used to determine the number of birds that perish from window strikes in the state. The data can also be used to determine when collisions are more likely, thereby strengthening our ability to take more effective steps towards reducing this source of mortality.



To participate in this project, all you need to do is document and report each window strike you observe, either at your home, place of work, or during your daily activities.

If you encounter a dead bird that is located near a window (suggesting it may have died from a collision), please report the sighting to Audubon:

1. Take photos of the bird in the location where it was found. Multiple photos from different angles are best as they will aid in identification.
2. Email the photos to cclarkson@asri.org. Please include the date and address where the bird was found – it can be approximate.

If you encounter a bird that has collided with a window and is still alive but clearly injured, please call: The Wildlife Clinic of Rhode Island at 401-294-6363.

Help Reduce Bird-Window Collisions at Your Home

Consider placing specialized decals on your windows. Several designs are available at the Audubon Nature Shop in Bristol, or visit audubonrinatureshop.shopsettings.com.



American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*)



Prairie Warbler (*Setophaga discolor*)



Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*)

Advanced Studies in Ornithology

Join Dr. Charles Clarkson, Audubon Director of Avian Research, in a five-part online course designed to increase your understanding in all things bird!

Virtual Course; December 5, 12, 2023, January 2, 9 and 16, 2024; 6:00–7:30 pm.

Register through the events calendar at asri.org/calendar.



Blackpoll Warbler (*Setophaga striata*)



SAVE THE DATE

Sunday, February 4, 2024 - Salve Regina University, Newport, RI

BIRDS ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

The Second Audubon Regional Conservation Symposium

Join the Audubon Society of Rhode Island for the second annual Avian Research Symposium. The 2023 event featured researchers from across the northeast and provided attendees a broad understanding of the bird conservation work occurring across our region.

This year's event will be bigger and better! The symposium will be held at Salve Regina University in Newport, RI and will feature over 20 researchers presenting on topics ranging from birds and renewable energy to the impacts of climate change on bird populations.

Last year's event sold out in a matter of days, so don't miss your opportunity to attend. Registration information coming soon.

Watch for more information at asri.org/BirdsAcrossNE

SYMPOSIUM RESEARCH PARTNERS AND PRESENTERS:

- National Audubon Society
- Massachusetts Audubon
- Tufts University
- Salve Regina University
- University of Connecticut
- Renewable Energy Wildlife Institute
- Schoodic Institute
- Biodiversity Research Institute
- Manomet

Northern Saw-whet Owl Banding at Eppley

On a cool October evening, Rick and Amy Buskey, David and Rebecca Rotondo, Adoniram and Kara Sides, and Linda Zanni joined Audubon to observe the banding of a small Northern Saw-whet owl at the Audubon Marion Eppley Wildlife Refuge in West Kingston, RI. Program participants bid on and won the opportunity through the Party for the Peregrines fundraising auction in May.

Audubon sends a special thanks to Dr. Peter Paton, who banded the owl and spoke to the group about the species adaptations, habitats, and natural history.

Middle photo from left: Linda Zanni, Adoniram Sides, Kara Zanni Sides, Dr. Peter Paton, Rebecca Rotondo, Dave Rotondo, Rick Buskey, and Amy Buskey at the banding. Photos by Amy Buskey.



Learn More About the Audubon Avian Research Initiative.



Download Audubon's State of Our Birds Reports, Part I and II, and support the Avian Research Initiative at asri.org/AvianResearchInitiative

Soil—Not “Dirt”—Ecology

Soil scientists remind us that dirt is what you get on your pants; soil is the living, breathing component of habitats that support terrestrial communities worldwide. Natural scientists, gardeners and farmers appreciate soil. Yet we still have much to learn about this crucial resource.

Soil is composed of weathered geologic material, sand, silt and clay particles with mixtures of nutrients, minerals and organic matter. It is a relatively thin layer compared to the Earth’s enormous mass, but its role is vital. Audubon strives to protect and carefully manage our soil resources.

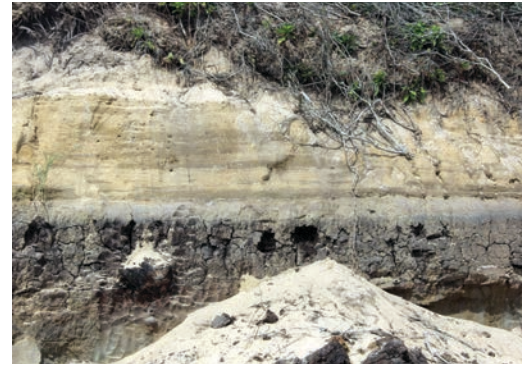
In this realm of plant roots and dormant seeds, soil is a largely secret dark world of nutrient cycling and soil creatures. When we see mushrooms, most of the fungal biomass is underground. The late E.O. Wilson, famed ant specialist and evolutionary biologist, admired the hidden world of soils, “Ten billion bacteria live in a gram of ordinary soil, a mere pinch held in between thumb and forefinger. They represent thousands of species, almost none of which are known to science.”

Soils reveal the history of habitats, telling a silent story of glaciation, forces of rivers and wind, plant communities, fires and farming. On rocky ridges in Rhode Island, soils are often thin, stony, acidic and low fertility. Valley soils are often deeper, more fertile and well drained. Humans have chosen these areas for crops throughout human history and European settlers cleared countless acres of forests in New England. Plow lines are evident in land that has been cultivated for decades or more. In spite of these trends, soils are amazingly heterogeneous.

For the past hundreds of millions of years in Rhode Island, geologic formations have weathered and soils have formed and changed. Soils formed slowly, but natural and human causes can alter soils quickly. It is only since the 20th century that humans realized the need for soil conservation.

Fires affect soils but impacts vary with fire temperature and duration. After an intense fire, soils may lose nutrients and erode. Intense fires can also kill soil microorganisms. However, low intensity fires add nutrients to soils, aiding the recovery of forest communities.

Soils influence what plants thrive and the plants influence soils, adding to the organic top layer and altering soil chemistry and nutrient exchange. Organic matter and other factors control soil water, a significant impact on plant growth and survival. Perpetually dry soils require efficient water use by organisms. Wet organic soils called peat and muck are mostly decaying vegetation. Only specialized marsh and swamp plants can tolerate these wet, low oxygen conditions.



Changes in the environment are affecting soils. Research reveals that some invasive plants change soil chemistry and nutrient cycling therefore affecting the plants and soils organisms that grow along with these new species. Invasive worms are cycling fallen leaves faster than native organisms leaving bare, depleted soils in some forests.

Climate change also affects soil. Increased rain causes more erosion and droughts worsen the impacts of already dry conditions. The ground in many urban areas no longer freezes. What does this mean for the invasive soil-dwelling species normally controlled by winter weather?

As Audubon protects habitats for wildlife, we are aware of the need to preserves the soils that are the base of the food web.

Audubon practices soil conservation in many ways. Whether you are a gardener or a large landowner, you can adopt similar conservation actions.

- Prevent erosion by maintaining plants and their roots. Even the roots of dead trees hold soil in place.
- On paths, install low barriers (often referred to as water bars) to slow the flow of rainfall.
- Let leaf litter remain. It keeps soils cool and moist and adds nutrients as it decays. Leaf litter is home to countless organisms including overwintering bees, amphibians and reptiles.
- Reduce ground tilling, and plant as soon as possible. Exposed soil blows away.
- Eliminate use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides that contaminate soils and groundwater.

New TerraCorps Members to Serve at Audubon

A newer affiliation of AmeriCorps, TerraCorps was founded on the principles and practices of service with an emphasis on land conservation. Audubon welcomes TerraCorps Members Nathan Archer and Ethan Paiva, both serving with Audubon through July 2024.

