



# NEW YORK CITY AUDUBON

## ANNUAL REPORT 2016



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*Officers, board, and advisory council April 2015 to December 2016; staff from January 2016*

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<sup>1</sup> Elected June 2016  
<sup>2</sup> Term ended June 2016  
<sup>3</sup> Elected June 2015  
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## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Like many New Yorkers, I'm from somewhere else. I grew up in Northern California, surrounded by nature. But after moving to a downtown apartment in New York City, I found myself looking for nature outside of the city, on vacations to places like national parks. On returning, I put my binoculars in the drawer until my next trip out of town. It was not until I moved uptown and discovered birding in Central Park that I realized the incredible nature we have within our city. It changed my life, and I wanted—like many who have uncovered something amazing—to find a way to share my revelation.

Changing lives by connecting people with nature in the city is what NYC Audubon has been doing for nearly 40 years. The hundreds of bird walks, educational programs for children and adults, outreach festivals, volunteer cleanups, and citizen science projects our organization runs each year not only enrich the lives of New Yorkers, but also engage people in caring for our birds and the habitat they need. And never has this environmental stewardship been more important, as we face the potentially devastating impact of climate change on birds and wildlife—and a new administration that threatens to undo programs and policies that protect them.

As I begin my tenure as president, NYC Audubon is energized to reach out and engage more New Yorkers than ever in our mission to protect wild birds and their habitats. For example, we are working with new partners to expand bird habitat and engage the local community with the construction of the bird-friendly Kingsland Wildflowers green roof in Greenpoint. Thanks to the leadership of Harry Maas, who completed his term as president last year, we are taking our long-standing science, grass-roots advocacy, and education efforts to a new level of sophistication, innovation, and collaboration. Our use of new NanoTag technology to track migratory shorebirds and the continued development of our [D-Bird](#) online bird injury and mortality database are just two of the numerous ways NYC Audubon is innovating in its bird conservation efforts.

The following pages highlight these efforts and many others on behalf of the city's birds over the last year—all made possible through your membership, donations, volunteering, and grassroots advocacy. We count on your continued support. Please visit us at [www.nyc Audubon.org](http://www.nyc Audubon.org) to find out how you can help.

With thanks,

Jeffrey Kimball  
President





### PROJECT SAFE FLIGHT:

Protecting the millions of birds that migrate through our city every year



### WATERBIRDS OF NEW YORK HARBOR:

Monitoring the beloved and charismatic creatures that deserve our protection



### OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY:

Connecting the most important driver of our success—people—to our city's natural world



## EXPANDING OUR REACH

In the nearly four decades since NYC Audubon was founded by a group of ardent conservationists, we have built a solid foundation for protecting the city's birds and habitat for the benefit of all New Yorkers. We've amassed a body of scientific research on the birds that nest, stop over, and live year round in our city, and have organized sustained grassroots advocacy by our 11,500 members. Our educational programs, outreach, and volunteer habitat restoration efforts have connected tens of thousands of New Yorkers to birds and nature.

Building on this strong base of science, conservation advocacy, and outreach, we are now boosting our ability to safeguard our city's birds through cutting-edge technologies, innovative urban design, and far-reaching educational programming.

For example, we've continued to expand the D-Bird online bird injury and mortality interactive website, allowing us to collect more data throughout all five boroughs on bird collisions with buildings in order to identify collision hotspots and ultimately reduce bird mortality. Our use of NanoTag tracking technology—tiny radio transmitters—on migratory shorebirds will help us learn where they travel and stop within New York City and elsewhere along the Atlantic Flyway, allowing conservationists to identify important local foraging grounds in need of protection from development.

After decades of working to expand and restore bird habitat in City parks and wetlands, we are now raising our sights to the rooftops: with our partners, we recently completed the first phase of installation of Kingsland Wildflowers, a 32,000-plus-square-foot green roof designed to attract birds and wildlife, atop a performance arts studio in industrial Greenpoint.

To broaden our educational programming and inspire the next generation of urban birders and conservationists, we launched a pilot after-school program called Feathered Friends. Third graders from the AmPark Neighborhood School in the Bronx went on weekly walks with volunteers throughout fall migration, exploring Van Cortlandt Park and learning about birds and nature. The program was a success on all counts and will continue to expand in 2017.

We're also going to be part of the excitement on Governors Island this summer. Provided with a cottage in Nolan Park free of charge for the 2017 season, NYC Audubon hopes to introduce some of the island's 600,000 annual visitors to the wonders of urban birds and wildlife in the five boroughs through free birdwalks, a library, displays, and demonstrations all throughout the summer.

# PROJECT SAFE FLIGHT

2016 PROGRAM  
HIGHLIGHTS

*MAKING NEW YORK CITY SAFER FOR MIGRATORY BIRDS*



This ovenbird was one of over 200 birds tested this year at our glass-testing flight tunnel at the Bronx Zoo in partnership with American Bird Conservancy and Wildlife Conservation Society. In all, more than 1,000 birds from over 50 species have helped us determine the efficacy of different glass treatments in deterring bird collisions.

The palm warbler, which mainly breeds in Canada's boreal forest and winters as far south as Panama, is one of hundreds of migrant species that travel through New York City each year. Like many birds, it is susceptible to collisions with buildings due to reflective glass and artificial light.

© Kelly Colgan Azar / CC BY-ND 2.0 \*



Millions of birds funnel through New York City during spring and fall migrations. As they look for places to rest and feed, they can become confused by the bright lights and transparent glass of our city's buildings, resulting in collisions that kill hundreds of thousands of birds a year.

Project Safe Flight—supported by the Leon Levy Foundation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act program, and individual donors—is NYC Audubon's multi-pronged effort to reduce these collision hazards and to improve and expand the stopover habitat birds need as they travel through the city.

Our research advances the scientific understanding of how light, glass, and other factors contribute to collisions. Every fall and spring, our volunteers monitor high-collision locations for dead or injured birds. Together with reports submitted by the public on our D-Bird online database, this citizen science effort helps us identify the most hazardous conditions, locations, and building designs. We are also

conducting studies on the effects of urban lights on night-time bird migration, and using a specially constructed apparatus to field-test glass and identify glass products birds can see and therefore avoid.

Advocating to reduce collisions, we work with building owners to retrofit the most hazardous structures. We educate architects and lobby for bird-friendly building design standards and regulations. Every year our volunteers monitor the annual Tribute in Light memorial to make sure the lights are turned off when birds get caught circling in the beams. Lights Out New York recruits building owners to turn off their lights at night during fall and spring migration on behalf of birds.

Expanding our longtime effort to protect and restore bird habitat in City parks, beaches, and wetlands, we are now leading the effort to create bird-friendly rooftops, conduct research to understand rooftop biodiversity, and learn how green roofs can help birds and other critical wildlife like bats and native plant pollinators.



