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Audubon Society of Rhode Island



**A YEAR OF
HISTORIC GIVING
TO AUDUBON**

See pages 24-27

REPORT

VOLUME 56 • NO. 1 • WINTER 2022

CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE



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From the Desk of the Executive Director



At 125 Years and Counting... We are in it for the Long Haul

As we celebrate the Society's 125th anniversary, we look back at many years of dedicated work to protect birds and their habitats through conservation, education, and advocacy.

Although it all started with a movement to protect birds in the late 1890s, it didn't take long for Audubon's founders to realize that natural habitats were also a critical element of bird conservation. In 1924 we acquired our first property, the 23-acre Kimball Bird Sanctuary (now a special area within Burlingame State Park) and today we protect nearly 9,500 acres of land through a combination of fee-title ownership and conservation easements, making Audubon among the top three land conservation agencies in Rhode Island.

However, acquiring the land is just the beginning. Providing proper stewardship and habitat protection on our properties is a top priority for Audubon. Being one of the largest and oldest conservation groups in the state presents its own challenges. With thousands of acres acquired over 125 years, it is important that we follow established conservation guidelines on all our properties and are able to measure our progress. Our members and donors must always have confidence in our stewardship; that is critical to our success.

That is why we have applied to achieve accreditation with the National Land Trust Alliance in 2022. This accreditation insures we meet national standards for conservation practices. Please read more about this goal on page seven. We would appreciate your comments of support for our application at landtrustaccreditation.org.

Thanks again for your ongoing support,

Lawrence J. F. Taft



Why Endowments Work

Mark and Mary Jones* have been giving to Audubon for many years. We consider them partners in fulfilling our mission, and have become dependent on their gifts. Mark and Mary know this and are doing something to make sure their giving continues after they are gone. Through their will they have created the Jones Endowment Fund. A portion of their estate will be set aside for a special fund that will generate annual gifts to Audubon, to continue their giving. Here are three reasons why endowments work for couples like Mark and Mary:

1. Endowments are Perpetual

Like an artesian well, endowment funds keep giving and giving. Programs and people will come and go, but endowments last. In the future, family members such as children and grandchildren will be reminded of Mark and Mary's involvement with Audubon and the value of making regular gifts to support worthy causes. What a wonderful legacy to leave behind!

2. Endowments are Protected

Endowment funds at Audubon are set aside and kept separate from operating and capital fund accounts. Mark and Mary have the assurance that their endowment fund will be secure. The written agreement will be on file, and the terms will be carefully followed.

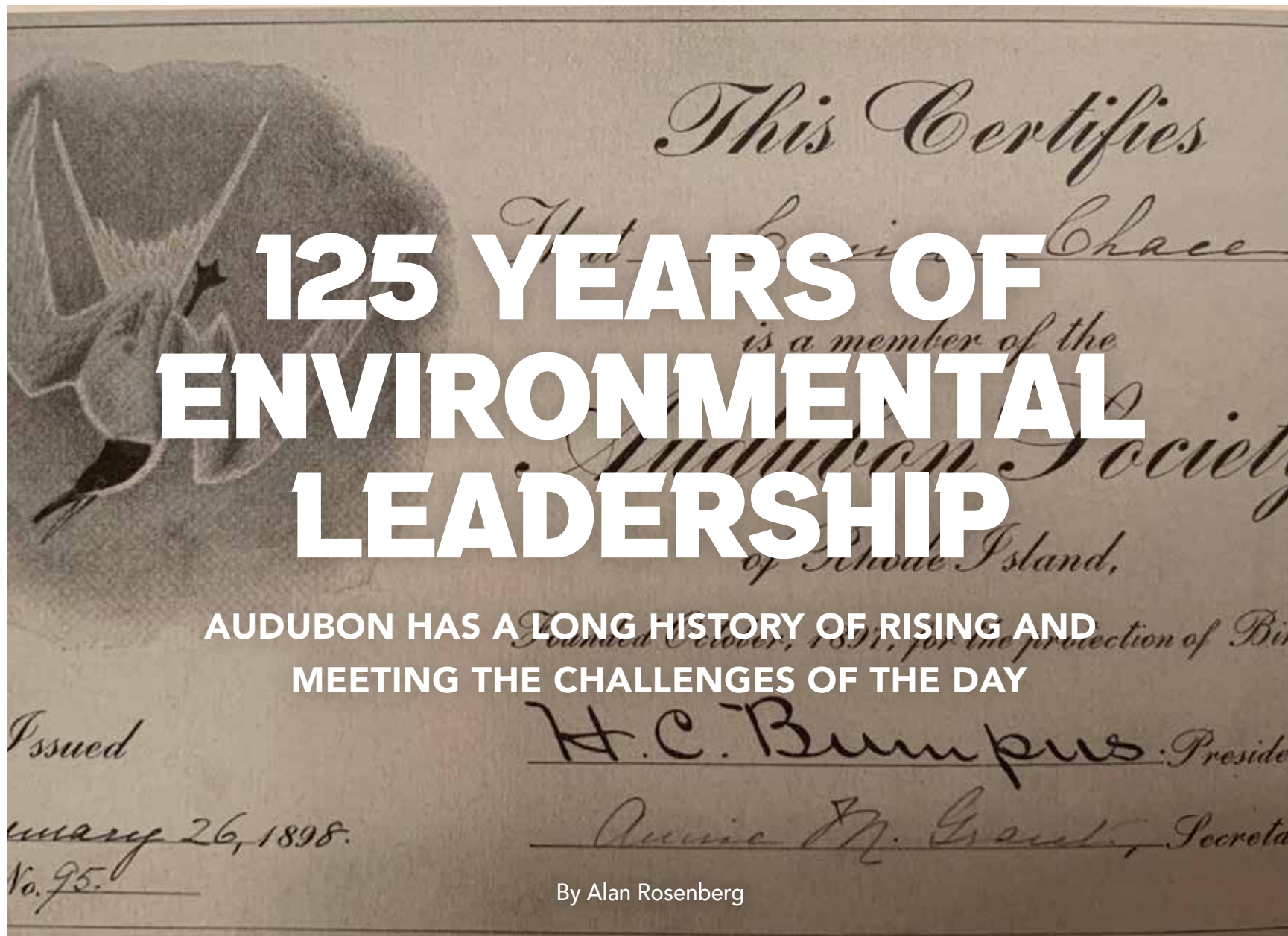
3. Endowments are Personal

While it is possible to create an unnamed, unrestricted endowment fund, many people want their fund to bear a person's name. And they often wish to tailor the purpose of their endowment to benefit a specific area of interest at Audubon, such as land conservation, advocacy, the Nature Center and Aquarium, environmental education, or animal care.

Audubon has developed sound policies for creating and managing endowment funds. Contact Senior Director of Advancement Jeff Hall to learn more. He's able to show you a variety of ways you can use the vehicles of gift planning to make an endowment, whether it's through a current gift, or later through your estate plan. Contact Jeff at 401-949-5454 ext. 3017, or email him at jhall@asri.org.

Learn more at an Audubon Planned Giving Workshop. See page 28 for details.

* Names changed to protect privacy.



125 YEARS OF ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP

AUDUBON HAS A LONG HISTORY OF RISING AND MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF THE DAY

By Alan Rosenberg

Audubon Society of Rhode Island Membership Certificate for Louise Chace, January 26, 1898.

It all began with a fashion craze in women's hats. The decade was the 1890s ó the era known as the Gay Nineties. Part of the gaiety was the display of feathers in the best women's hats. But to get those feathers, hunters and trappers did something far from happy. They slaughtered birds by the hundreds of thousands: songbirds, shorebirds, birds of prey.

That sparked a movement to save the birds, which originated with the first Audubon Society in New York in 1886. Ten years later, a group of women in Boston founded the Massachusetts Audubon Society and by the following year, several other states joined the cause and formed societies named after John James Audubon, a famed wildlife painter. (Audubon had died decades earlier and was not involved with the organizations see story, page 6.)

And on Oct. 20, 1897, 30 people gathered on Providence's East Side to form the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, the state's first environmental organization. The Society set out to offer information about birds, protest their use for adornment, seek to improve laws concerning them, and, its bylaws said, above all, to awaken the interest in children in bird life and thus educate them to humane and gentle sentiments.

While the Society's mission has broadened over the last century and a

quarter to include all of wildlife, its methods and objectives ó educating, advocating and fostering environmental conservation ó have remained basically unchanged. Today, Audubon protects almost 9,500 acres of pristine Rhode Island properties with a wide diversity of natural habitats. It's also one of the state's largest private environmental educators and is recognized for a long history of promoting strong environmental policies.

By 1907, the Society's membership had swelled to almost 1,300. It was busy with speakers and field trips, and collecting eggs and mounted birds, which ó while they wouldn't be gathered today ó were, as Ken Weber notes in his 1997 book about Audubon's first 100 years, important educational tools in a time before color photos, PowerPoint and the internet.

By the end of World War I, Audubon Societies' original objectives had largely been met. In 1918, Weber writes, President Woodrow Wilson signed a migratory-bird treaty with Canada, passed by Congress in 1916, that virtually put North American plume hunters out of business. With that success, bird advocates relaxed, and in the upheaval of the Great Depression of the 1930s, many states' Audubon Societies vanished.

Please turn to page 5

125 YEARS OF ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP

1897
Audubon Society of Rhode Island founded to stop the slaughter of birds for fashion.



1924–1928
Acquires first properties in Charlestown and Coventry.



1950
Roland Clement becomes first executive director: increased programming, directed purchase of first headquarters, and began relationships with the media.