Nathan Archer

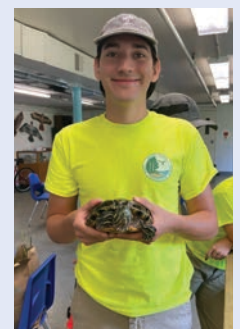
Nathan Archer graduated from The University of Rhode Island with a B.S. in Wildlife Conservation Biology and is serving with Audubon as a Land Conservation Coordinator. During the summer of 2022 he worked with USFWS as a Piping Plover Monitor, protecting nesting habitat and monitoring populations on state beaches in RI. Nathan also worked in the Scott McWilliams Lab at URI as a Research Assistant tracking American Woodcock using radio telemetry. Over the next year, Nathan will be contributing to Audubon’s conservation efforts with a focus on monitoring pollinator habitats and mapping vernal pools.



Nathan Archer with a young American Oyster Catcher during a RIFWS banding session.

Ethan Paiva

Ethan Paiva, a recent graduate from the University of Rhode Island with a B.S. Degree in Wildlife Conservation Biology, will be taking on the role of Audubon Land Steward Coordinator. Prior to serving as a TerraCorps member he was a Leader of the Youth Conservation League in 2022 and 2023, working with Audubon and other land trusts across the state. Ethan also volunteered in local conservation efforts for diamondback terrapins, Wild Turkeys, and American Woodcock. He is working to create forestry and fire management plans for several Audubon wildlife refuges, leading the Bluebird Monitoring Program, and creating a new plan to monitor vernal pools on our wildlife refuges.



Ethan Paiva holds a turtle at Caratunk in 2022, when he was a Leader for the Youth Conservation League.

Tim Mooney

Restore America's Estuaries Grant Fully Funds

Stormwater Innovation Center and Roger Williams Park Zoo Green Infrastructure Partnership



By Rebecca Reeves, Stormwater Education and Outreach Coordinator

On Friday, October 6, 2023, it was officially announced and celebrated that the Stormwater Innovation Center (SIC) had received a Restore America's Estuaries SNEP Watershed Implementation grant to collaborate with the Roger Williams Park Zoo. Together with Providence Parks Department, City of Providence Department of Public Works, and other partners, a Stormwater Master Plan will be developed for green infrastructure in the Zoo.

The wetland in Roger William's Park Zoo is vulnerable to cyanobacteria blooms and is connected to the other already-impaired Roger Williams Park ponds. A new Stormwater Master Plan will identify sources of nutrient contribution to the Zoo wetland and propose innovative nature-based solutions for addressing those concerns. Another component of this grant will be outreach and education. SIC and Audubon education staff will collaborate with Zoo educators to develop youth programming and educational signage. This education initiative, aimed at Zoo visitors and partners, will share information on the critical importance of green infrastructure, how stormwater installations work, and the solutions they can provide for climate resiliency. As the new Stormwater Master Plan is implemented, education around green infrastructure design, construction, and restoration will also be highlighted.



Stormwater Director Ryan Kopp, Audubon Executive Director Jeff Hall, and Audubon Senior Director of Education Lauren Parmelee (fourth, fifth, sixth from left respectively) joined Providence Mayor Brett Smiley, Deputy Director of Providence Parks and Recreation Brian Byrnes, and Congressman Seth Magaziner (eighth, ninth and tenth from left respectively) along with Senator Jack Reed (third from right) and Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (far right) to announce the grant on October 6, 2023. Courtesy of The Office of Senator Jack Reed.

Stormwater Expo

Over 160 attended the 2023 Stormwater Innovation Expo in Roger Williams Park on October 18, 2023. Hosted by the Stormwater Innovation Center and the Green Infrastructure Coalition, participants attended presentations, toured green infrastructure installations, networked, and discovered innovative products and services to increase climate resiliency in their communities.

Audubon provides leadership for the Stormwater Innovation Center, which works with communities throughout Southeast New England to provide strategies for improving urban water quality through green infrastructure.



From left: Over 160 people attended the event. Audubon Senior Director of Conservation Scott Ruhren speaks to a group of attendees during a tour.

2023 Rain Harvest Festival A Community Celebration of Water, Science, and Art

Although this year the event lived up to its name, showers certainly did not stop the enthusiastic response to the Rain Harvest Festival on Sunday, September 24, 2023. Hosted by the Stormwater Innovation Center in collaboration with the Providence Parks Department, this annual event brings together community, scientists, musicians, artists and educators. Audubon Executive Director Jeff Hall MC'd the event and attendees enjoyed musical performances from Alpaca Lunch and Extraordinary Rendition Band (ERB), and a storytelling performance given by Rochelle Coleman of Rhode Island Black Storytellers. Face-painting, games, crafts, and marine animal touch tanks were available for families. Over a dozen environmental nonprofits tabled at the event, each offering interactive opportunities for attendees to learn.

In 2024, the Stormwater Innovation Center aims to host the event at the new three-season pavilion at the Roger Williams Park Botanical Center. This venue will both highlight a different section of the Park and allow for more protection from the elements. We thank our partners, performers, volunteers, and presenters for supporting this free community event.



AUDUBON NATURE TOURS & PROGRAMS

December 2023 – February 2024 For more information and to register, visit the events calendar at asri.org/calendar

BIRDING WITH AUDUBON

Advance registration is required for all programs.

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRD WALKS

Locations across Rhode Island. Details will be sent to registered participants in advance. *Every Wednesday through June 2024; 9:00-11:00 am.*

CAPE COD WINTER WATERFOWL TOUR

Departs from Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, 12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, RI; *December 2, 2023; 7:00 am-5:00 pm.*

ADVANCED STUDIES IN ORNITHOLOGY

Join Dr. Charles Clarkson, Audubon Director of Avian Research, in a five-part online course designed to increase your understanding in all things bird! Virtual Course; *December 5, 12, 2023, January 2, 9 and 16, 2024; 6:00-7:30 pm.*

OWL PROWL AT CARATUNK

Three Dates Offered. Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, 301 Brown Avenue, Seekonk, MA; *December 7, 2023, January 25, February 24, 2024; 6:30-8:00 pm.*

OWLING AT FISHERVILLE BROOK

Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge, 99 Pardon Joslin Road, Exeter, RI; *December 8, 2023; 7:00-9:00 pm.*

OWL PROWL AT PARKER WOODLAND

Parker Woodland Wildlife Refuge, Maple Valley Road, Coventry, RI; *December 8, 2023; 7:00-9:00 pm.*

RAPTOR PHOTO SHOOT

Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, 12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, RI; *December 9, 2023; 10:00 am-12:00 pm.*

SOUTH COUNTY WINTER WATERFOWL TOUR

Departs from Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, 12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, RI; *January 13, 2024; 8:00 am-4:00 pm.*

OWLS AND ALES

Two Dates Offered. Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium, 1401 Hope Street, Bristol, RI; *January 13, February 17, 2024; 6:30-8:30 pm. Must be age 21+.*

SMALL GROUP OWLING AT FISHERVILLE BROOK

Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge, 99 Pardon Joslin Road, Exeter, RI; *January 19, 2024; 7:00-9:00 pm. Adults only.*

DUCKS OF SACHUEST POINT

Search for ducks and other waterfowl found along the coast. Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge, 769 Sachuest Point Road, Middletown, RI; *January 20, 2024; 9:30-11:30 am.*

OWL PROWL AT POWDER MILL LEDGES

Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, 12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, RI; *January 26, 2024; 6:30-8:30 pm; Fee: \$10/member; \$14/non-member. Ages: 10 and up.*



LEARN TO BIRD WITH AUDUBON

Six Session Course: Virtual and In-person. Join all six sessions or pick the classes that fit your schedule. Visit asri.org/calendar for itinerary. Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, 301 Brown Avenue, Seekonk, MA; *February 6, 13, 17, 20, 27, March 2, 2024.*

WINTER BEACH WALK WITH AUDUBON

Join a mid-afternoon winter walk along Moonstone Beach. Moonstone Beach Road, South Kingstown, RI; *February 10, 2024; 1:30-3:30 pm.*

OWL PROWL AT FORT REFUGE

Fort Nature Refuge, (Rt. 5), 1443 Providence Pike, North Smithfield, RI; *February 23, 2024; 6:30-8:30 pm.*

EAGLE CRUISE ON THE CONNECTICUT RIVER

Join a boat trip to search for eagles, waterfowl, seals and more! Departs from Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, 12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, RI; *February 24, 2024; 9:00 am-4:00 pm.*

WINTER VAN TRIP TO CAPE ANN

Birding van trip the Cape Ann, MA coastline. Departs from Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, 12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, RI; *February 25, 2024; 7:00 am-5:00 pm.*

BIRDS AND BREWS VAN TRIP

Come for a day of birding and a stop at a local brewery! Departs from Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge, 99 Pardon Joslin Road, Exeter, RI; *March 2, 2024; 9:00 am-4:00 pm. Ages 21+.*



Peter Green

AUDUBON NATURE CENTER AND AQUARIUM

1401 Hope Street (Route 114), Bristol, RI

PROGRAMS, LECTURES & WORKSHOPS FOR ADULTS

NEW! DECOUPAGE SHELL CRAFTING

December 16, 2023; 1:00-2:30 pm.

