

GEORGIA AUDUBON
ANNUAL
REPORT
2022



GEORGIA
AUDUBON

www.georgiaaudubon.org

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Building places where birds and people thrive requires quite the flock, and I am so glad you are part of ours.

Reflecting on the past year, I remember fondly Saturday morning bird walks led by talented birders, the Wildlife Sanctuary Tour (which inspired me to get my own back yard certified by Georgia Audubon), and many educational opportunities through Georgia Bird Fest, Georgia Grows Native for Birds Month, and other events. As we have done in years past, we ended our year with a fun “Annual Meeting” at Manuel’s Tavern, where I had the pleasure of meeting many of you to say thank you in person.

I recently invited the Georgia Audubon Board of Directors over to show off my bird-friendly back yard, and we did a bird walk in my neighborhood. A neighbor saw us, grabbed her binoculars, and joined us. That is what I love about birding and Georgia Audubon: the people, being in nature, and the birds—pops of color and a melodic backdrop on what was a wintry day. We saw 24 bird species, ending the day with an Ovenbird. It was a good day in a year where you helped us do a lot of good. Thank you for being a partner in our mission!

2023 brings us to a new location, joining several other conservation organizations at the Trees Atlanta Kendeda Tree House. Our centennial year and celebration will be here before we know it (2026). As we approach this important milestone, I hope you will think about sharing the joy of birds and birdwatching with your network.

Birds are a catalyst for conservation. At Georgia Audubon, opportunities abound for all levels of interest and expertise—in conservation, education and community engagement. Join us in our work, and thanks for helping us expand our flock.

Birds, y’all!



Paige Martin
Chair, Board of Directors



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Tree Swallows, by Sandrine Biziaux Scherson

2022 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 2022.

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Every attempt has been made to include all donors in each category and to correctly identify them. If you believe there has been an error, please contact us at dottie.head@georgiaudubon.org so that we may correct our records.

Habitat Restoration

Habitat loss and degradation is one of the leading causes of bird population decline. But, thanks to several grants and through support from our members, Georgia Audubon continues to expand our successful habitat restoration model across the state, creating more bird-friendly places not only for our feathered friends, but for people too.

Dune Restoration on Jekyll Island

Through generous grants from from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program and the Robert F. Schumann Foundation, Georgia Audubon, in partnership with the Jekyll Island Authority, has been working to restore and stabilize more than 10 acres of coastal dune habitat. Staff and volunteers have been busy removing non-native invasive plant species and replacing them with new native vegetation, including more than 15,000

native coastal grass and perennial plugs, to make the area more resilient and ecologically rich.

Restoring a meadow and riverbank in the South River Watershed

Georgia Audubon is restoring nearly 50 acres of river buffer and a beautiful meadow/native grassland in the South River Watershed, thanks to grants from the Georgia Ornithological Society and the Robert F. Schumann Foundation.

As part of the river buffer project, Georgia Audubon has removed invasive plant species and replaced them with native river cane to create critical bird and wildlife habitat along the South River. Our accompanying meadow restoration project at Panola Mountain State Park will support a number of bird species, including grassland specialists, migratory warblers, river-dependent species, and select focal species like the Swainson's Warbler.

23,870 NATIVE PLANTS were distributed or sold in 2022 via Georgia Audubon's spring and fall plant sales, school garden installations, and plantings at our **124+ ACRES** of habitat restoration sites.

In 2022 we topped **800 CERTIFIED PROPERTIES** for the Wildlife Sanctuary Program, bringing our program acreage to roughly **29,000 ACRES!** Using ArcGIS geospatial software, Georgia Audubon has created a map of certified sanctuaries allowing users to view the locations of certified properties across Georgia.

We were able to contribute to **MULTIPLE MONITORING EFFORTS** along the Georgia coast, ranging from Wilson's Plover nest monitoring to Chuck-will's-widow GPS tagging to Red Knot resighting.



Jekyll Island planting day

Making Georgia Safer for Migrating Birds

With an estimated 250 million birds passing over Georgia during spring migration and 675 million during fall, it is critical that we learn more about migration over our state and work with partners to make our cities safer.

Thanks to a grant from the Disney Conservation Fund, in 2022 Georgia Audubon retrofitted three buildings, totaling more than 2,550 square feet, at Camp Jekyll, Wild Nest Bird Rehab in DeKalb County, and the Northwoods Pavilion at Dunwoody Nature Center, to make these building safer for migrating birds and to educate the public about ways to make their homes safer, too.

Georgia Audubon is also expanding our collision monitoring and light reduction efforts to the Georgia coast, where many

migrating species make first (or last) landfall during their migratory journeys. Working with partners and the two Audubon chapters on the Georgia coast, Georgia Audubon is setting up bird-building collision monitoring efforts in Savannah and Brunswick and educating the public about the importance of reducing outdoor lighting during times of peak migratory activity.

