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Audubon Society of Rhode Island

REPORT



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August 7, 2021
AUDUBON ROSE POLLINATOR GARDEN PARTY
Details coming soon!

VOLUME 55 • NO. 2 • SPRING 2021

CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE



STORM WARNINGS

AUDUBON LOOKS TO NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

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From the Desk of the Executive Director



Rewilding Rhode Island

Habitat restoration, green infrastructure and rewilding (a term popular in Europe), are all based on the same principle. They work to restore developed or degraded areas and let nature reclaim space to once again provide much needed ecosystem services.

This can mean removing introduced species of plants and replacing them with native ones, as we do at many Audubon refuges. Other examples include the removal of a dam to allow herring to return up river, or supporting the return of a keystone species to help restore degraded, over-grazed grasslands.

Too often rewilding is an uphill climb – critical natural habitat continues to be destroyed in favor of development for human use. As the effects of climate change (flooding, pollution, excessive heat, etc.) grow and adversely affect human health and well-being, we support the expansion and implementation of nature-based solutions. Restoring our local landscapes is critical for people and wildlife.

This issue of the Report focuses on natural solutions being implemented at both Audubon wildlife refuges and in our towns and cities. You might consider rewilding your own backyard. Options include the creation of pollinator gardens to replace lawn areas, or rain gardens instead of traditional storm drains. We will need to work together to increase the development, awareness and support of these important efforts.

Thank you for your continued support,

Lawrence J. F. Taft

Keepsakes

Perhaps you have something from your parents or grandparents that you consider a keepsake that brings you joy. According to Webster's dictionary, a keepsake is "anything kept, or given to be kept, as a token of friendship or affection; remembrance."

A bride may keep her wedding dress for years as a treasured keepsake, and pass it to her daughter to wear in her own wedding. An athlete may keep a uniform as a remembrance of the glory days of competition and victory. We all cherish our keepsakes.

Audubon has keepsakes as well. Webster's phrase "anything...given to be kept, as a token of friendship" applies perfectly to our endowments. These have been "given to be kept" in perpetuity as a "token of friendship" and support for our charitable mission.

The principal of an endowment fund is held in a permanent pool of invested funds with only the net earnings, or a portion thereof, used to meet the purposes described in the endowment agreement. The balance is reinvested so the amount available to spend in future years will keep pace with inflation. For example, an endowment designed to provide annual support of the operating budget of the Audubon Society of Rhode Island does just that.

Every year, these keepsakes remind us of the friendship and loyalty of the donors who provided them. Endowments can carry the name of the donors or the name of someone a donor wants to honor or memorialize. Endowments can provide annual "gifts" for the general purposes of Audubon, or be targeted for more specific things.

Endowments can be created with cash, securities, real estate, patents or other assets of value. They may be funded during life or at death, or by a combination of the two.

We have been honored to receive some wonderful keepsakes at Audubon. Would you like to create one as a token of your friendship and support? Please call Jeff Hall, senior director of advancement, at 401-949-5454 x 3017.





STORM WARNINGS

AUDUBON LOOKS TO NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

By Todd McLeish

On Food Truck Fridays at Roger Williams Park, some of those in attendance set up portable picnic tables at what look like attractive patios near the park's carousel and Japanese garden to enjoy the festivities. The park's deputy superintendent, Brian Byrnes, has even received kudos from residents for constructing the patios.

But they're not patios at all. Instead, they are pathways of permeable pavement that direct stormwater to a containment area to remove sediment. The water then travels on to natural filtration zones to decontaminate the roadway runoff while it seeps into the water table. They are among 42 installations constructed throughout the park and used by the Providence Stormwater Innovation Center, where green infrastructure is helping to improve water quality in the park's ponds while demonstrating nature-based solutions to one of the leading causes of water pollution in the state.

We're getting heavier rains now, and those storms are likely to get even more severe due to climate change. With more roads and more houses, we're replacing natural areas with surfaces that don't allow rainwater to soak in," said Ryan Kopp, Audubon's stormwater coordinator. "With all these impervious surfaces, the water picks up fertilizers, pesticides, oils and sand and runs into the gutter and into the closest water body and eventually into Narragansett Bay. Those pollutants cause major water quality issues in urban ponds that impair habitat, wildlife and people.

The infrastructure installed at Roger Williams Park is helping to rectify the problem. At one site near the seal house, where a large pipe once delivered runoff directly into the adjacent pond, stormwater now runs through a multi-stage system of sediment removal and contaminant filtration areas that look to the uninitiated like an attractive series of natural landscape features.

Nearby, across from the park's bandstand, a 100-yard long bioretention area planted with native wetland plants collects water diverted from the road, through a rocky swale and under a paved walkway, where natural filtration of pollutants occurs.



What appear to be patios are actually pathways of permeable pavement that direct stormwater to a containment area to remove sediment. The water then travels on to natural filtration zones to decontaminate the roadway runoff while it seeps into the water table.

Please turn to page 4

STORM WARNINGS Continued from page 3

A bioretention area is another word for a rain garden, Kopp said. It's a wet area where the plants are doing more of the work. The water filters down through the soil, and the plants uptake the pollutants while also providing habitat for pollinators, birds and other wildlife.

While the 42 stormwater installations at the park are designed specifically for each site, all have similar elements: an inlet structure where water enters from the roadway, a weir of rocks that slows the movement of water to allow sediments to settle, a treatment area of sand and soil where microbes attack the pollutants, and aesthetically pleasing plantings to provide wildlife habitat. Many also have an overflow system to reduce flooding when the volume of runoff is especially high.

The stormwater installations were constructed in 2019 and 2020 at a cost of \$1.5 million in response to a consent agreement between the City of Providence and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. While it cost a little more to install than traditional stormwater management systems, it is much less expensive to maintain, making it a good investment for the city.

But it's more than just a natural way to reduce the impact of roadway runoff on area ponds. It has also become a valuable tool for training and public education.

The installation and maintenance of these structures has been a learning process for all of us, said Byrnes. But as we trained our staff, I realized we could train the parks and public works staff from other cities as well, most of whom are also facing consent agreements. The Department of Transportation sends their staff, too.

That's how Audubon got involved. Working with the Rhode Island Green Infrastructure Coalition, Audubon applied for a grant from Restore America's Estuaries to turn the Roger Williams



Audubon Stormwater Coordinator Ryan Kopp installs water monitoring equipment at Roger Williams Park.

“There’s no question that plants, soil and stormwater installations can help clean polluted water. Our monitoring efforts take it to the next step”

Ryan Kopp

Audubon Stormwater Coordinator

Park stormwater management system into a public education and training center for innovative stormwater technologies. In partnership with the City of Providence, Roger Williams Park Conservancy, University of Rhode Island, University of New Hampshire Stormwater Center, Rhode Island Department of Transportation, and The Nature Conservancy, Audubon is showcasing nature-

Please turn to page 14



Like other areas in Rhode Island, Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge in Exeter also saw record-high levels of flooding in 2010. However, nature responds much better to the inundation of water than human landscapes. The water rose very high at Fisherville, but also receded quickly.

