

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2030

*Building a Biodiverse, Bird-Friendly Future*



**NYC BIRD  
ALLIANCE**

A CHAPTER OF NATIONAL AUDUBON

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

NYC Bird Alliance is transforming urban conservation as we protect the over 350 bird species that call our city home—on newly created roof gardens, in restored wetlands, along enhanced green corridors, and across shared shorelines. Our research-fueled advocacy prevents thousands of bird collisions and protects critical habitat, while our inclusive programs inspire environmental activists in all five boroughs.

We've built the scientific foundation, policy framework, and community partnerships that deliver real results in New York City and across the country. As environmental threats intensify, our strategic plan focuses our greatest strengths toward our greatest conservation opportunities.

Together, let's make cities thrive with birds, biodiversity, and natural wonder.



Michael Yuan  
Board President



Jessica G. Wilson  
Executive Director





## MISSION

**NYC Bird Alliance protects birds and their habitats, strengthening urban biodiversity through science, advocacy, and community engagement.**

## VISION

**We envision New York City as a leader in urban bird conservation, where nature thrives and all New Yorkers appreciate and care for the City's biodiversity.**

## VALUES

- **Inspired by birds and nature**
- **Driven by conservation impact**
- **Guided by science**
- **Strengthened by inclusivity**
- **Powered by collaboration and volunteers**

# STEMMING A GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY CRISIS

## BIRDS AND BIODIVERSITY ARE FUNDAMENTAL

In our dense urban landscape, birds are nature's indispensable workers—managing pests, pollinating plants, and dispersing seeds. Their presence ensures healthy ecosystems that store carbon and nurture all urban dwellers—including humans. They are also wonders: their songs and flashes of color connect New Yorkers with nature, inspiring them to become environmental advocates. By nurturing this connection, we empower the collective action needed to safeguard urban biodiversity, a critical foundation for climate solutions that will secure our city's future.



## CITIES ARE CRITICAL TO THIS GLOBAL EFFORT

The biodiversity crisis has reached a tipping point: Scientists estimate we're losing species at 1,000 times the natural rate, including a nearly 30% decline in North American birds since 1970. Climate change accelerates this loss, shifting birds' migration patterns and eliminating habitat. Urban areas, where more than two-thirds of human beings will live by 2050, are at the heart of this challenge. The coming decade offers a critical window to make our cities thriving biodiversity hubs and key mitigators of climate change.



## A LEGACY OF SUCCESS AND VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Since its founding in 1979 as NYC Audubon Society, NYC Bird Alliance has evolved from grassroots activism to national conservation leadership. Our science-driven advocacy has yielded defining successes: habitat protection and enhancement across all five boroughs; groundbreaking collision research; and cutting-edge legislation, including New York City's landmark bird-friendly building law.

We've transformed how cities approach urban conservation, creating replicable models adopted nationwide. This unique blend of scientific expertise, community engagement, and policy innovation equips us to meet tomorrow's pressing conservation challenges, extending our growing influence. (Learn more about our history and accomplishments on page 18.)

## SEIZING THIS MOMENT

The present moment offers an immense opportunity. Birding's remarkable rise in popularity reflects growing public appreciation for nature and a clearer understanding that we are all essential for biodiversity and climate security. Looking toward our 50th anniversary in 2029, this strategic plan is precisely timed to leverage these currents, enabling us to respond to new challenges and drive future conservation success.





