



NEW YORK CITY AUDUBON

ANNUAL REPORT 2017



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Officers, board, and advisory council from April 2016 to December 2017; staff from January 2017

* Past President

¹ Elected June 2016

² Term ended June 2016

³ Elected June 2017

⁴ Term ended June 2017

ANNUAL REPORT

Writing, Editorial Production

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Design

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



New York City Audubon is the most urban of Audubon organizations, which brings its own set of challenges. We conduct our research and conservation programs in a densely built landscape where habitat and wildlife are under constant pressures of development and competing human uses. Yet the urban focus of our endeavor offers a wonderful opportunity to encourage the city's residents to see beyond their human-made surroundings and experience the beautiful parks and natural areas in every borough.

Our mission is to educate people about the wildlife and habitat all around us in New York City and to involve them in urban conservation. As we engage people through citizen science, volunteer habitat restoration, education programs, our new Governors Island summer residency, and many other initiatives, we amplify our ability to conserve habitat and advance science. We also connect people to nature, so essential for the planet and for our psychological and physical well-being.

Thanks to the dedication and support of our donors, members, and volunteers, we are expanding the ways in which people can experience urban nature. There are many ways to join in: contributing to science by counting and tagging Horseshoe Crabs with us, reporting dead or injured birds on D-Bird, surveying shorebirds in the harbor, or restoring habitat in Jamaica Bay by planting marsh grass or clearing trash from beaches.

With these and many other efforts highlighted in this report, we are making progress in conserving urban habitat, protecting our city's wildlife, and involving diverse communities. Visit our house on Governors Island, come to a program at Kingsland Wildflowers, join us on bird walks, lectures, and tours—and bring your family and friends!

To keep the momentum going, we count on your continued support. Please visit us at www.nycaudubon.org to find out what you can do.

With thanks,

Jeffrey Kimball
President



GOOD FOR BIRDS, GOOD FOR PEOPLE

New York City Audubon envisions a future in which nature is not something separate from the urban environment but an integral part of it—and of the lives of people who make the city their home. In the past year, we have taken exciting new steps toward this goal.

For the first time, we have a physical presence where we connect people with nature in New York City: a seasonal “pop-up” environmental center in a historic house on **Governors Island (page 9)**. Our 2017 inaugural residency featured birdwalks, nature-themed art exhibits, workshops, and kids activities, and we’ll be returning for the next three years. We are inspiring a new, more diverse, generation of environmental advocates with our programs for public school students. We successfully piloted our **Feathered Friends (p. 10)** afterschool birding club in the Bronx last year and held the ninth year of our **Jamaica Bay Tidal Connections (p. 10)** field-and-classroom ecology program with NYU.

We are working to weave a whole new layer of wildlife habitat into the cityscape on the rooftops. With community partners, in 2017 we completed **Kingsland Wildflowers (p. 4 & 8)**, a bird-friendly green roof and community space in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. The demand has been so great for roof tours, school visits, workshops, and other events that we recently received funding to expand and extend programming. We also coordinate the **New York City Green Roof Researchers Alliance (p. 4)** to establish a research and policy foundation for advancing green roofs in the city. The alliance will host the first New York City Green Roof Research Alliance Conference in June 2018.

This report highlights these and other accomplishments in our three program areas—**Waterbirds of New York Harbor (p. 6)**, **Project Safe Flight (p. 4)**, and **Education and Outreach (p. 8)**—as we work to improve habitat, protect wildlife, and make nature fundamental to the urban experience.



PROJECT SAFE FLIGHT

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



WATERBIRDS OF NEW YORK HARBOR

Monitoring and protecting the beloved creatures of the harbor and shorelines



OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

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

PROJECT SAFE FLIGHT

MAKING NEW YORK CITY SAFER FOR MIGRATORY BIRDS

With the generous support of the Leon Levy Foundation, Project Safe Flight aims to protect the millions of birds that migrate through our city each year.

