



NEW YORK CITY AUDUBON

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR ENDING 3/31/09

Dear Friend,

New York City is best known as a thriving metropolis, but it is also a vitally important habitat for wild birds. From the robins and red-tailed hawks we see on the streets, to the piping plovers and Baltimore orioles in the city's 28,000 acres of parks and 14 miles of beaches, these birds help ensure a happier, healthier habitat for all New Yorkers.

New York City Audubon works exclusively on protecting those birds and the unique urban niches or fragile natural areas where they live, helping eight million people share their habitat with hundreds of thousands of wild birds.

Why is local conservation so important? Because dozens of bird species may go extinct during our lifetime, while others may be driven from the city by climate change and urban development. That's why NYC Audubon is working to protect wild birds in New York City, whether they are residents or just passing through.

Each year NYC Audubon's conservation and education initiatives reach out to more than 20,000 New Yorkers in all five boroughs. We are grateful to the many partner organizations, committed volunteers, and dedicated donors who make our critical conservation efforts possible. With their help—and yours—we can keep New York City a great place to live, for birds and people alike.

Sincerely,

Peter Mott
President

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Education

Education Programs for Adults

NYC Audubon has increased and diversified our calendar of programming in the last fiscal year. We offer members' programs in cooperation with other organizations, local programming within the New York City area; and national and international programming, which takes participants out of the region to explore the wintering habitat of neo-tropical migrants that migrate through New York City each spring and fall. This year we have experienced an increase in outreach in all categories. For NYC Audubon-only programs, we increased from 893 to 916 participants in local programming, and from 41 to 59 in national and international programming. Our most significant growth came in outreach programs with other organizations, where we went from serving 17 people in 2008 to 422 people in 2009. We are proud to be working with so many excellent partners in conservation across New York City.

Education Programs for Children

NYC Audubon staff and volunteers provide environmental education to over 5,000 New York City children and teens through Look Around NYC, our science-based newsletter for children in grades four through six and after-school programming. This year, a new partnership with ACTION, an after-school group at THE POINT Community Development Corporation in the Hunts Point neighborhood of the South Bronx, gave twenty teens the opportunity to engage in environmental restoration work on North Brother Island and in Pelham Bay Park. While participating in these activities the ACTION members learned about "green-collar" jobs, native and invasive plants and assisted with monitoring studies of Harbor Herons. This year also brought the retirement of long-time Look Around volunteer publisher Naola Gersten-Woolf.

Conservation

In April 2008, with the leadership support of the Leon Levy Foundation, NYC Audubon hired Director of Conservation Dr. Susan Elbin to lead NYC Audubon's Conservation efforts and to improve the science underlying all programs.

Project Safe Flight

The Project Safe Flight (PSF) monitoring and research program improves our understanding of the causes behind urban bird collisions and studies ways to prevent bird collisions from occurring. During the 2008 migration seasons approximately 30 volunteers patrolled the city for evidence of bird collisions with buildings. Spring and fall migrations seemed light this year as evidenced by a low number of collisions: 65 during the spring season (April through June) and 158 during fall migration (August through November). White-throated sparrows, common yellowthroats, and ovenbirds were the most numerous species recovered. Nicole Delecretaz

presented PSF research as a poster at the 2008 NY State Ornithological Association meeting in Rochester. January 2009 saw the departure of Nicole Delecretaz, long-time PSF project manager.

This year, two research papers based on data collected by Project Safe Flight were accepted for publication, and are expected to appear in 2009. "Architectural and Landscape Risk Factors Associated with Bird-Glass Collisions in an Urban Environment," by Daniel Klem and others, attempts to analyze building characteristics which increase risk of collisions and will appear in *The Wilson Journal of Ornithology*. "Windows and Vegetation: Primary Factors in Manhattan Bird Collisions," by former NYC Audubon staff members Yigal Gelb and Nicole Delacretaz, analyzes ten years of data from Project Safe Flight and will appear in *Northeast Naturalist*.

Project Safe Flight also continued its monitoring of the Tribute in Lights, with over 20 volunteers participating in all-night monitoring. Peak numbers of birds circling in the beams occurred near 2am and never numbered more than 200 birds. Winds on September 11 were not conducive to a large migratory movement.

