



GEORGIA AUDUBON
ANNUAL
REPORT
2021



GEORGIA
AUDUBON

www.georgiaaudubon.org

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

When I was growing up in Alabama, we had a bird in a box in our living room every few weeks. My mom would get a call that there was an injured bird, she'd pick it up, and the bird would stay with us until she was able to drive it to the wildlife organization where she volunteered. The variety of birds we cared for ran the gamut, but I distinctly remember her showing me a Red-tailed Hawk and a Barred Owl. I found these animals stunning and the details of their feathers and features striking.

Today, I'm still in awe of these captivating creatures. In the early days of the pandemic, watching birds helped ground me and provided a source of calm. Two years later, they are still a light in this never-ending shade: my source of joy and wonder.

I am grateful to all of the members, donors, and staff who support Georgia Audubon and our mission to build places where birds and people thrive. Because of you, we have a lot of progress to celebrate toward our mission. It is my pleasure to share some of our accomplishments over the past year, detailed in our 2021 Annual Report.

I hope you'll enjoy reading about our efforts in Georgia to increase and protect bird populations and healthy habitats, to create a diverse group of environmental stewards and professional educators, and to collaborate with communities to connect people with birds.

Thank you for making these achievements possible and for protecting the birds we love. In 2022 Georgia Audubon will continue our work with a focus on making birds and birding accessible for everyone—connecting students with STEM through birds, migration forecasting, habitat restoration, and more. Healthy habitats, including parks and greenspaces that support birds and other wildlife, create healthy communities that we not only enjoy but also need for our own survival.

I invite you to find ways to deepen your connection to our statewide organization so birds can continue to nourish our spirits and enrich our lives.

I hope to see you on a bird walk soon!



Paige Martin
Chair, Board of Directors



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CONSERVATION

Restoring Bird-friendly Habitat Across the State

Georgia Audubon's model of habitat restoration isn't just for the birds. It's for people, too. And now, thanks to support from a number of grants and from our members, Georgia Audubon has been able to bring our restoration services across the state to do even more good for birds and people alike.



In Fayette County, Georgia Audubon began tackling our first wetlands restoration project at Sams Lake Bird Sanctuary in 2021. Located within the Flint River watershed, this 56-acre public nature area, owned and managed by our partners at Southern Conservation Trust, helps mitigate the impacts of flooding in communities along the upper Flint River watershed by storing water and slowly delivering it through tributaries to the Flint River.

It's also great habitat for birds, with more than 140 species being recorded at the site, including species in decline such as Brown-headed Nuthatch, Wood Thrush, Red-headed Woodpecker, Chimney Swift, and Prothonotary Warbler.

During the past decade, aquatic plants released from home aquariums have spread and choked the open water wetlands, disrupting foraging areas for wading birds and waterfowl. On the land portions of the sanctuary, Chinese privet, Bradford pear, and other non-native plant species have overrun nesting islands and prevented native plants from thriving.

A grant from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services, along with generous matching funds from the Southern Conservation Trust, have allowed us to conduct targeted treatments to eradicate the non-native aquatic vegetation, as well as to remove invasive terrestrial plants. This year, we'll continue removing non-native plants from the project site, in addition to replanting areas with bird-friendly native plants such as buttonbush, Virginia sweetspire, and hackberry.

Demonstrating the importance of this work for Georgia's native wildlife and the surrounding communities, Georgia Audubon's and Southern Conservation Trust's work at Sams Lake was recognized as one of the Georgia Water Coalition's 2021 Clean 13 award recipients.

Nearly **7,000 NATIVE PLANTS** distributed or installed in 2021 through plant sales and habitat restoration.

3,357 ACRES have now been certified through the Wildlife Sanctuary Program, sequestering an estimated **8,818 METRIC TONS** of CO₂, the equivalent of 9,746,390 pounds of coal burned.

Installation of **3 HIGH-PROFILE CHIMNEY SWIFT TOWERS** (two along the Atlanta BeltLine, one at Freedom Park in Atlanta).

Making Migration Safer for Birds Over Georgia

Atlanta is a dangerous place for migrating birds, ranking as the fourth most dangerous city during fall migration and ninth in spring for light exposure to migratory birds, according to a 2019 study by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. With an estimated 250 million birds passing over Georgia during the spring and 675 million birds migrating over in the fall, it is vital that we learn more about migration over our state and work with partners to make our cities safer. Georgia Audubon, in collaboration with Colorado State University, launched a new tool in the fall of 2021 that allows us to predict nights of high bird migration and issue Lights Out Alerts. While it might not be possible to dim the lights every single night during migration, reducing or eliminating nighttime lights on the ten or so peak migratory nights each season can go a long way to reducing mortality events for Georgia's birds.