- We research the causes of bird collisions, pinpoint the city's deadliest buildings, and develop realistic solutions.
- We educate and work with policy-makers, developers, architects, and building owners to reduce the hazards of glass and lights.
- We restore and create urban habitat—including green roofs—and study its use by wildlife.

2017 HIGHLIGHT: ROOFTOP URBAN WILDLIFE

In 2017, we completed a series of green roofs at **Kingsland Wildflowers** in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. Located in a polluted industrial area next to Newtown Creek, these roofs soak up stormwater, clean and cool the air, save energy costs, and provide much-needed habitat for birds, bats, and pollinators. The project was funded by the Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund, with matching support from building owner Broadway Stages, and designed and built by local business Alive Structures. It includes 14,215 square feet of low-growing extensive green roof, 7,066 square feet of bird-friendly intensive wildflower meadow, and community space for tours, classes, lectures, and workshops.

With a grant from The New York Community Trust, we launched and coordinated the **New York City Green Roof Researchers Alliance** to spur the creation of environmentally beneficial green roofs. It is the first-ever effort to coordinate green roof science, policy, and education research and build a database of green roofs in New York City.

Continuing our partnership with the **Jacob K. Javits Convention Center**, we completed a fourth year of monitoring birds, insects, and bats on the building's green roof—the second largest in the country. We are finding that more species are using the roof during migration as the plant community matures. This ties in nicely with our study at Kingsland Wildflowers and provides important information about the habitat value of different types of green roofs in urban environments.

© NYC Audubon



Native plants such as Tickseed bloom on the rooftop meadow at Kingsland Wildflowers.

KINGSLAND WILDFLOWERS

14,215
square feet
of sedum

7,066
square feet of
wildflower meadow

27
species of native bird-
friendly plants

36,525
gallons of stormwater
retained per 1 inch of
rainfall by the
green roof



Funding for Kingsland Wildflowers 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.

2017 HIGHLIGHT: LIGHTS AND MIGRATION

A paper by New York City Audubon and academic collaborators on the impact of high-intensity artificial light at night on bird behavior was published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* on September 26, 2017. The study, co-authored by Director of Science and Conservation Dr. Susan Elbin and Advisory Council Member Dr. Andrew Farnsworth, analyzed seven years of data collected at the September 11th Tribute in Light and proved that birds from as far away as .5 kilometers and flying as high as four kilometers in the sky change their migration course and speed in response to artificial light.

With Dr. Greg Dobler, data scientist from New York University's Center for Urban Science and

Progress, we began a study of the effects of artificial light on night-migrating birds. We designed the season's collision monitoring routes to align with the light data collected by rooftop cameras focused on Midtown and lower Manhattan. The study was made possible by the generous support of The Durst Organization.

For the 15th year, our volunteers and staff monitored the Tribute in Light, alerting partners Michael Ahern Production Services and The National September 11 Memorial & Museum to turn off the lights when too many birds were caught circling in the beams. Through news stories and social media, our message about bird collisions and light reached a larger audience than ever. More than 27,000 people watched our Facebook Live video explaining why the beams are turned off.



Director of Conservation and Science Dr. Susan Elbin and two volunteers identify birds caught in the 2017 Tribute in Light. Dr. Elbin advised partner Michael Ahern Production Services to shut off the lights three times for roughly 20 minutes each time to allow the birds to disperse.

TRIBUTE IN LIGHT STUDY

7

years of migrant bird behavior studied at the Tribute in Light

41

volunteers helped monitor the lights for bird activity

1.1

million birds estimated to be pulled off course by the lights

34

minutes on average that a bird would stay in the lights

.4

meters per second on average slower that the birds travelled when Tribute was lit compared to when unlit

100+

news stories resulted from study's publication

WATERBIRDS OF NEW YORK HARBOR

MONITORING AND PROTECTING THE BELOVED CREATURES OF THE HARBOR AND SHORELINE

For over three decades, we have been monitoring and protecting long-legged wading birds, shorebirds, and other waterbirds that nest and migrate through our urban estuary. Projects received essential support in 2017 from the National Migratory Bird Conservation Act, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Five Star and Urban Waters Program, Manomet, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), The Bay and Paul Foundations, Eppley Foundation for Scientific Research, Patagonia, Williams, and Investors Bank.

