



COMMUNITY REPORT

AUDUBON SOCIETY of Rhode Island

BARRINGTON, BRISTOL, AND WARREN

AUDUBON NATURE CENTER & AQUARIUM, BRISTOL



Audubon Society of Rhode Island

NATURE IS NOW MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER.

Through land conservation, the Audubon Society of Rhode Island will always protect critical habitat for birds and wildlife in the East Bay. We advocate locally and at the state-level on environmental issues impacting your community, our educators bring nature-related programs to school children and the public in your area, and we look to connect you and people of all ages with nature. With your support, our work will continue to have a lasting impact.

This year, our advocacy efforts resulted in a series of legislative victories. Most significantly, the use of deadly neonicotinoid pesticides in our neighborhoods and parks has been restricted. These toxic chemicals not only kill birds, bees, and other pollinating species, they also seep into our ground water. This legislation is only the beginning. We will continue the fight to ban these and other toxic chemicals that harm our ecosystems.

Audubon's award-winning environmental education programs reach thousands of Rhode Islanders of all ages each year in schools, libraries, community centers, and on our wildlife refuges. Our educators bring hands-on science and nature programs to school children across the state, providing experiences that support classroom learning and foster a connection with the natural world.

A \$100,000 federal grant was recently awarded to Audubon to ensure that children in city communities have access to experiential learning opportunities in schoolyards, classrooms, local parks, and on Audubon wildlife refuges.

We protect nearly 9,500 acres of conservation land in Rhode Island and nearby Massachusetts, including fourteen wildlife refuges that are open to the public for hiking and wildlife observation. Through a new avian research initiative, Audubon properties have been identified as being significant habitats for threatened bird species as well as important resting areas for migrating birds. Additional details about this new initiative are included in this community report.

Your support of the Audubon Society of Rhode Island directly impacts environmental education and conservation initiatives in the East Bay, and provides nature with a voice at the State House. With your help, along with our members and other supporters, we will continue our work to protect our state's natural heritage – resulting in greener, healthier communities for all.

Please give as if nature depends on you... because it does. Donate to Audubon today at asri.org/donate.

Thank you for your support!



Jeffrey C. Hall
Executive Director

Connecting People With Nature

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AUDUBON NATURE CENTER & AQUARIUM, BRISTOL

The Claire D. McIntosh Wildlife Refuge in Bristol is home to the award-winning Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium. Approximately 20,000 visitors enjoy the trails, programs, lectures, and events at the Center each year. The Nature Center and Aquarium is home to the Palmieri Pollinator Garden, hosts the annual Raptor Weekend event, and provides beautiful nature trails to Narragansett Bay and the East Bay Bike Path.

CONSERVATION

- Protects approximately 9,500 acres of habitat in Rhode Island, including 64 acres in Barrington, 39 acres in Bristol, and 66 acres in Warren.
- Partnered with Roger Williams University on an environmental art installation focusing on climate change at Touisset Wildlife Refuge in Warren.
- Coordinates the state-wide Osprey monitoring program, including 16 sites in Barrington, 14 in Bristol, and 21 in Warren.
- Manages the Youth Conservation League, employing high school and college students in summer to gain experience in conservation; completed work in Barrington at Johannis Farm and Saint Andrews Farm.
- Administrative coordinator of the Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve on Prudence Island since 2004.
- Protects forest and coastal habitats, natural areas that are critical in the face of climate change and sea-level rise.



AVIAN RESEARCH

The Audubon Avian Research Initiative has engaged numerous volunteers to monitor the current abundance and distribution of birds in Rhode Island. This research will guide habitat management plans to enhance long-term biodiversity and minimize the impacts of climate change on birds utilizing Audubon wildlife refuges and properties throughout New England.



- First comprehensive baseline data survey was conducted on breeding, nonbreeding and migratory birds on 14 Audubon wildlife refuges to understand the needs of birds over their full annual cycle.
- Surveys were completed at Audubon wildlife refuges in Bristol and Warren.
- Over 400 volunteer hours were spent collecting data.
- Audubon partnered with an analytical chemistry lab at URI to process soil and water samples from our properties to determine the presence of dangerous neonicotinoid (neonics) pesticides. Presence of neonics in soil or water will prompt the collection and analysis of bird feathers to determine the extent to which these chemicals may be impacting our local bird communities.
- A final "State of Our Birds" report will be released in early 2023 summarizing the results from the year-long baseline data collection and the first-round of neonicotinoid analysis.
- Partnering with an international effort to track migratory species using the MOTUS Wildlife Tracking System to aid researchers throughout North America in tracking birds, insects and bats. This will allow Audubon to perform in-house research on the movement dynamics of birds using our refuges for breeding, wintering or as migration stopover habitat.