Stormwater Outreach

The Providence Stormwater Innovation Center has numerous opportunities for the public to get involved and learn more about how green infrastructure can reduce stormwater runoff and improve water quality in local ponds and other waterways.

Training for parks, public works and other municipal officials, as well as civil engineers, construction workers and others involved in the design, construction and maintenance of stormwater management infrastructure, are offered several times each year. Multiple classes are available each a combination of classroom learning and hands-on training targeting different job responsibilities.

Volunteers are always sought to participate in the URI Watershed Watch program, which monitors water quality at hundreds of water bodies around the state, including the ponds at Roger Williams Park. Several times each year, park volunteers are also needed for the Cyanobacteria Monitoring Program, an EPA-led effort to track algae blooms using a smartphone app or water testing kits.

In addition, ten Picture Posts have been installed around the park where visitors can take pictures of the stormwater infrastructure to document changes in vegetation, sedimentation and the appearance and disappearance of algae blooms over time. Photos can be uploaded to the Picture Post website for review by Stormwater Innovation Center staff.

For those just seeking to learn more about green infrastructure while enjoying a fun day with their family, the second annual Rain Harvest Arts Festival will be held on June 12 at Roger Williams Park, where visual and performance artists, environmental scientists and educators will share their inspirations and engage the public in learning about stormwater and water quality.



Learn more at stormwaterinnovation.org



COLLABORATION IS HER SUPERPOWER

AUDUBON SENIOR DIRECTOR OF POLICY MEG KERR HEADS FOR RETIREMENT IN JUNE AFTER THREE DECADES OF ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP IN RHODE ISLAND.

By Alan Rosenberg

Michael Stultz, DEM

Meg Kerr (left) greets RIDEM Director Janet Coit at the podium for the Bee Rally on June 19, 2018. Kerr orchestrated the event that brought hundreds to the RI Statehouse to support pollinator health and habitats.

Meg Kerr started running regularly in college, and it soon became an addiction. She runs nearly every day, baseball cap on her head, hair pulled back in a ponytail, sensible sweaters or stylish scarves traded -- when weather permits -- for shorts and a T-shirt. Sometimes, says Amy Moses, director of Rhode Island's Conservation Law Foundation, Kerr has been known to run down the steps from a meeting at the State House to get to a tennis match.

It's my mental thinking time, Kerr says, to solve my problems and the world's problems. She has run more than 20 marathons -- including the Boston Marathon, three times. And, she says, running those 26-mile races took determination. The first one I signed up for, I got pregnant.

And I was really frustrated, she says with a laugh. I was trained and ready to go, but I couldn't find a doctor anywhere to tell me it was okay. I finally ran 18 miles, because they said that was okay.

Kerr's laugh and smile are ready as she talks about her life and career. And her strength and determination are still evident as she heads for retirement after five years as senior policy director of the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, and three decades as an environmental leader in the state.

Even as COVID-19 has forced a halt to the in-person meetings with other environmentalists that she thrives on, she moved on-line with her

work, including virtual training programs and the official launch of the Providence Stormwater Innovation Center, a partnership between Audubon and six other organizations.

She was undaunted, says Janet Coit, director of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. She put on a virtual event, never missing a beat. That's a legacy that will live on long after her. (You can find the center, and its lessons for both the public and professionals, at stormwaterinnovation.org.)

Environmentalism isn't just a job for Kerr. She was raised with it, at a time when Earth Day hadn't yet been invented. I was born in 1955, and my parents recycled, she remembers. They had to drive a couple of towns away to where there were bins, and we recycled. They composted. And my mother hung up laundry, rather than using a dryer. I still hang up my laundry. I like it that way.

Kerr was raised in Pleasantville, in New York's Westchester County, near New York City. She got her bachelor's degree -- with honors -- in marine biology, at Brown University.

That's where she met and married her husband, environmental toxicologist Bob Vanderslice. After graduation, they left Rhode Island, and she worked in a Florida lab for a year before getting her master's in public health from the University of North Carolina.

Please turn to page 6



Meg Kerr (fourth from left) and Audubon intern Caroline Jones (center) celebrate Governor Gina Raimondo signing environmental legislation.



Meg Kerr was instrumental in developing the Nature at Work campaign to support healthy pollinator habitat through the Green Infrastructure Coalition.

MEG KERR HEADS FOR RETIREMENT Continued from page 5

But after a decade working in North Carolina, Virginia and Washington, D.C. -- she was a scientist with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency -- the couple wanted to be closer to their families in the Northeast. So in 1990, they moved back to Rhode Island.

Since then, she has been a mainstay on the state's environmental scene. With three and then four children, she worked part-time at first, then full-time, with the Rhode Island Rivers Council, the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program and Clean Water Action, before joining the Audubon in January 2016.

Among the most important aspects of my job is finding the right people to help lead Audubon, explained Audubon Executive Director Larry Taft. When former policy director Eugenia Marks retired after 32 years of a stellar career, I knew that it would take a special person to fill her shoes and continue to move Audubon's advocacy efforts forward.

I knew Meg's reputation as a respected voice for the environment and witnessed her skills first hand through her volunteer service on the Audubon Issues Committee. I was delighted when she officially joined our team. Meg has been a role model for Audubon staff, volunteers and supporters.

Meg has directed Audubon's policy issues with skill and determination for five years, Taft said. She also developed many strong partnerships along the way -- one of her greatest strengths. Wherever she has gone, she has built coalitions and friendships as well as policies and events.

Collaboration is her superpower, says Sheila Dormody, director of climate and cities for The Nature Conservancy's Rhode Island chapter. When there are disagreements in Rhode Island's environmental movement, she says, Kerr works her magic in a way that does not call attention to itself. She picks up the phone and calls this person and that person, and this person and that person until understanding is reached.

In conversations with groups such as the Chamber of Commerce and Rhode Island's Realtors, says the Conservation Law Foundation's Moses, Kerr does something powerful: She's a really good listener. By listening, she opens lines of communication that can pay off in cooperation. Kerr, she said, can also translate environmental concerns into practical terms lawmakers can understand.

At the State House, Moses said, Kerr testified on a recent climate-change bill. She brought home the impact climate has on birds, and told them about its importance to her [Audubon] members, who are voters. And there are thousands of them. Thousands of voters meant a voice legislators might be willing to heed.



Rupert Friday, Meg Kerr, Richard Grant and Representative McEntee at the Land & Water Summit where Grant received the Blueways award for river conservation.



Meg Kerr and her husband Bob Vanderslice testify in support of PFAS Chemical regulation at a pre-pandemic hearing at the Rhode Island State House in 2020.



Advocates at the State House (Kerr is third from left) working on the Rhode Island plastic bag ban.

Priscilla De La Cruz, president of the Environment Council of Rhode Island, has felt the impact of Kerr's gentle persuasion in her own life. While De La Cruz was still in graduate school and taking part in council meetings, she says, Kerr -- then the president -- phoned her: I want to enlist you as president-elect. When De La Cruz protested that she wasn't ready, she recalls, Kerr reminded her that I stepped up to be the president ... because no one else would. Now she was looking for a new generation to take the reins. Besides, De La Cruz would only be agreeing to become president-elect; you have a year to decide whether to actually be president. And after a year, De La Cruz adds with a chuckle, there I was, taking on the role. As she knew I would.