- We are building and analyzing a long-term database on New York Harbor's nesting waterbird populations.
- We monitor migratory shorebird abundance, distribution, and foraging in Jamaica Bay.
- We use the data we collect to assess changes in the environment and advocate for protecting key habitats.
- We engage New Yorkers in citizen-science monitoring and volunteer habitat restoration in the harbor.
- We contribute to collaborative efforts to manage and protect waterbird populations and prey species in New York City and along the Atlantic Flyway.

2017 HIGHLIGHT: HARBOR HERONS

A grant from the Eppley Foundation allowed us to confirm and analyze more than three decades of data from **colonial waterbird surveys** in New York Harbor. As a result, we now have the first detailed picture of waterbird population trends in New York City.

We conducted our 33rd annual Harbor Herons nesting survey, recording colony size and species composition at 20 locations. We also conducted our ninth year of citizen-science waterbird foraging surveys.

We are monitoring and banding the **Common Terns on Governors Island**, where they were discovered nesting on decommissioned piers in 2008. After one pier collapsed and the terns abandoned another, we developed a plan to get them to return. Working with The Trust for Governors Island, Billion Oyster Project, the New York Harbor School, Earth Matter, NYSDEC, National Park Service, and Shoals Marine Laboratory, we added a nesting substrate of crushed oystershell and grass clippings, closed off the area to human disturbance, and set up tern decoys. The result: 33 terns returned to nest in 2017.



Great Egrets were observed nesting on six different islands in New York Harbor this year. The largest colony size was found on Hoffman Island (shown here), with 197 nesting pairs. While this species' population declined 15% compared to 2016, the trend in its population has been positive over the 33 years of monitoring.

HARBOR HERONS NESTING SURVEY

33

consecutive years
studying waders in New
York Harbor

7

species of long-legged
wading birds studied

1,367

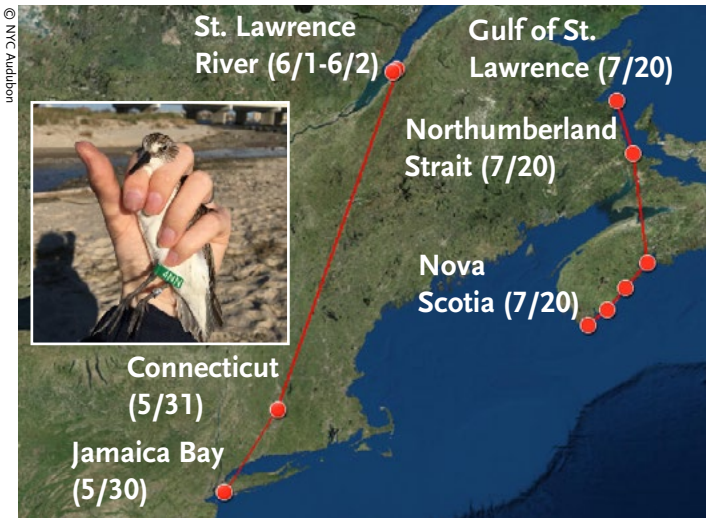
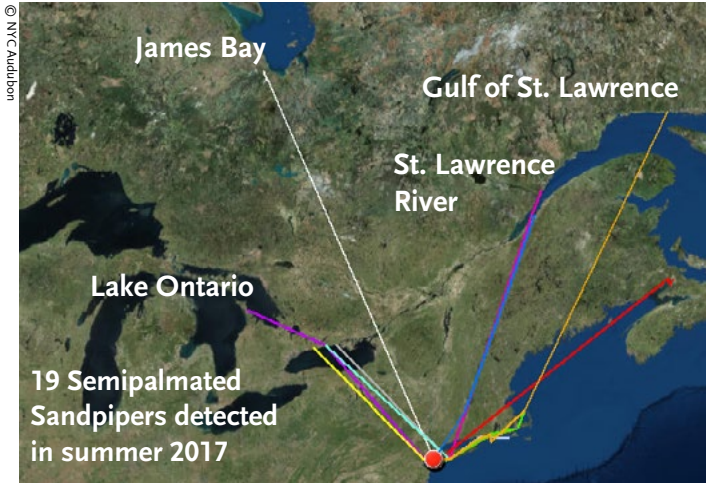
wading bird nests
found in 2017