OWLS AND ALES

Two Dates Offered. *January 13, February 17, 2024; 6:30-8:30 pm. Age 21+.*

SEA GLASS JEWELRY WORKSHOP

Two Dates Offered. *January 13, 2023, February 24, 2024; 1:00-2:30 pm.*

SEALS AND SOCIETY

New! Traveling Exhibit. Dive into the world of harbor and grey seals!

January 15-March 1, 2024; 9:30 am-4:00 pm.

NATIVE SEED STARTING WORKSHOP

January 20, 2024; 10:00-11:30 am.

DISCOVERING MOTHS: NIGHTTIME JEWELS IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD

Lecture and Book Signing with Author John Himmelman. *January 20, 2024; 1:00-2:30 pm.*

PAPER BEADS FOR BEGINNERS

Come for an afternoon of bead making and learn skills that will last a lifetime!

January 21, 2024; 1:00-2:30 pm.

FISH PRINTING WORKSHOP FOR ADULTS

Learn gyotaku, the ancient Japanese art of fish printing! *January 27, 2024; 1:00-2:30 pm.*



Jane Gavin

FAMILY PROGRAMS AND CLASSES FOR CHILDREN

CITIZENS FREE FAMILY FUN DAY

Thanks to Citizens, the Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium is open free to the public on the first Saturday of every month. Join Audubon for nature stories, animal discoveries, hikes, and more.

No need to register! *December 2, 2023, January 6, February 3, 2024; 10:00 am-3:00 pm.*

AUDUBON DECEMBER SCHOOL VACATION WEEK ACTIVITIES

Bring the kids for special programs, animal interviews, crafts, and more!

December 27-29, 2023; 10:00 am-3:00 pm

LI'L PEEPS

Introduce young children to the delights of nature!

January 11, 18, 25, February 1, 8, 15, 2024; 10:00-10:45 am.

FISH PRINTING FOR KIDS

Use real fish to create a unique, one-of-a-kind pillow-case! *January 28, 2024; 1:00-2:00 pm.*

AUDUBON FEBRUARY SCHOOL VACATION WEEK ACTIVITIES

Bring the kids for special programs, animal interviews, crafts, and more!

February 20-24, 2024; 10:00 am-3:00 pm.



Cate Brown

AUDUBON NATURE TOURS & PROGRAMS

December 2023 – February 2024 For more information and to register, visit the events calendar at asri.org/calendar

CARATUNK WILDLIFE REFUGE

301 Brown Avenue, Seekonk, MA

STARGAZING AT CARATUNK

December 1, 2023; 6:30-8:30 pm.

OWL PROWL

Three Dates Offered. December 7, 2023, January 25, February 24, 2024; 6:30-8:00 pm.

FULL MOON HIKE

January 24, 2024; 7:00-9:00 pm.

LEARN TO BIRD WITH AUDUBON

Six Session Course: Virtual and In-person. Includes four virtual lectures and two in-person guided birding walks at Caratunk. Join all six sessions or pick the classes that fit your schedule. Visit asri.org/calendar for itinerary. February 6, 13, 17, 20, 27, March 2, 2024.

FEBRUARY VACATION WEEK AT CARATUNK

Bring the kids and discover some cool critters!

- Reptile Meet and Greet
February 20, 2024; 11:00 am-12:00 pm.
- Big Owl, Little Owl
February 22, 2024; 11:00 am-12:00 pm.

SAVE THE DATE! MAPLE SUGARING

Audubon's popular Maple Sugaring program returns to Caratunk in 2024!
March 16, 2024; 10:00 am-12:30 pm.

FISHERVILLE BROOK WILDLIFE REFUGE

99 Pardon Joslin Road, Exeter, RI

OWLING AT FISHERVILLE BROOK

December 8, 2023; 7:00-9:00 pm.

WINTER WILDLIFE WREATHMAKING

December 14, 2023; 6:30-8:30 pm.

SMALL GROUP OWLING AT FISHERVILLE BROOK

January 19, 2024; 7:00-9:00 pm. Adults only.

DECEMBER SCHOOL VACATION WEEK

Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium
December 27-29, 2023;
10:00 am-3:00 pm

Bring the kids and get up-close with owls and other cool creatures, build forts for fairies on the refuge, and take a winter hike!

Visit asri.org/calendar for details.



POWDER MILL LEDGES WILDLIFE REFUGE

12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, RI

AUDUBON HOLIDAY CRAFT FAIR

Come find perfect gifts for the nature enthusiasts on your list! December 2, 2023; 10:00 am-4:00 pm.

RAPTOR PHOTO SHOOT

Get up-close with a Great Horned Owl, Merlin, Eastern Screech-owl, Red-tailed Hawk, and Barred Owl.
December 9, 2023; 10:00 am-12:00 pm.

WINTER WILDLIFE WREATHMAKING

December 16, 2023; 10:00 am-12:00 pm.

NAKED TREE I.D.

January 20, 2024; 10:00 am-1:00 pm.

OWL PROWL AT POWDER MILL LEDGES

January 26, 2024; 6:30-8:30 pm.

FEBRUARY VACATION WEEK AT POWDER MILL LEDGES

Bring the kids and discover some cool critters!

- Owls of New England
February 19, 2024; 11:00 am-12:00 pm.
- Rockin' Reptiles
February 21, 2024; 11:00 am-12:00 pm.
- Big Hawk, Little Hawk
February 23, 2024; 11:00 am-12:00 pm.

PRUDENCE ISLAND

Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Prudence Island, RI

WINTER WILDLIFE ON PRUDENCE ISLAND

Two Dates Offered. December 15, 2023, February 7, 2024; 9:45 am-4:45 pm.



PROWL FOR OWLS

Join an expert and search for owls at night!

- Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium, Bristol, RI
January 13, February 17, 2024
- Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, Seekonk, MA
December 7, 2023, January 25, February 24, 2024
- Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge, Exeter, RI
December 8, 2023 & January 19, 2024
- Fort Wildlife Refuge, North Smithfield, RI
February 23, 2024
- Parker Woodland Wildlife Refuge, Coventry, RI
December 8, 2023
- Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, Smithfield, RI
January 26, 2024

Register early as these programs fill quickly!
Visit asri.org/calendar.



WINTER WALKS WITH AUDUBON

Grab Your Woolly Mittens and Go!



DUCKS OF SACHUEST POINT

Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge, Middletown, RI
January 20, 2024; 9:30-11:30 am.

FULL MOON HIKE

Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, Seekonk, MA
January 24, 2024; 7:00-9:00 pm.

WINTER WONDERLAND AT TOUISSET

Touisset Marsh Wildlife Refuge, Warren, RI
February 10, 2024; 10:00-12:00 am.

WINTER BEACH WALK WITH AUDUBON

Moonstone Beach Road, South Kingstown, RI
February 10, 2024; 1:30-3:30 pm.