1958
Al Hawkes named executive director: Audubon grew exponentially under his direction with a new focus on environmental advocacy.



1965
Guides the enactment of the RI Salt Marsh Act.

1969
Caratunk Wildlife Refuge in Seekonk, MA is donated by Charles Greenhalgh.



1972
2,000 members recorded.

1975
Summer camp programs begin at Caratunk and Ruecker Wildlife Refuges.



1980
Mary Louise Alcott donates 81 acres in Smithfield, becoming Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge.

1984
Acquires Lewis Dickens Farm on Block Island.

1985
Established the first International Coastal Cleanup in Rhode Island.

1987
Current headquarters opened in Smithfield.



1988
First tract of Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge donated by George and Rose Matteson and others.

1989
The Federal Environmental Protection Agency ruled against the Big River Reservoir. One of Audubon's largest environmental victories.

1992
Claire D. McIntosh donates Bristol property to become the McIntosh Wildlife Refuge.

1993
Lee Schisler becomes third executive director: developed the Environmental Education Center with then Board President Sam Hallowell.



1997
Florence and Richard Knight Fort Wildlife Refuge opens.

2000
Grand opening of the Audubon Environmental Education Center; renamed the Nature Center and Aquarium in 2018.



2001
Summer camp offered in Bristol for the first time.

2004
Environmental Education for Urban Schools Initiative launched.

2005
Lawrence Taft becomes fourth executive director: instrumental in the acquisition of the 295 acre Maxwell Mays Wildlife Refuge.

2008
April marsh fire damages Bristol boardwalk, reopened in July.



2010
Accepts management of Osprey Monitoring Program from RI DEM.

2010
Launches Providence Peregrine Webcam.



2011
Maxwell Mays Wildlife Refuge opens.



2016
Opposes the Burrillville Invenergy Powerplant to protect critical habitat and stress greenhouse gas reduction goals.

2018
The Palmeiri Pollinator Garden is planted in Bristol.



2018
Bee Rally at the Statehouse brings hundreds to support protection of pollinators and their habitats.



2020
Providence Stormwater Innovation Center is launched: Audubon a key supporter of this stormwater initiative.

2020
Kept trails open during the pandemic, offered numerous virtual and online programming for students, families, and educators.



2021
Landmark Act On Climate legislation passed; Audubon co-led the campaign on this critical climate legislation.

2021
New director of avian research position is created.





Former Executive Director Roland Clement leading a group of birders at Little Compton, 1958.

Continued from page 3

Rhode Island's didn't, thanks largely to Alice Hall Walter, a volunteer and forceful personality who served it from 1906 to 1946, raising money, organizing nature walks, recruiting other volunteers, serving on the board and chairing its Education Committee. I'd call her the grande dame of the Society movement, the late Roland C. Clement, the Society's first full-time executive director, said in an interview with Weber.

By the 1930s, Audubon had acquired its first two wildlife refuges, Kimball Bird Sanctuary in Charlestown and the first tract of the Parker Woodland Wildlife Refuge in Coventry. Educational efforts continued to expand, and Audubon began publishing its *Bulletin*, a 16-page magazine issued several times a year. Its first part-time employee, field executive Harold L. Madison, expanded into radio and television broadcasts and a program on nature therapy at Providence's Butler Hospital. Yet amid all this progress, there was conflict about Audubon's direction and emphasis. Should Audubon continue to be largely a bird club, or should it become more politically active and issues-oriented?

The discord came to a head in the early 1950s, Weber writes, at a meeting described as a knock-down, drag-out battle. A new president, William Dean Ó leader of a younger, more aggressive faction Ó was elected, and Audubon's course was set.

Clement had been hired in 1950 as the society's first full-time executive director. Trained in wildlife conservation, he began photographing Rhode Island, developing illustrated lectures to tell the story of the state's ecology, including the pollution of the Blackstone River watershed. He also began a live weekly program on WJAR-TV and sparked a revival of interest that led to an increase in Audubon's membership. That allowed the hiring, in 1955, of a second full-time employee, to run the Society's educational programs in elementary schools: Alfred L. Hawkes.

Hawkes became executive director when Clement left in 1958, and Audubon Ó which had bought its first permanent home, a Victorian on the East Side's Bowen Street - entered an era of unprecedented activism.

Sparked by Rachel Carson's 1962 book *Silent Spring*, people across the country had become concerned about DDT, a pesticide that in Rhode Island was sprayed from planes to fight gypsy moths and mosquitoes.

Tons and tons of DDT, billowing out of the planes like smoke, Hawkes

recalled in a 1996 interview. It was awful. The state's ospreys were in a steep decline because of the pesticide Ó just one of its ill effects. Hawkes and Audubon fought DDT for years, until finally, the state banned it in 1965.

As it fought environmental battles, Audubon didn't stand alone. Hawkes found allies, both local and national. In the 1960s and early 70s, Allens Avenue was a mess in terms of scrap metal and industrial pollution, Eugenia Marks, former Audubon Senior Director of Policy, recalled in a 2021 interview. Audubon Ó had very privileged connections on the East Side. That was its history, she said. So big-name lawyers got involved.

"... it became apparent that effective laws against the wholesale slaughter of birds or other wildlife are of no value if the habitat they need to survive is destroyed."

– Former Executive Director Al Hawkes, 1979

Around the same time, Marks said, Al was very active with the National Wildlife Federation and the Wildlife Society. He was key to forming the Environment Council of Rhode Island, ousting the Rhode Island Wildlife Federation Ó composed of rod and gun clubs Ó as the state's affiliate of the national federation. That meant a sea change in how birds and other creatures were perceived: as part of an ecosystem instead of as potential targets for hunters.

Hawkes wanted to develop an Audubon refuge within 20 minutes of every school in Rhode Island, Marks recalled. That goal was eventually achieved through multiple land acquisitions across the state. He also set up a model for the organization with three main emphases: advocacy; education; and land conservation.

As Hawkes wrote in the ASRI Report in 1979: In the beginning, the concern was for egrets, terns and other birds exploited by the feather trade. Soon, the concern grew to encompass more than birds. Only then did it become apparent that effective laws against the wholesale slaugh-

ter of birds or other wildlife are of no value if the habitat they need to survive is destroyed.

Perhaps Audubon's biggest battle along those lines was against the proposed Big River Reservoir, a project meant to drown the Big River in West Greenwich and Coventry to build a supplement to the Scituate Reservoir. Audubon fought it from the 1960s until the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency killed the proposed project in 1989, agreeing that Rhode Island's need for water was not acute enough to justify the destruction of thousands of acres of wetlands and other habitat.

By the late 1970s, Audubon had outgrown its East Side home. When long-time supporter Mary Louise Alcott donated 81 acres in Smithfield to Audubon, the idea quickly grew to build a new headquarters at what would come to be known as the Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge. It would also house a nature center where people could meet for programs.

After a fundraising drive, Audubon moved into its newly constructed headquarters in 1987. And in 2000, it opened its crown jewel: a \$3.5 million Environmental Education Center on the 28-acre Claire D. McIntosh Wildlife Refuge in Bristol. Audubon's third executive director, Lee Schisler, was the driving force behind this ambitious project with then Board President Sam Hallowell. Along with a 33-foot model of a right whale, an indoor tide pool and interactive exhibits, the Bristol site would feature a quarter-mile boardwalk winding through fresh-water and saltwater marshes to a beautiful view of Narragansett Bay. Over the years, it has added more and better marine exhibits, so that Jeffrey Hall, Audubon's senior director of advancement, now describes it as Rhode Island's largest aquarium. Befitting that status, in 2018 it was renamed the Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium.

Audubon added another, distinctly modern touch in 2010 when it launched the Peregrine Falcon Webcam, a video camera perched atop Providence's Industrial Trust Superman Building that each spring tracks the nesting, egg-laying, hatching and departure of Peregrine Falcons from the skyscraper, to the delight of 57,000 people who followed their adventures over the internet 275,000 times during the 2021 nesting season.

I don't think people [usually] put Providence and raptors in the same sentence, Hall says. It shows that nature is adaptive, that these birds are living in the city and you don't even notice them

As the years have gone by, Audubon has acquired more wildlife refuges, including the

The Audubon Name

In 1897, the Audubon Society of Rhode Island was founded by a group of concerned citizens to protest the inhumane slaughter of birds for fashion. The organization invoked the name of John James Audubon, as did a number of newly created birding organizations of this time.

Audubon was an acclaimed bird and wildlife artist, and *The Birds of America* is unarguably an enormous achievement. He died in 1851, 45 years before the founding of what we now call Audubon Societies. His name was recognizable and associated with birds, but he played no part in this conservation movement.

The legacy of John James Audubon, the man, is not inspiring. It is one fraught with racism and arrogance. He was an enslaver and displayed an amazing degree of intolerance over his lifetime. His work was only possible with Black and Indigenous knowledge, even though he viewed people with these identities as his social and cultural inferiors.

Today, the name Audubon is an international brand associated with the protection of birds and habitat. The origins of this environmental movement reflect the intent of its founders, not that of the artist. Although the modern Audubon movement is far removed from the man of which it is named, we recognize that the views held by John James Audubon and early environmental leaders have left a painful legacy and are not conducive to creating the healthy environment we all deserve.

In reflecting on the 125th Anniversary of the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, we recognize that there is much work to be done to become the welcoming, inclusive, and diverse organization we wish to be. We strive to bring diversity to our staff, board, membership, and programming.

We will continue to challenge ourselves to reach and engage all Rhode Islanders in our mission, particularly communities of color. We will encourage coalitions to join together in advocating for climate action. And we will ensure that our facilities and wildlife refuges are safe, accessible, and inclusive to all.

