



Group Strength

I drove past a high school soccer field the other night just as the sun had ducked down below the tree line. Gathered on the grass were two different flocks. The first consisted of teenage boys, clearly tired after a hard pre-season practice. The second flock was made up of roughly twenty geese. The geese had clustered near one of the goals while the boys picked up cones a few yards away. Neither group seemed to notice or care about the other—there was work to do.

The scene left me wistful and hopeful. I thought back to my own high school fall preseasons when I gathered on a field with teammates, some of whom I was meeting for the first time. The practices were hard, and we had to learn to trust each other quickly if we were going to make it to our destination (in our case, the goal was simply to win more games than we lost). But despite the aches and exhaustion, I loved being part of a group and I loved how the hazy August days slowly gave way to September's clear blue skies. While I knew I would miss summer, I always found myself excited for the new school year—full of unknown promise and blank notebooks.

The geese I saw on the field were also coming together in the waning summer days for a purpose. Birds know that by working as a group they will make their winter destination, hundreds of miles to the south. Seeing them gathered on the soccer field was a sharp reminder that fall is upon us. Other birds have also started to flock and move.

As I made my way home that night, I reflected gratefully on all that happened this summer—and acknowledged all that did not get crossed off my to-do and wish lists. But September is here. It is time to find our groups and move forward.

--Suzanne

P.S. We hope you'll participate in an Audubon event this fall. We have a lot planned for you and you'll be sure to find a group that loves birds like you do!

Wood duck. Photo: Melissa Groo



Marshes for Tomorrow Field Report

Audubon staff have completed our field season in the salt marshes of the Eastern Shore of Maryland, wrapping up avian point counts, playback surveys and deployment of Autonomous Recording Units (ARUs) to observe focus species of birds. This work is an important part of our Marshes for Tomorrow restoration planning project. To learn more about this summer's field work and research techniques like mist-netting and bird banding, [click here](#).

Over the last few weeks, the Audubon Mid-Atlantic Coasts Team, in collaboration with local partners Lower Shore Land Trust, Eastern Shore Land Conservancy and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, have led three [Marshes for Tomorrow](#) community engagement events on the lower eastern shore of Maryland. The purpose of these events was to share information and update community members on the work to create a restoration plan for 25,000 acres of saltmarsh. Staff shared the broad results of our computer modeling and showed how the community input collected over the past 10 months has been incorporated into our salt marsh restoration decision-making process. Each meeting included three interactive activities designed to review and comment on our preliminary work. These meetings are invaluable in building local community support and strengthening relationships to ultimately protect these threatened habitats and the bird and human communities that rely on them. Between August 20th–Sept 5th, we met with a total of 37 community members at the Rock Creek Church Community Hall in Chance, the Berlin library, and the [Delmarva Discovery Museum](#).



Marshes for Tomorrow Field Team



Conrad the Blue Jay

We're sad to announce that Conrad, our resident Blue Jay at the [John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove](#), recently passed away. Conrad was a rescue bird who came to us in 2016, and spent years visiting local schools as part of our educational programming. In his retirement, he was well known among Mill Grove visitors who visited him often in our Bird Pavilion. He had a strong bond with the bird care volunteers and Audubon staff who all mourn him. Thank you to every volunteer who made sure he received extra love, care, and enrichment in his final months. Farewell, Conrad, we will miss you!

Conrad at the John James Audubon Center



Creating Bird Habitat in Baltimore

Audubon's Baltimore team is making big plans! Neighbors and leaders in the Pigtown neighborhood have eagerly shared their ideas and dreams with Audubon for how an enhanced community greenspace can best serve migratory birds, welcome residents, and even mend relationships and strengthen multigenerational bonds. This fall, we will dig in, remove invasive plants and replace them with layers of blooming natives that birds need during migration. Collaborative projects like these restore habitats, feed pollinators, and invite in the people who love to see them.

Meanwhile in the Lakeland neighborhood, new collaborations are budding. Together with Baltimore City Recreation and Park's Forestry Division, the Lakeland Community and STEAM Center, and the Lakeland Community Association Partnerships, Audubon is launching a community-centered forest restoration initiative. Neighbors and partners will improve the 3-acre forest in Lakeland Park, including new edge habitat and enhanced trails that welcome both avian and human visitors.

