



Seasonal Shifts

Early February marks the half-way point between the winter solstice and spring equinox. The days grow longer and the sun shines stronger. Like us, birds sense these changes and they are more active in my backyard and in local parks. I find encouragement in their songs and their movements, knowing that the darkest days of winter have passed. I hope that you do too.

It seems fitting, therefore, that a lot is going on around Audubon Mid-Atlantic this February—the annual I Bird/I Vote meeting in Maryland; the Great Backyard Bird Count; workshops and bird tours. Our conservation staff is busy planning restoration work to occur later in the spring and, as you will read below, our policy staff is focused on informing state legislators on how proposed bills will impact birds in the region. And our education staff is welcoming birders from all walks of life to new programming and familiar favorites.

I invite you to join us in our work on behalf of birds.

Thank you,

Suzanne

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

Eastern bluebird in snow. Photo: Pamela Underhill Karaz/Audubon Photography Awards



2023 Mid-Atlantic Policy Priorities

This January, two new governors were inaugurated in Maryland and Pennsylvania. Their new administrations will bring change, but also continuity. We are happy to report that Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro has nominated Cindy Adams Dunn to continue as Secretary of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). Secretary Dunn has a long relationship with Audubon, serving as the executive director of Audubon Pennsylvania, and she has a strong conservation track record. Governor Shapiro has also nominated Rich Negrin to be Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection. Rich was Philadelphia's Managing Director under Mayor Michael Nutter.

In Maryland, Governor Wes Moore has nominated Josh Kurtz to serve as Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). An avid birder, Kurtz is a longtime partner with Audubon through his previous work with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. We look forward to continuing to work

with him in his new position.

During the upcoming legislative sessions in Annapolis and Harrisburg, Audubon will promote policy approaches that address the growing challenges of climate change and its effect on the birds and people that call the Mid-Atlantic region home. In Maryland, we will focus on legislation to require bird-friendly design in publicly-funded buildings; expand conservation of habitats needed by threatened birds; incentivize renewable energy projects; and bolster the use of green infrastructure to help mitigate the impact of climate change.

In Pennsylvania, we will work with other environmental organizations to identify permanent revenue sources to sustain investments in state parks and public lands. And we will support funding for the Department of Environmental Protection's implementation of clean streams and water quality legislation. In addition, we will work to strengthen climate resiliency efforts in the state.

Audubon Mid-Atlantic looks forward to working in Harrisburg and Annapolis with public agencies, Audubon chapters, partner organizations, and elected officials to protect birds and the special places they need in the landscapes and habitats across the Mid-Atlantic. Throughout the year, we will invite you to join us in advocating for birds—through our united voices, we can make change happen.



Downy woodpecker on tree. Julia Archibald/Audubon Photography Awards



2023 I Bird I Vote Conservation Summit

We hope you will attend Maryland's annual I Bird I Vote Conservation Summit on Saturday, February 11th, 2023 from 9:00am until 4:00pm (but come earlier for a bird walk led by Audubon Mid-Atlantic's Dave Curson). We'll be meeting in person at the [Chesapeake Bay Foundation](#) headquarters in Annapolis, MD.

Environmental advocates including Maryland Senator Sarah Elfreth, Maryland League of Conservation Voters' Political Director Kristen Harbeson, and National Audubon Society's Senior Director of Government Affairs Jesse Walls and Senior Director of the Migratory Bird Initiative Jill Deppe will speak on policy priorities that will address the impact that climate change and habitat loss have had on birds. Other speakers will include Audubon Mid-Atlantic staff, elected officials, and leaders of Maryland environmental organizations.

This event will provide an opportunity to learn how to advocate for Maryland's birds and the places they need to survive. [Registration is \\$30 per person](#), and will include coffee, snacks, lunch, and admission to all sessions.



Black-capped chickadee in winter. Photo: Becky O'Neill/Audubon Photography Awards



Great Backyard Bird Count

Audubon's 26th annual Great Backyard Bird Count will be held on Friday, February 17th through Monday, February 20th, 2023. This community science project provides Audubon and other leading ornithology groups with an annual snapshot of the state of birds across the world, as well as longitudinal data that shows trend lines over time.

You can participate in the count by simply observing birds in your own neighborhood and entering your observations onto eBird. (Visit the official Bird Count website for more information: www.birdcount.org.) If you live in southeast Pennsylvania, consider attending the Great Backyard Bird Count tour at the John James Audubon Center on Saturday, February 18th from 8:00am until 10:00am! Click [here](#) for more information and to register for the JJAC program.

Pileated woodpecker behind tree. Photo Credit: Matt Williams/Audubon Photography Awards



Bird Migration Explorer Tool

The National Audubon Society launched the Bird Migration Explorer tool just a few months ago, and now its maps are available on mobile devices! [Be sure to dive in to the explorer to find out more about the birds near you.](#)

Ruby-crowned kinglet in tree. Photo: Karola Hanks/Audubon Photography Awards



Jeanne Ortiz to Be Recognized at PennFuture's Women in Conservation Awards

We are proud to announce that Jeanne Ortiz, Senior Program Manager for Landscape Conservation at Audubon Mid-Atlantic, [will be honored by PennFuture on March 21st, 2023 for the "Woman of Environmental Education" award](#). These awards recognize excellence in conservation and to forge a stronger network of women who are deeply committed to working to protect Pennsylvania's environment. Join us in congratulating Jeanne!

Headshot of Jeanne Ortiz. Photo: PennFuture.



Many Events in February and Beyond!

Join Audubon Mid-Atlantic for our many events taking place over the coming weeks. [Introduction to Birding at John James Audubon Center](#) will include a brief presentation on the most common questions about birding, followed by a bird watching tour around the Discovery Center.

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](#)



Hands holding binoculars.

CONNECT WITH US



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