As we continue today with our founding mission to protect birds, we also look to the future and recognize the critical importance of engaging all communities in this important work.



Goldfinches from The Birds of America.

Courtesy of the John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove, Montgomery County Audubon Collection, and Zebra Publishing.

AUDUBON APPLIES FOR NATIONAL LAND TRUST ACCREDITATION

For the past several years Audubon has been preparing for accreditation offered through the Land Trust Alliance, a national organization that aims to strengthen land conservation across the country. Land trust accreditation is a way of documenting and ensuring that Audubon follows the proper standards and best practices in how it handles land management and conservation.

You can read about why we are pursuing accreditation and how we have been preparing for it in this story from the 2018 Audubon Report archives: bit.ly/Fall2018Story

Below is a Stakeholder Notification/Public Notice regarding Audubon's application.



Stakeholder Notification/Public Notice

The land trust accreditation program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever.

The Audubon Society of Rhode Island (ASRI) is pleased to announce that it is applying for accreditation with the National Land Trust Accreditation Commission Association. A public comment period is now open.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, conducts an extensive review of each applicant's policies and programs. Achieving national accreditation is an affirmation that the Audubon Society of Rhode Island is a capable and trustworthy steward of the nearly 9,500 acres of land that has been put under its protection as habitat for birds, and other wildlife for the benefit of people and other forms of life.

The Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how the Audubon Society of Rhode Island complies with national quality standards. These standards address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. For the full list of standards see: <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/help-and-resources/indicator-practices>.

To learn more about the accreditation program itself and to submit a comment, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org or email your comments to: info@landtrustaccreditation.org.

Comments may also be faxed or mailed to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments: (fax) 518-587-3183; (mail) 36 Phila Street, Suite 2, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

Comments on the Audubon Society of Rhode Island's application will be most useful by May 15, 2022.

SEND A KID TO AUDUBON SUMMER CAMP

Please Donate TODAY – Summer is right around the corner!



How did you spend your summers as a child?

Did you explore the woods or play in your yard?
Did you build forts, search for insects, or look for frogs in a local pond?


For most adults, the connection to nature began with positive, outdoor childhood experiences. By contrast, today's children are spending less and less time outside.

Every child should be able to attend summer camp.

But many families cannot afford the cost. You can help a child to get outside this summer, explore nature, and experience the joys of summer camp.

All Audubon Camps include nature exploration, meeting live animals, walks through the wildlife refuge, games, stories, arts & crafts, making new friends and lots of outdoor FUN!

Send a kid to Audubon Summer Camp!

Cut here and return slip with your donation. 

Please accept my donation for a camp scholarship.

__\$550 (2 children) __\$275 (1 child) __\$137.50 __\$69 Other \$____

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY / STATE / ZIP



Please charge my credit card.

CARD NUMBER

EXPIRATION DATE (MM/YYYY)

CVV CODE

SIGNATURE

You can also donate online at asri.org/donate

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

SUMMER CAMPS STILL AVAILABLE AT CARATUNK!

From the big white barn to the meandering trails and crystal-clear brooks, Caratunk Wildlife Refuge provides a safe and inviting natural environment for outdoor learning and play. Campers enjoy exploring fields, forest, ponds and streams, hands-on science, games, arts & crafts, and more!



2022 CAMP SCHEDULE

AUDUBON NATURE CENTER AND AQUARIUM
1401 HOPE STREET, BRISTOL, RI

AUDUBON CARATUNK WILDLIFE REFUGE
301 BROWN AVE, SEEKONK, MA

July 11–15		Fledglings Ages 4–5* 9am–12pm	Building in Nature: Forts, Boats, & More! Ages 8–11* 9am–3pm
July 18–22		Dinosaur Days Ages 5–7* 9am–3pm	Nature Quest Ages 8–11* 9am–3pm
July 25–29	Traveling Naturalists Ages 10–12 M–Th 9am–3pm F 9am–5:30pm	Float, Fly & Hover Ages 5–7* 9am–3pm	Building in Nature: Forts, Boats, & More! Ages 8–11* 9am–3pm
August 1–5		Digging in the Dirt! Ages 5–7* 9am–3pm	Wow! Science Ages 10–12 9am–3pm
August 8–12	Wow! Science Ages 10–12 9am–3pm	*This age range is for Caratunk camps only.	

REGISTER TODAY!

2022 Summer Camp Update

Advance registration for members filled many Audubon camps in Bristol (see chart for two camps still available), but registration is still open for many Caratunk camps.

Visit audubonsummercamp.com for details. Audubon is accepting waiting lists for all camps, simply click on your desired camp and register without payment.

Camp Scholarships Available

Audubon wants every child to have the opportunity to attend summer camp, generous financial aid is available. Visit audubonsummercamp.com and click on 'scholarships.'

Weekly Sessions!



The Parent Handbook has everything you need to know about Audubon Summer Camp.

Download a copy and register today at audubonsummercamp.com

Questions?

Contact us at camp@asri.org or call 401.949.5454 x3014

Don't Forget the Good We Can Do for Wild Things and Places

As I sit and write this column on a January afternoon, I've just returned from a day in the field performing bird surveys on Audubon properties. I spent my time navigating to randomly placed point count stations stratified across our thousands of acres of protected space. At each of these points (there are 163 of them), I stopped and recorded all birds seen and heard. My first survey began at 7:30 am and I completed my route by 2:00 pm. The temperature was below freezing for the entire survey, the ground was rock solid underfoot and all standing water was frozen. My sluggish typing speed betrays the fact that my fingers are still quite numb. And yet, while exposure to the cold and bitter climate for hours drained my energy and reduced my dexterity significantly, the birds I encountered were not visibly bothered in the least. Kinglets, which weigh about the same as two pennies, were on the hunt for winter active insects and their eggs. Chickadees meticulously picked apart the small cones adorning hemlocks. In a flurry of wood chips, Pileated Woodpeckers blew apart the bases of long-fallen trees, leaving their tell-tale rectangular holes while they searched for carpenter ants.

It was a wonderful day in the field watching birds do what they have done for millions of years—survive. They are experts at balancing the tightrope that comes from having a warm-blooded anatomy in a world that changes throughout the year. During the winter, birds combine behavioral with physiological mechanisms to survive cold snaps and thrive despite the harsh conditions on the outside of their feather coat just a few centimeters away from their skin. Birds are amazing.

During my time out surveying I encountered birds that reside in mature forest throughout the year and would rarely be observed in suburbia. But, when I got home from my day in deep woods, I was witness to the predictable trend in winter bird distribution that has existed for decades:

“Audubon sits poised to contribute a great deal to the resiliency of our state and its birds as the effects of climate change become more apparent. Resiliency that allows our natural places to absorb the incoming energy from climate change and bend, but not break.”

– Dr. Charles Clarkson

there were more birds at my backyard suburban bird feeders than I had encountered all day in the field. For as long as human dwellings have encroached on forested land and backyard feeders have been stocked with seeds and suet, birds have abandoned forest interiors to forage along edge habitat and neighborhoods during the non-breeding season. While I will likely never see a Pileated Woodpecker or Brown Creeper at my backyard feeder in Middletown, those species that have acclimated to human-modified landscapes, such as Northern Cardinals, Tufted Titmice, Dark-eyed Juncos and Blue Jays, are abundant.

When we create a welcoming environment for them, birds have shown us just how plastic their behavior can be. They nest in our gourds, boxes and barns and they forage and bathe in our backyards. Much of this acclimation has occurred over short time scales, demonstrating that birds are capable of change when opportunity presents itself. Studies have documented that birds attending feeding stations in the winter can exhibit increased productivity during the following breeding season. By supply-



Pileated Woodpecker (Dryocopus pileatus), Blue Jay (Cyanocitta cristata), Golden-crowned Kinglet (Regulus satrapa).

ing food and refugia, we can have a positive impact on our local bird communities. In stark contrast, the rapid decline of so many bird species across the globe as our climate changes highlights the negative impacts we can have as agents of change. In this instance, behavioral plasticity is not enough to allow birds to cope successfully with our consumption habits.

On January 1, 2022, the Audubon Society of Rhode Island initiated work that will bend the arc of its identity as a conservation agency. Since its inception in 1897, Audubon has been an advocate for the natural resources of the state and its mission has always been directed at the protection of birds and their habitats. Now, in its 125th year of existence, Audubon has adopted a science-driven monitoring scheme across its nearly 9,500 acres of protected land.

Audubon sits poised to contribute a great deal to the resiliency of our state and its birds as the effects of climate change become more apparent. Resiliency that allows our natural places to absorb the incoming energy from climate change and bend, but not break. In January, over 60 volunteers, multiple staff and myself all set out into the properties Audubon manages and began collecting data that will allow us to determine just how resilient our properties are and what we can do to increase that resiliency. If you want to become a part of this endeavor, sign-up to volunteer on our website and come help us.

In the meantime, as you carry on with your lives in communities across our state, don't forget the good that humans are capable of doing for wild things and spaces. Make your backyard a haven for birds throughout the year. Provide them with native trees and plants to nest and forage in, supply food and water, drink bird-friendly coffee and contribute to worthwhile conservation projects at Audubon and around the world.

AUDUBON NATURE TOURS & PROGRAMS

March – May 2022 For more information and to register, visit the events calendar at www.asri.org.

BIRDING WITH AUDUBON

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRD WALKS – FREE IN MAY

Locations Across Rhode Island. Advance registration is required. Location will be sent to registered participants in advance. Every Wednesday through June 2022; 9:00–11:00 am.