Rupert Friday, executive director of the Rhode Island Land Trust Council, worked with Kerr to found the annual Land and Water Conservation Summits that for a decade and a half brought together hundreds of environmentalists from around the state. Friday recalls her not just rolling up her sleeves to help find a diverse slate of speakers -- equity is a key concern of Kerr's, her colleagues say -- but turning the summits into a family affair. Her mom would volunteer with us, he remembered, helping to organize the other volunteers. And after her mother's death, husband Bob would take part. Her kids would be labeling mailings at night while watching TV.

Kerr's long list of other accomplishments includes leading a climate-change legislation campaign in 2014; organizing the Bee Rally at the State House, which supports pollinators; furthering climate change education and initiatives within the Audubon Society; and being a founder of the Rhode Island Green Infrastructure Coalition, which promotes nature-based solutions to runoff pollution.

State Rep. Lauren Carson, a co-founder of the Coalition, praises the focus, discipline and unique leadership skills Kerr has brought to the group. She's the backbone of it, Carson says. She keeps us on track. Kerr has a wealth of knowledge, she adds, even of things most environmentalists might miss. Recently, Carson wanted to let Kerr know about a bill that wasn't in the environmental affairs committee, but in the small-business committee, where it would be easy to overlook. Lo and behold, Meg had already seen it, Carson says. That says a little about her being thorough. Carson echoes Kerr's other friends and colleagues in saying her retirement leaves huge, huge shoes to fill. But they also emphasize that just because Kerr is leaving her job at Audubon, she's not going to stop being connected to, and involved with, the environmental community. Meg is not going anywhere, Carson says. We're already trying to figure out new roles for her.

Still, Kerr's life will change. And that's okay with her. I'm happy to still be here, she said in February, as her retirement neared. I love to work. I love the people I work with. But, she said, she's old enough to retire. And just as she once wanted to spend time with her children, now she wants to be with her grandchildren -- there are three, with a fourth on the way. There's only so many hours in the day, she says, and I've got other things I want to do. Like run.

Alan Rosenberg is a retired executive editor of The Providence Journal. Reach him at AlanRosenbergRI@gmail.com.



Kerr hikes Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge with her family in 2006. Her mother (center) was a skilled naturalist who inspired Meg at a young age to care about nature.



Meg Kerr and Senator Dawn Euer after the Senator received Audubon's legislative award in 2019.



Kerr speaking at an event in the Rhode Island State House.



Kerr and her daughter Rita Kerr-Vanderslice running the Narragansett half marathon in 2018.

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.

Climate Change, Wetlands, and Virginia Rails

By Laura Carberry and Scott Ruhren

Climate change is likely to bring complicated and sometimes unpredictable impacts to Rhode Island's wetlands. More frequent storms have led to flooding of ecosystems. Sea level rise is already degrading coastal marshes. Summer droughts will dry out freshwater wetlands, stressing the plants and animals that live there.

Many species that rely on Rhode Island's wetlands will likely be affected. Unfortunately, some birds like Virginia Rails (*Rallus limicola*) may not be able to adapt to these increasing threats. Many Virginia Rails spend their spring and summer in Rhode Island. These small chicken-like wetland birds are elusive. They are well camouflaged and secretive, preferring marshes with dense vegetation where they hide, nest and hunt. One characteristic of rails is their reluctance to fly, preferring to run across the mud and through the cattails. Many birders identify them by their call, unable to spot them.

Laura Carberry, Audubon refuge manager, sees and hears Virginia Rails at many Audubon wildlife refuges. "They live in fresh, brackish and saltwater marshes. I have found them in Bristol in the cattails, Audubon's saltmarsh along Quonochontaug Pond in Charlestown, and in hay fields during fall migration. Overall, they are fairly common in Rhode Island marshes."

For decades Virginia Rails were threatened by hunting and ongoing habitat loss from wetland destruction remains a concern. Audubon continues to protect freshwater and coastal wetlands throughout Rhode Island to support these important birds. Fresh water marshes are rails' preferred hunting and nesting habitats. Now the future of marshes and Virginia Rails is further threatened by climate change.

We have witnessed more frequent freshwater marsh flooding from severe storms and heavy rainfall. This flood water often carries pollutants into marshes. Coastal flooding from sea level rise introduces excess salt to some marshes and endangers nests, eggs and young rails. An opposite climate impact may occur during Rhode Island summers. More frequent droughts and record-breaking heat in recent summers stresses vegetation, dries up wetlands, and reduces food needed by rails.



Virginia Rail

Virginia Rails are but one example of Rhode Island birds vulnerable to the many impacts of climate change.

Additional New England Climate-threatened Wetland Species:

- Spotted Sandpiper
- American Black Duck
- Swamp Sparrow
- Marsh Wren
- Wood Duck

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)

All Things Octopus at the Nature Center and Aquarium!

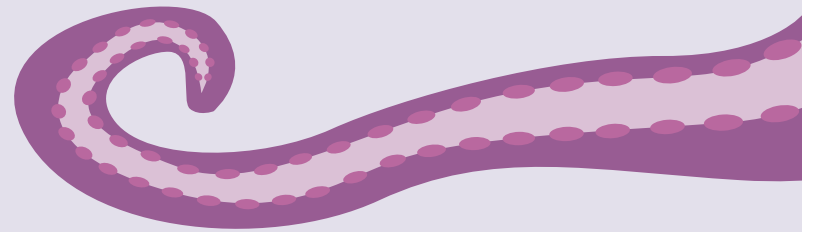
A one-year-old female California two-spot octopus has recently joined the other sea creatures in the aquarium exhibits at Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium. Donated by the Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL) / Marine Resource Center at Wood Hole Oceanographic Institute in Massachusetts, the octopus was bred and raised at the MBL as part of an octopus behavior study. These creatures are native to the Pacific Ocean and the coast of California and their normal lifespan is two years. This is the third octopus the MBL has donated to Audubon.

Also new at the Nature Center, beautiful murals enhancing the habitat exhibits have been installed by Claire Hoozeboom, a graduate of University of Rhode Island. Claire worked as an AmeriCorps member for Audubon from 2011 to 2012. She is currently an environmental consultant with LEC Environmental Consultants, Inc. Audubon thanks Claire for her time and talent. The new murals are stunning!

Visit the Nature Center and Aquarium and check out our new resident octopus and the new murals that enhance the exhibit hall.



A new mural highlights the California two-spot octopus that visitors can observe at the Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium.




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Jason Major

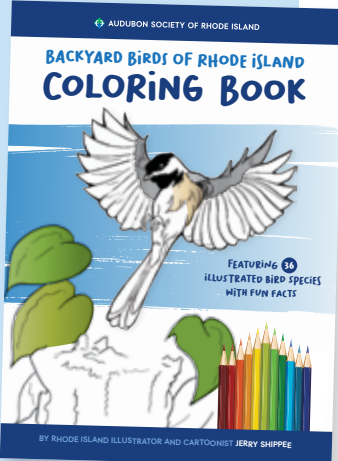
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF RHODE ISLAND

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

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Help our Membership Grow!
Audubon Society of Rhode Island

All members receive free admission to the Audubon Nature Center & Aquarium and discounts at the Nature Shop. Membership also includes reduced fees for programs, rentals, birthday parties and more!