8

islands in New York
Harbor providing
nesting habitat

4

percent decrease in
nests found in 2017
compared to 2016



TOP: The Motus wildlife tracking network picked up the migration routes of 19 Semipalmated Sandpipers NanoTagged by NYC Audubon scientists in the spring and summer of 2017 as the tags pinged radio towers along the flyway. We learned that tagged birds went to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, James Bay, and Lake Ontario, among other areas. BOTTOM: The path of Semipalmated Sandpiper 4NN, tagged in Jamaica Bay on May 30, was traced from Connecticut on May 31 to the St. Lawrence River two days later. It was then detected on July 20 at the Gulf of St. Lawrence flying south to Nova Scotia, tracing a different path during fall migration.

2017 HIGHLIGHT: TIDAL CONNECTIONS

Exciting results have begun to come in from a pilot study **tracking Semipalmated Sandpipers** using miniature NanoTags that transmit to a network of receivers along the Atlantic Coast. The data is forwarded to the Motus system that tracks the movement of birds, bats, and large insects. Some Semipalmated Sandpipers have made it as far as the Gulf of St. Lawrence, James Bay, Lake Ontario, and Lake Huron.

For the sixth year, we **monitored American Oystercatchers** nesting on Jamaica Bay beaches and assessed disturbances at nesting sites. Since 2011, we

JAMAICA BAY SHOREBIRD AND HORSESHOE CRAB RESEARCH IN 2017

24

Semipalmated Sandpipers NanoTagged

19

different locations where our NanoTagged Semipalmated Sandpipers were detected by radio towers, as far away as 800 miles north of Jamaica Bay

21

American Oystercatchers tagged with field-readable bands

6,000

shorebirds counted in New York City during our one-day Fall Shorebird Blitz

4,327

spawning Horseshoe Crabs counted at sample plots in Jamaica Bay

800

Horseshoe Crabs Tagged in Jamaica Bay

206

volunteers helped count and tag Horseshoe Crabs, a record number

have banded 60 oystercatcher adults and chicks to track their migration patterns. This research is contributing to a regionwide effort to protect the species' Atlantic Coast population.

Together with community partners, we once again **engaged hundreds of New Yorkers** in appreciating and caring for Jamaica Bay wildlife and involving them in citizen-science Horseshoe Crab monitoring, marsh and dune restoration, beach clean-ups, and wildlife festivals. We partnered with the National Park Service, American Littoral Society, Sadhana, and Rockaway Waterfront Alliance for these projects.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

CONNECTING THE MOST IMPORTANT DRIVER OF OUR SUCCESS—PEOPLE—to THE CITY'S NATURAL WORLD

We educate and connect New Yorkers of all ages with nature in the city, providing participants with the valuable opportunity to learn about wild birds and their habitats.

- We offer 200 public programs a year, including bird walks, lectures, tours, festivals, and a summer environmental center on Governors Island.
- We aim to create the next generation of conservation-minded New Yorkers.
- We reach out to diverse communities.

2017 HIGHLIGHT: KINGSLAND WILDFLOWERS

Even as the last sections of green roof were being completed, the wildflower meadow and community space at Kingsland was humming with activity. In 2017, we held six lectures, hosted 10 school groups and several workshops and conferences, and opened the roof to the community for Friday volunteer days and Saturday visits.