Connecting Students with STEM through Birds

After a brief pandemic-related pause, Georgia Audubon resumed its successful Connecting Students with STEM through Birds program, adding three more Title I Atlanta Public Schools to the program. Heritage Academy, Crawford Long Middle School, and South Atlanta High School were added in the past year bringing the total number of schools in the program to eleven. Three additional schools will be added in 2022. As part of this program—provided at no cost to each partner school—a bird-friendly STEM garden is installed on campus with the help of students and teachers, transforming areas of dirt and turf grass into wildlife habitat. In addition, each school receives training for teachers to provide lesson ideas and curriculum resources to enhance their use of the new outdoor classroom along with a class set of binoculars for the school.



1500+ PEOPLE reached through education programs (schools, community groups, etc.)

60 NEW MASTER BIRDERS: Demand for the Master Birder program has been so strong that we now offer two cohorts twice per year

Hummingbird ambassador programs (virtual and in-person) reached **500+ PEOPLE** who had the chance to see Sibley and Polly up close and learn about hummingbird lives and conservation. **THOUSANDS MORE** people were reached on social media and during Sibley's featured appearance on GPB's Georgia Outdoors with Sharon Collins.



Audubon Urban Ecologists

Now in its sixth year, the highly successful Audubon Urban Ecologists (AUE) Program is conducted in partnership with several metro-Atlanta conservation nonprofits, including founding partners Georgia Audubon, The Amphibian Foundation, and Trees Atlanta. AUE exposes youth in grades 8 through 12 to the fascinating, rich ecology of the Atlanta area, while providing opportunities for hands-on field experiences, career exposure, and fun with their peers. During the school-year-long program, students establish a network of environmental professionals who can assist with their academic and career development. In addition to a first-year program for new students, a second course is offered for returning students who want to continue their exploration of conservation careers.

THIS PAGE, FROM TOP: Students at South Atlanta High School dig in with shovels and mattocks to install a bird-friendly native plant garden on campus, M. Furr; Audubon Urban Ecologists at Panola, Tixie Fowler; OPPOSITE: Sams Lake

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

39,005 Total Reach

15,428 PARTICIPANTS

Increasing Accessibility & Equity

231 PARTICIPANTS

Cultivating an Interest in Youth Careers in Science

22,421 PARTICIPANTS

Engaging People in the Joy of Birds

925 PARTICIPANTS

Leveraging Our Collective Voices on Behalf of Birds



57 Total Webinars

32 Free Webinars

25 Paid Webinars

6,007 Webinar Registered

Georgia Audubon offered **100+ FIELD TRIPS** in 2021 attended by **1,630 INDIVIDUALS**

Bird Beyond

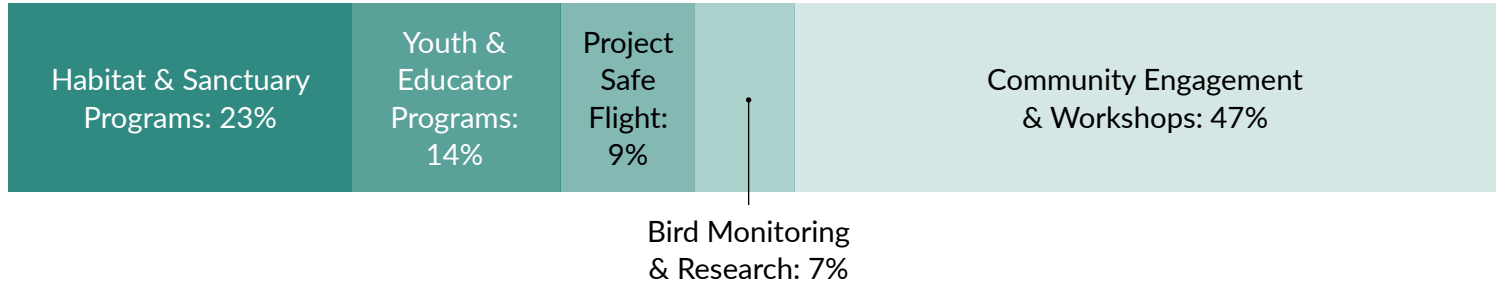
In an effort to include a broader diversity of people in avian conservation, Georgia Audubon and the National Audubon Society co-developed the Bird Beyond tool in 2021. This interactive mapping tool helps us prioritize our engagement in areas that have low median income, which are often communities of color, that have previously been underrepresented in avian community science. Through authentic relationship building and following community leadership, Georgia Audubon has begun partnering with local organizations, leaders, and community groups to engage our resources in ways that are relevant for each community. While the program is still new, our efforts are beginning to bear fruit—in places like Adams Park, Historic Washington Park, and Grove Park. Recently, Georgia Audubon was awarded an Audubon in Action grant to support the Adams Park Community's long-term vision to make the whole neighborhood a haven for wildlife, and we are thrilled to get to work on this important project. As we learn from our experiences in Atlanta, we hope to scale Bird Beyond partnerships statewide to engage other communities of color across the state.