PEREGRINE FALCONS



The fastest bird on the planet, Peregrine Falcons like the high life.

In Rhode Island, these amazing birds nest on top of the Superman Building in Providence, City Hall in Pawtucket, and several bridges including the Mount Hope, the Sakonnet, the Newport and the Jamestown/Verrazano. In other places, they nest high on steep cliffs.

These beautiful and fascinating birds have some amazing adaptations:

- Peregrine Falcons hunt medium-sized birds that they catch by diving on them from great heights in what's called a stoop. They sometimes do take-out meals, eating their prey on the wing!
- With pointed wings, Peregrine Falcons are built for speed. They can reach 67 miles per hour when chasing prey. In a stoop, they have been recorded at more than 200 miles per hour, making them the fastest bird on earth.
- Except for Antarctica, Peregrine Falcons can be found on every continent and many islands.
- The word peregrine is from the Latin word *peregrinus*, meaning foreign or coming from abroad but is also defined as roving, wandering, traveling, and migratory. The Tundra subspecies will travel all the way from its breeding grounds in the Arctic to South America to winter and then back again – up to 15,500 miles in a year.
- Peregrine Falcons, Ospreys, Bald Eagles and other raptor populations crashed during the mid-twentieth century due to the use of harmful chemical pesticides. Strong environmental laws and projects to reintroduce these birds to New England have helped their populations rebound.
- Falcons have the same sharp talons, curved beaks and sharp eyesight that other raptors have, but they are more closely related to parrots than hawks or owls.
- The oldest Peregrine Falcon recorded was at least 19 years and 9 months old. Scientists had banded the bird in 1992 in Minnesota, and found it again in 2012 in the same state.

NEST BOX



**WATCH PEREGRINE FALCONS HATCH,
GROW AND FLEDGE IN PROVIDENCE!**

Visit asri.org/view/peregrine-cam



AUDUBON NATURE TOURS & PROGRAMS

June – August 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.

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRD WALKS

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

BOATS AND BIRDS!

Two Dates Offered. Join a morning of kayaking and birding on Frying Pan Pond in search of wetland birds. Departs from 203B Arcadia Rd, Hope Valley, RI; *June 3, 10, 2021; 10:00 am–12:00 pm.*

BLUEBIRD WALK AND TALK

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

BIRD SONGS AND CALLS AT CARATUNK

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

NESTING BIRDS AT CARATUNK

Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, 301 Brown Avenue, Seekonk, MA; *June 13, 2021; 8:00–10:00 am.*

BIRD SONGS AND CALLS AT FORT WILDLIFE REFUGE

Fort Nature Refuge, (Rt. 5), 1443 Providence Pike, North Smithfield, RI; *June 14, 2021; 6:00–8:00 pm.*

BREEDING BIRDS AT CARATUNK

Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, 301 Brown Avenue, Seekonk, MA; *June 27, 2021; 8:00–10:00 am.*

FLYING FORAGERS AT CARATUNK

Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, 301 Brown Avenue, Seekonk, MA; *July 9, 2021; 6:00–8:00 pm.*

FLYING FORAGERS AT POWDER MILL LEDGES

Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, 12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, RI; *July 19, 2021; 6:00–8:00 pm.*

SHOREBIRD CLASS - A VIRTUAL PROGRAM

This program pairs nicely with Audubon's Shorebird Van Trip on August 27, 2021. Virtual Program; *August 25, 2021; 7:00–8:00 pm.*

SHOREBIRD VAN TRIP

Hop aboard the Audubon van with an expert guide and visit some of Rhode Island's best shorebird locations. Departs from Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge, 99 Pardon Joslin Road, Exeter, RI; *August 27, 2021; 7:00 am–3:00 pm.*

BIRD BANDING

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



Deirdre Robinson



BLOCK ISLAND BIRDING WEEKEND

October 1–3, 2021

Block Island in autumn becomes the resting place for thousands of migrating birds. More than 125 species of birds have been seen here on fall weekends! Space is limited so please register early.

Visit the events calendar at asri.org for details.



ALL ABOUT BATS

BATS AT EPPLEY

Join a fascinating presentation on these creatures, and then venture outside in search of the plentiful resident bats in this area.

Marion Eppley Wildlife Refuge, Dugway Bridge Road, West Kingston, RI; *June 18, 2021; 8:00–9:30 pm.*

BATS AND BEER

Join Audubon and learn about the fascinating world of bats while tasting some local brew.

Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge, 99 Pardon Joslin Road, Exeter, RI; *July 23, 2021; 7:30–9:00 pm.*



Peter Green



AUDUBON NATURE CENTER AND AQUARIUM

1401 Hope Street (Route 114), Bristol, RI

PROGRAMS, LECTURES & WORKSHOPS FOR ADULTS

TEXTILE RECYCLING EVENT

For a list of accepted items, visit the events calendar at asri.org.
June 9 – 14, 2021; 9:30 am–4:30 pm

SEA GLASS JEWELRY WORKSHOP

Three Dates Offered.
June 6, July 18, August 22, 2021. 1:30–3:00 pm.

BIRD BANDING

Three Dates Offered.
June 12, July 10, August 14, 2021; 9:15–11:15 am.

EDIBLE WILD PLANTS WALK

Join expert forager Russ Cohen for an evening ramble to learn about edible plants.
June 17, 2021; 4:00–6:30 pm

COMPOSTING LECTURE

June 19, 2021; 10:00–11:30 am.

BEECOLOGY: POLLINATOR WORKSHOP

Dr. Rob Gegear, biology professor at UMass Dartmouth, will give an indoor presentation for 30 minutes, followed by a two-hour workshop in the Rose-Pollinator Discovery Garden.
June 26, 2021; 11:00 am–1:30 pm.

DRAWING AND PAINTING CLASS FOR ADULTS: HERONS AND EGRETS

Join watercolor artist Elizabeth O’Connell for an afternoon of art on our covered patio. *June 27, 2021; 1:00–3:30 pm.*

NATURE AS I SEE IT. PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT BY KAREN JOHNSON-NIEUWENDIJK.

July 5 – August 28, 2021; 9:00 am–5:00 pm.

WILDLIFE AND HABITAT CONSERVATION TALK WITH LOU PERROTTI

Roger Williams Park Zoo Director of Conservation Programs Lou Perrotti will discuss the contributions to wildlife and habitat conservation happening in RI and around the globe!
July 8, 2021; 7:00–8:00 pm.

CERAMIC POT PAINTING FOR ADULTS

July 22, 2021; 7:00–9:00 pm.

THE OCEAN IN A CUP

Make a one-of-a-kind ocean scene in a tea cup!
August 28, 2021; 10:00 am–12:00 pm.



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!
June 5, July 3, August 14, 2021; 10:00 am–3:00 pm

WETLAND WADDLES

July 6, 2021; 10:30 am–11:30 am.

PAINTING NATURE IN WATERCOLOR

Two session program for kids. Children explore watercolor techniques, learn to mix colors, and enjoy painting from nature.
August 4 and August 11, 2021; 9:00–11:00 am.