EDUCATION

SCHOOLYARD HABITAT RESOURCE GUIDE

Audubon encourages schools to create natural spaces on their grounds for outdoor learning and nature exploration. The Schoolyard Habitat Resource Guide, produced in 2020, provides age-appropriate activities linked to core subjects with tips for outdoor teaching and safety. It complements the national Schoolyard Habitat Program led by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

BARRINGTON

- Long-term partnership with St. Luke's School, the Barrington Land Trust, and Waddington School in East Providence has eighth graders conducting water quality and wildlife studies along Annawamscutt Brook.
- Led 150 St. Luke's School students in grades K - 8 on spring field explorations at Audubon Caratunk Wildlife Refuge in Seekonk.
- Audubon visited St. Luke's School in September 2022 to share knowledge of pollinators and native plants with students who are developing pollinator gardens on school grounds.
- Facilitated a Raptor Encounter with a Red-tailed Hawk and Barred Owl at Nayatt School for 100 first graders.
- Partnered with Barrington Christian Academy to display bird sculptures created by 8th grade students at the Nature Center and Aquarium.
- Facilitated workshops with the Barrington Garden Club and Hameho Garden Club.
- Engaged 219 children in nature during Audubon summer camps in Bristol.

BRISTOL/WARREN

- Audubon Palmieri Garden staff and Master Gardener volunteers collaborate with the RI Veteran's Home in Bristol to grow native plants in the Veteran's greenhouse.
- Presented a program on local birds at the Veteran's Home for 25 adults. More programs are scheduled.
- Works closely with the Living in Fulfilling Environments (L.I.F.E.) program in Warren for adults with special needs.
- Partnered with Coggeshall Farm for a nature walk and owl presentation for homeschoolers and their families.
- Led an Owl Prowl at Mount Hope Farm in cooperation with the Bristol Land Trust.
- Presented four bird programs at Rogers Free Library.
- Educators visited the Bristol-Warren COZ (Child Opportunity Zone) in 2022 bringing Audubon's 65-foot Inflatable Whale and Birds of Prey programs.
- Presented an Owls of Rhode Island program to families at the George Hail Library.
- Partnership with Roger Williams University (RWU) provides opportunities for students to care for our aquaria and serve as education interns.
- Audubon naturalists lead year-round nature and birding walks at the Claire D. McIntosh and Touisset Wildlife Refuges.

ADVOCACY

- Audubon co-led efforts to once again position Rhode Island as a national leader in its response to the climate change crisis. Climate change is the biggest threat to birds, wildlife, and people as it brings flooding, hurricanes, and fires. With the passage of 100% renewable electricity by 2033 and up to 1,000 megawatts of additional offshore wind, there is a path for the State to meet the mandatory carbon emission reduction goals set by the Act on Climate law. Audubon partners with fellow environmental organizations, labor coalitions and policymakers in this critical work.
- Continues to co-lead advocacy for legislation and state and local policies to prioritize the protection of forests and drive the siting of renewable energy on already disturbed land.
- Serves on the Forest Conservation Commission, advising the RI Department of Environmental Management on how to promote forest values and pursue strategies to preserve private forestland. Also serves on the House Commission on Land Use, studying land use and zoning issues from preservation to housing.
- After years of leading legislative campaigns to protect pollinators that support our ecosystem and food supply chain, a critical step in managing the impacts of harmful pesticides was achieved in 2022 with the passage of the bill to regulate neonicotinoids.
- Working with partners, Audubon supported significant victories on long-time environmental issues with toxics and plastics: banning of PFAS known as "toxic forever chemicals" in food packaging and capping them in drinking water, and a statewide single-use plastic bag ban.
- Played a key role in preventing the advancement proposals for a toxic plastics incineration plant to be built, which would have bypassed state oversight.
- Provided leadership in advocating for the \$50 million Green Bond—Question No. 3 on the referendum ballot that passed with 66.9% voter approval in November 2022. This Green Bond will support investments in open space, outdoor recreation, land revitalization, green energy, climate resilience, forestland, habitat, wildlife conservation, water quality, and new facilities at Roger Williams Park and Zoo.
- As a member of the Green Infrastructure Coalition, Audubon advocates for sustainable funding for nature-based stormwater management. Stormwater pollution affects water quality throughout the state—especially with more extreme storms and flooding. Treating stormwater with green strategies like rain gardens and swales provides climate resilience and enhances wildlife habitats.
- Provides leadership for the Providence Stormwater Innovation Center, which showcases nature-based stormwater practices, engages communities in solutions to improve water quality, provides training on green infrastructure, and tests innovative treatment technologies.
- With the Rhode Island Land Trust Council, organizes and hosts the annual Land & Water Conservation Summit, Rhode Island's premier gathering of over 300 conservation volunteers and professionals.