# STRATEGIC PLAN, 2026-2030

## *Building a Biodiverse, Bird-Friendly Future*



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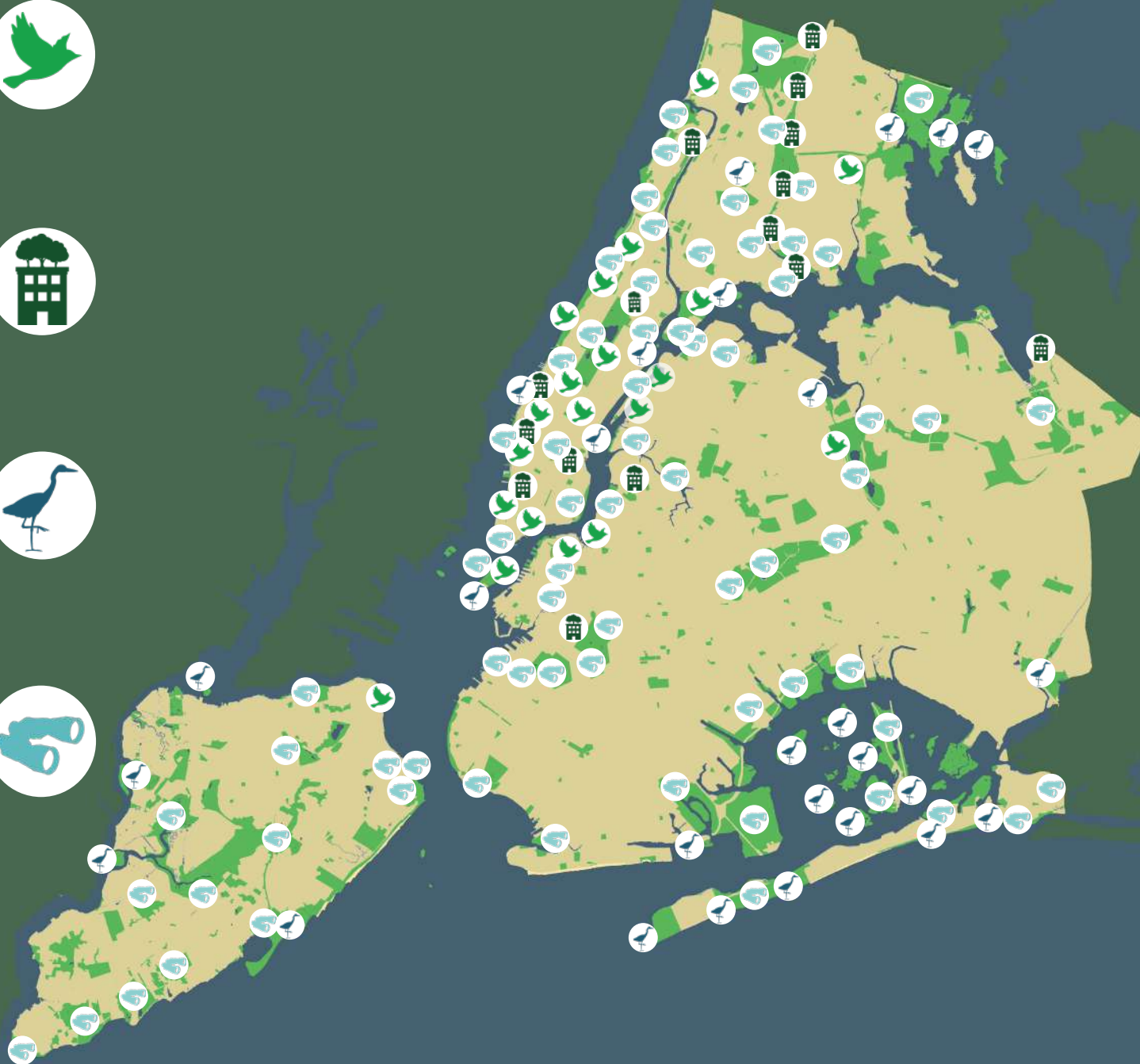
### GOAL 5: SUSTAIN OUR FUTURE

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# OUR WORK ACROSS THE FIVE BOROUGHS

NYC Bird Alliance protects birds and strengthens urban biodiversity across New York City. Through cutting-edge science, policy advocacy, and inclusive public programs, we safeguard habitat, reduce threats to birds, and inspire New Yorkers to build a city where wildlife and communities thrive.