SHORE HIKE WITH AUDUBON

August 11, 2021; 1:00–2:30 pm.

AUDUBON COLORING BOOK WORKSHOP

Kids join artist Jerry Shippee and learn how to draw, ink, and watercolor images of local birds!
August 17, 2021; 1:00–3:00 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 11 for Powder Mill Ledges Birding Programs.

LET'S TAKE A WALK: PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

June 8, 2021; 10:00–11:00 am: Pine Forest
 July 6, 2021; 10:00–11:00 am: Field and Meadow
 August 10, 2021; 10:00–11:00 am: Pond

INTRODUCTION TO TREE I.D.

June 26, 2021; 2:00–4:00 pm.

FIREFLIES!

July 9, 2021; 7:00–9:00 pm

CATCHIN' BUGS

July 10, 2021; 2:00–3:30 pm.

SUMMER MEADOW

July 14, 2021; 10:00–11:30 am

SUMMER WILDFLOWERS

July 24, 2021; 10:00 am–12:00 pm.

KOOKY CRAYFISH!

August 14, 2021; 3:00–4:30 pm.

NIGHT SINGERS

August 16, 2021; 6:00–7:30 pm.

WILD MUSHROOM WORKSHOP

August 28, 2021 ; 10:00 am–1:00 pm



CARATUNK WILDLIFE REFUGE

301 Brown Avenue, Seekonk, MA

See page 11 for Caratunk Birding Programs.

WHITE BARN STORY TIME

Three Dates and Nature Themes.
 June 3, July 1, August 5, 2021; 2:00–3:00 pm.

KID'S INVESTIGATIONS

For ages 8 and up with accompanying adults.
 June 16, 2021; 9:00–11:30 am: Hike the Refuge.
 July 21, 2021; 9:00–11:30 am: Pond Exploration:
 August 18, 2021; 9:00–11:30 am: Field and Forest.

WONDERFUL WILDFLOWER WALK

June 29, 2021 ; 9:00–11:00 am.

COUNT BUTTERFLIES AS THEY FLUTTER BY!

Two Dates Offered.
 July 21, August 11, 2021; 10:00 am–12:00 pm.

POND & STREAM EXPLORATION

July 23, 2021; 9:00–11:00 am.

SUMMER NATURE WALK THROUGH CARATUNK

July 25, 2021; 8:00–10:00 am.

NIGHT SINGERS

Enjoy an evening walk to listen for crickets, grasshoppers and katydids. August 20, 2021; 6:00–8:00 pm.



FORT WILDLIFE REFUGE

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

SKUNK CABBAGE AND LADY SLIPPERS WALK

June 10, 2021; 10:00 am–12:00 pm.

BIRD SONGS AND CALLS

June 14, 2021; 6:00–8:00 pm.

SUMMER TWILIGHT HIKE

August 19, 2021; 7:00–9:00 pm.



FISHERVILLE BROOK WILDLIFE REFUGE

99 Pardon Joslin Road, Exeter, RI

ICE CREAM AND LIGHTNING BUGS

June 23, 2021; 7:30–9:30 pm.

BATS AND BEER

Join an evening of fun discussing the fascinating world of bats and tasting some local brew.
 July 23, 2021; 7:30–9:00 pm.



A Virtual Program:

AUDUBON MURAL WALKING TOUR

July 29, 2021; 7:00–8:15 pm

The Audubon Bird Mural Project is an impressive effort to create murals of over 300 North American birds. Most are in the Harlem neighborhoods of New York City and all of the species painted are threatened by climate change. Over 40 murals will be shown in a 50-minute virtual slide presentation with live commentary.

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



This infiltration basin, built in 2019, is designed to reduce phosphorous loads by 11.6 lbs/year rather than being discharged directly to the ponds at Roger Williams Park.



Audubon summer camp instructor Joe Koger explains to a young camper how the Caratunk rain garden works.



The Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council worked with homeowners in Elmhurst for stormwater retrofits, including redirecting roof downspouts away from the road and toward existing landscaping, installation of permeable pavers in place of walkways, and construction of rain gardens.

STORM WARNINGS Continued from page 4

based stormwater practices, coordinating the training of municipal workers, engineers and construction companies on how to build and maintain them, and educating the community about how green infrastructure can improve water quality.

To demonstrate that the technologies actually work, Kopp is overseeing a series of water quality monitoring efforts with citizen scientists, University of New Hampshire experts, and Providence Parks Department personnel.

There is no question that plants, soil and stormwater installations can help clean polluted water, Kopp said. Our monitoring efforts take it to the next step.

Some of the monitoring is based on the level of maintenance required. If storm drains get clogged and water isn't diverted off the roadway, then even the best constructed filtration isn't going to work. So time lapse cameras, data loggers and visual assessments are determining whether the system is working effectively. Kopp also oversees volunteers with several water quality monitoring programs, like Watershed Watch at URI, to measure improvements in water quality. Next up will be a stormwater training program for homeowners that will teach residents how to build a rain garden and use a rain barrel to reduce runoff from their roofs, as well as teach other strategies that will reduce human impact on local properties.

Roger Williams Park isn't the only place in the region where green infrastructure is helping to address concerns about flooding and stormwater management. Audubon's Caratunk Wildlife Refuge in Seekonk is a prime example. The refuge parking lot often flooded during spring, making

it a muddy mess and impairing access to visitors. The accumulating water also carried silt, salt and other roadway runoff into a nearby pond, which impacted the Wood Ducks and other species that make their home there. Pollutants from runoff can harm or kill pond plants, algae, fish and animals such as ducks, heron and otter that feed in the ponds. Even the soil that erodes is harmful to aquatic life because it blocks sunlight entering water and covers sensitive animals that live on the bottom.

So, in 2018, Audubon installed a permeable pavement system and an adjacent rain garden that has greatly reduced the problems associated with flooding. It really does work, said Scott Ruhren, Audubon's senior director of conservation. And it's very visible to refuge visitors, which is what we wanted. It gets people talking about it and asking questions, and it always comes up in conversation when we lead walks. A rain garden was also constructed at the Nature Center and Aquarium in Bristol to capture the flow of stormwater, reduce flooding and stop erosion around the property.

According to Ruhren, green infrastructure is modeled after the natural properties of wetlands, which he said serve as the kidneys of the world, absorbing and slowly releasing water to alleviate flooding. Wetlands also collect sediments, filter pollutants and reduce downstream flooding.

We all remember what happened in 2010 when the Pawtuxet River flooded and inundated the malls and other low-lying areas due to the lack of natural streams and wetlands from urbanization, he said. That's a sharp contrast to what happened at our Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge, where

“With many impacts of climate change already being felt, our efforts with green infrastructure will hopefully create more resilient landscapes for people and wildlife.”

Scott Ruhren
Audubon Senior Director of Conservation

we have streams and ponds and wetlands that responded much better to the inundation of water than happens in human landscapes. The water got high at Fisherville, but it wasn't Armageddon. Scientists expect climate change to lead to more frequent intense storms and flooding. This is not just a prediction; it is happening already, and green infrastructure could play a major role in decreasing impacts to our natural and human communities.