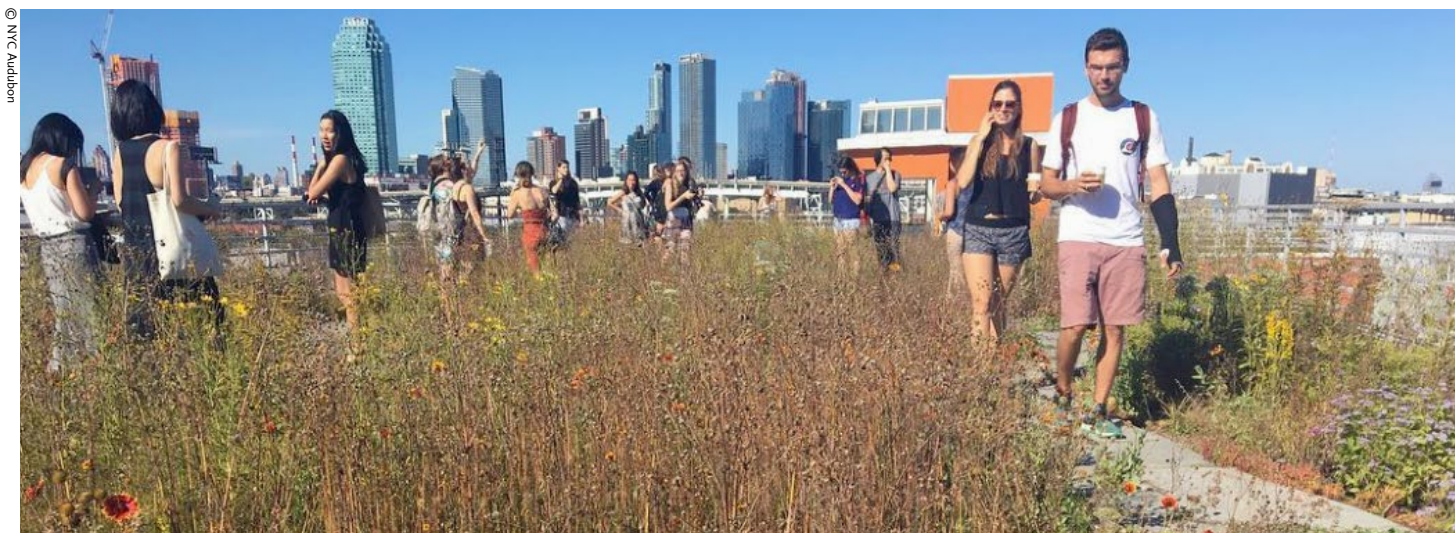
Our second annual **Kingsland Wildflowers Festival** in September drew 400 attendees, and 500 people visited the roof for tours during Open House New York in October. Demand for our programs far exceeded our expectations. A grant amendment from the Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund will allow us to offer more programs and extend our programming for an additional year.



© NYC Audubon



© James Park, Broadway Stages



© NYC Audubon

Kingsland Wildflowers hosted numerous school groups last year. An Eco-Families tour from P.S. 34, (TOP LEFT), and a school group from P.S. 10 (TOP RIGHT), both in Greenpoint, participated in activities such as a sensory exploration of plant life and a mapping activity provided by National Wildlife Federation sustainability coaches. BOTTOM: At the second annual Kingsland Wildflower Festival in September 2017, hundreds of people explored the rooftop meadow and learned about the value of green roofs and native plants for migratory birds.

2017 HIGHLIGHT: GOVERNORS ISLAND

From May to October of 2017, we piloted a new model for public engagement—a seasonal “pop-up” **environmental center** on Governors Island. We offered birdwalks, art exhibits, artist residencies, craft activities, and

interpretive displays including our conservation partners. Visitors discovered the city’s wealth of birdlife and learned about the threats birds face. The Trust for Governors Island has renewed our residency for the next three years and we will be returning in May with expanded activities.