Finally, we continue to appreciate our hardworking stewards, who lend their skills and commitment to growing healthy habitats for Baltimore's birds through Habitat Teams in Patterson Park and Library Square! [Sign up for these and other upcoming events, this fall.](#)

Participants of a community planting.



Native Plants in the Mid-Atlantic Region

Fall is a great time to create migratory stopover habitat in your own yard and neighborhood. The soil is warm, and native plants' roots will enjoy the head start before battling any heat and drought next year may bring. After all, this is the time of year that nature – trees, shrubs, flowers and grasses – drops its seeds, so shouldn't people do the same?

Check out Audubon's new and improved [Native Plants Database](#) to find the groups of plants that best support our regional birds and their insect prey. Soon enough, millions of migrating birds will be returning to our region and they will benefit from the seeds, berries, and insects in your patch of habitat, whether it be urban, rural, or anywhere in between.

American goldfinch feeding on Cutleaf Coneflower



Summer Camp at the John James Audubon Center

This summer, Audubon Mid-Atlantic again welcomed groups of children for summer camp programming. Campers at the John James Audubon Center learned about animal architects, adaptations, art, and of course, birds! They went on many adventures such as bird watching and searching for macroinvertebrates along the Perkiomen Creek. The campers visited our resident birds, and even had a visit in the classroom from a snake. There were many engaging art projects and games, especially Drip Drip Drench, which was a welcome relief on those especially hot days. If you have a school-age child and are interested in our summer camp programming, be sure to keep an eye on registration next spring.

2024 Summer Camp at Audubon



Community Day and Five Year Anniversary at the John James Audubon Center

On Sunday, September 29, Audubon and its partners will mark the fifth anniversary of the opening of the new Visitor Center at the John James Audubon Center. We will also celebrate Hispanic Cultural Month and the birds that migrate between our region and South American countries. Throughout the day, visitors can immerse themselves in the vibrant traditions and customs of Hispanic culture while learning about migration and the birds that connect us. The day's events will include traditional dances performed by local Hispanic dance troupes, bilingual bird tours on the center's walking trails, and a range of children's activities designed to entertain and educate. For more information on the community day and anniversary, [please visit our website.](#)

Teaching demonstration at Audubon.



Philadelphia Birding Weekend

On the weekend of October 12 and 13th, Audubon will host its third annual Philadelphia Birding Weekend. Over two days, Audubon staff and volunteer guides will lead bird tours in some of the Philadelphia's iconic green spaces. Planned excursions include touring local watersheds and parks, bird monitoring in Center City, learning about the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood's importance within the city, and so much more! Every tour is free and family friendly! For more information on Philly Birding Weekend, please [visit our website here](#).

Philly Birding Weekend

Upcoming Events in the Mid-Atlantic

Friends Fall Festival

John James Audubon Center staff will be stationed in the Bird Booth at the Downtown Quaker Meeting's Friends Fall Festival on Saturday, October 12 from 9 am to 4 pm, and will give an 11:00 AM talk about

protecting birds and growing bird-friendly plants in the garden. For almost 50 years, the Friends Fall Festival has been a signature event in southeastern Pennsylvania. The day includes a curated Friendly Thrift, Kid's Corner (free), hay wagon ride, home-made lunch and baked goods, live music, crafters, silent auctioning of services, and more. Join us at the Quaker Friends Meeting, at 800 E. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown PA. [More info here.](#)

Birdwatching Tour of Druid Hill Park

On Saturday, September 21st from 8:00am until 9:30am, Audubon and the Baltimore Bird Club experts will lead a birdwatching tour in Druid Hill Park, Baltimore's oldest large park and home to 745 acres of forests, fields, and a large lake. 189 species of birds have been documented here, including nesting Baltimore orioles and yellow-crowned night herons. No experience necessary. More info and registration [on our website here.](#)

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Audubon Mid-Atlantic

3401 Reservoir Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19121
(610) 990-3431 | audubon.org

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