SATURDAY MORNING BIRD WALKS WITH AUDUBON

Three Dates Offered. Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium, 1401 Hope Street, Bristol, RI; March 5, April 16, April 30; 8:30–9:30 am.

AUDUBON WINTER VAN TRIP TO CAPE ANN

Departs from Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, 12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, RI; March 5, 2022; 7:00 am–5:00 pm.

LATE WINTER BIRDING

Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, 12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, RI; March 5, 2022; 9:00–11:00 am.

BEGINNING BIRDING WITH AUDUBON

Two Virtual Sessions.
Part 1: March 7, 2022; 10:00–11:00 am. Repeated March 9, 2022; 6:30–7:30 pm.
Part 2: March 14, 2022; 10:00–11:00 am. Repeated March 16, 2022; 6:30–7:30 pm.

BRISTOL BIRD WALKS

Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium, 1401 Hope Street, Bristol, RI; March 13, 20, 27, April 3, 10, 2022; 8:30–9:30 am.

WOODCOCKS AND WINE

Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge, 99 Pardon Joslin Road, Exeter, RI; April 1, 2022; 6:30–8:30 pm.

WATCHING WOODCOCKS – SUPPER AND SAUNTER

Departs from Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, 12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, RI; April 1, 2022; 6:00–9:00 pm.

BIRDING FOR KIDS

Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, 301 Brown Avenue, Seekonk, MA; April 19, 2022; 9:30–11:00 am.

BLUEBIRD NESTING WALK

Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, 301 Brown Avenue, Seekonk, MA; April 23, 2022; 9:00–10:30 am.

PURPLE MARTINS!

Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, 301 Brown Avenue, Seekonk, MA; May 14, 2022; 2:00–4:00 pm.

SPRING BIRDING VAN TRIP

Explore the many birding hot spots of RI during spring migration. Departs from Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge, 99 Pardon Joslin Road, Exeter, RI; May 16, 2022; 8:00 am–4:00 pm.

BIRD BANDING

Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium, 1401 Hope Street, Bristol, RI; May 21, 2022; 9:15–11:15 am.

BIRDING CONNECTICUT HOT SPOTS: VAN TRIP

Departs from Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, 12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, RI; June 9, 2022; 7:30 am–5:00 pm.

NOTE: Masks are required for all indoor guests ages 2 and up at the Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium, or during any Audubon indoor program regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status. Proof of vaccination and masks are required for Audubon van trips.



FREE MAY BIRDING WALKS

May is the peak month for the spring bird migration, with something different moving through each week. Get in on the best birding of the year with Audubon! Novice birders are welcome. Walks are geared for teen to adult.

SUNDAYS

Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, 301 Brown Avenue, Seekonk, MA; May 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, 2022; 7:00–8:30 am.

MONDAYS

Fort Nature Refuge, (Rt. 5), 1443 Providence Pike, North Smithfield, RI; May 2, 9, 16, 23, 2022; 8:00–10:00 am.
Note: No walk will be held on Memorial Day, May 30.

TUESDAYS

Maxwell Mays Wildlife Refuge, 2820 Victory Highway, Coventry, RI; May 3, 10, 17, 24, 2022; 8:00 am–10:00 am.

WEDNESDAYS*

Locations determined weekly, please check the Audubon website or Facebook page for details.
** Wednesday Morning Bird Walks continue through June 2022. No fee in May.*

THURSDAYS

- Marion Eppley Wildlife Refuge, Dugway Bridge Road, West Kingston, RI; May 5, 12, 19, 26, 2022; 8:00–10:00 am.
- Touisset Marsh Wildlife Refuge, Touisset Road, Warren, RI; May 5, 19, 2022; 9:30 am–12:00 pm. Geared toward beginning birders.
- Emilie Ruecker Wildlife Refuge, Seapowet Avenue, Tiverton, RI; May 12, 26, 2022; 9:30 am–12:00 pm. Geared toward beginning birders.

FRIDAYS

Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge, 99 Pardon Joslin Road, Exeter, RI; May 6, 13, 20, 27, 2022; 8:00 – 10:00 am.

SATURDAYS

- Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, 12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, RI; May 21, 2022; 9:00–11:00 am.
- Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, 301 Brown Avenue, Seekonk, MA; May 28, 2022; 9:00–11:00 am.

BIRDING WITH YOUR KIDS

Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, 12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, RI; May 7, 2022; 9:00–11:00 am; Ages: 6+.



AUDUBON NATURE CENTER AND AQUARIUM

1401 Hope Street (Route 114), Bristol, RI

PROGRAMS, LECTURES & WORKSHOPS FOR ADULTS

**NATURE'S LIGHT:
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CARMEN RUGEL**
March 6 through April 30, 2022; 9:30 am–4:30 pm.

FAIRY HOUSES FOR ADULTS
March 12, 2022; 2:00–3:30 pm.

BRISTOL BIRD WALKS
March 13, 20, 27, April 3, 10, 2022; 8:30–9:30 am.

PAINT AND SIP: WOODLAND SCULPTURES
March 19, 2022; 7:00–9:00 pm.

SEA GLASS JEWELRY
Two Dates Offered
March 26, May 21, 2022; 1:00–2:30 pm.

**BICYCLE SAFETY AND MAINTENANCE
WORKSHOP**
March 26, 2022; 11:00 am–12:00 pm.

NEEDLE FELTED OWL WORKSHOP
April 9, 2022; 2:00–3:30 pm.

MAKE YOUR OWN LIP BALM
April 10, 2022; 10:00–11:30 am.

BLUEBIRD MONITORING WORKSHOPS
April 10, 2022; 1:00–2:00 pm.

EARTH DAY FAIRY GLOBES
April 23, 2022; 6:00–7:30 pm.

SPRING HERBAL WALK
May 1, 2022; 1:00–2:00 pm.

**SPRING GARDEN WALK:
CREATE A POLLINATOR
GARDEN AT HOME**
May 14, 2022; 9:30–10:30 am.

BIRD BANDING
May 21, 2022; 9:15–11:15 am.

BECORNS: PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID M BIRD
May through June, 2022; 9:30 am–4:30 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.
March 5, April 2, May 7, 2022; 10:00 am–3:00 pm.
10:00 am–3:00 pm: Take Home Crafts
10:00 am: Nature Story
11:00 am & 2:30 pm: Animal Interview
1:00 pm: Special Programs

BIKE DRIVE AND FREE KIDS BIKE REPAIR!
Bring your kid's bikes for a spring tune-up and donate your old bikes to the Providence Bicycle Collaborative.
March 26, 2022; 10:00 am–3:00 pm; Free. Ages: All.

LI'L PEEPS
This popular program introduces children ages 18 months to 2 years to the delights of nature.
March 31, April 7, 14, 28, May 5, 12, 2022; 10:00–11:00 am.

AUDUBON CAMOUFLAGED EGG HUNT
April 9, 2022; 9:30–11:00 am.

APRIL SCHOOL VACATION WEEK
10:00 am–3:00 pm.
Visit asri.org/calendar for details.
Special programs each day at 1:00 pm:
Monday, April 18, 2022: Shore Exploration
Tuesday, April 19, 2022: Create a Natural Bookmark
Wednesday, April 20, 2022: Cartooning with Jerry Shippee
Thursday, April 21, 2022: Wetland Exploration
Friday, April 22, 2022: Turtle Races

MEMORIAL DAY NATURE ACTIVITIES
May 30, 2022; 10:00 am–3:00 pm.



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

LATE WINTER BIRDING

March 5, 2022; 9:00–11:00 am.

LECTURE: THE PROVIDENCE PEREGRINES

March 10, 2022; 6:30–8:00 pm.

PYSANKY WORKSHOP

March 19, 2022; 10:00 am–12:00 pm.

WATCHING WOODCOCKS – SUPPER AND SAUNTER

April 1, 2022; 6:00–9:00 pm.

AUDUBON CAMOUFLAGED EGG HUNT

April 9, 2022; 9:30–11:00 am.

BLUEBIRD MONITORING WORKSHOPS

April 9, 2022; 1:00–2:00 pm.

FREE! BIRDING WITH YOUR KIDS

May 7, 2022; 9:00–11:00 am.

FREE! SPRING BIRDING

May 21, 2022; 9:00–11:00 am.



APRIL SCHOOL VACATION WEEK

- Audubon Mythbusters: The Truth is Better than Fiction, Virtual Program; April 19, 2022; 7:00–8:30 pm.
- Leo the Lightning Bug: Story and Firefly Craft; April 19, 2022; 11:00 am–12:00 pm.
- Life Under a Log: A Hunt for Mini-beasts; April 19, 2022; 2:00–3:30 pm.
- Make and Take: Birdfeeders; April 20, 2022; 11:00 am–12:00 pm.
- Raptor Encounter; April 20, 2022; 2:00–3:30 pm.
- Mysterious Sounds of the Night; April 20, 2022; 6:30–8:30 pm.
- Toad-ally Awesome!; April 21, 2022; 11:00 am–12:00 pm.
- Playing with Plants; April 21, 2022; 2:00–3:30 pm.
- Pond Exploration; April 22, 2022; 11:00 am–12:30 pm.
- Nature Photo Scavenger Hunt; April 22, 2022; 2:00–3:30 pm.



GARDENING AND LANDSCAPING FOR WILDLIFE

May 19, 2022; 6:30–8:00 pm.



SCHOOL VACATION WEEKS

February 21–25 and April 18–22, 2022

Become a Nature Explorer! Kids get up close with cool critters and explore local habitats.

- Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium, Bristol
- Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, Smithfield

Visit asri.org/calendar for program details.