## HABITAT CREATION, CONSERVATION, AND RESTORATION

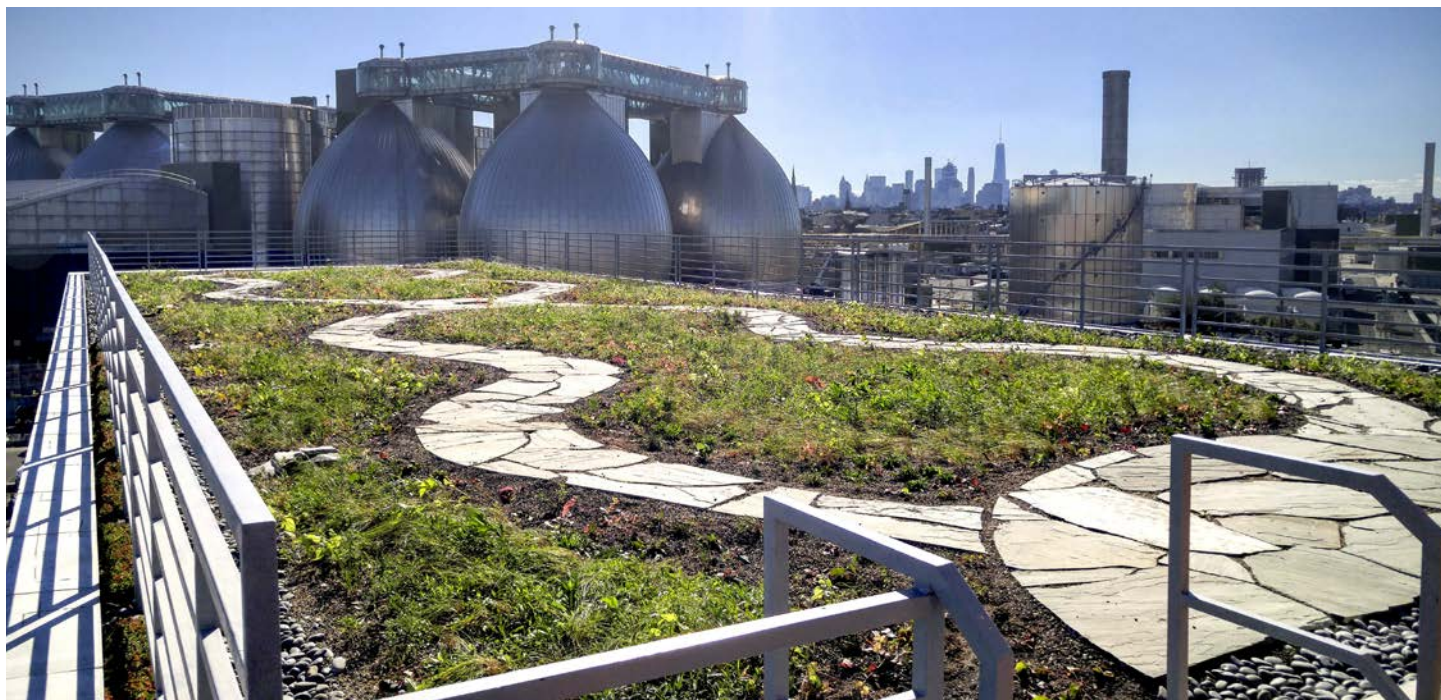
- With our partners Alive Structures and building owner Broadway Stages, we created new rooftop stopover habitat in Greenpoint with the completion of phase 1 construction of Kingsland Wildflowers. As of last fall, the first stage of construction offered over 10,000 square feet of green roof habitat in industrial Greenpoint and featured native plants designed to attract birds and other wildlife. Phase 2 of construction will begin in 2017, completing the remaining roofs and providing more than 32,000 square feet of green roof in all.

© Kingsland Wildflowers



Above: As part of Phase 1 construction of Kingsland Wildflowers, our partner Alive Structures planted over 12,000 square feet of sedum and native plants (27 different species) across three roofs atop the Broadway Stages performance arts studio at 520 Kingsland Avenue.

Below: Section A of the Kingsland Wildflowers green roof is a 4,000-square-foot native plant garden attractive to native birds and pollinators and features a stone path for pedestrian access.



*Funding provided by the Office of the New York State Attorney General and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation through the Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund*



This herring gull with chicks, nesting on the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center Roof, was one of 11 herring gull pairs and 17 fledged chicks observed on the roof in 2016. While herring gulls have been the most frequent visitors to the roof, we have found that ever more bird species are using the roof as stopover habitat as well, including the eastern kingbird and white-throated sparrow.