These nature-based stormwater remedies are being installed in all kinds of settings around the state. In the Elmhurst neighborhood of Providence, for instance, the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council is demonstrating how local residents can manage the stormwater from their properties so it doesn't carry pollutants into the nearby Pleasant Valley Stream. The Council surveyed 120 households in 2017 to gauge interest in the idea, then selected 12 houses for retrofits, which included redirecting roof downspouts away from the road and toward existing landscaping, installation of permeable pavers in place of walkways, and construction of rain gardens. Workshops on the construction of rain barrels reached another 24 households.

The response from the community was very positive, said Alicia Lehrer, executive director of the Council. It was hard to decide where to do the projects because so many people wanted to be included. Some were even willing to pay for it. There's a lot of knowledge in the community now about the value of green infrastructure.

The Council has been an early adopter of innovative stormwater management tools. In 2015, it installed what it calls a green infrastructure showcase at Riverside Park in Olneyville to demonstrate numerous sustainable stormwater strategies and technologies, and later it removed some pavement from a bank parking lot to create a walkway with adjacent bioretention areas.

It makes it more like a park instead of the concrete jungle it was for a long time, Lehrer said.

Now, as we build a new section of the greenway from Eagle Square to Providence Place Mall, we'll be adding a great deal of additional green infrastructure.

In Cranston, the city's environmental program manager, Ed Tally, is working to install green infrastructure to address water quality and stormwater management issues at Spectacle Pond, Still-

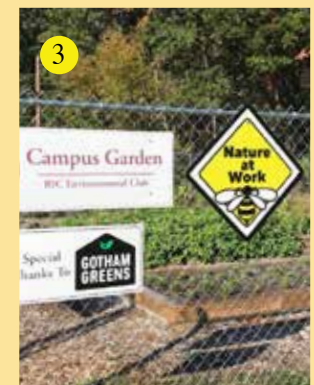
Please turn to page 19

Bee Aware: Nature at Work!



Audubon is a member of the Green Infrastructure Coalition, formed in 2015 to promote nature-based stormwater solutions and to advocate for sustainable funding for stormwater management. The Coalition focuses on training stormwater professionals on construction and maintenance of green stormwater projects. They also work to implement signage to communicate the multiple benefits and encourage support for these projects.

In a partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT), the Green Infrastructure Coalition designs the signs and RIDOT prints them at no cost for Coalition partners. The Nature at Work signs are especially popular and promote healthy habitat for pollinators. They can be spotted around the state, and Audubon has posted them to highlight pollinator plantings at many wildlife refuges.



Nature at Work signs highlight habitat at:

1. Audubon Powder Mill Ledges, Smithfield.
2. Riverside Park, Providence.
3. Rhode Island College, Providence.
- 4 & 5: Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium, Bristol.

Water Creatures Are Effective Indicators

What lives in and around ponds, lakes, streams and rivers can reveal so much about the health of the ecosystem. Some species are so tightly linked to water quality that their numbers rise and fall as conditions change. We call these indicator species or bioindicators and they are valuable monitoring tools.

Probably the best-known freshwater indicators are insects that spend their juvenile stages in water. Stoneflies, mayflies and caddisflies are used by scientists, environmental organizations, teachers and students to create ranking systems for water quality. Audubon also uses these aquatic insects as indicators to describe the health of systems and to teach about life in water.

Algae can also be a key indicator of aquatic health, but are more difficult to identify. Presence or absence of algae and associated organisms can indicate changes in chemicals, pH, temperature and oxygen in the water. Certain algae are sensitive to changing water characteristics and may disappear, while others thrive in disturbed systems.

Algae are the foundation of food webs in freshwater and marine ecosystems. Algae in lakes and rivers exist as plankton (free-floating or swimming) and attached greenish films. The health and abundance of algae can ultimately affect other organisms within the system. This is called bottom-up control. Unfortunately, these intricate, life-sustaining relationships can get out of balance from habitat disturbance, climate change and pollution.

Some key nutrients for aquatic life can become pollutants when levels rise. Phosphorous is usually the nutrient that keeps freshwater algal communities in check; it is a limiting nutrient. However, in the 60s and 70s large amounts entered ponds, streams and rivers through wastewater. Nitrogen, also a key nutrient for life, can be flushed into bodies of water in unhealthy amounts from sources such as lawn fertilizer and animal and human waste. Eutrophication—excessively high nutrients—of ponds and lakes disrupts the natural balance and community of freshwater systems. Habitat degradation and road runoff also can lead to eutrophication.

When levels of these nutrients increase, an algal bloom can result. Not all bloom algae are toxic, but the toxic and smelly ones get noticed. Cyanobacteria, often called blue-green algae, are species that dominate many eutrophic systems. When nutrients such as phosphorous and nitrogen increase, many of these algae-like cyanobacteria bloom. Some produce



Top: An algae bloom in Roger Williams Park, Providence. Inset: Cynobacteria. Bottom: Scientists from The Nature Conservancy in Rhode Island engage the public at a water monitoring event.

chemicals that are toxic to fish, other pond organisms, and people. They can make water taste and smell foul, and deplete oxygen that can lead to the death of other aquatic organisms such as mollusks and fish.

If Rhode Island's aquatic systems are to remain healthy, productive and safe, sources of pollution need to be reduced. With storms increasing from climate change, stormwater needs to be slowed or captured and steps taken to filter it. The little creatures in the water, bioindicators, can reveal how we are doing.

Providence Stormwater Innovation Center

Rain Harvest Arts Festival

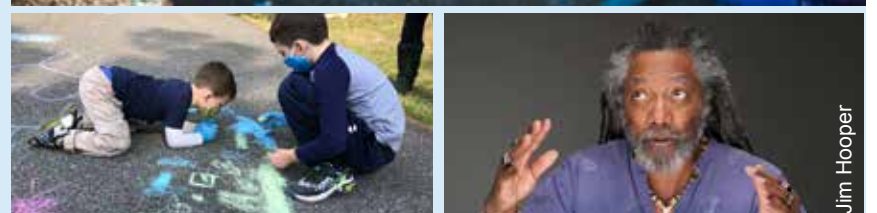
at Roger Williams Park, Providence

A community celebration of water quality and habitat improvements

June 12, 2021; 2:00–6:00 pm. Free and open to the public.

Festivities will include work by local artists and students, storytelling, music, chalk drawings, scavenger hunts, tours of the Stormwater Innovation Center, and more!

Sponsored by Rhode Island Department of Transportation, Wood Environmental, Horsley Witten Group, Restore America's Estuaries, SNEP Network, Robbins De Beaumont Foundation.



Jim Hooper



There was an unusually large number of orange foxes running and walking across Rhode Island during Earth Week – they were spotted in nine other states as well!

Thank you to all the individual participants, families, and peer-to-peer fundraisers who made the first Run Wild for Nature a HUGE success! Audubon also wishes to acknowledge Bank of America for their support of this event.