Visit asri.org/calendar for details.



Eastern Cottontail

RABBITS

Peter Green

Bunnies, bunnies, everywhere! People have noticed that there are a lot of rabbits around this year. Check out your neighborhood for these brown, long-eared furry creatures with their twitchy little noses and puff ball tails. How many can you find?

The only rabbit native to Rhode Island is the New England cottontail, but most of the rabbits you see today are Eastern cottontails. It is very hard to tell them apart! Eastern cottontails were introduced to the area in the 1800s and early 1900s, and thrive in field, meadow and grassy lawn habitats. They really like vegetable gardens too!

New England cottontails prefer shrublands and young forests. When these habitats grow into tall, mature woodlands, the rabbits are no longer successful. Audubon keeps some of its land shrubby just for these rabbits.

Rabbits can have a lot of babies in one year. Depending upon the weather and the number of predators around, a mother rabbit can have 2 to 4 litters per year with 3 to 8 baby rabbits (called kittens) in each litter. If you do the math, one mom could have between 6 to 32 young every year. If you find a rabbit nest in your yard, just leave it be. The mom is hiding nearby and will come feed them soon.

As the rabbit population rises, the predator populations can rise too because there is more food for their young. Coyote, fox, weasels, hawks and owls all like to prey on rabbits. They are an important link in the food web.


New England Cottontail





Eastern Cottontail




BUNNY FACTS

 When frightened, rabbits will usually freeze, but if danger gets too close they can run up to 18 mph in a zig-zag pattern. Go rabbit go!

 Rabbits tend to be relatively quiet, but will thump the ground with their hind feet, perhaps to warn others about danger. They also let out a loud scream when caught by a predator.

 You can see rabbits in Rhode Island all year long. In the warm seasons, they nibble on grass, clover, leaves and herbs. In the winter, they change their diet to bark, twigs and buds.

 Rabbits have an excellent sense of smell, with an estimated 100 million scent receptors in their nostrils. In order to expose those receptors to the air, they twitch their nose 20 to 200 times per minute.



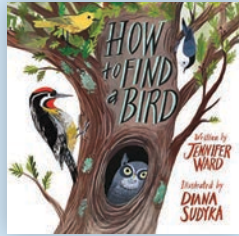
Books Recommended by Audubon Educators

Sometimes kids can't go outside to explore nature, but they can still learn about plants and animals with beautifully-illustrated children's books.

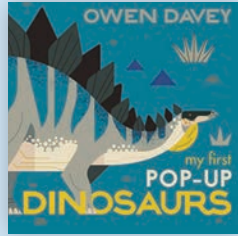
Nature-themed books, toys and building projects make wonderful gifts for the holiday season and bring families and friends together. The books below are available at the Audubon Nature Shop in Bristol. Stop in and browse, shop online at asri.org/natureshop or call 401-949-5454 ext.3118.



Go on a walk through the forest, where shadows fall, eyes peek out, and some animals sleep while others run and leap.



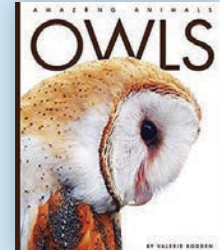
How do you find a bird? Begin by watching. And listening quietly. Soon you'll see that there are birds everywhere!



Learn about long-extinct creatures and watch them spring to life in a this first pop-up book for children.



Engaging projects allow children to interact with nature while learning all about wild birds.



Children discover key aspects of owls - appearance, behaviors, and habitats of these nocturnal birds of prey.

Audubon Hosts Volunteer Appreciation Day

We simply could not do our work without them!

Caratunk Wildlife Refuge in Seekonk, MA was abuzz with over 65 volunteers on Saturday, October 14, 2023, for a special appreciation luncheon. Guests included Osprey and Bluebird monitors, Avian Research volunteers, and exhibit hall guides. We welcomed volunteers who assist with bird banding, programs, events, animal care, conservation, office help, and more!

All enjoyed a delicious lunch, project and volunteer updates from Audubon staff, and a special visit from Audubon's Barred Owl. Executive Director Jeff Hall also spoke to express sincere appreciation for all Audubon volunteers and the many ways they help the organization to succeed and grow.

As a thank you, each volunteer left with a field guide to butterflies of Rhode Island, milkweed and spotted Joe Pye weed seeds to plant at home, and a custom Audubon Society of Rhode Island sticker that read "Easily Distracted by Birds!"



Volunteers listen to Dr. Charles Clarkson speak at the event.



Audubon Educator Ianna Leshin Szewczok presents a Barred Owl.



From left: Tom Cone and Elizabeth Reardon with Audubon Executive Director Jeff Hall.



Steve Reinert (left) and Tom Cone.



From left: Marge Bradley, Joe Koger, and Dick Bradley.



Guests enjoy the owl presentation.

Audubon Wildlife Carving and Art Exposition

Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium, Bristol, RI

April 6 & 7, 2024; 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

New this year! In addition to bird carvings, this popular event will showcase work by talented photographers, painters, illustrators, and other nature-inspired artisans from across the Northeast.

Interested in showcasing your work? Email audubon@asri.org.



NEW DATE!

ANNUAL MEETING; OCTOBER 22, 2023

In 2023, Audubon made major advancements studying the state of Rhode Island's bird populations and Dr. Charles Clarkson provided an update on this critical research. Executive Director Jeff Hall spoke about the successes of the last year, and plans for 2024 with a focus on Accessibility, Biodiversity, and Climate Resiliency.



Audubon Executive Director Jeff Hall.



YEAR OF THE BIRDS

Newly Elected to the Board of Directors



Stephanie Beauté

Stephanie Beauté earned a M.S. in Information Systems from the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) and a B.A. in Communications from the University of Rhode Island. As a senior

IT professional, Beauté has led diverse teams and generated substantial value for global enterprises such as GE and start-ups.



Richard Staples, Jr.

Richard Staples earned a B.S. in Business Administration from Colorado College and enjoyed a 50-year career in bank marketing and mortgage finance before retirement. He currently serves in the elected

position of Moderator for the Town of Barrington, RI, and as resident photographer for Leadership Rhode Island. Staples and his wife, Betsy, were Audubon Volunteers of the Year in 2021.



Sara Sweetman

Dr. Sweetman is an Associate Professor at the University of Rhode Island (URI) in the College of Education. She earned a Ph.D. in Education from URI, an M.Ed. in Elementary Education from Rhode Island College, and a B.S. in Family

Relations from the University of New Hampshire. Dr. Sweetman has a strong background in STEM education and is working to develop a new B.S. degree program at URI in Environmental Education.

The Audubon Society of Rhode Island gratefully acknowledges the terms of service of board members Ivan Colón and Terry Meyer who are stepping down from the board of directors this year.



LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP AWARD Rhode Island Representative June Speakman

Audubon recognized Representative Speakman for her dedication to Rhode Island's environment and the protection of birds and wildlife.

From left: Audubon Executive Director Jeff Hall, Representative June Speakman, Audubon Board President David Caldwell, Jr.



EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR April Alix, Conservation Program Coordinator, Providence Parks Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership

Alix was honored for her work in connecting diverse and underserved communities to nature through outdoor play and exploration. She started her career with Audubon as an AmeriCorps member in 2010.

From left: Audubon Senior Director of Education Lauren Parmelee, April Alix, Audubon Executive Director Jeff Hall.



Members of the Brown University Birding Club joined a walk with Dr. Charles Clarkson, Director of Avian Research, and enjoyed his keynote address. This club joins Senior Director of Education Lauren Parmelee (third from right) each year for birding programs and walks.

Gifts for Every Birder on Your List!

Are you looking for the perfect holiday gift for the birding enthusiast in your life or struggling to find something that a birder may not already have? I have a few ideas to get you started!

If you are shopping for someone who is just beginning to enjoy the world of birds, you can never go wrong with a feeder. As there are so many shapes and varieties to choose from, start with picking the birds that they might like to attract. The Audubon Nature Shop staff in Bristol would be happy to assist you with your gift selection – the shop carries a wide variety of feeders and seed.

