



## Stretching Our Wings and Preparing to Soar

December always strikes me as a confused month. As the days shorten and shadows lengthen, my inclination is to slow down and spend time looking back at the year that was. And yet, the holiday preparations and gatherings, not to mention work planning meetings, keep me in constant motion with my eyes focusing in what is to come. I live with this tension as best I can every year, grateful for both the reflections and the chance to dream.

This week, Audubon Mid-Atlantic staff gathered in person for only the second time since the Maryland and Pennsylvania offices merged in 2020. During our time together, we celebrated our many accomplishments from the past year (see below for a list), strengthened our ties to one another and did some bird watching in Baltimore's Patterson Park.

I also had the opportunity to attend the annual meeting of the Wyncote Audubon Society in early December. It too was a celebratory gathering complete with

reflections on the year's successes with some learning thrown in for good measure.

Both of these events held deeper meaning for me than they would have before the global pandemic when I used to take luncheons and staff retreats for granted. People need to flock together, just like birds, and we missed so many opportunities to do so in 2020 and 2021. In 2022, Audubon Mid-Atlantic provided bird lovers with many moments to be together again—through birding classes and guided tours, workshops, volunteer planting efforts, policy discussions, birding weekends, author talks, conservation cafes, canoeing and raptor watches. We saw how these moments helped people make connections to each other and to birds. And this time together sparked new ideas for us to pursue in 2023 and built the muscle we need to get important things done.

I could not be more grateful to Audubon Mid-Atlantic staff for all that they did together in 2022. And I could not be more thankful for the many chapter gatherings and advisory board meetings, not to mention the program attendees, email writers, volunteers, donors and supporters who showed up for birds this year. I cannot wait to see what we accomplish together in 2023.

Thank you,

**Suzanne Biemiller**

Executive Director, Audubon Mid-Atlantic  
Vice President, National Audubon Society

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American Robins in snow. Photo: Mike Gindling / Great Backyard Bird Count



## Audubon Mid-Atlantic's 2022 Impact Report

We're excited to share with you a snapshot of what Audubon Mid-Atlantic achieved this past year.

- Forests program staff trained 304 Pennsylvania foresters in forest management practices that encourage forest age class diversity and support priority bird species like the Wood Thrush and Golden Wing Warblers. All told, these foresters help manage more than 2.3 million acres of public and private land.
- 15 private landowners, representing 2,000 acres, attended enrollment presentations on the Family Forest Carbon Program, which incentivizes forest preservation as habitat for birds.
- 82.71% of voters in Pennsylvania's Carbon County supported a \$10 million environmental bond referendum that grew out of a "Return on Environment" study developed by Audubon and our partners in the Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Landscape.
- We worked with The Nature Conservancy to create stopover habitat for migratory birds at Pennsylvania's Cove Mountain.
- Our Coastal program received more than \$1 million this year to create a plan to restore 6,000 acres of saltmarsh in Maryland. These marshes support threatened birds like the Saltmarsh Sparrow and are rapidly disappearing due to sea level rise.
- Coastal staff also worked with partner organizations to build and launch artificial nesting rafts in Maryland's coastal bays. This year, 310 terns found the rafts and produced 181 chicks, the largest colony in the Bay this year and an increase from 19 chicks hatched last year. A few of the birds had been banded in Argentina, evidence of their semi-annual heroic journeys.
- 7,325 native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants were planted in urban, suburban, and forests throughout Maryland and Pennsylvania to improve bird habitat.
- In Philadelphia, 39 commercial buildings and 69 residential buildings pledged to turn their lights off from midnight to 4am to help prevent bird collisions during spring and fall migration. Audubon staff worked again with staff and volunteers from the Academy of Natural Sciences, Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, Wyncote Audubon Society, and Valley Forge Audubon Society to monitor bird collisions and gather evidence that Lights Out efforts help save birds' lives.
- During Baltimore Birding Weekend (May), 145 people saw 121 different bird species at parks around the city. Audubon Mid-Atlantic also launched the first ever Philadelphia Birding Weekend in October. 120 people participated and saw 93 different species.
- 703 children attended a summer camp at our centers in Baltimore (349) and Philadelphia (354).
- 107 people paddled the Perkiomen Creek during Birding by Canoe evenings at the John James Audubon Center.

- 91,348 visited the Mill Grove property, 5,462 visited the museum.
- Audubon Mid-Atlantic held 183 public programs attended by 4,471 adults and children.
- Across the region, we held 294 school programs that engaged 3,650 students.
- The Discovery Center and the John James Audubon Center each hosted an Alliance for Watershed Education intern and 14 interns in the Environmental Youth Leadership program.
- More than 1,500 Audubon members in Pennsylvania contacted their state legislators to urge passage of the \$696 million in the Growing Greener III fund. The Philadelphia Inquirer also ran an opinion piece written by Audubon Mid-Atlantic director, Suzanne Biemiller that spoke to the benefits of the legislation.
- 1,100 Audubon members wrote to the Atlantic States Fisheries Council to urge them to continue to ban the harvest of female horseshoe crabs, whose eggs are needed by the endangered Red Knot to fuel their migration. In early November, the Council voted to keep the ban in place.
- In a 220 to 206 vote, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Delaware River Basin Conservation Reauthorization Act (DRBCA), with help from a newly-formed bipartisan Congressional caucus that Audubon helped to create.
- More than 80,000 supporters were reached through social media and monthly communications.

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Red knots on beach. Photo Credit: Mathew Malwitz/Audubon Photography Awards

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## SAVE THE DATE: I Bird, I Vote

Audubon Mid-Atlantic invites you to join us once again at the annual I Bird I Vote Conservation Summit on February 11, 2023! This year, we return to an in-person event at the beautiful Chesapeake Bay Foundation headquarters, located on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay just south of Annapolis. Sessions will focus on policy issues facing Maryland's birds and the habitats they need to survive, but is sure to be of interest to anyone who cares about birds or the environment in the Mid-Atlantic region. Join us at this incredible location to meet in-person with our fellow bird advocates, environmental partners and elected leaders! We will also be offering a hybrid option for those not able to join us in person. Keep an eye on email from us and Audubon Mid-Atlantic social media for the upcoming registration link!

Also, please know that there will be a similar event in Pennsylvania in the future – details on this event will be announced soon.



Barn Owl. Photo: Shlomo Neuman/Audubon Photography Awards



## New funding awarded to protect salt marshes in the Maryland Coastal Bays!

Audubon Mid-Atlantic has been awarded a \$416,800 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Coastal Resiliency program. This grant will supplement funding already generously provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through the Chesapeake Bay Field Office to develop a comprehensive plan to restore Maryland's Coastal Bays marshes, which will include a more significant community engagement component. It also means that Audubon Mid-Atlantic can hire a Program Manager and a Biologist, who will ensure appropriate monitoring of birds and their habitat in priority Eastern Shore marshes. Read more in the press release [here](#).

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Common tern with fish. Photo Credit: Kim Abplanalp

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## Upcoming Programs and Events

### **Many Events in December and Beyond!**

Join Audubon Mid-Atlantic for our many events taking place over the coming weeks! Consider attending *Mussels Maniacs* at the Discovery Center this Saturday, 12/17 from 10am until 12pm to learn more about our freshwater mussel propagation program!

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Visit our Centers, explore our trails, and join us for some winter birding and other exciting activities happening across the Mid-Atlantic region!

- [Pennsylvania Events](#), including the John James Audubon Center and The Discovery Center
- [Patterson Park Audubon Center Events](#)

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Freshwater mussels.

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CONNECT WITH US



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