*See highlights of where we currently work in each program area, below.*





# GOAL 1: REDUCE COLLISIONS

## *Make Buildings Safer for NYC's Resident and Migratory Birds by Reducing Collision Risks*

### WHY IT MATTERS

Simple solutions can save birds. Our research shows that over one billion birds die from building collisions each year in the U.S.—nearly a quarter million in NYC alone. Easy solutions to stem this staggering biodiversity loss include reducing artificial light at night and making glass visible to birds.

### WHY US

NYC Bird Alliance is a national leader in reducing bird-building collisions. Our decades of glass and nighttime lighting research, community science engagement, advocacy, and collaborative partnerships have led to bird-friendly solutions with architects, developers, and government agencies; the renovation of Javits Center (see page 11) is one of many such successful collaborations that save birds' lives.

Our expert leadership enabled the passage of New York City's Local Law 15 in 2019, requiring bird-friendly glass in new and renovated buildings. This landmark law now serves as a national model for bird-safe design.



### Community Science at Scale: Project Safe Flight's Evolution

The injured White-throated Sparrow pictured above is one of thousands of collision victims rescued as part of Project Safe Flight, founded in 1997 when a few concerned New Yorkers began documenting bird mortality in lower Manhattan. Today, this community science initiative mobilizes more than 150 volunteers annually to systematically collect collision data across the City's five boroughs, identifying collision hotspots and proving the efficacy of Lights Out initiatives and bird-friendly glass retrofits. Our work is now a replicable monitoring framework adopted by conservation organizations nationwide.

*Background photo: Nearly a quarter million birds die each year in collisions with glass in New York City.*



## HOW WE'LL GET THERE

- **Generate robust data** through research and groundbreaking Project Safe Flight volunteer monitoring, to inform policy and building design solutions that reduce collisions.
- **Collaborate with building stakeholders** to make the built environment safer for birds.
- **Conduct scientific research and lead advocacy** efforts to address emerging collision and disturbance risks to birds, such as public light shows and drone displays.
- **Champion science-based policies** and legislation that reduce bird collisions with buildings.
- **Leverage NYC Bird Alliance's expertise** and leadership in bird-collision science and advocacy to create national models for bird-safe cities.



### Inspiring a New Generation of Conservationists

*"As a young birder, I feel it is my responsibility to understand how New York City's buildings affect birds. I started volunteering in fourth grade, monitoring buildings for collisions, rescuing injured birds, and helping at the Tribute in Light Memorial to watch for birds trapped in the beams of light. NYC Bird Alliance has helped me see how we all have a part in making the City safer for the birds that depend on it."*

— Elias Markee-Ratner, age 15,  
Project Safe Flight volunteer



## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Every year, our built environment takes a staggering toll on birds, causing more than one billion collisions with buildings across the country. Help us rewrite this story.

**Your generosity and partnership fuel the research, engagement, and advocacy needed to make our city's buildings safer for birds**, from training watchful volunteers to turning hard data into laws.

# GOAL 2: PROTECT HABITAT FOR

## *Champion the Protection and Enhancement of Bird Habitat and Biodiversity in NYC's Public and Private Green Spaces*

### WHY IT MATTERS

Bird populations face dire threats from climate change and habitat loss, intensifying the global biodiversity crisis. Investing in green infrastructure and protecting habitat ensures food-rich refueling stops for birds, while also increasing community access to green spaces and helping to cool the City.

### WHY US

Protecting and enhancing bird habitat has been a priority since our early advocacy for protection of Central Park's Ramble and Floyd Bennett Field, near Jamaica Bay. Our expertise in monitoring, urban planning, and policy development drives lasting habitat enhancement.

Through science research and compelling advocacy campaigns, we've shaped a more bird-friendly city. Wins include pioneering green roof biodiversity research at Javits Center, creating and monitoring new wildlife habitat at Kingsland Wildflowers in Greenpoint, and championing policies that advance green infrastructure.