If your birding buddy has one too many feeders, ask if they have a good way to identify the birds in their yard. My two favorite field guides are *The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America* and *The National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America*. If your gift recipient is just starting out, stick to the Sibley's Guide. Perhaps you have a friend travelling to another state or country for birding. Look for a local field guide or a book that tells them where to go for the best birding spots in that destination.

Another useful tool to help with identification is a birding app. It is like having a field guide on your smart phone, but with bird songs! There are several different apps out there including iBird and Sibley's birding app. For a young birder or someone who might be overwhelmed with apps, get them the Identifier hand-held device! It has songs and pictures to match what you are hearing. Both kids and adults love them!

Two great ideas for birders in the field are a binocular harness and a microfiber lens cleaning cloth. The harness relieves strain on your neck that may occur with a traditional binocular strap, and a microfiber cloth that can hook to your binoculars will always provide an easy way to clean your lens.

So, what if your birding friend has all the books and gear they need? Are they a coffee drinker and want to support healthy bird habitats? The Audubon Nature Shop has a selection of delicious bird-friendly coffee in stock!

And how about birding fun with family and friends? I am a big fan of bird games! The Audubon Nature Shop carries all my favorites! Bird-opoly, Sibley Birder's Trivia, Bird Bingo, and Wingspan! These are great for beginners and experts alike! Also shop for a wide variety of bird-themed t-shirts, socks and jewelry. We even carry Audubon swag!

Another way to surprise your bird-loving friend is to support the Audubon Society of Rhode Island with a donation or membership in their name. This is a thoughtful way to support your loved one's enthusiasm for nature. How about registering them for an upcoming birding workshop or a field trip with a local guide? Audubon offers beginning birding classes, courses for more experienced birders, owl prowls, all-day van trips, and even overnight excursions. And on-line gift certificates are available so that a recipient may register for the program of their choice.

I hope my suggestions give you plenty of ideas for friends and family. Once again, I recommend a visit to the Audubon Nature Shop where staff will be happy to help you find the perfect gift.



LET'S GET SOCIAL!

facebook.com/audubonRI
twitter.com/Rlaudubon
instagram.com/Rlaudubon

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:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <i>Leader</i> — \$1,000 to \$2,499 | <i>Benefactor</i> — \$7,500 to \$9,999 |
| <i>Advocate</i> — \$2,500 to \$4,999 | <i>Visionary</i> — \$10,000+ |
| <i>Conservator</i> — \$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. 5017.

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.

AUDUBON HOLIDAY CRAFT FAIR

Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, Smithfield, RI
December 2, 2023; 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Find the perfect gifts for the nature enthusiasts on your list!

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: ASRI.ORG/NATURESHOP

SAVE THE DATE!

TRANSFORMING THE LANDSCAPE

Audubon Symposium on Supporting Native Plants and Pollinators

Rhode Island College; April 20, 2024

- Curious about solutions to create more wildlife habitat in your neighborhood?
- Looking to support our native pollinators at home?
- Interested in establishing more native plants in your yard?

Join Audubon and learn how to protect pollinators and other wildlife with healthy landscaping practices! Discover best management practices for wildlife-friendly gardening, landscape design with native plants, and connect with other concerned citizens and organizations that wish to create a better future for pollinators. Hear from scientists about research happening in Rhode Island and learn how you can get involved.



Keynote Speaker: Doug Tallamy
Author of *Bringing Nature Home*, *Nature's Last Hope*, and *Oaks*.

Tallamy is Professor and Chair of the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware. Chief among his research goals is to better understand the many ways insects interact with plants and how such interactions determine the diversity of animal communities. He has authored numerous books on transforming our landscapes into healthy wildlife habitats. Watch for more details at asri.org.

Citizen Science with Audubon

Get involved With Local Research Initiatives

WINDOW STRIKE DATA COLLECTION

Collect simple data on birds that have flown into windows and report it to Audubon - this information can be used to determine the number of birds that perish from window strikes in Rhode Island. See page 6 for details.



Ryan McAssey

JOIN THE AUDUBON TEAM AND MONITOR VERNAL POOLS

Two Dates Offered.

Volunteers are needed to map vernal pools on Audubon wildlife refuges and to count what's in these wetlands. For more info, email Nathan Archer at narcher@asri.org or Ethan Paiva epaiva@asri.org.

Virtual Training Programs: January 18, 31, 2024; 7:00 - 9:00 pm. Ages: Adult.

OSPREY MONITOR TRAININGS

Two Dates Offered.

Help Audubon research the ecology of Osprey in Rhode Island. Join our team and become part of a research initiative that has been ongoing since 1977!

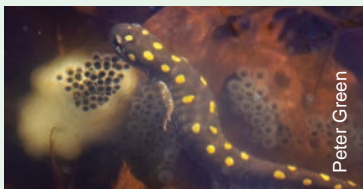
Virtual Training Programs: March 13, 27, 2024; 7:00-8:30 pm; Free. Ages: 16 and up. Register for the virtual training programs on the events calendar at asri.org/calendar.

BLUEBIRD MONITORS NEEDED

Two Dates Offered.

Volunteer with Audubon to monitor Eastern Bluebird populations this spring and summer.

Virtual Training Programs: January 11, March 6, 2024; 7:00 pm-9:00 pm.



Peter Green

Audubon Outreach at Local Farmer's Markets



Audubon staff and volunteers could frequently be spotted at Rhode Island farmer's markets this summer and fall. They shared information on Audubon wildlife refuges, programs, advocacy work to support native pollinators, and encouraged visitors to get involved in their communities through volunteer opportunities with Audubon.

Audubon Educator Katie Schortmann (right) and Pollinator Outreach Intern Brittany Velikeneye at a Farmer's Market in Neutaconkanut Park, Providence.

Rhode Island Birding Trails

Over 60 Places to Watch Birds in the Ocean State

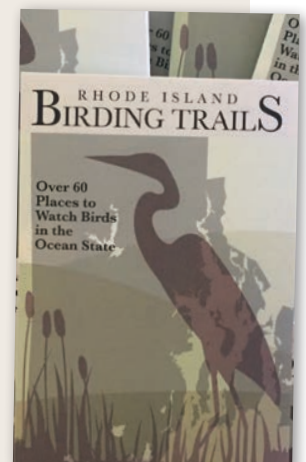
Published by the Audubon Society of Rhode Island

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.



Rhode Island PBS WEEKLY

STORIES THAT MATTER
SUNDAYS 7:30 PM
WEDNESDAYS 7:30 PM

Rhode Island PBS
ripbs.org/weekly

WHAT WOULD AUDUBON DO **WITHOUT YOU?**

NOTHING.

You make our work possible. The pages in this issue of the Report are full of accomplishments that Audubon has achieved with your support.

Without you...the other pages would be as blank as this one.

Please give to our year-end appeal so we can continue to support birds and wildlife. Help us protect critical habitat across the state and engage safely with schools and diverse communities with programs for all ages. As we face the ongoing challenges of climate change, your support gives nature, and all of us, a voice at the State House as we advocate for strong environmental policies.

We need your support now more than ever.

Please donate today. Visit asri.org/donate or use the enclosed envelope.

To learn more about our 2024 projects and initiatives, visit asri.org/wishlist.

Employees of the Bank of America / Merrill Call Center in Lincoln Raise \$26,000 to Support Audubon Camp Scholarships

Employees of the Bank of America/Merrill Call Center in Lincoln, RI held their annual employee charity golf tournament on Wednesday, August 9, 2023, at the Crystal Lake Country Club in Burrillville, RI. Organized and orchestrated by team members of the two companies, the event was attended by more than 200 staff members.

Funds collected from hole-in-one contests, putting challenges, and a gift basket raffle were donated to the Audubon Society of Rhode Island. The event raised \$26,000 which Audubon will use to fund summer camp scholarships for youth at wildlife refuges in Rhode Island and nearby Massachusetts.

