



In early May, Audubon Mid-Atlantic staff spent the day together in Maryland's Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. It gave us the opportunity to see these protective saltmarshes firsthand and better understand the restoration planning work that Dave Curson and his coastal team have undertaken.

It's one thing to read about the beauty of coastal marshes and quite another to be in their presence. There's a vastness to them, a coastal prairie spreading out for miles. Bald eagles soared over our heads and white pelicans moved through the grasses. It was truly beautiful.

Yet there was also sense of impending tragedy along our journey. The road was flooded in many places. An old cottage located at the marsh's edge was surrounded by rising waters and may not stand for much longer. The rising ocean is destroying this habitat, which is critical to the survival of so many birds, including the saltmarsh sparrow.

In the face of this significant challenge, Audubon's coastal team is helping to lead a

Marshes for Tomorrow effort to save and restore thousands of acres within this ecosystem. You'll read more about this important work from the perspective of one of our field biologists below.

Thank you for all you do to support our work.

--Suzanne

Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. Photo: Isabel Rivera.

**THIS MONTH IN THE MARSH**

**"MARSHES FOR TOMORROW" FIELD BLOG**

A photograph of three field biologists standing in a marshy area. The person on the left is a man wearing an orange jacket and a brown cap, holding a clipboard. The person in the middle is a man wearing a white cap and sunglasses, with his arm around the man on the left. The person on the right is a woman wearing a green shirt and a green cap, also with her arm around the man in the middle. They are all smiling and standing in tall grass. In the background, there is a body of water and a line of trees under a blue sky.

**MAY: GEARING UP FOR THE SEASON**

Follow our Marshes for Tomorrow field work through this monthly blog!

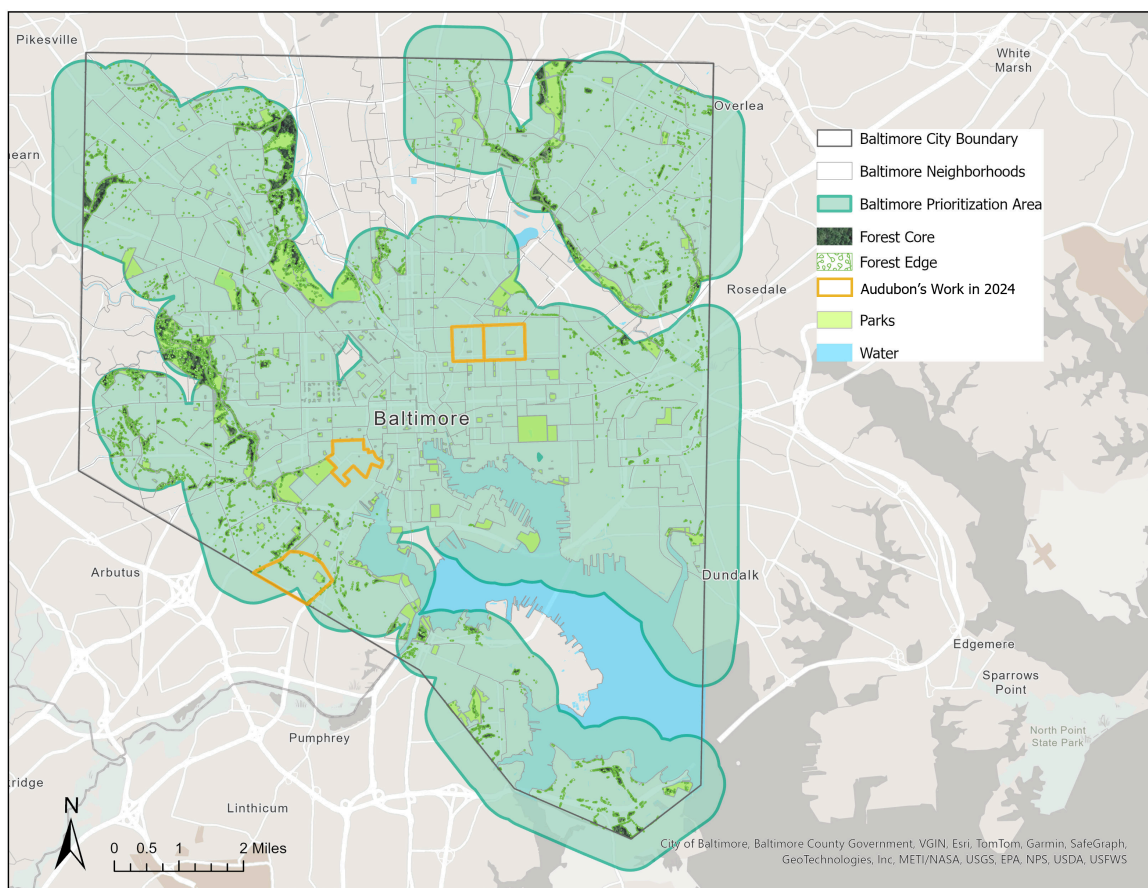
Audubon's Coastal Avian Biologist, Bri Panos, reported from Maryland's saltmarshes in this web post focused on our Marshes for Tomorrow work.



“My name is Bri Panos, the Coastal Avian Biologist for Audubon Mid-Atlantic. This field season, I’ll be coordinating field data collection for the Marshes for Tomorrow Project. I invite you to learn more about the birds we see in salt marshes, how we monitor them, and what restoration techniques are being implemented to save the salt marsh. Follow the link below to learn more about “Marshes for Tomorrow,” an initiative led by Audubon Mid-Atlantic and its partners to create an implementation plan for tidal salt marsh restoration on a landscape scale in Maryland.”

[Visit the Marshes for Tomorrow project website here](#), and check back on Audubon social media frequently for updates!