PRUDENCE ISLAND

Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve,
Prudence Island, RI

WINTER WILDLIFE

March 2, 2022; 9:45 am–4:45 pm.

'SPRING' ON OVER TO PRUDENCE ISLAND!

April 14, 2022; 1:30–6:00 pm.

EARTH WEEK EXPLORATION FOR KIDS!

April 20, 2022; 9:45 am–4:45 pm.

SPRING BIRDING

May 12, 2022; 7:30 am–3:00 pm.

PRIVATE PRUDENCE ISLAND ADVENTURE WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY (MARCH–MAY)

Contact: Maureen.Dewire@dem.ri.gov or by phone at 401.683.1478.



AUDUBON CAMOUFLAGED EGG HUNT

April 9, 2022; 9:30–11:00 am

Children hunt for brown eggs in a natural setting and quickly learn how well the eggs camouflage.

FOUR LOCATIONS

- Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium, Bristol
- Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, Seekonk
- Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge, Exeter
- Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, Smithfield

Register at asri.org/calendar

FISHERVILLE BROOK WILDLIFE REFUGE

99 Pardon Joslin Road, Exeter, RI

WOODCOCKS AND WINE

April 1, 2022; 6:30–8:30 pm.

AUDUBON CAMOUFLAGED EGG HUNT

April 9, 2022; 9:30 – 11:00 am

FRIDAY MORNING BIRD WALKS IN MAY

April 29, May 6, 20, 27, 2022; 8:00–10:00 am.



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

CARATUNK WILDLIFE REFUGE

301 Brown Avenue, Seekonk, MA

SPRING SCAVENGER HUNT

March 6, 2022; 1:00–3:00 pm.

ANIMAL TRACKING

March 12, 2022; 10:00 am–12:00 pm.

SIGNS OF SPRING

March 20, 2022; 8:00–10:00 am.

WOODCOCK WALK

March 25, 2022; 7:00–9:00 pm.

AUDUBON CAMOUFLAGED EGG HUNT

April 9, 2022; 9:30–11:00 am.

SPRING PAPER-CRAFTING WORKSHOP

April 10, 2022; 1:00–3:00 pm.

BIRDING FOR KIDS

April 19, 2022; 9:30–11:00 am.

BLUEBIRD NESTING WALK

April 23, 2022; 9:00–10:30 am.

MOTHER'S DAY PAPER-CRAFTING WORKSHOP

May 1, 2022; 1:00–3:00 pm.

FREE MAY BIRDING WALKS

May 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, 2022; 7:00–8:30 am.

FREE SATURDAY BIRDING

May 28, 2022; 9:00–11:00 am.

PURPLE MARTINS!

May 14, 2022; 2:00–4:00 pm.

A FROGGY NIGHT

May 22, 2022; 6:30–8:30 pm.

TURTLE TIME!

May 21, 2022; 1:00–3:00 pm.



FROGS AND TOADS IN APRIL!

MYSTERIOUS SOUNDS OF THE NIGHT

Powder Mill Ledges, 12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, RI; April 20, 6:30–8:30 pm.

TOAD-ALLY AWESOME!

Powder Mill Ledges, 12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, RI; April 21, 2022; 11:00 am–12:00 pm.

A FROGGY NIGHT AT CARATUNK

Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, 301 Brown Avenue, Seekonk, MA; April 22, 2022; 6:30–8:30 pm.

A FROGGY NIGHT AT FORT

Fort Nature Refuge, 1443 Providence Pike, North Smithfield, RI; April 28, 2022; 7:00–9:00 pm.



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



GET READY TO RUN WILD!

VIRTUAL 5K RUN/WALK

APRIL 16-24, 2022 ANYTIME, ANYWHERE!

Interested in doing even more for wildlife?

Start an Audubon fundraiser!

You'll receive a personalized fundraising webpage to share with friends and family. Collect donations and help keep Audubon's beautiful wildlife refuges free and open to all.

Prizes awarded to the top fundraisers!

COMING SOON! WATCH FOR MORE INFO AND REGISTRATION DETAILS ON ASRI.ORG.

Five Audubon Wildlife Refuges will have marked trails for walkers to follow:

- Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, Seekonk
- Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge, Exeter
- Fort Wildlife Refuge, North Smithfield
- Parker Woodland Wildlife Refuge, Coventry
- Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, Smithfield



All participants receive: exclusive tech t-shirt, embossed medal and numbered bib!

Bluebirds at Fisherville

As I walk through the snowy fields of Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge, I hear the cheery calls of the Eastern Bluebirds. They stand out in the stark landscape with their beautiful blue feathers and rusty chests. I spot a group of six, scouring the edge of the forest for berries in the frigid air. When the weather begins to warm, they will be one of the first birds to scout the 50 nest boxes we have at Fisherville. And I want to be ready. Currently I am checking to see which boxes need to be replaced, and it looks like we will only need four new ones this year.



Marjorie Vorhaben

The Eastern Bluebird is part of the Thrush Family. The males have royal blue backs and heads, with a rusty brown chest. The females are a muted blue-gray back with a muted red chest. Eastern Bluebirds stay in Rhode Island year-round. At this time of year, we often find five to ten birds in small family groups before the young disperse in the late winter to find their own territories. Some homeowners have been able to attract Bluebirds to their feeders by providing mealworms. They are also attracted to winterberry bushes and crabapple and cedar trees. In the spring and summer, their diet is made up of insects.

From the early 1900s to the 1960s, the population of Eastern Bluebirds dramatically decreased due to the introduction of the European Starling and House Sparrow. These two species are also cavity nesters and would out compete the shy Eastern Bluebirds for homes. In the mid-1960s conservationists created Bluebird Trails along power lines and fielded areas. They discovered that if you create a smaller entrance hole (1.50 to 1.75 inch) on nest boxes, it excludes the European Starlings, allowing the bluebirds to nest comfortably. Today, Eastern Bluebirds are thriving. There are several websites that offer plans for constructing your own nest box or you can visit the Audubon Nature Shop in Bristol to purchase one already built. Bluebirds start searching for nesting areas early, compared to other species. By mid-March Audubon staff make sure that all our nesting boxes across the state are cleaned out and new ones installed when necessary. Bluebirds tend to like power line trails, fielded areas, golf courses and other open spaces. I have noticed that folks have more luck attracting Eastern Bluebirds if they let a portion of their yard go to a more natural, field-like habitat. With that change, the birds have better luck finding the insects they need. Bluebirds often will nest two to three times a season, which greatly increases the rate of success.

The Audubon Society of Rhode Island has implemented a Bluebird Nest Box Monitoring Program at several of its wildlife refuges. We are looking for volunteers to help keep track of how many birds nest and what their success rate is. If you are interested in volunteering during the 2022 season, please see the details on this page or email ldark@asri.org. Happy Birding!

Bluebird Monitoring Workshops



Are you captivated by Eastern Bluebirds? Consider volunteering with Audubon to monitor their populations this spring and summer. Although the Eastern Bluebird is a staple of our local ecosystem, these birds have historically been threatened by invasive species, pesticide use, and reforestation of previously open areas. To help conserve this species, Audubon is monitoring their abundance on our wildlife refuges from April to August.

The workshops listed below offer prospective volunteers information and training. No experience is necessary, all are welcome! For more information and to register, visit the events calendar at www.asri.org/calendar or email Lincoln Dark at ldark@asri.org.

Virtual Bluebird Workshops:

Wednesday, April 6, 2022; 5:00-6:00 pm
Thursday, April 7, 2022; 5:00-6:00 pm

In-person Workshops:

Saturday, April 9, 2022; 1:00-2:00 pm;
Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, Smithfield
Sunday, April 10, 2022; 1:00-2:00 pm;
Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium, Bristol

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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ORDER ONLINE: ASRI.ORG/NATURESHOP



The Audubon 2023 Calendar needs photos of birds and wildlife in winter

New this year! Audubon is including images of wildlife, as well as birds, in the 2023 calendar competition. Remember that photos must be taken in Rhode Island, and we are looking for images that reflect all seasons.

Visit asri.org/audubon-calendar.html for details and to submit photos. Deadline is September 12, 2022.



Ed Hughes

MAPLE TREES

Maple trees are tapped each spring when the weather begins to warm, and their sap begins to flow. *Sugar Maple* trees are the most popular to tap, but *Red* and *Norway Maple* trees may also be used. A hole is bored into their bark and sap is collected in buckets or tubes that carry the sugary liquid to big tanks. Forty gallons of sugar maple sap must be boiled down to make one gallon of yummy syrup!

While they are best known for maple syrup, maple trees also provide important benefits for people and wildlife.

- 🍁 Officially the state tree of Rhode Island, *Red Maples* are common in our neighborhoods and woodlands. *Red Maples* are well named. In spring, their buds, flowers, and seeds are all red! In autumn, their leaves also turn brilliant red before falling to the ground.
- 🍁 *Sugar Maple, Silver Maple, Mountain Maple, Striped Maple* and *Boxelder* are also native to Southern New England.
- 🍁 Learn to identify a maple tree by the shape of its leaf!
- 🍁 Maple trees have winged-seeds called *samaras* that spin when they fall from the tree and get carried by the wind. *Red Maples* drop their seeds in spring, but sugar maples hold them until fall. Throw a maple seed up in the air and watch it whirl!
- 🍁 Like all trees, maples help clean the air. They remove air pollutants and release oxygen for us to breathe.
- 🍁 Maple trees provide food and shelter for wildlife too. Deer and rabbits nibble on buds and bark. Squirrels eat the seeds. Songbirds build nests in the branches, and owls and woodpeckers nest in the cavities.
- 🍁 With their abundant leaves, maple trees also provide a shady spot to cool down in the summer for birds, wildlife, and all of us!