Audubon thanks the many employees at the event for their generosity and enthusiasm to support summer camp scholarships for children in need.



Front row from left: Audubon Communications and Development Associate Paige Therien, Audubon Director of Development Jen Cleland, Audubon Donor Engagement Coordinator Robin Xiong, Audubon Executive Director Jeff Hall, Bank of America/Merrill employees Lisa Gingras, Mary Pothier, Alyssa Lombardi, Chad Lacroix, AD Mittra. Back row from left; Ben Remsbecker, Frederic Blythe, Parrys Delacruz, Jeremy Mazzola, Anthony Dellaquila.



Planning a Celebration or Special Event?

Caratunk Barn

The big white barn at Caratunk provides the perfect rural setting for weddings, showers, family reunions or meetings. Birthday parties for children are also offered.

For availability and reservations regarding weddings and birthdays, visit asri.org and click on 'services.' For all other rental queries, contact Lincoln Dark at ldark@asri.org.

AUDUBON FIRE 2023

A little rain didn't dampen our party – or our enthusiasm to meet up with our members!

Thank you to all who came out for AuduBonfire 2023. While our annual member appreciation event on September 30 started off with rain, the skies did clear in time for campfires and s'mores! The Nature Center and Aquarium was bustling with live music, games, and activities for all ages. Audubon is so fortunate to have such dedicated and engaged members. We can't wait to celebrate with you again next year!



Audubon Society of Rhode Island Named Endowment Funds

The Audubon Endowment is a permanently restricted fund that, by law, exists in perpetuity.

Because the Audubon Endowment is invested, it allows for long-term stability, fiscal responsibility, and financial viability that keeps Audubon a vibrant and growing organization. It also enhances our credibility, relieves pressure on fund raising, allows program expansion, and provides independence.

Donations of \$10,000 or more to the Audubon Endowment can be recognized by a named designation, either for an individual, family, or a cause you believe in.

Audubon Society of Rhode Island Named Endowments

- Aust-Capron Memorial Fund
- Barter-Moore Fund
- Edith Becker Fund
- Mary Catherine Rogers Beckett Fund
- John Brezinski Memorial Fund
- Bristol Education Center Fund
- Caratunk Fund
- Mary B. Cottrell Fund
- Severyn Dana Fund
- Davis Memorial Wildlife Fund
- Norman A. Deslauriers Fund
- Dickens Farm Fund
- Patricia Meagher Dwyer Conservation Fund
- John Raleigh Eldred Fund
- Bayard Ewing Fund
- Fisherville Brook Fund
- Fort Nature Refuge Fund
- Grout Memorial Fund
- Alice O. Harris Fund
- Jonathan H. Harwood Fund
- Hicks-Borden Fund
- Priscilla J. Hollis Fund
- Mary C. Kellermann Endowment Fund
- Walter Hammond Kimball Fund
- Margaret Robinson Knight Fund
- Kimball Memorial Garden Stewardship Fund
- Kay Kinsey Fund
- Kraus Wildlife Fund
- Henry J. Larkin Wildlife Preserve Fund
- Lorraine Leaney Fund
- Little Rest Bird Club Fund
- Lonesome Swamp Fund
- Edward B. and Phoebe W. McAlpine Memorial Preserve Fund
- Constance McCarthy Fund
- McKenzie Wildlife Fund
- George B. Parker Fund
- Powder Mill Ledges Fund
- Prudence Island Fund
- Susan M. Romano Memorial Fund
- Elton Sanford Fund
- Alicia Perry Seavey Family Fund
- South County Fund
- Everett F. Southwick Fund
- Touisset Marsh Fund
- Viall Memorial Library Fund
- Mrs. and Mr. Dudley A. Williams Memorial Fund

For more information contact Jeff Hall at jhall@asri.org or (401)-949-5454 ext. 3017.

Trail Monitors Thanked for Their Commitment to Audubon

Another set of eyes and ears on Audubon properties, trail monitors help to keep our wildlife refuges accessible and looking their best. These volunteers visit assigned wildlife refuge trails on a weekly or bi-monthly basis and greet visitors, report on any downed trees or needed repairs, pick up litter, and stock trail maps in the kiosks. On Tuesday September 26, 2023, conservation staff and Audubon TerraCorps members hosted a luncheon at Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge to thank and celebrate the on-going work that these volunteers do for Audubon.

Jen Amazeen
Katie Burns
Bill Carpenter

Neal Carpenter
Jerry Humm
Steven Levine

Nick and Susan Smith
Emily Westcott
John Woulfe

If you are interested in joining the team, we are currently in need of trail monitors at the following wildlife refuges. It's a great way to help Audubon, get exercise, and enjoy nature. Visit asri.org/volunteer.

- Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, Seekonk, MA
- Davis Memorial Wildlife Refuge, North Kingstown, RI
- Waterman Pond Wildlife Refuge, Coventry, RI
- Lewis-Dickens Wildlife Refuge, Block Island, RI



Learn to Bird with Audubon Six Session Course: Virtual and In-person

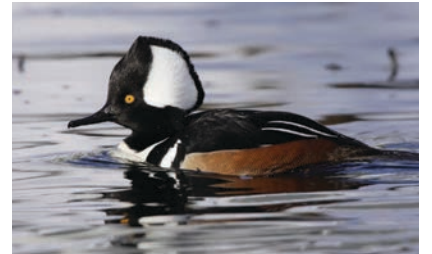
Are you interested in birdwatching, but are not sure where to start? Join an Audubon expert and learn the basics: how to identify birds in the field, habitats, bird families, the ins-and-outs of your binoculars, and how to decipher a field guide. After this course, you will be ready to head out with your binoculars for spring migration!

This course includes six sessions: four virtual 90-minute lectures and two in-person guided birding excursions at Caratunk Wildlife Refuge in Seekonk. Join all six sessions or pick the individual classes that fit your schedule.

Virtual Sessions: February 6, 13, February 20, 27, 2024; 7:00–8:30 pm.

In-person Bird Walks: February 17, March 2, 2024; 10:00 am–12:00 pm

For class descriptions and to register, visit the events calendar at asri.org/calendar.

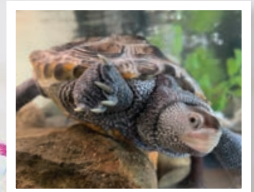


AUDUBON BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Have a WILD time!

Choose an Audubon location, a party theme, and have a wild time celebrating your child's special day!

Visit AudubonBirthdayParties.com



VOLUNTEERS ARE THE BACKBONE OF AUDUBON



Individuals of all ages, backgrounds, and experiences share their time and talent to support Audubon. From interns and educators to gardeners, trail monitors, office help and more, we depend on volunteers. Upcoming issues of the Report will continue to highlight a number of Audubon volunteers and the many talents they share with us.

CATE MERRIAM

Junior Camp Counselor
Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium



Audubon's Junior Counselor program is designed for high school students that have an interest in nature and science, and experience working with younger children. Junior counselors form an important part of Audubon camp: helping our staff and counselors to create a fun, engaging, safe experience for young campers. Over the years, some of our junior counselors have stood out as their efforts and enthusiasm have gone above and beyond – like Cate Merriam. She came to Audubon with an impressive resume of experience and had previously volunteered for Audubon. She brought knowledge, experience, laughter and fun to her four weeks at camp this summer.

Cate is a hard worker, displayed maturity beyond her years, and has a visible passion for the environment and sustainability. She biked to Audubon almost every day, and held the position of President of the Environmental Club at Mount Hope High School in Bristol for two years. She is a member of the National Art Honor Society and class of 2024 Executive Board. We are fortunate that Cate is interested in returning as an Assistant Camp Counselor next summer, she would be welcomed back with open arms!