TOP INDIVIDUAL PEER-TO-PEER FUNDRAISER & BEST DRESSED:



NATALIE COOLEN

MORE BEST DRESSED:



JACKSON AND ISABELLE OLIVIER



REBECCA SHANNON AND FAMILY

BEST SCENERY:



KATE WHITTINGHAM

BEST PLOGGERS: (JOGGERS WHO PICK UP LITTER)



JILL ANN PARRETT



PAMELA CAMPPELLONE BARTOLINI



VERÓNICA TOLEDO



TRACY ANDREWS-MELLOUISE



EMILY LEJEUNE

*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.

Act On Climate 2021

April 10, 2021 was a landmark day for Rhode Islanders and the environment. Act On Climate was signed into law by Governor Daniel McKee, preparing Rhode Island for a cleaner and healthier future by reducing greenhouse-gas emissions to net-zero by 2050.

This critical law gives the state enforceable, economy wide greenhouse gas reduction goals that are based on the best science. It sets Rhode Island up for a rapid transition to renewable energy and the green jobs that will accompany the transition. The bill ensures that Rhode Island will plan for an equitable transition for environmental justice populations and a process for these communities to provide input on the plans. With this in place, Rhode Island will not be out-competed by neighboring Connecticut and Massachusetts when the upcoming federal investments in climate infrastructure become available.

Act On Climate

S0078. Senators Euer, Ruggiero, McCaffrey, Goodwin, Sosnowski, Coyne, Cano, Murray, Valverde, Kallman

H5445. Representatives Carson, Cortvriend, Blazejewski, Kazarian, Ruggiero, Donovan, Speakman, Knight, McEntee, and Alzate

Audubon's legislative priorities for 2021 include the following:

- The Ocean State Climate Adaptation and Resilience Fund (OSCAR)
- Forest Conservation Act
- Solar Siting Bill to Close the 10 MW Loophole.
- Manage Neonicotinoid Pesticides

To learn more, visit: bit.ly/2021PrioritiesAudubon



Audubon Senior Director of Policy Meg Kerr (front row, second from right) and other environmental advocates with Governor Dan McKee (center) immediately after the bill was signed.

Life Scout Cleans Up at Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge

Each spring, the wind and snowmelt bring a significant amount of litter to the roadside at Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge in Smithfield. Heather Richards of Scout Troop 1 Gaspee Plateau, Warwick, completed many hours of community service by picking up trash at Powder Mill Ledges to keep roadside litter off the refuge and the Audubon headquarters entrance clean. She is working toward her Life Scout EPA badge. Audubon thanks Heather for her service.



Heather Richards, Life Scout from Troop 1 Gaspee Plateau, Warwick

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LIKE/SHARE/FOLLOW

The most followed Audubon Facebook page in New England!



STORM WARNINGS Continued from page 15

house Cove and other sites around the city. A bioretention swale constructed along Narragansett Boulevard has helped reduce nutrients flowing into Stillhouse Cove and the Providence River and provided the city with a boost of confidence to tackle additional projects.

At Spectacle Pond, where there is limited public property to accommodate green infrastructure, Tally is targeting what he calls end-of-road projects where stormwater can be treated before it runs into the pond. There are a lot of these sites, so if we can get the design right and use it on the next street and the next street, then it doesn't become too costly, Tally said. The repeatability of it is something we like.

With every installation, Tally is learning additional lessons about how to make them more effective without overspending. And having the Providence Stormwater Innovation Center just a few miles up the road makes it easy for him to compare his installations to those at Roger Williams Park to ensure he is doing it right.

The projects we're doing aren't designed to take the whole watershed and treat every half inch of rain that falls, but in pockets like this, you can start to build that compounding effect where this one is treating this area, that one's treating that area, and hopefully in tandem it will all work out, he said. If we can keep putting them in as the budget becomes available, we can keep making progress.

Scott Ruhren agrees.

The overarching goal of all of this is improved water quality, which is why Audubon has taken a leadership role at Roger Williams Park. Everything flows downhill, Ruhren said. Urban areas are traditionally bypassed in conservation programs, so the Providence Stormwater Innovation Center and these other efforts are a way to solve a lot of problems and improve water quality in our urban areas. With many impacts of climate change already being felt, our efforts with green infrastructure will hopefully create more resilient landscapes for people and wildlife.

Jump Right In!

When most of our winter ducks have headed north to nest, we welcome back one of the most colorful ducks in North America. Once threatened with extinction by habitat loss and hunting, Wood Ducks are now thriving due to habitat protection and nest box programs.

Male or drake Wood Ducks have green helmet-like heads with intricate white chin straps, black cheeks and chestnut chests dotted with white. Their backs are hues of purples, blues, creams and black. The females or hens are made up of browns and grays but also have that tell tale helmet shape head with a white eye ring. These ducks also have clawed webbed feet that help them perch on trees! Wood Ducks have the largest eyes of all ducks, which make it easier for them to navigate through trees. They are also known to have the greatest sense of smell, helping them to find nuts, berries, insects and aquatic plants to eat. They have strong flight skills, and have been known to fly up to 30 mph.

In March and April these spectacular ducks arrive in Rhode Island, looking for nest sites in our wooded swamps. They are secretive but can often be seen or heard when they search for cavities to make their nests. These nest holes can be 5 to 60 feet off the ground. Usually they nest near water, but some nesting cavities have been found over a mile from ponds and rivers if nest sites are limited. To increase nest site availability, human-made nest boxes can be installed near ponds, rivers and wet areas.

Once a site has been picked, the female will lay between 6 to 16 eggs in a downy nest. In some areas with limited nest sites, females are known to egg-dump. This means they lay their eggs in another female's nest. Some hens have been seen with up to 29 eggs! After about a month of incubation, all the chicks hatch. Only one day later, the mother calls her young from the nest. Each chick uses its clawed feet to climb out of the hole and make its jump, sometimes up to 60 feet, to either the ground or water. Because of their small size they just bounce as they land, unhurt. For about two months they follow their mother, learning to survive on their own.

During the summer months these birds can be hard to spot as they hide in the shadows and the reeds. But come fall, Wood Ducks start to flock together in larger groups. This is when the adult males and females molt their feathers. The males resemble the females at this time. The coloring helps them camouflage while they molt their flight feathers, which makes it difficult to fly.

Wood Ducks can be found throughout Rhode Island and nest on most of Audubon's Wildlife Refuges. Although the species tends to be secretive, if you are quiet and one of the first folks on the trails in the morning, you might catch a glimpse. Some less secretive Wood Ducks that are more comfortable around human activity nest at Roger Williams Park. They would be proud to show you their beautiful colors!



Peter Green



Ed Hughes

At Center: Laura Carberry repairs and cleans Wood Duck boxes before the ducks arrive to nest, and has found egg shell remains.



NEW!

New Audubon Digital Membership Cards

Enjoy a NEW way to access your Audubon Society of Rhode Island membership! Audubon Members can now receive digital membership cards by email, a convenient, eco-friendly alternative to printed cards. Just download and saved to your smartphone.

Going digital means you never have to worry about forgetting your membership card when visiting the Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium, in addition to being more environmentally friendly and helping to reduce administrative costs. After joining or renewing your membership, you will receive an email within a week with a link to download your card.

Digital membership cards provide quick links to our website, information on your membership benefits, Audubon contact information and helpful renewal notifications all in one place—your fingertips! If you would prefer to receive a paper membership card, please contact Julius Lundy at jlundy@asri.org or 401-949-5454 ext. 3018.