Creating the Next Generation of Conservation Professionals

As people continue flocking to Georgia, the need for knowledgeable conservation professionals will continue to grow. We need leaders who can creatively address Georgia's myriad environmental challenges including climate change, habitat loss and degradation, air and water pollution and inequitable access to parks and greenspaces. Georgia Audubon, in partnership with other conservation organizations, is working to build the next generation of environmental leaders that not only reflect the state's diverse population but also are well equipped to build a more resilient future for Atlanta and beyond. Through innovative partnerships with Zoo Atlanta and The Amphibian Foundation, Georgia Audubon is offering in-person and virtual events to introduce and connect middle and high school students with conservation professionals and to provide resources and next steps to pursue their interest in wildlife conservation. In 2021, Georgia Audubon also launched the Conservation Careers Series, featuring Black and Brown conservation professionals sharing the paths they took to get to their positions, what a typical workday looks like, and answering questions about their careers and career paths.

How Program Dollars Benefit Bird-Friendly Communities

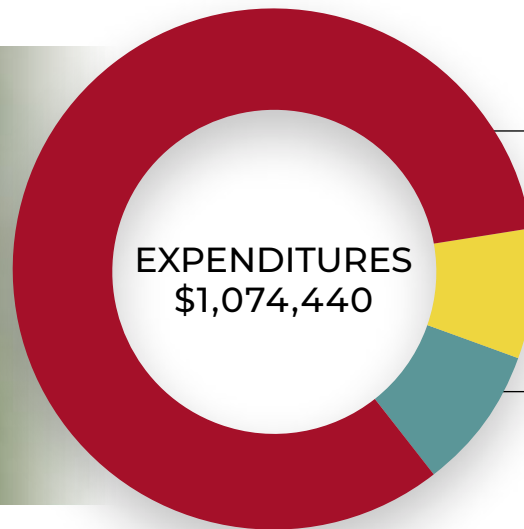
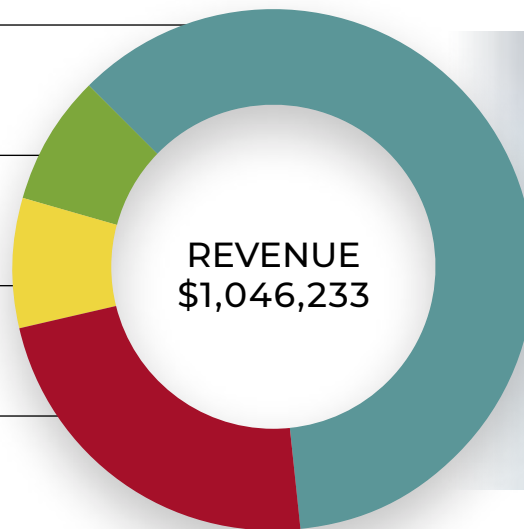


Contributions & Grants:
\$641,752 / 61%

Programs & Events:
\$235,832 / 23%

Membership:
\$85,683 / 8%

Other:
\$82,966 / 8%



Program Services:
\$892,826 / 83%

Fundraising:
\$85,444 / 8%

Management &
General Operations:
\$96,170 / 9%

THIS PAGE: Greater Yellowlegs, Melissa James; Yellow-throated Warbler, Lorraine Minns
OPPOSITE: Adams Park, Corina Newsome; Barn Owl, Joshua Jackson

2021 GEORGIA AUDUBON SUPPORTERS

The board and staff of Georgia Audubon extend their appreciation to the following members and friends who made significant financial gifts in 2021.

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