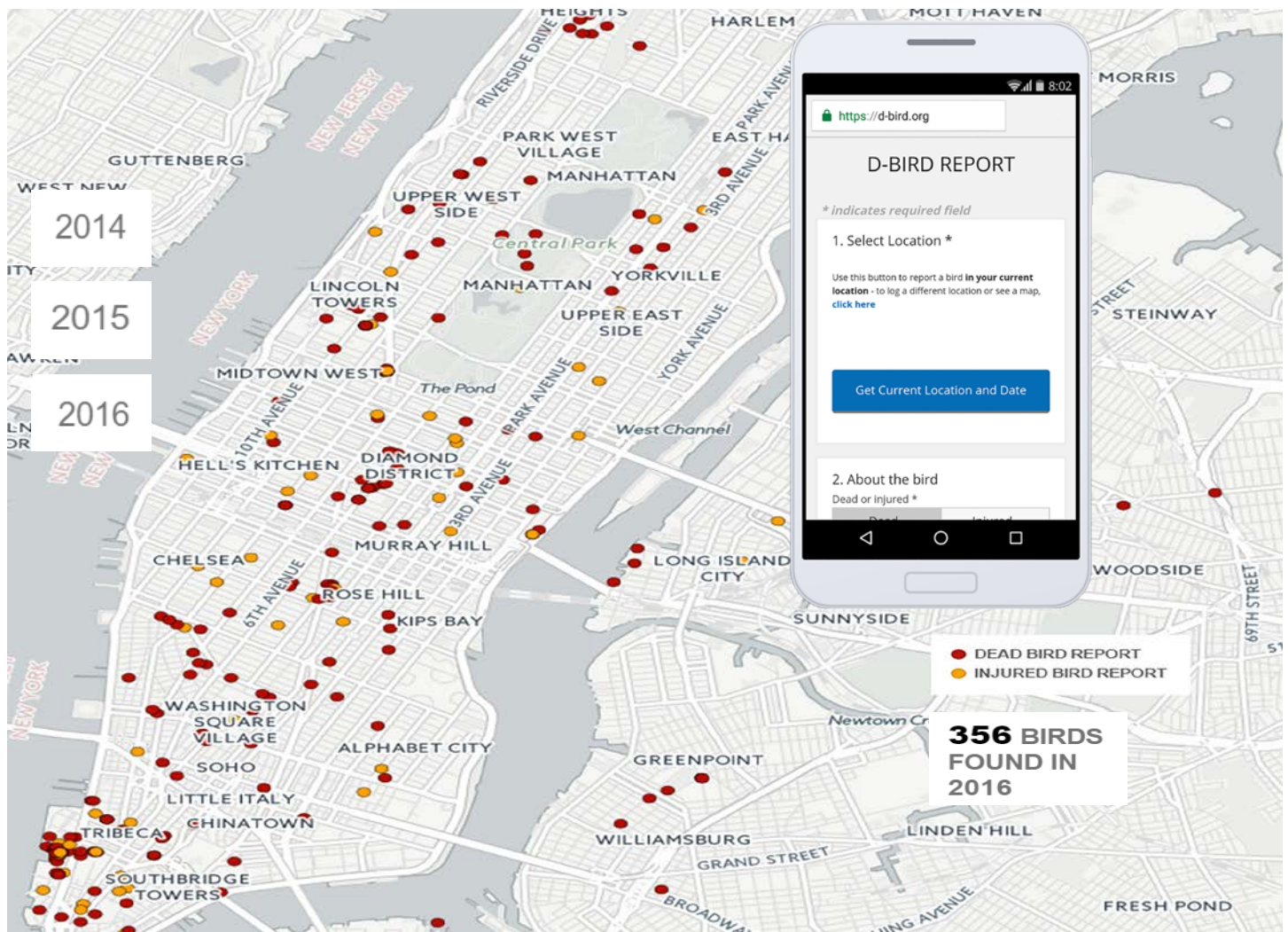


### ***INCREASING OUR KNOWLEDGE OF GREEN ROOFS AS HABITAT FOR WILDLIFE***

- For the third year, we partnered with Fordham University researchers to conduct surveys of birds, bats, and insects making use of the Jacob K. Javits Center's green roof.
- Our science staff worked with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to create and manage a Green Roof Working Group. Co-chaired by Dr. Susan Elbin, the Working Group brings together biologists from universities, nonprofit conservation organizations, and government agencies to better understand the function of green roofs as habitat and to make recommendations for the creation of more green roofs.



D-Bird provides us with an interactive map of bird collision data, helping us identify the most hazardous areas in New York City for birds. Reports submitted by the public through the desktop website, and the newly designed mobile-friendly version of the site pictured here, have increased 59% since 2014.



### EXPANDING AND REFINING D-BIRD

Launched in 2014, D-Bird is NYC Audubon's online crowd-sourced bird injury and mortality database and data collection tool. D-Bird lets anyone report an injured or dead bird—along with its exact location, time found, and species information—quickly and easily through [www.D-bird.org](http://www.D-bird.org). This essential tool allows us to collect data outside of our regular Project Safe Flight monitoring, increasing the amount of bird collision data we receive, and helping to provide context and guidance for targeting collision hotspots in need of solutions.

- We redesigned [D-Bird.org](http://D-Bird.org) for smartphones,

making the site mobile-friendly for easier and quicker reporting on our interactive database.

- Realizing the tool's enormous potential for bird conservation, Atlanta Audubon, Audubon Minnesota, and Audubon Texas tested their own web versions of D-Bird with our assistance.
- We created an online data entry tool, modified from D-Bird, to streamline the data entry process for Project Safe Flight volunteers. The tool permits the simultaneous submission of multiple records rather than one at a time, allowing volunteers to file all of their reports at once.
- NYC [D-Bird.org](http://D-Bird.org) continues to see its usage increase as word spreads about its usefulness in helping study bird collisions: reports submitted to the site increased by 28.5% (356 in 2016 vs. 277 in 2015).



## LIGHTS OUT NY

- Continuing our research into the effects of light on bird migration, we partnered with New York University's Center for Urban Science and Progress and the Durst Organization to analyze the quality and intensity of artificial light emitted into the skies over the city. Custom designed camera equipment has been installed atop One Bryant Park to collect vast amounts of data about the intensity, temperature, and color of artificial light emitted from lower Manhattan in the spring of 2017. New York University will perform a multivariate analysis of the data collected by the cameras to produce a detailed light map, which we can use to look for correlations between light quality emitted by buildings and bird collisions.
- Our work with our partners to monitor the September 11 Tribute in Light memorial this year once again proved invaluable to migrating birds. Thanks to the cooperation of Michael Ahern Production Services and the National September 11 Museum & Memorial, the memorial's lights were turned off three times, allowing thousands of birds trapped in the light beams—including black-and-white warblers and American redstarts—to continue on their migration.



Above: This photo of lower Manhattan (pictured on the left) was taken by our specially designed camera recently installed atop the Bank of America Tower at One Bryant Park. Using the image provided by the camera and topographic data of the city, our research partners from NYU have been able to segment the image into buildings (pictured on the right). The next step in this new artificial light study will be to measure the total light coming from each building and correlate the light quality emitted by the building with bird collision data.

Below: American redstarts, black-and-white warblers, Baltimore orioles, and yellow- and black-billed cuckoos were among the many species seen trapped in the light beams during our Tribute in Light monitoring in 2016.

©Felicity Arengo



## SAVING THE *BIRDS* WE LOVE

- During migration season, we frequently get calls from people who have found an injured bird and don't know what to do. We provide guidance and, if necessary, we will dispatch one of the dedicated members of our injured bird transporters group to pick up the bird and

safely transport it to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. With our help, over 50 injured birds were rescued this year and received the professional medical care they needed.