Red Maple



Sugar Maple



Maple Seeds



Plant a tree to celebrate
Earth Day on April 22 and
Arbor Day on April 29!

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

These books are suggested by Audubon educators:

- 🍁 *At Grandpa's Sugarbush*
by Margaret Carney and Janet Wilson
- 🍁 *Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf* by Louise Ehlert
- 🍁 *The Big Tree* by Bruce Hiscock



Drummond Wildlife Refuge

Long-time Supporters Donate North Kingstown Property to Audubon



A place of quiet retreat and wildlife observations for several generations, the new Drummond Wildlife Refuge in North Kingstown contains 25 acres that have slowly transitioned from a working farm to a forested landscape. Few signs of human activity remain these days, other than the large stone walls that were built when the land was cleared, crisscrossing the forest floor below large Norway spruces. Early successional fields, deciduous forest, and a small pond and stream are highlights of this former farm.

Long-time Audubon members Joan and George Gardiner recently donated the property which has been in their family for over 100 years. Joan's aunt and uncle, Clarence and Rosie Drummond, originally purchased the land in 1917 and the Gardiners have always felt strongly about keeping the land in its natural state.

The donors have been Audubon members since 1965 and have supported and volunteered with the organization for over 50 years. Joan started volunteering with Audubon in 1975, when Audubon headquarters was still located on Bowen Street in Providence. She also served on the Board of Directors and is currently part of Audubon's Council of Advisors.

We appreciate the many years of friendship and support that the Gardiners have shown to Audubon, said Executive Director Larry Taft. We are honored that they have entrusted Audubon with the permanent protection of their family land.

The Drummond Wildlife Refuge creates a small yet diverse oasis for wildlife in North Kingstown. One can often hear Barred Owls calling their traditional who-cooks-for-you on the property, or see the snow and leaves stirred up where deer and Wild Turkeys looked for acorns and insects, said Audubon Senior Director of Conservation Scott Ruhren. I have known Joan and George for many years and appreciate their passion for wildlife conservation.

Other bird species that may be found at Drummond include Pileated Woodpeckers, Great Horned and Eastern Screech Owls, Cooper's Hawks, Black-capped Chickadees, Red-eyed Vireos and more. The birds are joined by deer, red and grey fox, coyotes, fisher, box turtles and other reptiles and amphibians.

Audubon is grateful for this generous donation. The Drummond Wildlife Refuge will be managed for wildlife protection and study. No trail system is planned.

Thank You!

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: Stuart Bargerly
From: Christine and Marc Low

In Honor of: Jeff Hartley
From: Lois C. Hartley

In Honor of: Brody K
From: Medini Padmanabhan

In Honor of: Armand Marien
From: Elise and William Ramos

In Honor of: Lorene McDonald
From: Mrs. Elizabeth Drayton

In Honor of: Kevin J. Nelson
From: Stephen and Ronnie Sirota

In Honor of: Joan Schaefer
From: The Schaefer Family

In Honor of: Lauren Shaw
From: Susan Blando

In Honor of: Karen Weimann
From: Lois C. Hartley

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 C. Anderson
From: Kathy Rohrman

In Memory of: Katrina H. Avery
From: Thomas Doepfner

In Memory of: Sandy Axile
From: Mr. Evan Gettings

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

In Memory of: Muriel Cote
From: Brian Hunter

In Memory of: John H. Doherty
From: Michael and Margaret Alexander

In Memory of: Daniel Elkins
From: Karen Elkins

In Memory of: Clarice S. Grear
From: Patricia Appleton

In Memory of: Charles G. Greenhalgh
From: Larry D. and Jane G. Ransom

In Memory of: Marie I. Hawkes
From: Catherine Hawkes

In Memory of: Janis Kortyna
From: George Kortyna

In Memory of: Dorothy V. Lee
From: Barbara Mahony Kent

In Memory of: Juliette Mandeville
From: Douglas Brown
Kimberly and Randall Brown
Richard and Louise Carriere
Michael Curtin
Christine and Dean Duckworth
Nancy Tierney and William Gannini
Brian Hunter
Andre Loranger
Charles Mandeville
Lise Robidoux
Carolyn and Edward Sabatino
Monique Sabatino
Peter and Christina Squillacci
Gene Zylkuskki

In Memory of: John Cosmas Minichiello
From: Michael Minichiello
Maureen O'Donnell

In Memory of: Catherine E. Phelps
From: Mr. Aram and Mrs. Lynda Kaprielian
Natalie and Martin Tennant
Bertha and Byron Williams

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

In Memory of: Elizabeth H. Schumann
From: Walter Schumann

In Memory of: Shirley Silva
From: Diane Graca

In Memory of: Joanna Sorlien
From: Keri Miller

In Memory of: Burton Strom
From: Joan Lausier

In Memory of: Gerarda Sumner
From: Gregory and Karen Steinmetz

In Memory of: Joseph A. Voccio
From: Mary E. Costello

In Memory of: Joachim A. Weissfeld
From: Geoffrey and Judith Hopper
Elizabeth Weissfeld Hopper
Loredana and Stephen Lister
Maurania Corp
Paul A. Silver



*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, 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.

Exeter Family Celebrates with Audubon Virtual Birthday Party

Nancy Whitacre from Exeter let Audubon know that a virtual birthday party for her son's class was a huge hit and a safe way to celebrate during COVID.

Through the Party for the Peregrines auction in 2020, Nancy purchased a birthday party for her son and 20 friends. I am a mom and an Audubon member. I purchased the Audubon party and hoped things would improve so we would be able to use it. As 2020 came and went, and 2021 was not looking good for parties either, we got creative.

Due to COVID, it was hard to get friends to come out for celebrations. I reached out to my son's third-grade teacher and asked if we could sponsor an event with Audubon virtually, she explained. We offered to cover the cost and the teacher would be able to help pick the program that best works with the class curriculum and her learning goals. His teacher was enthusiastic and fully on board. After a phone call or two with Audubon about how to make this happen, we were good to go. The Audubon team worked with my son's teacher to arrange a virtual reptile program and all his friends learned that this was a gift to the class for his birthday. The Audubon Nature Shop in Bristol made up 20 goodie bags at a very nominal price. The staff even delivered them to the office in Smithfield, which was a more convenient pickup location for us.

Nancy has already approached both of her son's teachers this year to see if they could do it again in June.

If you are looking to celebrate your child's birthday during the school year, consider a virtual celebration like the Whitacre family. Audubon is happy to work with your child's teacher to bring a program into the classroom. And remember the goodie bags, a big hit with the kids!



Camilla Ledezma

WE CAN HELP WILDLIFE...

WHEN YOU HELP US.



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Managing Invasive Species

Most conservation-minded people know that habitat loss tops the list of threats to biological diversity. But in second place is a complex challenge: invasive species.

Plants, animals and even microbes comprise an immense list of invasive species that challenge conservationists globally. Grey squirrels and bullfrogs have invaded Europe. Grass carp are now thriving throughout the Mississippi River system. Zebra mussels are clogging waterways. Countless Eurasian weeds have been partly blamed for the decline of grassland birds.

As we confront invasives in New England, we are focusing on rare species protection and habitat management. Invasive species seep into day-to-day efforts at Audubon. They take up space and consume natural resources as well as straining our workforce and equipment. We know it is an important fight: native plants help protect clean water and air, and promote healthy soil and good habitat. Important too are the countless bird species and pollinating insects that rely on native plant foods.

As stewards of our natural heritage, Audubon does the right thing by trying to minimize the growth of these species, but we long ago realized that we will never completely eradicate them. Some of the plants that we battle are bittersweet vine (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), several honeysuckle shrubs and vines (*Lonicera spp.*) and glossy buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*). Carefully timed mowing of fields suppresses many invasive plants. We also have focused workdays when conservation staff cut plants within the forests.

Though many invasive species emerged accidentally, many have been introduced. A prime example are plants moved globally for agriculture and horticulture. Thankfully, most of these plants are isolated and do not become invasive.

Each plant exhibits habits and strategies that we must understand. There is increasing data on the often-subtle ecology and impacts of biotic invasions as well as the fascinating survival skills of these successful colonists. Phytotoxicity, use of defensive chemicals or suppression of other plants is used by two common invaders. Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolate*), increas-



Top row left: Common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*); Center: Autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*); Right: Bittersweet vine (*Celastrus orbiculatus*). Bottom row: Control measures for invasive species include mowing fields and cutting back the plants.

ing in woodlands in Rhode Island, is one example. It invades by inhibiting the native beneficial fungi, known as mycorrhizae, in invaded soils. Barberry does the same. Even after barberry is removed, the soil chemistry is changed and native plants struggle to survive.

Today, the invasive species problem grows more and more complicated, but scientists remain hopeful. At Audubon, we manage habitat for birds and other wildlife, including pollinators. We remain positive with our focus on protecting the native plants and animals, while working to keep the invaders under control.

Jason Major



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125 YEARS OF ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP

Continued from page 6

2009 bequest of folk artist Maxwell Mays of 295 acres in Coventry, now known as the Maxwell Mays Wildlife Refuge. Mays had bought the land in 1941, and loved to walk it, recalls Lawrence Taft, Audubon executive director since 2005. He didn't want a bulldozer to come in and square things off and create a housing development.

Mays approached other groups as well as Audubon about a potential bequest. But, says Taft, he liked Audubon's plan to allow the public to enjoy the land as he had for so many decades, and decided the Society was the right steward for it.