By Tracey Hall
Audubon Education Coordinator
and Camp Director

STEVEN LEVINE

Trail Monitor
Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge



As an active volunteer trail monitor since 2022, Steven Levine has been a familiar face at Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge in Exeter. Several times a month he can be found greeting visitors, walking the trails, removing small branches and trees that he might find, and reporting any major issues that he has discovered along refuge trails.

This past year, Steven also joined the Fisherville Trail Crew, a group of enthusiastic volunteers that gather once a month for conservation work on the refuge. He was an integral part of taking down our old and worn parking lot fence and replacing it with a new one. When asked why he wanted to be involved with trail monitoring, Steven replied "I love being outside. I want to be sure we have interesting and safe spaces for others to enjoy the outdoors and develop a better appreciation of the wildlife and its importance to the environment." Thank you, Steven, for all your hard work, enthusiastic support for Audubon, and helping Fisherville look its best for visitors.

By Laura Carberry
Audubon Director of Properties

RICHARD STAPLES

Audubon Volunteer Photographer



Audubon not only depends on local photographers for images of birds and wildlife, we also need quality photos of our programs and events for publications, social media and the press. Keeping photography current is key to our communications, but it is challenging on a limited budget. Richard and Betsy Staples, familiar volunteers at the Nature Center and Aquarium, also happen to be talented with a lens, and this year Richard took on the role of event photographer.

Richard combined a keen eye behind the camera with the skill to take on challenging requests. He enthusiastically heads to classrooms, parks, and Audubon properties and delivers sharp images that beautifully reflect our work. This year his photos have been used in Audubon's newsletters, social media posts, and helped spread the word on our education initiatives in local newspapers. Richard and Betsy were named Audubon Volunteers of the Year in 2021 for their hours spent improving the gardens and grounds of the Nature Center and Aquarium in Bristol. We thank them both for their ongoing support – and give a special shout-out to Richard for traveling the state and sharing his talent behind the lens this year.

By Lauren Parmelee
Senior Director of Education

BRITTANY VELIKANEYE

Pollinator Outreach Intern
Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium



Brittany Velikaneye took on the role of Pollinator Outreach Intern this summer. She attended farmers markets around the state in an effort to educate the public about Audubon's work protecting pollinators and natural spaces.

She spent a majority of her internship working in the Palmieri Pollinator Garden at the Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium in Bristol, getting to know our volunteers, learning how to identify native plants, and creating an in-depth inventory of the bee species that utilize the pollinator garden. Brittany was able to capture, identify, and then release 87% of the bee species found in Rhode Island, all within the limits of the Palmieri Pollinator Garden! The plant choices and management techniques being implemented as part of her internship are having a positive impact on the biodiversity. Thank you, Brittany, for your diligence, research, and helping Audubon with our critical citizen science projects.

By Katie Schortmann
Audubon Garden Coordinator /
Environmental Educator

THE BIG FIX Continued from page 5

better equipped we are.” And Cofrin, an avid birder and nature photographer, understands how critical this work is.

Cofrin says she has “always liked projects that are off the beaten path. And, Audubon itself is a bit off the beaten path.” Similarly, she was drawn to the Taking Root initiative and Audubon’s work with the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center in Newport because “those needs resonated. When I need [a recharge] I go outside. I walk in the woods, I hear the birds sing. Imagine the difficulty,” she adds, “for people who can’t do that, who do not have access to the outdoors. Everyone should be able to experience those benefits.”

Kate Swain is the Audubon educator who, using her Master’s Degree in Special Education, was instrumental last year in launching Taking Root. She says that Cofrin’s support is evident in almost every aspect of her work and has funded a variety of needs from transportation and program scholarships that bring students to the wildlife refuges to updated educational materials. This fall she has been working with second- to fourth-graders enrolled in the special education program from the Chariho School District. They meet once a month at the Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge in Exeter for a nature walk. “The students did really well in that setting,” she says. They relax, they learn, and enjoy themselves. At the end of the first trip a boy who was visibly anxious about being outside with “ticks and other insects, made a point of telling me that he had a great time.”

Likewise, Audubon has teamed with the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center in Newport for a number of years, offering after-school outdoor explorations, summer camp programs, and story-time sessions that introduce nature (and cool animals) to preschool students. “It’s all about getting kids interested in and excited about nature,” said Parmelee. “There are fascinating birds, insects, animals and plants to be discovered in city neighborhoods. This funding allows us to reach children where they live and engage them in science and nature.”

“I like groups that are streamlining, that put their money where it needs to go,” Cofrin says. Audubon “checks all the boxes. It’s efficient, impactful, hardworking, and passionate. I get more bang for the buck that way.”



An anonymous donor funded the refurbishment of the cemetery plot at Fisherville.

Every donor is different, and whether through binoculars, eyeglasses or a magnifying glass, people see wildlife through their own specific lenses. Throughout the year Hall and his staff work tirelessly to pair donors and their particular passion or concerns with its programs, initiatives, conservation work, stewardship, needs and visions. That also includes educating them on ways to give.

It is a never-ending process. In fact, forty-three percent of giving occurs in the last weeks of December. Hall also talks about Audubon’s reliance on endowment (“It saved us during the Great Recession”), and about stewardship for the future. The “hidden treasures” of Caratunk need to be available long after nature walks in September of 2023. What also matters is how that knowledge will be used. “Children grow up, and they are the future. They keep learning and passing it along.” Hall wants those Caratunk kindergarteners and summer campers to be returning one day with their own children for nature walks.

“Audubon is here today because people cared about nature and remembered us in their will,” he says. “Bequests fund the future forever.” When, through donor support of any kind, Audubon can fulfill its mission of educating five-year-olds about the wonders of wildlife, managing habitat for declining pollinator species, or permanently protecting forests, fields, and wetlands, it is connecting its founding legacy to what lies ahead.

And the future comes calling every day.

Betsy Sherman Walker is a Rhode Island native who writes for area non-profits, news, and lifestyle publications, and who has recently discovered the joy and wonder of birding. Touch base at walkerbets@gmail.com.

SAVING BIRDS ONE CUP AT A TIME!

Audubon Offers Fresh Whole Bean and Ground Bird-Friendly Coffee

Visit asri.org/coffee to order online and learn more about Dean’s Beans support for local communities where the coffee is grown.

Dean’s Beans Coffee is Fair Trade Federation Certified and is also certified Bird Friendly by the Smithsonian’s National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute.



All proceeds benefit the Audubon Avian Research Initiative.

MIGRATION CELEBRATION
Medium roasted coffee from Honduras.

GUATEMALAN MEDIUM ROAST
Classic Central American flavor: clean sugar sweetness, smooth and nutty, with a touch of floral aromatics.

GUATEMALAN FRENCH ROAST
A dark roast, this coffee has a medium body with a smoky flavor.

PERUVIAN DECAF COFFEE
A full-bodied, but flavorful and aromatic coffee.

RAPTOR WEEKEND

New for 2023, Audubon hosted a popular Friday Brewery Night to launch Raptor Weekend! Over 1,500 joined Audubon's three-day celebration at the Nature Center and Aquarium in Bristol. Master falconer Greg Wojtera brought his crowd-pleasing raptor free-flight programs for the first time and guests got up-close with owls, falcons, and hawks during programs and presentations. Visitors learned about raptor adaptations, conservation and enjoyed lectures. Families played raptor games, made crafts, joined sing-alongs and more!

Thank you to our sponsors: NEC Solar, Poseidon Expeditions, RI PBS



Photo above: As the event came to a close, dark clouds opened up with an unexpected downpour. Tents, chairs and signs needed to be taken down and put away. Audubon staff and volunteers got absolutely drenched – resulting in lots of laughs and shared comradery. It was a Raptor Weekend to remember!

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.