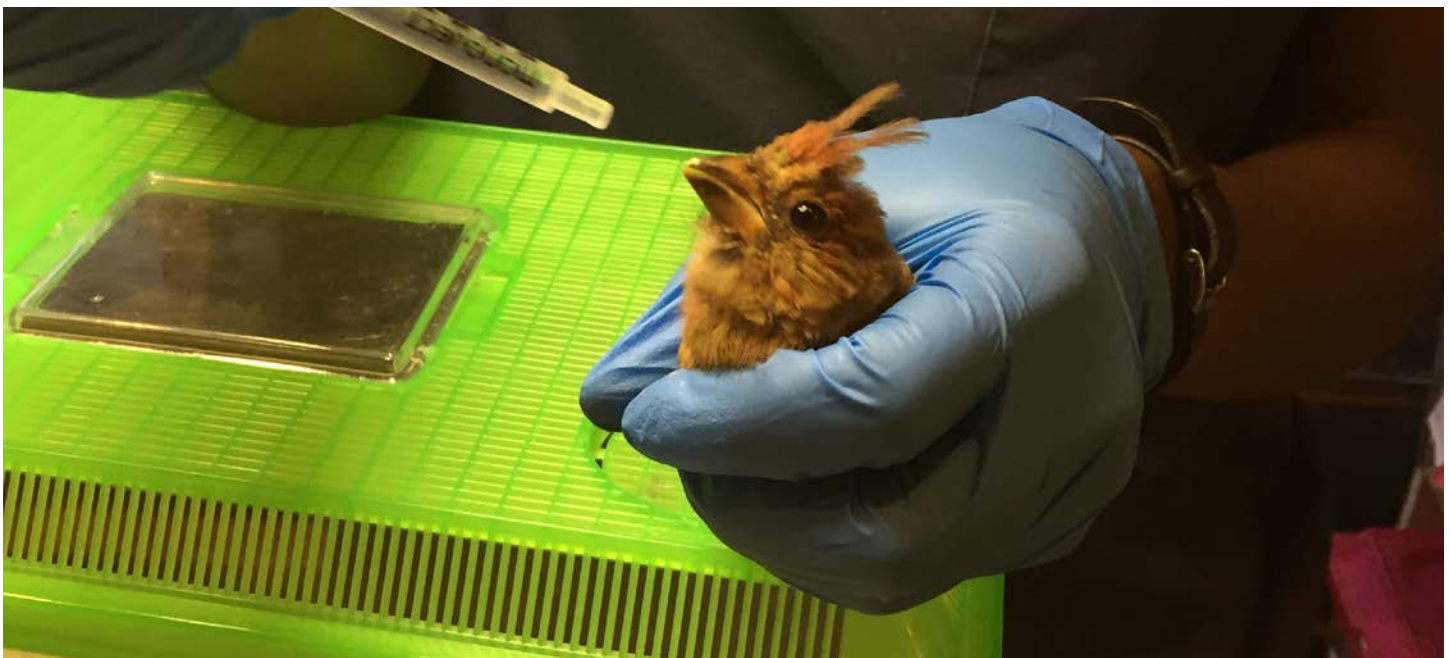
© MaryJane Boland



Above: This young American kestrel, found on the street in June 2016, could not be returned to his nest. Brought to the Wild Bird Fund by one of our volunteer transporters, he received excellent care until he was ready for a successful release back into the wild.

Below: A northern cardinal gets water at the Wild Bird Fund before his rehabilitation and release.

© MaryJane Boland





## ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION

- We continued to deliver workshops to architects and City agencies about bird-friendly design in order to build a safer city for migratory birds.
- Our science staff joined in presentations in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). We presented to hundreds of people at events in Central Park, the New York Aquarium, and the Waterbird Society Meeting in New Bern, NC. The Migratory Bird Treaty is among the oldest wildlife protection laws in the United States. In the years since its enactment, the MBTA has saved millions, if not billions, of birds from predatory human activities.

## TESTING BIRD-SAFE GLASS

- With our partners American Bird Conservancy (ABC) and Wildlife Conservation Society, we continued to test bird-safe glass treatment efficacy in deterring bird collisions. ABC tested over 200 birds belonging to 26 species this year at our glass-testing flight tunnel at the Bronx Zoo to see if they could detect various window treatments and avoid collisions. NYC Audubon's work at the Bronx Zoo tunnel is focused on building a tunnel design that gives reproducible results consistent with the tunnel ABC is concurrently using at the Powdermill Avian Research Center in Pennsylvania. We have worked to fine-tune the Bronx Zoo tunnel design with the goal of producing a prototype test apparatus that can be mass produced and delivers consistent glass testing results wherever it is deployed.

© Jacob K. Javits Convention Center



Above: The Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, once considered one of the city's deadliest buildings for birds due to its transparent glass, was retrofitted to use bird-safe glass in 2014, resulting in a 90 percent reduction in bird collisions from the previous year.

Below: This Baltimore oriole is about to test one of several glass products for bird safety at our glass-testing facility at the Bronx Zoo. We work in partnership with the American Bird Conservancy to address the problem of window strikes, a hazard that claims the lives of millions of birds each year.





# WATERBIRDS OF NEW YORK HARBOR

2016 PROGRAM  
HIGHLIGHTS

*MONITORING THE BIRDS THAT BREED AND STOP OVER IN THE HARBOR'S RICH ECOLOGICAL ZONES AND ENGAGING CITIZENS TO PROTECT THEIR HABITAT.*



The great egret, saved from near extinction in the early 20th century by dedicated conservationists, including the founders of the National Audubon Society, nests on five of New York's Harbor Heron islands. These recently hatched nestlings were photographed on South Brother Island during our 2016 survey. We try to protect thriving colonies like these, which are particularly vulnerable to disturbance from human recreation, predators, and sea-level rise.



The black-crowned night-heron is one of several waders that have proven to be excellent bio-indicators of harbor health and water quality. Because we've been monitoring nesting behavior in New York Harbor since 1982, we know that this species has seen a population decline of approximately 60 percent since 1993. However, over the last decade its population has stabilized and it continues to be our most abundant wader nesting in New York Harbor, with 538 pairs found in 2016.

© Russ / CC BY 2.0



The islands and wetlands of New York Harbor host significant populations of breeding and migratory wading birds, shorebirds, waterfowl, and other waterbirds. As top predators in the food web, these birds are critical indicators of habitat health and water quality in an estuary that is rich in wildlife but also vulnerable to storm surges, climate change, sea-level rise, and contamination from heavy metals, organic toxins, plastics, and other pollutants.

The Harbor Herons program (with major support from Elizabeth Woods and Charles Denholm) and the Tidal Connections program (funded by grants from Williams, Patagonia, Con Ed, Investors Foundation, the Five Star & Urban Waters Restoration Program of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, FedEx, and Bank of America) study waterbird populations to understand and interpret threats and engage communities in research and stewardship.

Harbor Herons tracks the health of the harbor by conducting longterm monitoring of the harbor-wide

population size and distribution of nesting long-legged wading birds and other colonial waterbirds, and evaluates their food resources through foraging surveys. We facilitate communication of data about these birds through the annual Harbor Herons and Waterbirds Working Group meeting. Organized and led by NYC Audubon, the meeting brings together biologists and resource managers working with waterbirds and their habitat in the greater New York/New Jersey Harbor region to discuss the latest conservation findings, research, and success stories.

Tidal Connections focuses on Jamaica Bay, a globally significant estuary that provides habitat for more than 325 species of birds. We conduct research and involve the community in protecting the bay and its wildlife through citizen science surveys of migrating shorebirds, spawning horseshoe crabs, and beach-nesting birds, as well as by cleaning, restoring, and advocating for the protection of beach and wetland habitat.

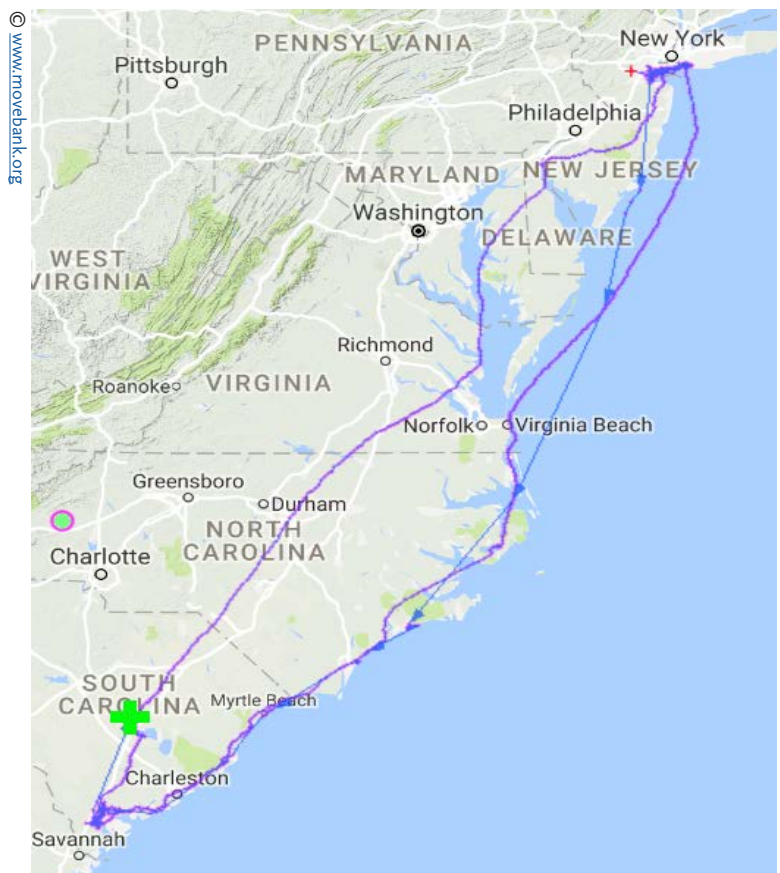
## APPLYING NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO OUR MONITORING EFFORTS:

- In the fall of 2016, our scientists deployed NanoTags on semipalmated sandpipers and common terns to help us understand the value of Jamaica Bay shorebird habitat, part of a pilot project with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and New Jersey Audubon. The tags transmit a unique frequency picked up by radio towers at key locations along the East Coast. The effort proved successful. We've been learning a lot as these birds move about the Atlantic Flyway, analyzing their time spent at various refuges, and putting down a layer of data that will be augmented in future years as we tag and monitor more birds. Our main goal is to find out how well our city's habitats are supporting migrating birds based on the time spent here.
- We worked with the USFWS to install a radio tower at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge in order to provide a more complete vision of shorebird migration through the city.
- We continued to track Edward, the great egret we tagged with an SMS transmitter on Staten Island in 2015 in coordination with researchers from Lenoir-Rhyne University in North Carolina and New Jersey Audubon. Edward's movements and whereabouts, available for anyone to view on [movebank.org](http://movebank.org), provide conservationists with additional information about wading bird migration patterns and the habitats along the Atlantic Flyway that support these birds.

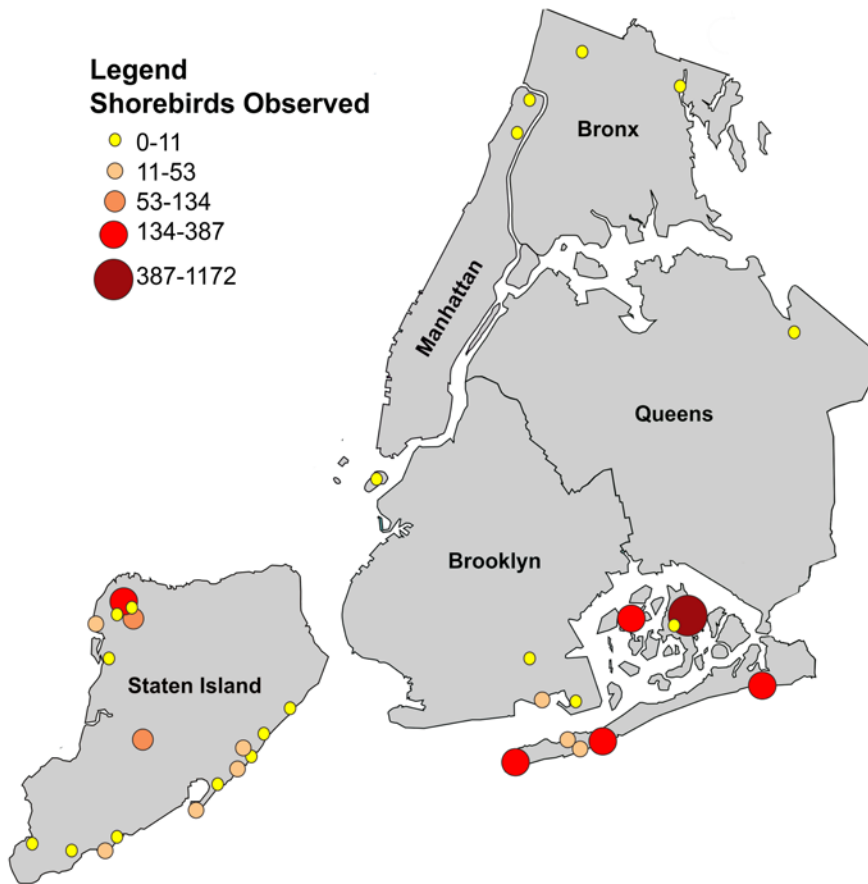
Right: This map shows the location and migration paths of Edward the great egret as of December, 2016. We know from the SMS transmitter data that he came back to breed at Hoffman Island in New York Harbor in 2016, and wintered in Ridgeland, South Carolina, just north of Hilton Head Island (represented by green cross). His most recent whereabouts can be viewed in real time on [movebank.org](http://movebank.org).



Above: In 2016, we banded and applied NanoTags to four common terns, including the one pictured here at Breezy Point, and five semipalmated sandpipers.







The map above shows the concentration of shorebirds sighted during our second NYC Shorebird Blitz on September 3, 2016. With the help of 23 volunteers, we covered 35 locations throughout the 5 boroughs, finding 3,161 shorebirds of 17 different species during this 24-hour period. The semipalmated sandpiper was the most abundant shorebird by far, with 1,330 individuals citywide. Most of them were found at East Pond in Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, which was the site with the highest total concentration of shorebirds.



© David Speiser

The black skimmer, pictured here with chick, is listed as one of the bird Species of Greatest Conservation Need by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Like other beach-nesting birds, the black skimmer is threatened by disturbances such as ATV driving on City beaches and feral cats.

## BROADENING OUR SHOREBIRD MONITORING AND PROTECTION EFFORTS

- We organized the first ever spring and fall NYC Shorebird Blitzes—citizen science efforts that aimed to both count the total number of shorebirds using our city during a 24-hour period and engage more people in shorebird conservation. Between these 2 efforts, 31 citizen scientists—covering over 35 areas throughout the city’s five boroughs—found 4,291 shorebirds in all. The two Shorebird Blitzes, along with subsequent ones planned in the future, will help us answer important conservation questions, such as how many shorebirds are coming through our area during peak migration periods, how they are distributed throughout the city, what they are doing while here, and what disturbances they face.
- Director of Science and Conservation Dr. Susan Elbin served on a committee advising the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation in revising the State Wildlife Action Plan and updating the state list of Species of Greatest Conservation Need.
- We testified in support of proposed legislation by the New York City Council to increase fines and enforcement for driving ATVs in public parks, an activity that endangers birds using stopover and nesting habitat.

## MONITORING AND SURVEYS

- We conducted our 32nd annual Harbor Herons Nesting Survey, monitoring the population of long-legged wading birds, double-crested cormorants, terns, and gulls on 19 islands in New York Harbor. You can view our full 2016 report at [www.nycaudubon.org/issues-of-concern/harbor-herons](http://www.nycaudubon.org/issues-of-concern/harbor-herons). We also continued our foraging study to help understand what habitats are most important to the Harbor's waders and waterbirds.
- In our eighth year of horseshoe crab monitoring in Jamaica Bay, we organized more than 160 citizen scientists (a record) to survey spawning crabs at four sites around Jamaica Bay. The high counts were 205 crabs at Plumb Beach East, 21 crabs at Plumb Beach West, and 451 crabs at Big Egg (and that was only what we counted in our quadrat samples). At Dead Horse Bay, where we take a total count of the horseshoe crabs, the high count was 493. Additionally, we were able to tag 797 crabs this year in order to monitor their movements and see whether crabs are returning to Jamaica Bay to spawn. In total, we have tagged 4,380 horseshoe crabs since we started the program in 2009.