Not all Audubon land is open to the public. Hundreds of parcels aren't often, small pockets of land that may protect fragile habitat or are not suitable for walking trails or other public use.

Audubon is now more strategic than it once was in deciding what land to acquire, Taft says. In the past, Audubon would often accept land donations without an understanding of how the property supported birds and wildlife, or any consideration of how it fit into a conservation plan. Now, Audubon looks to see what species it can support. The Society manages its properties for specific populations of bird and wildlife and may alter its methods if those populations change. Caratunk Wildlife Refuge in Seekonk and Lewis-Dickens Farm on Block Island, for instance, contain large tracts of grass or shrub habitat. These areas are important for Bobolinks, as an example, that nest in fields. But if that species should no longer use the property, Taft says, Audubon might alter the conservation plan to provide for other birds that require critical habitat for survival.

Audubon also looks for ways to expand the boundaries of the properties it owns. You end up with larger conservation buffers, without the responsibility of managing a new wildlife refuge—often, people don't know that ownership has even changed. But for us, it's a reason to celebrate when connected tracts of land remain wild.

A new chapter in Audubon's conservation work opened in 2021 as Dr. Charles Clarkson was hired as Audubon's first director of avian research. His work will guide Audubon's management efforts and provide a better understanding of the long-term population trends of birds that depend upon Audubon properties. It's critical work relating to conservation and climate change, Taft said, and Audubon will share these results with other birding organizations across New England.

A capital campaign that ended in 2019 raised \$7.5 million and left Audubon's endowment in excellent shape, Hall says. But financial challenges aren't the only ones that nonprofits face. Taft says the organiza-



Peter Fish

Snowy Egrets (Egretta thula)

tion is committed to making sure that Audubon's programs and wildlife refuges are accessible to all, including those in urban communities and for people with different backgrounds and walks of life. In hiring new educators, he says, there is now a high preference for applicants who are bilingual, and Audubon is working on translating its website and trail maps into Spanish. Even physical locations are important. It's no coincidence that the Nature Center in Bristol was built along a bus line and offers an all-accessible trail down to Narragansett Bay to provide visitors of all abilities the same connection to nature. Audubon also has urban birding walks in Providence's Roger Williams Park, leads summer camps in the city, and brings nature programs to Providence libraries.

We've got to bring our programs and outreach into communities where people live, not always out in the woods, Taft said. It's important to meet and engage people where they are.

The issues that Audubon faces today are significantly different than those they advocated for in 1897, but the organization still depends on members and supporters who understand the vital importance of a strong and healthy environment. The largest crisis we have ever faced is here, said Taft. Climate change will affect all Rhode Islanders as well as the birds and wildlife Audubon works to protect. Many voices, strong advocacy, and environmental leadership will be critical in the years ahead.

Audubon will rise to meet the challenge, as we always have.

Alan Rosenberg is a former executive editor of The Providence Journal who now helps nonprofits tell their stories. Reach him via email at AlanRosenbergRI@gmail.com.



Lewis-Dickens Farm on Block Island provides panoramic views of the Atlantic Ocean. It has been under Audubon's protection since 1984.

AUDUBON BY THE NUMBERS

14 WILDLIFE REFUGES OPEN TO THE PUBLIC



4 NATURE CENTERS



9,400+ ACRES PROTECTED



10,000 MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS



\$20,000,000 ENDOWMENT



36 FULL AND PART-TIME EMPLOYEES



2 REGISTERED STATE HOUSE LOBBYISTS



500 AVERAGE ANNUAL VOLUNTEERS



12,000 AVERAGE ANNUAL STUDENTS SERVED



57,100 ANNUAL PEREGRINE WEBCAM VISITORS



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

Kids and Nature at Caratunk

Audubon Receives \$200,000 Gift from the Helen Brackett Trust

In the 1950s, if you walked north on Prospect Street in Seekonk, it eventually led to forests, streams, farms, and pastures. As a young girl, Helen Brackett would walk from her home to explore these wild places and developed a life-long passion for nature.

The Caratunk Wildlife Refuge isn't far from Prospect Street, and Audubon has recently been the recipient of a generous gift from Helen's estate to both upgrade the property and encourage visitation from the nearby urban communities of Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls. Her gift will provide numerous scholarship opportunities for campers, classrooms, and bus transportation to bring children to Caratunk and get them outside with our educators exploring the natural world.

With a doctorate in psychology, Helen championed the mental health benefits of nature and often worked with underserved communities in New York. She found nature to be restorative, and healing, explained her life-long friend Rosemary Wilson. Helen looked to expand the worlds of children, especially those who might live in urban communities and have limited access to nature.

With Helen's \$200,000 gift, Audubon will reach out to families, schools, libraries, and community centers in nearby urban communities, focusing on Caratunk as a welcoming destination for all. Additional summer weekend assistants and camp staff will be hired, and Audubon is encouraging applications from those who are bilingual and from diverse backgrounds.

While she was a visionary when it came to children's health and the importance of nature, Helen Brackett was also down to earth and understood that basic needs must be met. The cost of a much-needed compostable restroom has been covered by the gift, as will several outdoor tents and cleaning supplies to safely engage children during the pandemic. New children's chairs and tables will be purchased to accommodate the expanded school programs, along with necessary field exploration tools such as nets, magnifiers, and field guides. Busloads of students and numerous summer campers will greatly benefit from the scholarships, upgrades, and new exploration tools that are now available to them.

Helen's career introduced her to many children in need, Wilson said. She would be pleased that her gift will bring so many children to Caratunk, enabling them to explore and reap the benefits of nature.



*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.



*Rent the
Perfect
Summer
Retreat!*

Maxwell Mays Lakefront Cottage Coventry, RI

This charming cottage in western Coventry is on a secluded lake, part of the Audubon Maxwell Mays Wildlife Refuge. Head out each day to canoe, bird watch, or hike on the property's trails.

This beautifully furnished wood and field stone camp features fireplace heat, a full kitchen, screened porch, dock, large deck overlooking the pond, outdoor gas grill, indoor plumbing, two bedrooms, one bath. The cottage sleeps five.

Perfect for an affordable weekend get-away or a family vacation. Kids love it here! The cottage comes with a canoe and kayak. Available from May 1 to October 30th.

For details, visit asri.org and click on the *services* link.

Restoration of Parker Woodland Boardwalks

The Audubon conservation staff were busy this December out on the Parker Woodland Wildlife Refuge in Coventry. A number of existing boardwalks that cross wet and muddy areas have been restored for ease of visitor access to the trails. The work will be continuing during the winter months and will be completed in time for the busy spring birding season.



LET'S GET SOCIAL!

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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.



Thank You for a Historic Year

Talk about timing! As we honor Audubon's 125th anniversary, we have a new historic milestone to celebrate. Audubon donors gave **over one million dollars** last year to support environmental conservation, education, and advocacy.

Several gifts in excess of \$100,000 were provided to support our new avian research program and land acquisition. We also received major funding for marketing on commercial and public radio, improvements to the Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, and expanding program and summer camp scholarships to underserved communities in the Providence, Central Falls, and Pawtucket areas.

Donors supported our work at public libraries, the Martin Luther King Community Center in Newport, and provided funds to upgrade the Powder Mill Ledges Raptor Care Facility. Audubon was the 5th most active charity during the state-wide 401Gives Program run by the United Way in April 2021. We are truly grateful for ALL of our supporters and the many ways in which you place your trust in us. Thank you.



2021 Donors and Supporters

The 1897 Society honors those donors who annually give \$1,000 or more.

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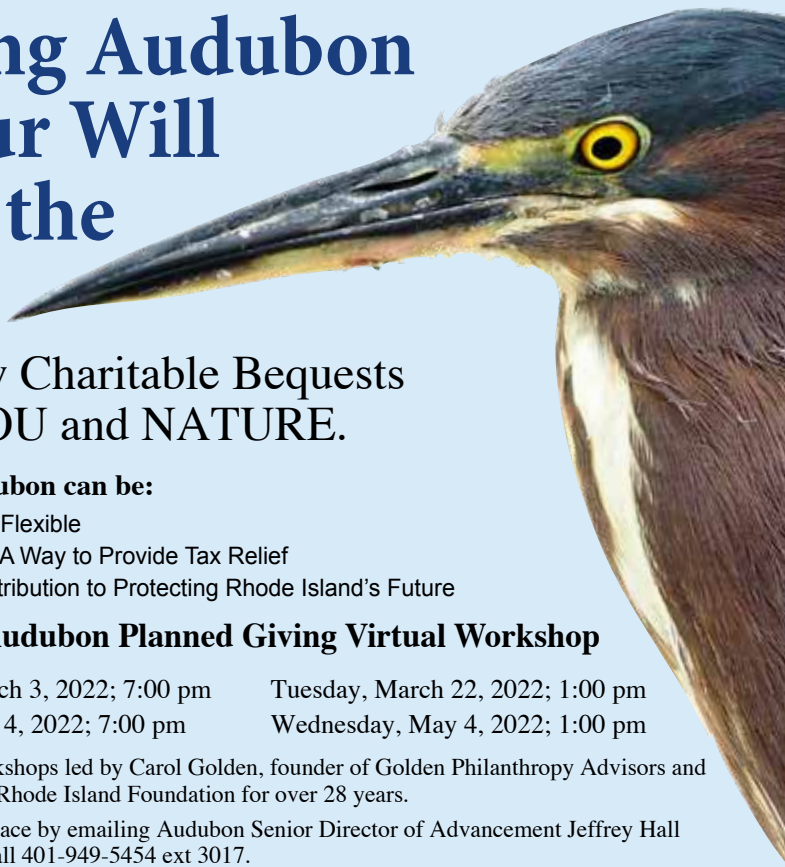
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Thursday, March 3, 2022; 7:00 pm Tuesday, March 22, 2022; 1:00 pm
Monday, April 4, 2022; 7:00 pm Wednesday, May 4, 2022; 1:00 pm

One-hour virtual workshops led by Carol Golden, founder of Golden Philanthropy Advisors and trusted advisor at the Rhode Island Foundation for over 28 years.