Coastal team standing in project area.



## Mapping Priority Areas in Baltimore City

In Baltimore, Audubon staff collaborate with community organizations to create and restore biodiverse habitat to support migratory birds such as wood thrush, American woodcock, and Baltimore oriole, especially in neighborhoods where a lack of green spaces has led to urban heat islands

and stormwater overflows. Our goal is to create a greener, more climate-resilient city.

To help us determine which Baltimore neighborhoods have the greatest need, the Audubon team created a GIS map (shown above) with data from city agencies and organizational partners. It indicates areas of the city in which residents suffer the most from extreme temperatures and have the greatest need for increased tree canopy (shown in blue). The Baltimore team then worked with local partners to plan, create, and restore public spaces designed to benefit birds and people through native plants and trees that will provide migratory bird habitat, cool ambient temperatures, and help capture stormwater before it reaches local streams and the Chesapeake Bay.

Our community-driven conservation efforts are already underway in southwest and east Baltimore neighborhoods (shown in orange). In 2024, we are creating a healthier forest in Lakeland Park, seeding a meadow in Broadway East, and planting perennial gardens in a pocket park in Pigtown, thanks to organizational partnerships and generous funding from Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the South Baltimore Gateway Partnership, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and private foundations.



Priority map of Baltimore





## Audubon Meets with Partners and Legislators in Harrisburg

In mid-May, Executive Director Suzanne Biemiller, Policy Director Jim Brown, and Delaware River Watershed Policy Fellow Agung Putra met with Pennsylvania legislators and partners in Harrisburg to discuss priority watershed stewardship legislation. The meetings were part of the annual Clean Water Action Day organized by Penn Future. Audubon staff and our partners met with seven state senators and representatives whose districts fall within the Delaware River watershed, including Environmental Resources and Energy Committee leadership. Among the topics covered were the benefits of a permanent dedicated funding stream for habitat restoration and park maintenance across the Commonwealth; stronger riparian buffer protections; and paying Pennsylvania's funding share of the Delaware River Basin Commission.

To follow along with our priority legislation in Pennsylvania, please visit the 2024 PA Legislative Tracker on [our website](#).

In Maryland, Gov. Wes Moore signed our priority bills into law, including the Whole Watershed Act, which will bring more resources to habitat restoration along Maryland's waterways and marshes; the Biodiversity Protection Act,

which limits the sale of invasive plant species in Maryland; the Brighter Tomorrow Act incentivizing solar power development on rooftops, brownfields, and already disturbed land; and a law that allows Maryland to increase the development of appropriately sited offshore wind. In addition, Governor Moore signed into law changes to the Critical Area Commission that would give the Department of Natural Resources the ability to use climate change and habitat protection as tools to guide growth and development in ecologically sensitive areas.

You can also follow our priority legislation in Maryland by visiting our [website here](#).

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Bill signing for the Maryland Invasive Species Act.

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## Birds and Brews at the John James Audubon Center!

Join us on Thursday, June 20th from 6:00pm until 8:00pm for Birds and Brews at the John James Audubon Center! Grab a beer and settle in for a thought-provoking conversation about why protecting local water sources like the Perkiomen Creek is good for birds and people. Our panel of experts will discuss how natural solutions like riparian buffers and wetlands provide



habitat while reducing flooding and building climate resilience; and will delve into why legislation at all levels of government is needed to keep our water clean. More information and registration for this free event is available [on our website here.](#)

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Cedar waxwings. Photo: Gary Leka

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## Pollinators! at the John James Audubon Center

Join us on Saturday, June 22nd from 11:00am until 3:00pm at the John James Audubon Center for a celebration of pollinators and the vital role they play in our lives.

Regina Rhoa of Grange Apiary, the woman behind the bees of Mill Grove, will give a presentation titled “How Honey Bees Collect Pollen and the Benefits for your Health,” followed by a visit to our hives to learn more about the art of beekeeping and their secret to success. While you’re there, “bee” sure to check out our pollinator garden conveniently located a few steps from the hives and get a firsthand look at a garden specially designed for bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. [Visit our website for the schedule of events.](#)



Bee on flowers. Photo: Evan Barrientos

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## Birdwatching Tour of Druid Hill Park

Druid Hill Park is Baltimore's oldest large park and is home to 745 acres of forests, fields, and a large lake. 189 species of birds have been documented here, including nesting Baltimore orioles and yellow-crowned night herons. Audubon and Baltimore Bird Club experts will lead us in search of avian friends! No experience necessary. Join us on Saturday, June 22nd from 8:00am until 9:30am for this tour. [More info here.](#)

American goldfinch. Photo: Kevin Rutherford

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## Birding by Canoe at the John James Audubon Center

Join us on Thursday, June 27th from 6:00pm until 7:30pm for an evening paddle on the gentle waters of the Lower Perkiomen and discover the many birds that depend on its riparian habitat. You'll learn about the valuable resources the Creek provides to a variety of wildlife, and why protecting the Delaware River Watershed and its tributaries is good for people too.

[Registration available here.](#)

**Reminder: John James Audubon Center admission is 50% off through June 2024!**

Don't forget this great deal at the John James Audubon Center. For a limited time, enjoy 50% off all museum admissions.

**Dates: April 1, 2024 – June 30, 2024**

**Hours: 10 am to 4 pm, Wednesday through Sunday**

Don't miss out on this special opportunity to experience the wonders of art and nature at half the price.

See you soon at the John James Audubon Center where art and nature bloom!

Visit our Centers, explore our trails, and join us for some winter birding and other exciting activities happening across the Mid-Atlantic region!

- [Pennsylvania Events](#), including the John James Audubon Center and The Discovery Center
- [Maryland Events](#)

CONNECT WITH US



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