© T.M. Stuart



Above: This double-crested cormorant, originally banded as a chick on Swinburne Island by NYC Audubon in summer 2016, was spotted and photographed on August 12, 2016, at Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey. Resightings of our banded birds help us learn about where these birds spend their winters and whether they come back to NYC to nest in the summer.

Below: Horseshoe crabs, whose eggs are an important food source for shorebirds, have seen their populations remain steady throughout Jamaica Bay. These horseshoe crabs and semipalmated sandpipers were photographed at Big Egg Marsh, one of four horseshoe crab spawning sites that we monitor each year.





## JAMAICA BAY WEST POND RESTORATION

After years of dedicated advocacy from our members, we are happy to report that efforts to repair Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge's West Pond were undertaken in November 2016 by the National Park Service (NPS). West Pond, an important freshwater source for hundreds of bird species migrating and nesting in Jamaica Bay, was originally breached during Hurricane Sandy in 2012. With the breach now closed, NPS fortified the closure and if necessary

will fill a substantial amount of the pond with freshwater to jump-start its return to its pre-Hurricane Sandy state. NPS plans to begin construction to reinstall the loop path around the pond this spring, with the trail expected to be open to the public by this summer. Thank you to all of our dedicated members who advocated for NPS to restore the West Pond as a vital freshwater source for birds.

© Don Riepe



Work by the National Park Service to repair the breach in Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge's West Pond began in November 2016.

# NEW YORK CITY RAPTORS

## *DEFENDING THE CITY'S BIRDS OF PREY*

Raptors are increasingly finding a home amid our urban grid: New York City has the country's largest urban population of peregrine falcons, who share the city's resources with nesting red-tailed hawks, osprey, American kestrels, and great horned owls. In addition, there are occasional winter irruptions of snowy owls, and more frequent sightings of bald eagles attempting to nest in the city.

NYC Audubon works to safeguard the city's raptors from the urban threat of accidental rodenticide poisoning. We coordinate a volunteer rapid-response raptor rescue team, which locates injured or trapped birds of prey, assesses their situation, and makes sure they are taken to a rehabilitator or safely released back into the wild. We advocate for the reduced use of pesticides, and educate New Yorkers on alternative rat-control methods.

© François Portmann



The red-tailed hawk, which did not begin nesting in the city until Pale Male and Lola took up residence on Fifth Avenue in 1992, is currently thriving in our city. This year we estimated there were at least 20 nesting pairs throughout the five boroughs.

## **2016 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

- We continue to support the Port Authority's trap-and-relocate program for snowy owls and other raptors. The program removes them from airport grounds, where they could collide with aircraft, and bands them to track their future movements.
- Our conservation staff testified at a New York City Council hearing in support of advanced notice for pesticide application in parks.
- We are working with agencies to gather and keep track of raptor nest locations in Manhattan to make sure rodenticides are not used in parks near those locations.



The Savannah sparrow is a grassland bird that nests in Floyd Bennett Field and is threatened by loss of habitat. Earlier studies of banded grassland birds showed that adults often return year after year to the same area to nest.

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# GRASSLAND BIRDS

## *MAINTAINING A DWINDLING HABITAT FOR GRASSLAND BIRDS*

Grassland birds are in decline across North America, largely due to loss of habitat. NYC Audubon works to identify patches of grassland within the five boroughs and collaborates with resource managers to keep these areas maintained as such. Without active management, grasslands can transition to scrub-shrub and forest. Productive grasslands include Floyd Bennett Field in Brooklyn and Freshkills Park in Staten Island.

## **2016 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

- Our science staff worked with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to create and manage a Grassland Bird Working Group. Composed of biologists from universities, nonprofit conservation organizations, and government agencies, the working group was formed to develop best management practices for sustaining grassland habitat that supports bird biodiversity.
- We continued our long history of advocating for and monitoring the Floyd Bennett Field grassland area.



# OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

2016 PROGRAM  
HIGHLIGHTS

CONNECTING NEW YORKERS WITH *BIRDS AND NATURE*



Birders of all ages and abilities caught sight of a yellow-bellied sapsucker on one of our free birding walks with trip leader Gabriel Willow in Bryant Park. Although it is only 9.6 acres, the park is an urban birding hotspot with 124 species posted on [eBird.org](http://eBird.org).



Clockwise from upper left: Participants learned about the value of green roofs, native plants, and green infrastructure from more than 10 partner organizations tabling at our Kingsland Wildflowers Festival. Trip leader Tod Winston educated Greenpoint residents about the value of native plants on our Native Plant Walk at McGolrick Park. Students got a hands-on education about the ecological value of horseshoe crabs during a visit to Plumb Beach, part of our Tidal Connections program.



© Anne Schwartz



© Sarah Ellis



Our 200 public programs, reaching over 2,000 people a year, include summer and winter ecocruises in New York Harbor and Jamaica Bay, bird walks (many of them free), overnight birding trips, an evening lecture series, a photography club, volunteer cleanup and habitat restoration, and educational and stewardship activities at festivals and events

throughout the five boroughs. We inform members and subscribers about bird conservation through our quarterly newsletter, *The Urban Audubon*, *The eGret* monthly email newsletter, our website and Syrinx blog, and social media @nyc Audubon.



## FEATHERED FRIENDS

- We piloted “Feathered Friends,” an after-school birding club at P.S. 344 AmPark Neighborhood School near Van Cortlandt Park. Featuring weekly guided bird walks throughout its fall semester, this program aims to foster an appreciation of the natural environment and stewardship of wild places. We plan to continue the Feathered Friends program at AmPark Neighborhood School and expand the program to other schools in New York City in 2017.

© Sybil Costello



As part of our Feathered Friends pilot program, during the fall semester students from P.S. 344 AmPark Neighborhood School birded once a week after school in Van Cortlandt Park, the Bronx, under the guidance of volunteer educators Chris Cooper (pictured here) and Sybil Costello.



## ENGAGING GREENPOINT IN CONSERVATION

- At the newly constructed Kingsland Wildflowers green roof and community space we organized multiple events, including an author lecture, green roof tours, and the Kingsland Wildflowers Festival, which engaged and educated local Greenpoint residents about green roofs and green infrastructure.
- Our conservation staff organized volunteers in Greenpoint to conduct bird surveys of McGolrick Park. Its purpose was to involve the community in adding observations from the park to the eBird database and encourage park stewardship.
- We engaged community members to plant and care for the Urban Oasis native plant garden we created the previous year in McGolrick Park.



Above: Visitors looked for birds, enjoyed the gardens, and took in fantastic views of the city while touring the Kingsland Wildflowers green roof during the Kingsland Wildflowers Festival.

Below: McGolrick Park Bird Survey volunteers, including the group pictured here at our May 5 survey, observed 34 species in the park during six different bird surveys throughout the year. Nineteen of these species had not previously been recorded in the park, among them the blackpoll warbler, cedar waxwing, and scarlet tanager.