Please reserve your place by emailing Audubon Senior Director of Advancement Jeffrey Hall at jhall@asri.org or call 401-949-5454 ext 3017.

A virtual link will be provided to all registered guests. For your privacy, these workshops will be held in webinar format.



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Providence Students Receive Donated Binoculars and Birding Lessons

Audubon and the Ocean State Birding Club collected 36 pairs of new and gently used binoculars from generous donors in 2021. Thank you to our supporters who made this program such a success.

In October 2021, a group of very enthusiastic and energetic 4th and 5th graders from the Paul Cuffee Elementary School in Providence gathered at Neutaconkanut Hill Park. Part of the Wild Kids Club, these students were there to learn about birding and binoculars. They were shown how to properly hold the optics, adjust the eyepieces, and used the knob on top to focus. They even practiced on photos of various bird species that had been cleverly placed in park trees at different heights.

The best part? These children were able to take their new binoculars home so they could continue their birding adventures. Now they share their knowledge with friends and family and bring the optics back for future club meetings. All the binoculars were provided by generous donors to encourage an interest in birding and curiosity of the natural world.

The Providence Parks Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership's after-school program, the Wild Kids Club, is led by April Alix, Conservation Program Coordinator. Alix is an expert naturalist, experienced educator, and former Audubon AmeriCorp Member. She enthusiastically treks up the trails with her club members each week in the fall. From wasp nests and mushrooms to soil erosion and dragonflies, the club explores all things wild.

April has taught the children to watch for birds by looking for movement in the trees and listening for their chirps, calls and songs. A highlight was when they spotted a Red-bellied Woodpecker feeding in the woods. The young birders were able to observe it with their new binoculars and the excitement was contagious!

Along the trail, they also saw American Robins, Blue Jays, Red-tailed Hawks, Black-capped Chickadees, and Rock Pigeons, as well as heard Northern Flickers, and crows. The children even met an Audu-

bon supporter out birding - and they couldn't wait to share their bird list and show off their new binoculars.

The kids were all so excited about the binoculars, Alix said. They were incredibly respectful with the equipment and kept yelling I CAN SEE SO FAR WITH THESE! We did have to teach them not to walk with binoculars held up to their eyes: a lesson even some adult birders, including me, often need to be reminded of!

One of my young students kept repeating I can't believe we get to keep these! while another said, I can't believe how far I can see! immediately followed by a long listing all the things in his sight range, Alix said. He also promised he would bring his binoculars back the next time we met. Sure enough, he did!

With over 100 existing and accessible parks in the city, the Providence Parks Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership aims to connect children and families with nature where they live, work and play. Providence is one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the U.S. and has many underserved communities that lack the resources to experience nature outside of the city. However, 90% of children in Providence live within ten minutes of a park. This partnership has seized on this opportunity to make Providence's abundance of green spaces a foundation for education and fun, and to help youth build a long-lasting relationship to the natural world and their communities.

Audubon is proud to partner with Providence Parks Urban Wildlife Refuge Program and the Ocean State Birding Club to supply binoculars to young urban birders. We thank Tom Younkin for initiating this binocular program and Stacy Gale, 4th Grade Teacher at Paul Cuffee Elementary School, who proposed the Wild Kids Club in 2015. She continues to engage her students in outdoor learning.



URBANTREES

By Ryan Kopp, Audubon Stormwater Coordinator



They Bring Beauty, Birds, Wildlife and Critical Environmental Benefits to our Cities

Providence Stormwater Innovation Center Introduces the New Stormwater Tree Trench Design Guide

Urbanization can be defined as the replacement of natural ecosystems with artificial systems in order to support a growing human population and economy. With more population growth, urban areas are becoming denser with industrialized materials and byproducts, leaving less space for the natural environment to thrive. The importance of preserving, maintaining and growing these natural urban ecosystems in cities has major environmental, social and economic impacts.

Street trees are a public resource and one tool for managing urbanization and providing critical green infrastructure in the cities. Trees in urban areas help intercept rainfall before it hits impervious surfaces, which reduces stormwater runoff and lower air temperatures by providing shade and cooling on high heat days. They encourage biodiversity and wildlife, and remove air pollutants which improves air quality and provides health benefits to frontline communities that are overburdened by pollution. From an economic perspective, urban trees can increase property value by enhancing neighborhood beauty, and making streets more walkable and bikeable. This in turn has a positive impact on businesses and will lower electricity usage in buildings surrounded by large tree canopies. Various studies have shown that trees in a community help improve mental health, can reduce crime and increase health recovery rates.

Stormwater Tree Trenches incorporate all the benefits of street trees, but also treat polluted stormwater runoff and remove sediment that is detrimental to our urban water bodies and Narragansett Bay. Tree Trenches are designed to mimic nature and use the natural filtration properties of soil and plants to remove pollutants from stormwater runoff, improving both water quality and the habitat of birds and other wildlife that use urban lakes, rivers and ponds.

The new Stormwater Tree Trench Design Guide was developed by the Providence Stormwater Innovation Center, Horsley Witten Group, the Southeast New England Program (SNEP) Network and the Providence Parks Department to help municipalities design and maintain greener, healthier, and more resilient tree trenches. This beautifully illustrated guide is an important tool to assist with the design process given specific stormwater objectives, site context, aesthetics, tree health, and maintenance capabilities. It is intended to encourage a creative, multi-functional design approach specific to each project's needs, goals, and

budget. The guide will help improve communication between designers and municipalities as they plan and implement their green infrastructure projects.

To download a copy of this guide, please visit: stormwaterinnovation.org/surface-tree-trench-options-guide

Roger Williams Park is home to the Providence Stormwater Innovation Center (PSIC) a hub for innovative nature-based solutions and green stormwater practices improving urban water quality and wildlife habitat in vital recreational green spaces. Learn more about the PSIC, volunteer opportunities, training workshops and events at: stormwaterinnovation.org/get-involved



Examples of stormwater tree trenches in Providence.



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Emerging 2022 Top Legislative Priorities for Audubon

By Priscilla De La Cruz, Senior Director of Government Affairs

The 2022 legislative session is upon us, and Audubon is ready to pick up right where we left off on our top policy priorities. This year, we are more focused than ever on working with legislators and advocacy partners to protect pollinators and forestland habitats.



Managing Neonicotinoid Pesticides and Protecting Bees, Butterflies, and Other Pollinators

Pollinators are declining worldwide. Pesticides used for the control of mosquitoes and other widespread problem insects, as well as homeowner use of over-the-counter pesticides, contribute to the decline. Loss of habitat and climate change also impact their populations. Dr. Charles Clarkson, Audubon director of avian research, led the state's Breeding Bird Atlas and has spoken about declining bird numbers in Rhode Island, matching trends seen worldwide. Research is showing a link between pesticide use, particularly neonicotinoids, and impacts on birds. Neonicotinoids (neonics) is a class of insecticides that affect the central nervous system of insects.

Audubon has worked for several years on issues related to pollinator health and habitat. In 2016, we began to advocate for a full ban on neonicotinoids (neonics), faced with strong opposition. Last year, we were pleased to report progress – the House passed a ban of neonics application by non-licensed professionals (H 5641 Sub A), which Representative Kislak is reintroducing this year, and Senator Miller will be sponsoring the legislation once again (S 702). We are grateful for their continued leadership in pushing for the protection of pollinators and addressing this threat to our ecosystem.

The Protection of Forest Habitat and Solar Siting

Audubon prioritizes forest protection as legislation moves through the General Assembly to develop a comprehensive state siting plan for solar energy. To reach this solution, Audubon's goal is to help protect resilient forests while maximizing solar installations on already developed land, gravel pits, landfills, brownfields, commercially zoned properties, rooftops, and parking lots.

Forests play a critical role in our environment. Therefore, mitigating climate change and providing necessary wildlife habitats are essential values that must be stressed in this process.

We recognize Rhode Island must deploy the necessary clean energy to face the growing threat of climate change. But we must do so while we protect Conservation Opportunity Areas, areas identified as critical core natural areas, sites, and corridors to safeguard Rhode Island's key species and habitats, consistent with the State's Wildlife Action Plan and the Value of Rhode Island Forests Report.

Today our forestlands continue to be lost and fragmented as we see the climate crisis and pressures from deploying more onshore solar play out. Municipalities need help to reach a balanced approach accelerating the growth of renewable energy while preserving critical forest habitats essential for carbon sequestration and wildlife habitat.

This challenge requires more state leadership with technical and legislative guidance. Not having comprehensive solar siting reform for renewable energy will be a barrier to transitioning off fossil fuels and addressing the climate crisis specified in the 2021 Act on Climate.

Visit asri.org/lead to sign up to get the Audubon Eagle Eye Advocacy Update in your inbox!



RHODE ISLAND LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION SUMMIT

New Dates!
July 14, 15, 16, 2022

NEW!

A multi-day summit is planned that includes field trips, social opportunities, networking and more.

More information: landandwaterpartnership.org

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF RHODE ISLAND REPORT

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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.

SPOT THE BEETLE, STOP THE BEETLE

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- Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, Seekonk
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- Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, Smithfield

Register at asri.org/calendar