Harbor Herons

The 2008 nesting season was a comprehensive survey year in which all possible nesting islands were searched for breeding activity. Conducted in partnership with the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation—Natural Resources Group and the National Park Service—Gateway National Recreation Area, this survey included 17 islands. NYC Audubon scientists, interns and volunteers monitored nesting populations of wading birds, cormorants and gulls on the islands and surrounding waterways and documented nesting habitat including species composition of nest trees and shrubs. Wading birds nested on eight islands in the harbor; nine species were confirmed as nesters: Black-crowned Night-Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Glossy Ibis, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Little Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron, Cattle Egret, and Green Heron. The largest species diversity noted on Canarsie Pol (eight species). South Brother Island was the largest wading bird colony observed in 2008 (462 nests). No active wading bird nests were observed on islands in the Arthur Kill and Kill van Kull. Mainland nesting of Yellow-crowned Night-Herons was observed at the Redfern Houses colony in Far Rockaway; 55 nests were present, a marked increase over the 26 nests observed in 2007. Double-crested Cormorants nested on seven islands (1,333 total nests).

Natural Areas Initiative

Research and monitoring projects for the year included a breeding bird census in Central Park. Thirty-seven species were confirmed breeding in the park with an additional species that were probable breeders. Trend analyses are being done, comparing the 1998 and 2008 census data. In a joint initiative with National Audubon and Audubon New York, three chimney swift nesting towers have been erected in honor of Geoffrey Cobb Ryan in three state parks.

The Jamaica Bay Initiative is a new program funded by TogetherGreen (National Audubon and Toyota Corporation), with the goal of improving wetland accessibility for shorebirds and

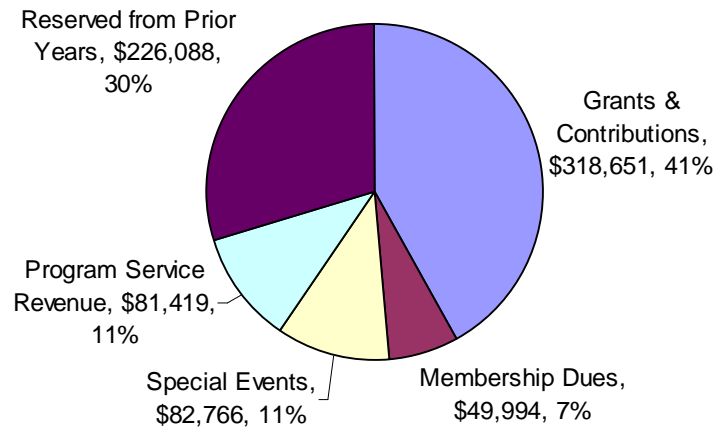
horseshoe crabs. Citizen scientists are monitoring the numbers of horseshoe crabs nesting on beaches in Jamaica Bay and also documenting use of the same beaches by shorebirds that eat horseshoe crab eggs during migration. At the same time, teams of volunteers of all ages have been cleaning beaches where horseshoe crabs nest in Jamaica Bay. One local high school student commented, "We're doing it for the horseshoe crabs!"

Volunteers

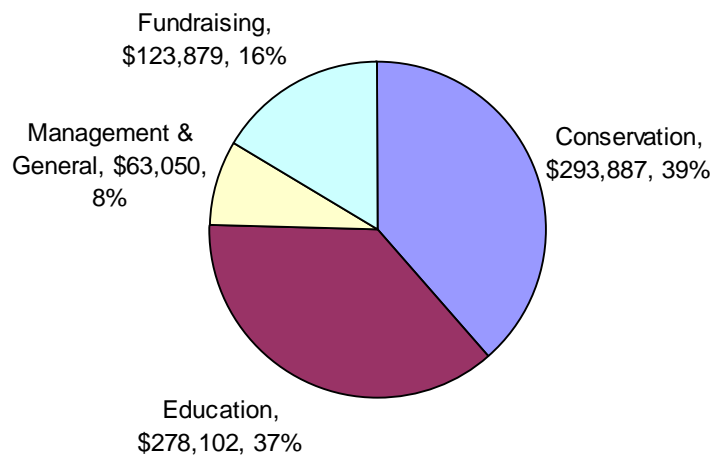
Volunteers are the lifeblood of NYC Audubon. Over the past year, our volunteer programs have grown tremendously and had a huge impact on conservation in New York City. Through the Audubon-Toyota TogetherGreen Initiative, NYC Audubon hosted two Volunteer Days, where volunteers planted native trees in the Bronx, and cleaned up Brighton Beach. Volunteers also conducted a census of breeding birds in Central Park, participated in the annual Harbor Herons survey, and monitored collision routes with Project Safe Flight. Education volunteers aided other birders by lending a hand with our trips and classes, produced Look Around NYC, our children's newsletter, and created six stunning editions of the Urban Audubon, our bi-monthly newsletter. Behind the scenes, administrative volunteers worked closely with staff to keep the NYC Audubon office running smoothly. Our volunteers come from all five boroughs and display a wide range of skills, experiences, and age brackets. Thanks to the 375 volunteers who contributed more than 4,700 hours this year, NYC Audubon's programs are going strong. We couldn't have done it without everyone involved.

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