#### **Google: Growing Partnerships with City Stakeholders**

Since 2023, NYC Bird Alliance has monitored biodiversity across the green roofs of Google's offices, documenting dozens of bird species at their St. John's Terminal building alone (including the American Kestrel above, perched upon bird-friendly glass). Google's partnership is a game-changing model for other companies and office buildings across New York City and the world.

*Background photo: NYC Bird Alliance conducted biodiversity monitoring at over 60 sites in New York City in 2025, including Memorial Field in Douglas Manor, Queens, where our research is part of the Big Rock Wetland Restoration Project.*



# BIRDS AND BIODIVERSITY

## HOW WE'LL GET THERE

- **Apply science-based recommendations** to inform bird-friendly landscape management practices and urban planning models across the City.
- **Advance green infrastructure projects** through policy, legislation, and incentives that support bird-friendly land use.
- **Champion the protection and expansion** of New York City's green spaces and natural areas.



### Javits Center: From Collision Hotspot to Critical Habitat

*"NYC Bird Alliance helped us turn Javits Center into a model of sustainable design. Their research validated that our bird-safe glass retrofit saved thousands of birds, and that our green roof supports more than 70 bird species. Just as important, they've shown that partnerships like this deliver a win-win, advancing biodiversity while strengthening business performance. Together we set a standard for the kind of green infrastructure investments New York City needs."*

— Alan Steel, former president and CEO of Javits Center



## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Climate change is reshaping New York City, and birds are in grave danger. Our actions in the next five years can shift the trajectory of this biodiversity crisis.

**Your financial support helps us protect wild spaces, transform barren rooftops into thriving ecosystems, and restore nature to the communities that need it most.** Together, we can create a more resilient, livable city—woven with green spaces that serve as lifelines for migrating birds and provide cleaner air, cooler streets, and reduced flooding for all New Yorkers.

# GOAL 3: SAFEGUARD WATERBIRDS

## *Safeguard New York Harbor's Waterbirds and Their Nesting Habitats*

### WHY IT MATTERS

Charismatic waterbirds—wading birds like herons and egrets, and shorebirds like plovers and sandpipers—serve as critical bioindicators of harbor ecosystem health while inspiring public connection with urban wildlife. But their presence in our waterways is not guaranteed. As development, habitat loss, and rising sea levels threaten the biodiversity of New York Harbor, it is critical to take action to protect the harbor's birds.

### WHY US

NYC Bird Alliance's work to protect the harbor's waterbirds include advocacy to protect the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, groundbreaking research on American Oystercatchers, and the longest-running survey of breeding wading birds in the Northeast. Data from this long-term monitoring is used to protect our region's most significant wading bird colony through systematic research and evidence-based advocacy.



#### **Black-crowned Night Heron in Critical Decline**

Once the Harbor's most abundant wading birds, Black-crowned Night Herons now face steep declines—a discovery made by NYC Bird Alliance scientists. Our crucial long-term wading bird dataset, amassed from four decades of Harbor Herons monitoring, is now driving advocacy to protect this charismatic species and encourage targeted conservation action before it's too late.

*Background photo: Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge in Queens is home to up to 10 species of nesting wading birds.*



## HOW WE'LL GET THERE

- **Lead scientific research** on colonial and beach-nesting waterbirds to guide conservation action and policy.
- **Collaborate with regional organizations** with expertise on waterbird research to synthesize scientific data to develop conservation recommendations.
- **Champion the preservation, restoration, and expansion** of critical nesting and foraging habitat for waterbirds, balancing community and conservation needs.
- **Advance science-driven protections** for priority waterbird species and related wildlife.
- **Engage local communities** in appreciating and protecting waterbirds.