Working with researchers at Colorado State University and the University of Oklahoma as part of their National Science Foundation's Growing Convergence grant, the Georgia Audubon conservation team is collaborating on a project to determine if improved forecasting of large bird migration events can help accelerate the transformation to more sustainable lighting options in urban areas.

EDUCATION

Georgia Audubon Master Birder Program

Georgia Audubon's Master Birder Program remains a popular course with spring and fall cohorts each year. This intensive, six-week course offers a deep dive into ornithology and bird identification. The course includes two online sessions each week, covering topics ranging from bird anatomy and physiology to bird calls, followed by weekend field trips to reinforce what was learned in the virtual classroom sessions. In 2022, Georgia Audubon expanded this program to the Georgia coast in partnership with the Ogeechee Audubon Society (Savannah) and the Hilton Head Audubon Society. We had three full cohorts, with two in the Atlanta area and one on the coast, graduating a total of 43 participants. For fall 2023, in addition to our two Atlanta cohorts, Georgia Audubon will partner with Oconee Rivers Audubon Society to offer a third cohort in Athens.

20 TEACHERS TRAINED (eight counties from White to Glynn)

44 GEORGIA URBAN ECOLOGISTS enrolled for 2022–23 (Athens, Atlanta)

3 NEW Connecting Students with Stem Through Birds partner schools, including one school in Carroll County and two in DeKalb County

80+ EDUCATION PROGRAMS for youth and adults, reaching **1600+ PEOPLE**



Zach Millan, part of the coastal Master Birder Cohort, at the Jekyll Island Banding Station



Taking Wing Teacher Training

Georgia Audubon spread its wings to the Georgia coast in 2022, offering Taking Wing, our keystone education program, in Glynn County on the Georgia coast and in Oconee County in central Georgia. Taking Wing is a unique, 40-hour professional development workshop that trains educators how to teach core subjects through the study and observation of birds.

The program includes field investigations led by professional ecologists and ornithologists, instruction on Georgia's birds and native plants, an introduction to community science projects aimed at birds, and hands-on outdoor learning experiences to take back to the classroom. Through the course of a full academic year, participants implement the training by developing a bird-related unit or community science project with their students, which participants share with the group during the final one-day spring workshop. Since the program was launched in 2012, 150 educators have been trained, and these teachers reach hundreds of students each year. Program participants consistently report that Taking Wing is not only the best professional development they have attended, but that it is life changing as well.

Common Yellowthroat, by Sandrine Biziaux Scherson
Taking Wing Teacher Training, by Tasha Messer

Expanding Accessibility to Birding

By bringing the love of birds and birding to more diverse communities, we can expand our mission to build places where birds and people thrive across Georgia. Through field trips and expanded access to greenspaces, we make nature in Georgia more accessible to college students, racial minorities, people living in rural areas, and disabled communities. Using our Bird Beyond tool, developed in conjunction with the National Audubon Society, we were able to collaborate with the Adam's Park community to encourage native plantings and community involvement. Recently Georgia Audubon was awarded an Audubon in Action Grant to support the St. Mark Church community's long-term vision to make the landmark a haven for wildlife. As we continue reaching out to broader audiences, we have expanded our field trip offerings to young people, ages 13 to 17, throughout the school year to engage and grow a younger audience. In addition, we are partnering with physical and mental health rehabilitation centers to foster outdoor experiences that are both healing and educational for otherwise inaccessible communities.



Georgia Audubon Field trip at the Joe Farm in Alabama's Black Belt during Georgia Bird Fest 2022



Barred Owl, by Tara Tanaka; Festival event, by Kim Kenley

181 FREE FIELD TRIPS with **1,764 PARTICIPANTS**

15,428 PARTICIPANTS in accessible and diverse field trips, Bird Beyond, outreach to under-represented communities