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.

- Botanical Center Conservancy
- Citizens Bank
- Cox Communications
- CVS Health
- DBVW Architects
- Green Energy Consumers Alliance, Inc.
- Lyons & Zaremba, Inc.
- Partridge Snow & Hahn LLP
- 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: Sarah Becker
From: Daniel Becker

In Honor of: William Cotton
From: Haley Cotton

In Honor of: Alice Desautels
From: Jeanne and Eugene Desautels

In Honor of: Richard Donnelly
From: Phyllis Kay and Richard Donnelly

In Honor of: Daniel Echt
From: Irene Leddy

In Honor of: Larry Geuss, MD
From: Anne and Michael Szostak

In Honor of: Dana Palka
From: Lindsay McKeever

In Honor of: Lauren Parmelee
From: Stacy Couto

In Honor of: Cynthia Warren
From: Deborah Linnell



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: Nancy Lisi-Asprinio
From: Jenny Cunningham
Michael Mort
Brad Goff
Mary Ann Lisi

In Memory of: Clarice Grear
From: Laura Burkett
David Chapman
Jeremy Furtado
Jeffrey Griffin and
Rebecca Martz-Griffin
Margaret Pelletier
Kirby Stephens
Nicole Pichette

In Memory of: Mary MacNeill
From: Jean Cella
Anne and David Wells

In memory of: Robert Mariani
From: Karen Berman
Barb Burke
Maria Franzen
Debbie and Gary Hicks
Paula Izeman

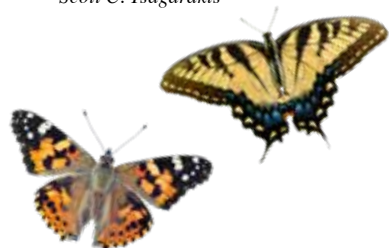
In memory of: Mary Lee Marini
From: Courtney Milan

In memory of: John and Judith McCarthy
From: Patricia and Christian DeFrancesco

In memory of: Michael Officer
From: Judith and Bob Bisceglia

In memory of: Thomas Pitts
From: Sherry and Nick Trepp

In memory of: Dean Rae
From: Paul Anagnostopoulos
H. Chris Der Vartanian
Scott C. Tsagarakis



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. 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.

Plastics That Go In The Ocean, Go In You.

Help Us!

Sign Up for
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Sign Up Today: asri.org/alerts



Audubon Society of Rhode Island 2022 Calendar

Do you have an
outstanding bird photo
taken in Rhode Island?

Submit your image
for Audubon's
new 2022 calendar.

Deadline is September 13, 2021.

Visit asri.org/audubon-calendar.html for details.

Scott Slusarski

Wildlife Images from the Audubon Refuges

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.

This winter we recorded a bobcat, racoon and coyote all near the same log, but at different dates and times. It is always fun to see what creatures are out and about on the Audubon Wildlife Refuges!



A Big Year for Osprey Fledglings

In 2020 monitors counted 303 Osprey fledglings, up from 212 fledglings in 2019.

Surprising to some who may notice their many nests along coastlines and riverbanks, Ospreys were listed as an endangered species in the 1970s. Their story of a healthy, rebounding population is a true environmental success story. Audubon Society of Rhode Island volunteers monitored over 239 Osprey nests in 2020, carefully recording the status of this raptor in the Ocean State. Audubon recorded a total of 303 Osprey fledglings in Rhode Island, up from 212 in 2019. There were just 8 fledglings in 1977, the year the program was founded.

For Osprey data by cities, towns and communities in Rhode Island, visit: asri.org/ospreyreport/2020.



*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 Jon Scoones at jscoones@asri.org.

WE CAN HELP WILDLIFE...

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A Story Well Told

Editorial by Meg Kerr, Senior Director of Policy



Meg Kerr in 1993 with her parents and children at a family cottage on the St. Lawrence River.

Krystal Noiseux, a founding member of the Greater Providence Chapter of The Climate Reality Project, addressed a recent Audubon staff meeting. She encouraged everyone in attendance to develop and then practice a personal climate story to share with neighbors and friends. Personal stories help to engage others in thinking and acting on the climate crisis.

My climate story begins in Pleasantville, New York, a suburb of New York City, where I was born and raised. My life was anchored by two rivers—the Hudson River near the Tappan Zee Bridge where my grandmother lived and the St. Lawrence River near its source at Lake Ontario where we spent our summers. I loved these rivers, but they were not clean. I clearly remember times when our Golden Retrievers were not allowed to go swimming because you could see human waste floating in the water.

When I went to college, I knew I wanted to be an environmental scientist with a focus on clean water. I found the perfect graduate program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and started my career working for the North Carolina state government in the water program focused on implementing the newly minted Clean Water Act.

Over the course of my years working on river and watershed management, I saw real improvements in water quality. Sewage treatment plants were built to treat human and industrial wastes. Water in the St. Lawrence River became visibly cleaner and paddlers can now be seen plying the Hudson River even in New York City. Here in Rhode Island, Narragansett Bay and the rivers that feed it are much cleaner than they were fifty years ago.

I reveled in the improvements. I knew that there were

many environmental problems that were not getting better with time, but I took great joy in seeing that water quality was improving.

The floods of 2010 were my wakeup call. In late March, heavy rain fell on a landscape that was already soaked by previous rains. Rivers throughout Rhode Island flooded. The Pawtuxet River crested at 20.79 feet. Flooding shut down portions of Interstate 95, the Warwick Mall and damaged hundreds of homes and businesses, along with several wastewater treatment plants. For several days, essentially untreated wastewater flowed out of the three municipal treatment plants along the Pawtuxet River, discharging millions of gallons of waste into Narragansett Bay.

No one event is caused by climate change, but we know that increasingly intense storms are already happening and will happen with more frequency as climate change continues to affect the world's environment. The floods of 2010 made me realize that wastewater infrastructure throughout the state sits in harm's way because it is located on the coast or along a river. Intense storms also increase stormwater runoff, bringing additional pollutants to local waters. The water quality improvements we have seen in Rhode Island and throughout the world are significantly at risk due to climate change.

After this realization, climate change advocacy has centered my work. All the environmental issues we care about pale in comparison to climate change and we need to be all-in to address the crisis before us.

I am retiring at the end of June but I know that Audubon will continue to lead on climate change. And I will continue to support that work. I hope you do too.

Audubon Senior Director of Policy Meg Kerr heads for retirement after three decades of environmental leadership in Rhode Island. We are grateful for the many years she represented Audubon at the Statehouse and in many partner organizations. Meg has done exceptional policy work on behalf of the environment, and she will truly be missed.

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

Executive Director
Lawrence J.F. Taft

Editor
Jeffrey C. Hall
Senior Director of Advancement

Managing Editor
Hope Foley

Contributing Writers
Laura Carberry, Hope Foley,
Meg Kerr, Todd McLeish,
Lauren Parmelee, Alan Rosenberg,
Scott Ruhren

Contributing Photographers
Hope Foley, Peter Green,
Ed Hughes, Scott Ruhren

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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.

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