### Protecting Habitats in and around Jamaica Bay

*"NYC Bird Alliance has been a powerful voice for protecting habitats in and around Jamaica Bay, our city's largest natural area. Their "Buffer the Bay" reports protected multiple sites that now form wetlands and publicly accessible parks around the bay. Their research guided restoration of grasslands in Floyd Bennett Field. And their programming creates new stewards and advocates for these critical natural habitats for years to come."*

— Terri Carta, Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy executive director



## HOW YOU CAN HELP

American Oystercatchers, at left, raise their young on the City's beaches—while just offshore, night herons, egrets, and ibises nest on the harbor's wild islands. Their presence is a sign of a healthy urban ecosystem—one we've worked to protect over decades. But now, their population declines are sounding the alarm.

**Your donation helps protect vital nesting grounds, restore coastal habitat, and invite more New Yorkers into the work of stewarding our shared shorelines.**

# GOAL 4: MOBILIZE CONSERVATION

## *Inspire and Mobilize a Broader, More Diverse Community for Bird and Habitat Conservation*

### WHY IT MATTERS

The environmental challenges we face today demand widespread participation. Inclusive conservation movements generate stronger policy advocacy, increased community investment, and equitable access to engaging nature experiences that build lasting environmental commitment.

### WHY US

With unparalleled expertise and a reach across all five boroughs, NYC Bird Alliance empowers New Yorkers through strategic community engagement, inclusive and accessible programming, and collaborative partnerships, transforming bird lovers into effective advocates for biodiversity and habitat protection. Offering hundreds of programs annually, from bird outings and volunteer opportunities to our NYCHA in Nature initiative, we welcome all New Yorkers into conservation.



### Bringing Nature to All

“NYCHA in Nature” strives to welcome all New Yorkers into our conservation community. This pilot program, which NYC Bird Alliance launched in 2023 in partnership with the Public Housing Community Fund, creates meaningful nature experiences in collaboration with the residents of New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) communities. Our programs strengthen bonds with green space and biodiversity, helping us develop a model to inspire the City’s half-million public housing residents to be active stewards of the environment.

*Background photo: The annual Jamaica Bay Shorebird Festival is one of hundreds of annual NYC Bird Alliance events, two-thirds of them free, that connect New Yorkers with birds and nature each year.*



# COMMUNITIES CITYWIDE

## HOW WE'LL GET THERE

- **Lead and collaborate** on conservation-focused birding activities.
- **Expand programs** that engage communities historically underrepresented in conservation.
- **Build clear pathways for New Yorkers** to take meaningful conservation action on behalf of birds and habitats.
- **Create engaging, accessible tools** and resources that inspire people to take action for birds and habitats.



### From Audubon to Alliance: a Name for All New Yorkers

*"If we as advocates for the wild want to guarantee a future with a healthy diversity of birds, then we must foster a healthy diversity of people who value them. We're seizing this opportunity to welcome everyone into our work, and to tell ever-wider audiences who we are and what we do: protect birds and their habitats, to the benefit of all New Yorkers."*

— Christian Cooper, NYC Bird Alliance board member



## HOW YOU CAN HELP

People protect what they love—and love grows through shared experience. **Your gift makes it possible to bring nature-based programs to neighborhoods not traditionally welcomed into the conservation movement**, and to activate the thousands of bird lovers across the City to take action to protect biodiversity.



# GOAL 5: SUSTAIN OUR FUTURE

## *Ensure the Long-Term Impact of NYC Bird Alliance through Sound Internal Management, Financial Health, and Effective Board Leadership*

### WHY IT MATTERS

Conservation challenges require sustained effort over time. By investing in organizational health—from staff development to financial resilience—we ensure we can maintain our mission focus, support our growing team, and protect birds for generations to come.

### WHY US

Born from passionate birders opposing the destruction of Central Park's Ramble habitat in 1979, NYC Bird Alliance has grown to become a leader in the protection of wild birds and their habitats, and a nationwide model for effective, science-based urban conservation. Our evolution demonstrates how sustained organizational growth can amplify conservation success over time—from local advocacy to national impact.