*Funding provided by the Office of the New York State Attorney General and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation through the Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund*



## CITYWIDE OUTREACH

- NYC Audubon hosted the third annual “It’s Your Tern!” Festival on Governors Island, partnering with the Waterfront Alliance, the New York Harbor School, Earth Matter, the Governors Island Alliance, and the Trust for Governors Island.
- Through our “Be a Good Egg” campaign in partnership with Audubon New York and New Jersey Audubon, volunteers raised awareness about how beachgoers can avoid endangering beach-nesting birds.
- We partnered with organizations to provide free bird walks open to the public, including 10 “Birding Basics for Families” walks with the Central Park Conservancy, 35 bird walks with the Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy, 24 walks with the Bryant Park Corporation, and 5 walks with Queens Botanical Garden.
- We secured funding for a residency on Governors Island for the summer 2017 season. NYC Audubon will offer free bird walks and outfit its Nolan Park cottage with displays, demonstrations, and a library (part of which will be devoted to children’s books). Our work conserving the island’s common terns will be the focus of our educational message. We hope that a portion of the island’s 600,000 annual visitors will stop by, learn about the wildlife in New York City, and become convinced of the importance of environmental stewardship in urban settings.



Above: Volunteer Adriana Palmer helps kids create their own bird bands during the “It’s Your Tern!” Festival on Governors Island.

Below: NYC Audubon helped educate beachgoers about how they can avoid endangering beach-nesting birds at “Be a Good Egg” outreach events at NYC beaches. The common tern pictured here helped to emphasize our message.



NYC Audubon will be engaging Governors Island visitors at Nolan Park House #17 starting on May 1, 2017.

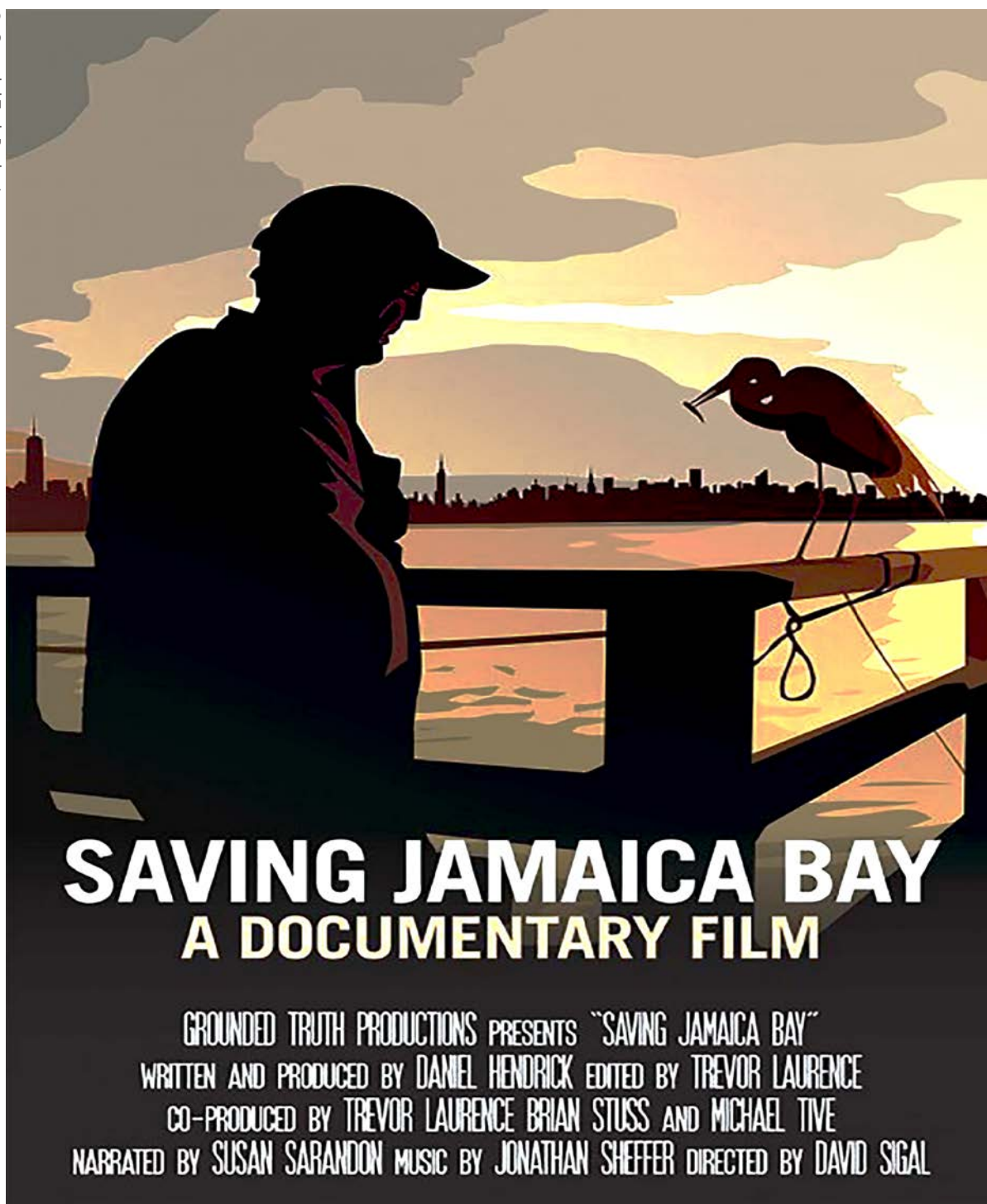


## SAVING JAMAICA BAY DOCUMENTARY MAKES ITS BIG SCREEN DEBUT

- *Saving Jamaica Bay* won “Audience Award for Best Documentary” at its world premiere on March 17, 2016, at the Queens World Film Festival. NYC Audubon partnered with producer Dan Hendrick to bring this feature-length documentary to completion. The film tells the story of how the local Jamaica Bay community fought to clean up and restore this globally significant

estuary that provides habitat for over 325 birds. The film was also featured at the Wildlife Conservation Festival in New York City, Portland EcoFilm Festival in Oregon, and DC Environmental Film Festival, among others, and had screenings at dozens of community events within the city.

© Grounded Truth Productions





# MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

*PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP IN THE CITY'S FIVE BOROUGHS*



As part of International Coastal Cleanup Day, September 17, 2016, volunteers removed over 80 bags of garbage from Jamaica Bay's North Channel Beach and cleared over a half mile of coastal area important for bird conservation.



Clockwise from upper left: At the 117th annual Central Park Christmas Bird Count, over 75 volunteers counted 6,342 birds of 59 species throughout the park. Warbler seekers made the journey out to Sterling Forest in May 2016 on one of the 200 trips and classes offered by NYC Audubon each year. Over the course of the day on April 23, 2016, more than 40 volunteers cleaned Plumb Beach in order to ensure productive nesting habitat for soon-to-be-returning shorebirds and horseshoe crabs.