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© Carol Peace Robins



© Wild Bird Fund

GOVERNORS ISLAND RESIDENCY SUMMER 2017

3,996

registered visitors and program participants at our house

35

U.S states from which house visitors travelled

36

countries from which house visitors travelled

50+

bird walks led by NYC Audubon guides on the island

109

bird species identified on the island

TOP LEFT: In NYC Audubon’s first seasonal residency on Governors Island, we created an environmental education center in an historic house in Nolan Park. Activities included a nest-building workshop for children with Linda LaBella (TOP RIGHT), over 50 bird walks led by Gabriel Willow (MIDDLE) and other NYC Audubon guides, and art exhibits such as Marna Chester’s *Paper Ecologies*, *Sculptures in Paper and Other Natural Materials* (BOTTOM).



TOP LEFT: A young participant at our first annual Horseshoe Crab Festival in May 2017 examines a live Horseshoe Crab. TOP RIGHT: Layla and Kayla, students at P.S. 344, took a field trip to Van Cortlandt Park with our pilot Feathered Friends afterschool birding club. BOTTOM LEFT: Pete Lengyel of Kings County Brewers Collective displays a can of its limited edition “Safe Flight IPA,” which featured facts about bird window strikes and a link to our Project Safe Flight web page. BOTTOM RIGHT: Dr. Susan Elbin, Kaitlyn Parkins, and Pete Lengyel take questions from the audience about bird conservation after screening *The Messenger* documentary film at Kings County Brewers Collective in October 2017.

2017 HIGHLIGHT: SPREADING OUR WINGS

After its success in 2016, we continued our **Feathered Friends afterschool birding club** at P.S. 344, across from Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx. With the club, we are testing a model for engaging urban kids in nature that we aim to bring to more New York City public schools.

For the ninth year, we planted the seeds of environmental stewardship with our classroom and field program for public school students with NYU’s Wallerstein Collaborative for Environmental Education.

In 2017, our 13th annual Shorebird Festival and first-ever Horseshoe Crab Festival drew hundreds of

people to Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge.

We collaborated with local Brooklyn brewery Kings County Brewers Collective (KCBC) to create “**Safe Flight IPA**,” a seasonal brew designed to raise awareness and funds for Project Safe Flight. The beer, brewed by KCBC co-founder Pete Lengyel in September 2017, was sold on tap at the KCBC taproom. Additionally, pints of the beer were canned and distributed to local bars, restaurants, and stores such as Whole Foods. Through sales of the brew, KCBC donated \$3,630 to support Project Safe Flight. We plan to collaborate again in 2018 to create a new batch of Safe Flight IPA in time for fall migration.

MEMBERS & VOLUNTEERS

PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP IN THE FIVE BOROUGHS

An incredible network of members, volunteers, and donors powers the work we do.

Our volunteer network keeps growing. In the spring of 2017, more than 200 citizen scientists—the largest number to date—made their way to Jamaica Bay beaches as the sun set to tag and count spawning Horseshoe Crabs. This effort collects longterm data on an important food source for migrating shorebirds. It contributes to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's regional effort to assess

the status of Horseshoe Crabs in New York State and helps determine the management and conservation of the species throughout the region.

Volunteers are also essential to our bird collision and shorebird research, as well as the habitat restoration projects we do with Jamaica Bay community organizations. Last year, more than 300 volunteers planted marsh grass to restore wetlands, stabilized dunes with native shrubs and plants, and cleared trash from beaches used by Horseshoe Crabs and shorebirds.

© NYC Audubon



© Lynne Hertzog



© Sean Sime



TOP: Fifth graders at P.S. 48 participated in a volunteer clean-up of Plumb Beach in May 2017. LEFT: The Ramble team in the 2017 Central Park Christmas Bird Count. RIGHT: On September 11, 2017, volunteers monitored the Tribute in Light for birds caught in the beams.