AUDUBON PROTECTED LAND

BARRINGTON 64 acres

1. ANNAWAMSCUTT BROOK RESERVE WILDLIFE REFUGE

Protected since 1974; Approximately 5 acres

Protects headwaters of a coastal stream; provides woodland habitat for birds near Haines Park.

2. BARON SALT MARSH WILDLIFE REFUGE

Protected since 1976; Approximately 16 acres

Protects sensitive coastal marsh; nesting site for coastal birds and critical stopover for migratory birds.

3. HUNDRED ACRE COVE WILDLIFE REFUGE

Protected since 1960; Approximately 43 acres

Extensive marsh protects valuable tidal wetlands and supports Osprey and other coastal birds.

BRISTOL 39 acres

4. CLAIRE D. MCINTOSH WILDLIFE REFUGE *

Protected since 1992; Approximately 26 acres

Home to Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium. Supports Osprey and other coastal wildlife; buffers coastline from storms and sea-level rise.

5. POPPASQUASH WOODS WILDLIFE REFUGE

Protected since 1995; Approximately 4 acres

Woodland habitat for songbirds and other animals within a residential neighborhood.

6. USHER COVE WILDLIFE REFUGE

Protected since 1968; Approximately 9 acres

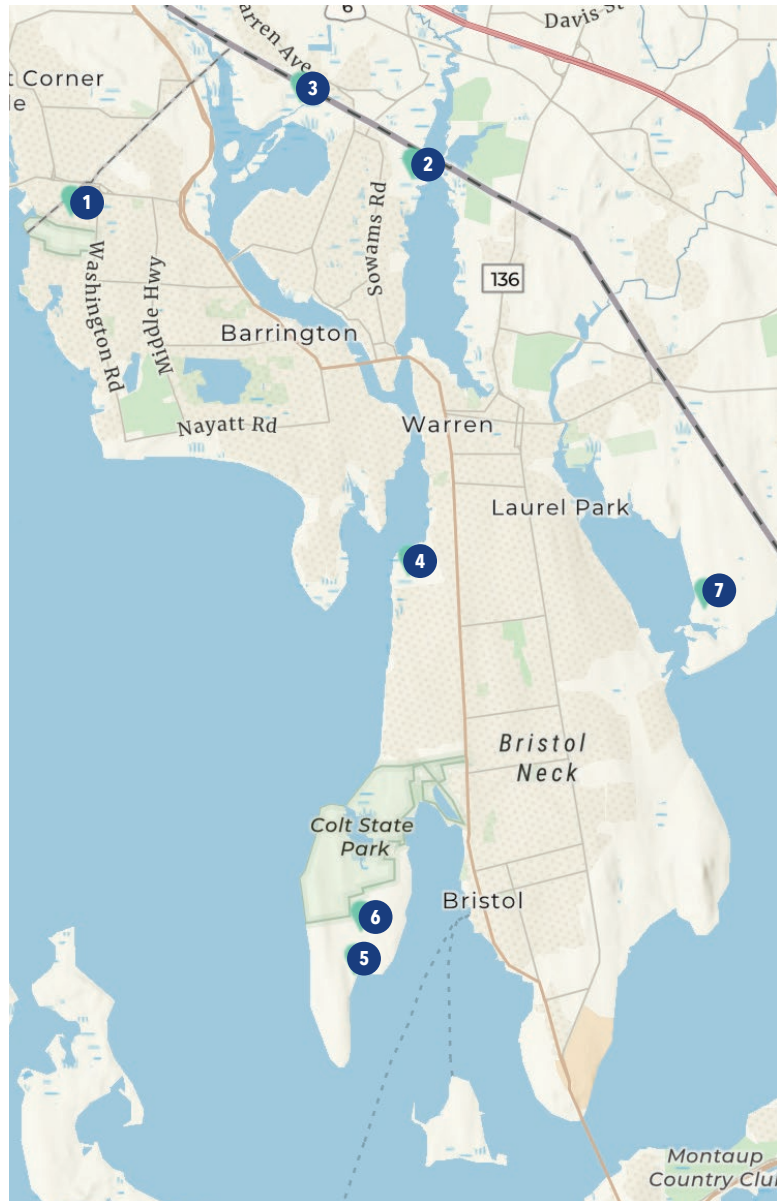
Preserves sensitive coastline and marsh habitat; protects upland habitat and homes from storms and sea-level rise.

WARREN 66 acres

7. TOUISSET MARSH WILDLIFE REFUGE *

Protected since 1990; Approximately 66 acres

Mix of coastal shrubs, grassland, forest and salt marsh habitats; supports wildlife while protecting land from sea-level rise.



* Wildlife refuge with trails open to the public. Visit asri.org/hike for details.



Scott Ruhren



Butch Leonard



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