© Lynn Hertzog



© Don Riepe



NYC Audubon's 11,500 members (3,000 direct contributors and 8,500 National Audubon members living in NYC), make all of the work that we do possible. Our success also depends on our corps of stalwart volunteers, who sustain our conservation and outreach efforts. In addition to their invaluable contributions to our Project Safe Flight and

Waterbirds of New York Harbor programs, volunteers helped restore salt marshes, cleaned up beaches, and participated in outreach and educational activities. Last year, more than 500 volunteers contributed over 2,295 hours of work to NYC Audubon's mission.



## RESTORATION AND STEWARDSHIP

- Our volunteers cleaned up Plumb Beach in Jamaica Bay ahead of horseshoe crab spawning, together with NYC H2O and the National Park Service.
- We took part in the global International Coastal Cleanup Day by organizing a cleanup of North Channel Beach.
- Thanks to a Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, NYC Audubon was able to greatly expand its Tidal Connections program of conservation science and habitat restoration in Jamaica Bay.



Above: A record 160 volunteers monitored and tagged horseshoe crabs at four different sites in Jamaica Bay this year.

Below: Students from the Brooklyn New School collected data on shorebirds and horseshoe crabs during a Tidal Connections program field trip to Plumb Beach on May 20.

© Sarah Elliot





## MEMBER BENEFITS

Members enjoy an array of benefits, including free walks that not only bring enjoyment and camaraderie, but also highlight our work and foster stewardship of important habitat.

- Membership activities of the year included 10 free member events—such as bird walks in Jamaica Bay, Central Park, Floyd Bennett Field, Prospect Park, and Inwood Hill Park; a donor cruise to the Brother Islands; and transportation to the annual Shorebird Festival in Jamaica Bay.

- Our KIDS Member Program for 8- to 12-year-olds offered two free bird walks during fall and spring migration.

- Members received the new version of our “Birding by Subway” brochure, featuring information on all the best birding spots within the city’s five boroughs and how to get to them via public transportation.

Left: Our updated “Birding by Subway” brochure, re-published in fall 2016, highlights 25 different locations to bird throughout the city’s five boroughs and gives directions to these spots via mass transit. The brochure also features the best season to visit each spot and helpful birding tips for when you reach your destination.



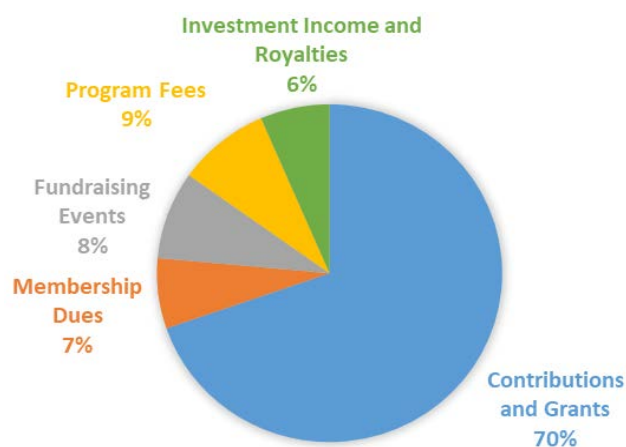
Donors on our June 1, 2016, sunset donor cruise to the Brother Islands enjoyed seeing some of the 3,000 herons, egrets, and ibis nesting in New York Harbor.



## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

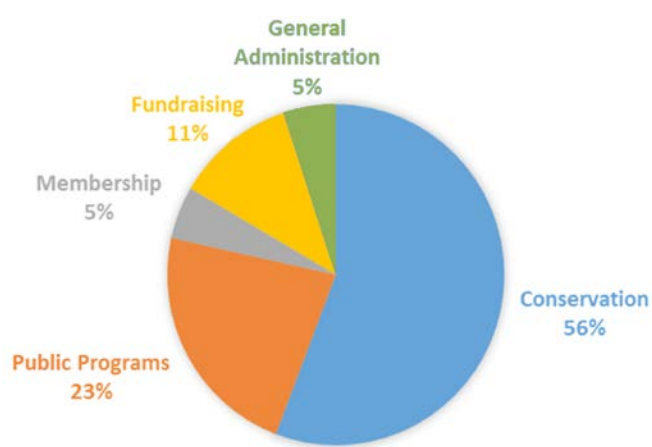
For fiscal year ended March 31, 2016

### SUPPORT & REVENUE



Contributions and Grants (70%)	\$	935,412
Membership Dues (7%)	\$	90,258
Fundraising Events (8%)	\$	113,088
Program Fees (9%)	\$	116,021
Investment Income and Royalties (6%)	\$	87,246
<b>Total Support &amp; Revenue (100%)</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,342,025</b>

### EXPENSES



Conservation (56%)	\$	652,251
Public Programs (23%)	\$	265,284
Membership (5%)	\$	58,104
Fundraising (11%)	\$	134,725
General Administration (5%)	\$	58,734
<b>Total Expense (100%)</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,169,098</b>

<b>Profit (loss)</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>172,927</b>
<b>Funds transfered to investment account</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>100,000</b>

### BALANCE SHEET

<b>Assets</b>	Cash	\$138,090
	Receivables	\$421,231
	Prepaid	\$7,780
	Fixed Assets	\$26,380
	Investments	\$572,942
	Other Assets	\$8,335
	<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$1,174,758</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	Accounts Payable	\$268,197
	Deferred Revenue	\$38,199
	<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$306,396</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	Unrestricted	\$738,824
	Temporarily Restricted	\$129,538
	Permanently Restricted	\$0
	<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$868,362</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		<b>\$1,174,758</b>



*NYC Audubon's conservation work and outreach programs are made possible by the generous contributions of members and friends. We would like to express our gratitude to the Leon Levy Foundation for its leadership support, to the Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund for its three-year grant to build a wildflower green roof and community space atop Broadway Stages, and to all those who have supported our work over the past year. The donor listings below include gifts received April 1, 2015 through March 31, 2016.*

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*New York City Audubon works to protect wild birds and their habitats in the five boroughs of New York City, improving the quality of life for all New Yorkers. Our 11,500 members, donors, and volunteers make our research, advocacy, and education work possible. NYC Audubon is an independent nonprofit affiliated with the National Audubon Society. NYC Audubon is tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations are deductible to the extent allowed by law. NYC Audubon meets all of the Better Business Bureau's Standards of Charity Accountability.*



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NYC Audubon's conservation work and public programs are made possible by philanthropic contributions from members, friends, corporations, foundations, and government agencies. We are grateful to all those who have sustained our work this past season, including the 2,254 members and donors whose individual gifts in amounts up to \$249 collectively provided \$94,275 in support of our mission from April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016

#### PHOTOGRAPHY

**Cover:** double-crested cormorants on Swinburne Island © Don Riepe

**Page 3:** (left to right): yellow-rumped warbler © Laura Meyers; yellow-crowned night-heron © François Portmann

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Thank you to all who supported our fundraising drive at the 2015 Fall Roost to purchase a new boat for our Harbor Herons Nesting Surveys, and to Cathy Heller for her leadership gift. Dr. Susan Elbin (pictured here) and her team can safely continue the annual surveys of island nesting colonies in New York Harbor on the Go-Go.