© Ingrid Pierre-Pierre



© Don Riepe



© Don Riepe



NYC Audubon members receive benefits such as members-only bird walks and other free events. TOP: KIDS Members looked for birds in Central Park on an outing with NYC Audubon trip leader Gabriel Willow. LEFT: Willow and Chris Cooper, NYC Audubon board member and Feathered Friends educator, at our Donor Cruise of the East River islands in June 2017. RIGHT: Participants spot shorebirds at our 13th Annual Shorebird Festival at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge.

2017 HIGHLIGHT: MEMBER BENEFITS

The foundation of our organization is our 8,500 members (2,000 direct contributors and 6,500 New York City-based National Audubon members).

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 urban habitat. This includes 10 free member

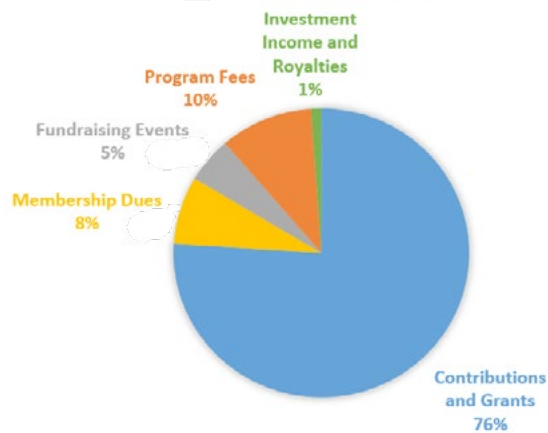
events, a donor cruise to see waterbirds nesting on East River islands, and transportation to the annual Jamaica Bay Shorebird Festival.

Our KIDS Member program for 8- to 12-year-olds offered two free bird walks during spring and fall migration. Over 40 KIDS Members explored Central Park in search of birds NYC Audubon walk guides this year.

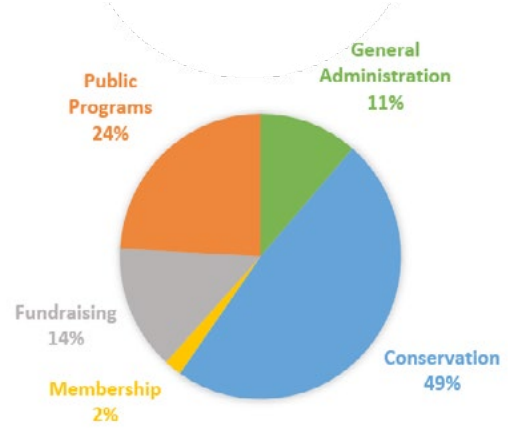
FINANCIAL INFORMATION

For fiscal year ended March 31, 2017

SUPPORT & REVENUE



EXPENSES



Contributions and Grants (76%)	\$	941,662
Membership Dues (8%)	\$	94,152
Fundraising Events (5%)	\$	63,192
Program Fees (10%)	\$	125,961
Investment Income and Royalties (1%)	\$	13,861
Total Support & Revenue (100%)	\$	1,238,828

Conservation (49%)	\$	584,056
Public Programs (24%)	\$	291,166
Membership (2%)	\$	24,430
General Administration (11%)	\$	137,076
Fundraising (14%)	\$	170,843
Total Expense (100%)	\$	\$1,207,571

Surplus (deficit)	\$	31,527
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BALANCE SHEET

Assets	Cash	\$101,987
	Pledges and Receivables	\$109,651
	Prepaid Expenses	\$15,047
	Fixed Assets	\$38,270
	Investments	\$742,626
	Other Assets	\$10,835
	Total Assets	\$1,018,416
Liabilities	Accounts Payable	\$19,398
	Deferred Revenue	\$43,193
	Total Liabilities	\$62,591
Net Assets	Unrestricted	\$848,841
	Temporarily Restricted	\$106,984
	Permanently Restricted	\$0
	Total Net Assets	\$955,825
Total Liabilities and Net Assets		\$1,018,416

SUPPORT FOR NYC AUDUBON

*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, 2016 through March 31, 2017.***

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