### Conservation Success Grounded in Professionalism

As NYC Bird Alliance has matured from a grassroots group to a professionally staffed organization, we've strengthened our foundation through enhanced board governance, diversified funding strategies, and an equitable workplace culture that empowers our professional team. Long-standing partnerships and more than one thousand volunteers support our ambitious science, engagement, and advocacy goals.

*Background photo: NYC Bird Alliance studies a colony of over 300 Herring Gulls nesting atop Javits Center.*



## HOW WE'LL GET THERE

- **Foster an equitable, transparent, and supportive organizational culture** that supports staff growth.
- **Diversify and grow revenue** to support our expanding impact.
- **Develop a long-term financial strategy** that supports strategic growth and stability.
- **Enhance board governance** to support visionary leadership and organizational resilience.
- **Cultivate a committed, informed, and active board** to drive strategic impact and organizational growth.



## HOW YOU CAN HELP

The strength of our organization shapes the strength of our work. Behind every success is a dedicated team, a thoughtful board, and a community of supporters like you. **Your investment builds the foundation that makes lasting impact possible.**

# CREATING A BIRD-FRIENDLY FUTURE

## BUILDING ON 45 YEARS OF CONSERVATION SUCCESS



**1979** Founding of New York City Audubon



**1982** Harbor Herons Nesting Survey begins



**1993** Executive Director Marcia Fowle, first paid employee, hired



**2002** First monitoring of the 9/11 Tribute in Light Memorial for birds trapped in the lights



**2007** South Brother Island heron colony protected as Forever Wild Preserve

**1980-1985** Defense of Central Park's Ramble habitat; Christo installation and Westway Project opposed



**1983-1994** Protection and restoration of western Staten Island, Jamaica Bay and Floyd Bennett Field habitats; Buffer the Bay reports



**1997** Project Safe Flight launched



**2004-2005** Advocacy to protect the nest of Red-tailed Hawks "Pale Male" and "Lola"



## STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR GREATER IMPACT

In 2024 and 2025, NYC Bird Alliance engaged our board, staff, supporters, and partners to shape a bold vision for our future. We reflected on our strengths, gathered input through surveys and events, and identified where we can have the greatest impact for birds and biodiversity in New York City. The result is a focused, ambitious plan that prioritizes what we do best: science, advocacy, and community action.

Birds face many threats—pesticides and rodenticides, predators, and more—but we must focus to make real progress. We concentrate on where our expertise and resources have the greatest impact: **preventing deadly building collisions and protecting urban habitat.** While we'll continue to support partners addressing other threats, this strategic focus allows us to lead effectively, engage communities, and deliver measurable results.







**2014** Bird-friendly Javits Center renovation; biodiversity monitoring begins



**2019** Landmark bird-friendly Local Law 15 passed



**2021** NYC Lights Out Laws for public buildings passed



**2023** NYCHA in Nature launched



**2024** NYC Bird Alliance chosen as our new name

**2016** Kingsland Wildflowers green roof opens in Greenpoint, Brooklyn



**2020** First Black Birders Week celebrated



**2022-pres.** Bird-friendly retrofits: 1 Hotel Brooklyn Bridge, Met Museum, Circa Central Park, others



**2023-pres.** Biodiversity monitoring of Google terraces, Broadway Malls, others



## LET'S BUILD OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

Thanks to you, New York City is showing what's possible when we unite for nature. Your investment helps us train volunteers, restore and enhance habitat, conduct policy-shaping research, and inspire a movement to protect biodiversity. But the next five years will demand even more.

With your financial support, we can expand NYC Bird Alliance's impact through science, advocacy, and community action—making our city a global leader in urban conservation. Together, we can build a future where wildlife thrives, communities grow stronger, and a healthier city and planet are within reach.








# SCIENCE | ENGAGEMENT | ADVOCACY



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