494 STUDENTS reached through our Conservation Careers Series

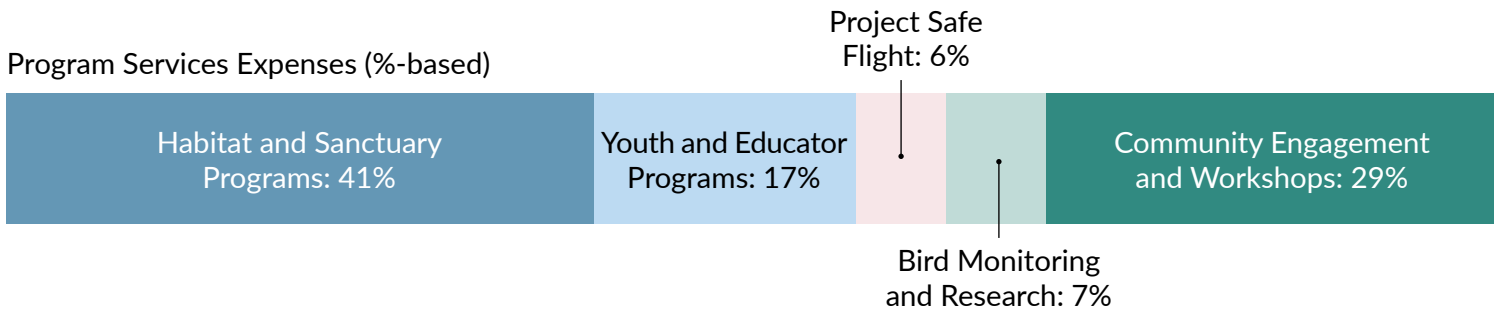
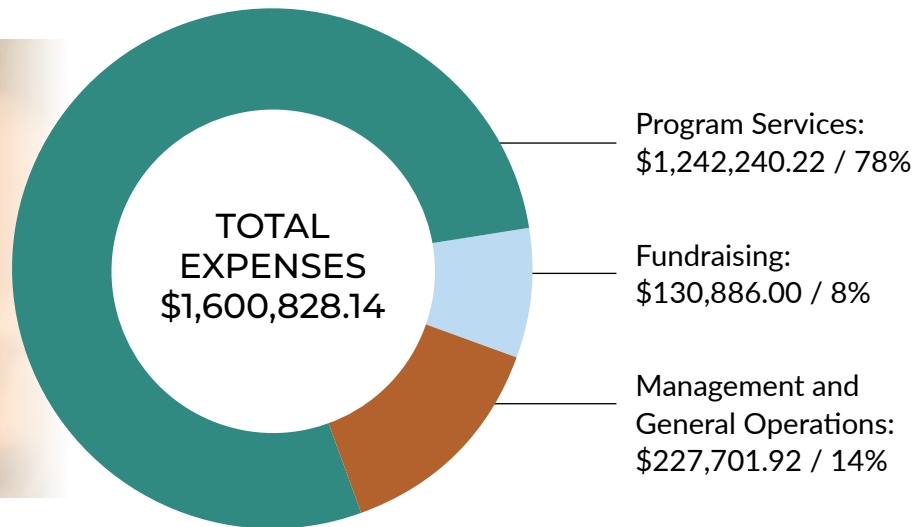
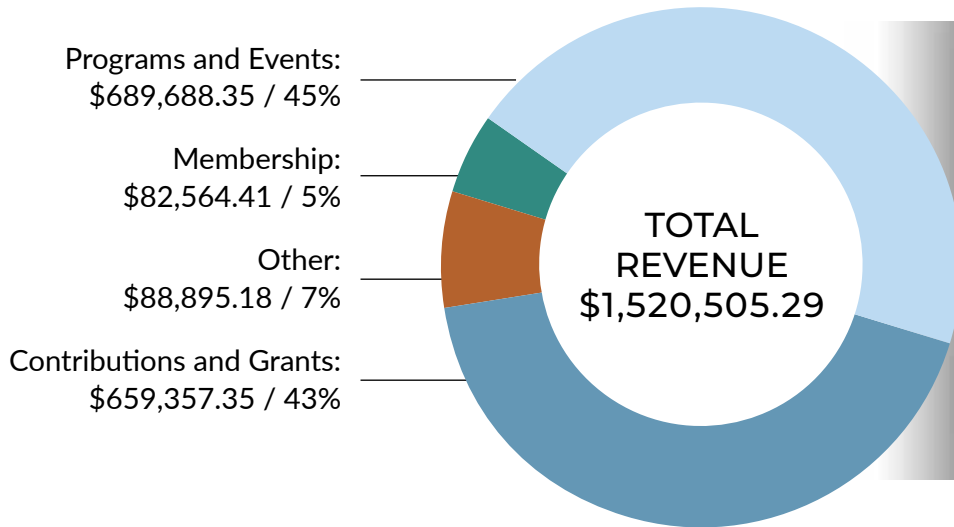
29 WEBINARS, including 16 free webinars

2,224 PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS representing 83 Georgia counties and 43 states, plus Canada

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 navigate 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 local school systems, is helping build the next generation of environmental leaders who not only reflect the state's diverse population but also are well equipped to build a more resilient future for Atlanta and beyond. In 2022 we reached more than 300 students through our conservation career series. This year we are encouraging additional online engagement through the launch of the new Morgens Environmental Education Gateway. This online tool will allow us to reach more students across the state through virtual classes and programming.

FINANCIALS*



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*The financials were updated 5/25/2023 to accurately reflect the timing of grants and expenditures.