- Bank of America
- Caldwell Realty Rhode Island
- Citizens Bank
- Cox Communications
- CVS Health
- DBVW Architects
- Green Energy Consumers Alliance, Inc.
- National Education Association RI
- NEC Solar
- Partridge Snow & Hahn LLP
- Rhode Island AFL-CIO
- R.I. Beekeepers Association
- Target
- United Natural Foods, Inc.
- Utilidata
- Van Liew Trust Company

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: John Brezinski
From: Joseph Brezinski and Catherine Tvirutbas

In Memory of: George de Lodzia
From: Gabriella and Charles Lemoine
Edward Marth

In Memory of: Patricia Faraone Finnerty
From: Jeffrey Lindeborg
Patrick Kenny

In Memory of: Doris Hanmer
From: Lynn R. Edmonds

In Memory of: Jill Johnson
From: Nancy Heroux

In memory of: Ellen McGill
From: Donna Schmader
Allison Goodley and Jim Erdosy

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: Dr. Charles Clarkson
From: Lifelong Learning Collaborative

In Honor of: Ian Mabie
From: Carly Commiso

In Honor of: Dr. Mehr
From: Sean Finnegan

In Honor of: Terry Meyer
From: Dr. Ann-Christine, A. Duhaime
and Mr. Stanley A. Pelli

In Memory of: David Milani
From: Susan Sherwood-Nulman
and Kenneth Nulman

In Memory of: Merrill Moore
From: Kristen and Donald Chambers
Gerald and Jennifer Terry
Thomas and Lynn Thompson
Fred Van Reen

In Memory of: Anna Palmer
From: Thomas and Samantha LeGrett

In Memory of: Christopher H. Thatcher
From: Amanda Thatcher

In Memory of: Claire Woodworth
From: Todd and Renay McLeish

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

Do You Want To Help Our Planet? Make Your Kids Ride The Bus!

Editorial by Dr. Charles Clarkson, Director of Avian Research

Many times each year, I find myself in auditoriums, classrooms, nature and community centers giving talks about the work we do at the Audubon Society of Rhode Island. I discuss topics ranging from data collection and analysis to, more often, the largest conservation issues facing birds today. I often finish these presentations with a message about how we can affect change for the positive...how individuals can help mitigate the loss of our birds and the intensifying changes to our global climate. While there are many simple things that can be done by your average human, the fact remains that even these easy things can be uncomfortable because they force people to change behaviors that they have incorporated into their daily rhythms for years. Consider the issue of cat predation:

as many as 4 billion birds are killed each year in the United States by cats. This is one of the largest sources of decline that birds face today. Cats have caused the extinction of 33 bird species globally and kill over 1 million seabirds each year on oceanic islands. And, direct mortality by cats is only part of the problem. As more cats invade habitats around the globe (and cat populations are increasing), more bird communities have to alter their behavior in the presence of a new predator threat. This altered behavior has been shown to have profound population-level effects as it impacts adult and juvenile survival and clutch size. To correct this massive conservation issue, a relatively simple solution exists: keep your cats indoors. For many cat owners, to hear that keeping their furry friends indoors will save countless birds each year is to experience an inner conflict. They may feel as though keeping their cat indoors will detract from their feline's quality of life. And indeed, cats that have spent time outdoors regularly may have come to expect it. But, if people truly want to save birds, if they truly want to be part of the solution and not part of the problem, then they need to keep their cats indoors. But, change can be hard...and even this simple change can be difficult for many.

All across Rhode Island, schools are back in session. The period of summer fun has now been supplanted by days filled with curricula designed to strengthen young minds and prepare them for a life where knowledge is paramount to success. To get to school, my own daughter rides the bus every day. While she is the last stop on the bus route in the afternoon, she arrives home only 15 minutes after school lets out. Why? Because her bus only makes 10 stops... picking up and dropping off only 10 kids. The average school bus seats 54 children, so she rides a nearly empty bus to and from school each day. When I asked my daughter how many students ride the bus, she told me by her observation over 70% of kids were transported every day to and from school by their parents. The math behind the conservation benefit of school buses is quite simple. The carbon dioxide emitted by a single school bus pales in comparison to that which is emitted from 54 cars, trucks and SUVs. And, with the average occupancy of a car being 1.5 people, the esti-

mated 480,000 school buses on the roads in the U.S. alone are responsible for transporting the same number of children as 17 million cars. Indeed, research out of Duke University has shown that transit by bus dramatically reduces the emissions of greenhouse gases. However, here's the rub: these equations ONLY work if buses are filled to near their capacity. Otherwise, with so few students riding the buses and instead being transported by their parents, the benefit of school buses to our climate is negligible or non-existent. And, let us not forget that school buses will continue to run their routes regardless of whether they are picking up 1 student or 54 of them. So, if parents choose not to send their kids to school on the bus, they are in effect contributing to the dire climate change issues we face today.



Birds are threatened by climate change. The National Audubon Society estimates that two-thirds of all bird species in North America face an increased risk of extinction due to a warming climate. In order to prevent this eventuality, we must do what we can to be a part of the solution. I understand that many children don't enjoy riding the bus and many parents have their own reasons for driving their kids to school each day. But, to truly start making a difference, we need to inconvenience ourselves...to think of the greater good. Change can be difficult, but often starts with one simple act. The bus is coming by anyway...you may as well get on. Our birds, and indeed our climate, will be better off for it.

Winter Van Tours

Climb aboard the Audubon Touring Van for a Birding Adventure this winter! Visit the events calendar at asri.org/calendar for details and to register.



- | | |
|---|---|
| Cape Cod Winter Waterfowl Tour
December 2, 2023; 7:00 am-5:00 pm. | Eagle Cruise on the Connecticut River
February 24, 2024; 9:00 am-4:00 pm. |
| South County Winter Waterfowl Tour
January 13, 2024; 8:00 am-4:00 pm. | Winter Van Trip to Cape Ann
February 25, 2024; 7:00 am-5:00 pm. |

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF RHODE ISLAND REPORT

Volume 57, Number 4, Winter 2023

Audubon Society of Rhode Island
12 Sanderson Road
Smithfield, RI 02917
(401) 949-5454
www.asri.org

Executive Director
Jeffrey C. Hall

Managing Editor
Hope Foley

Contributing Writers
Laura Carberry, Charles Clarkson,
Hope Foley, Lauren Parmelee,
Rebecca Reeves, Scott Ruhren,
Katie Schortmann,
Betsy Sherman Walker

Contributing Photographers
Rafael Adames, April Alix,
Cate Brown, Peter Green,
Richard Staples, Paige Therien,
Glenn Osmundson

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."



Because of you, the Osprey License Plate has provided hundreds of children with the opportunity to learn about nature. Thank you.



Order at www.asri.org



Audubon Society of Rhode Island
12 Sanderson Rd, Smithfield, RI 02917

Non Profit Org
US Postage Paid
Audubon Society of RI

Now Available!
**Audubon
2024
Calendar**



Exclusively From Audubon!

Stunning Rhode Island bird and wildlife images taken by local photographers.

\$17.99 plus shipping & handling (\$3.95) & sales tax.
Visit the Audubon Nature Shop in Bristol or shop online at
asri.org/bird-calendar/purchase.html



The Very Best Gifts Come From Nature HOLIDAY GIFTS & STOCKING STUFFERS

- Bird Feeders
- Stocking Stuffers
- Suet Feeders
- Audubon Hats
- Nature Tee Shirts
- Games, Toys & Puzzles
- Books for Children
- Field Guides
- Jewelry
- We stock a selection of high quality, affordable Opticon Binoculars



- Charlie Harper and David Sibley Graphic Tees

SHOP LOCAL!

The Audubon Nature Shop carries a variety of gifts created by Rhode Island artists.

Browse note cards, stained glass, felted animals, jewelry, soaps, prints, stickers and more!

These items are not included in any discount offer.

MEMBER DOUBLE DISCOUNT DAYS DECEMBER 1-3, 2023

Audubon Society of Rhode Island members will receive 20% off all purchases in the Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium Gift Shop when you present your membership card at the register. (Discount does not apply to the online shop, sale items, or binocular purchases.)

Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium, 1401 Hope Street, Bristol, RI asri.org/natureshop