



Taking action for birds

It's March, which can only mean one thing—state legislatures in Maryland and Pennsylvania are busy thinking about and crafting new policy (for those of you thinking that I was going to say “bird migration,” my apologies). As you will read below, Audubon staff are also busy informing policy makers about how the region's environmental challenges are negatively impacting birds and solutions that we think will make a difference.

February was bookended by two terrific policy-oriented events—Audubon's 9th Annual I Bird/I Vote summit in Annapolis and a Mayoral forum in Baltimore that Audubon staff helped develop. Audubon has been invited to testify on behalf of a number of bills during Maryland's legislative session, which ends in early April. And in Baltimore, we have added our voice to those who want greater attention to be paid to climate action and green investments in the race to become Mayor.

In Pennsylvania, Audubon is part of a Growing Greener III coalition that seeks to find increased, sustainable funding for conservation investments and we are working with other environmental organizations to encourage the commonwealth's continued participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). Audubon is also part of a coalition of community and environmental organizations that developed and is now working to implement the "Green Living Plan for Philadelphia."

Policy makers know that Audubon has an active and engaged membership and we carry your passion for birds with us into meetings, hearings and forums. As the legislative sessions unfold, we will keep you updated on policies that we are following—and you will be able to see how bills are moving in real time thanks to our new legislative trackers on both the Maryland and Pennsylvania websites (see story below for links).

Birds need us to act for them, and we hope that you will want to use the information that we provide to you to raise your voices on behalf of birds and the environment.

Thank you for all of your support,

Suzanne



I Bird I Vote Group Photo



Audubon hosts 2024 I Bird I Vote Conservation Summit

Audubon Mid-Atlantic held its 2024 I Bird I Vote Conservation Summit on Saturday, February 3rd in Annapolis, Maryland. More than 85 people attended the summit, participating in lively conversation and hearing from federal, state and nonprofit leaders on the status of Maryland conservation policy and projects, with a particular emphasis on coastal marsh conservation and renewable energy.

U.S. Senator Ben Cardin and Maryland Department of Natural Resources Secretary Josh Kurtz joined the summit as guest speakers - sharing insights on Audubon's priority legislation and how attendees can work with them to protect birds and their habitats. Audubon leaders also had the opportunity to thank Senator Cardin, who is retiring this year, for his outstanding leadership in the Senate on environmental issues. Senator Cardin is a true champion of birds and, during his remarks, he let the audience know how much birds mean to him.

The audience also learned more about Audubon's key conservation priority in Maryland—Marshes for Tomorrow—and the plan to save these marshes for birds and people. In addition, Audubon's federal policy lead, Felice Stadler, provided an overview of Audubon's current federal policy priorities.

If you attended the 2024 I Bird I Vote Summit, thank you! We hope you will [fill out this short survey](#). It will help us to develop a robust agenda for the 10th anniversary of the I Bird I Vote Summit in 2025!

Audubon's Jim Brown, Sen. Ben Cardin, Audubon's Suzanne Biemiller and Felice Stadler, Sec. Josh Kurtz



PA Gov. Shapiro 2024 Budget Address

Audubon Mid-Atlantic applauds Governor Josh Shapiro's proposed investment in Pennsylvania's natural resources as outlined in his 2024-2025 budget. Audubon and our members are pleased to see the proposed increases to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) budgets.

Audubon also encourages the governor to continue to elevate investments in the development and deployment of renewable energy in Pennsylvania.

We need to transition away from carbon-producing energy sources faster for the sake of birds and our climate. Audubon is optimistic that the proposed new positions in DEP's Energy Program Office will give that agency the capacity needed to access federal investments in renewable energy projects.

Audubon also will continue to press for Pennsylvania's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) and demonstrate a strong commitment to the "30 x 30" Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards. Pennsylvania must be a leader in BOTH conservation AND accelerated climate action. [Please visit our website to read our full statement on the budget address.](#)

Red bellied woodpecker. Photo: Matthew Pimm



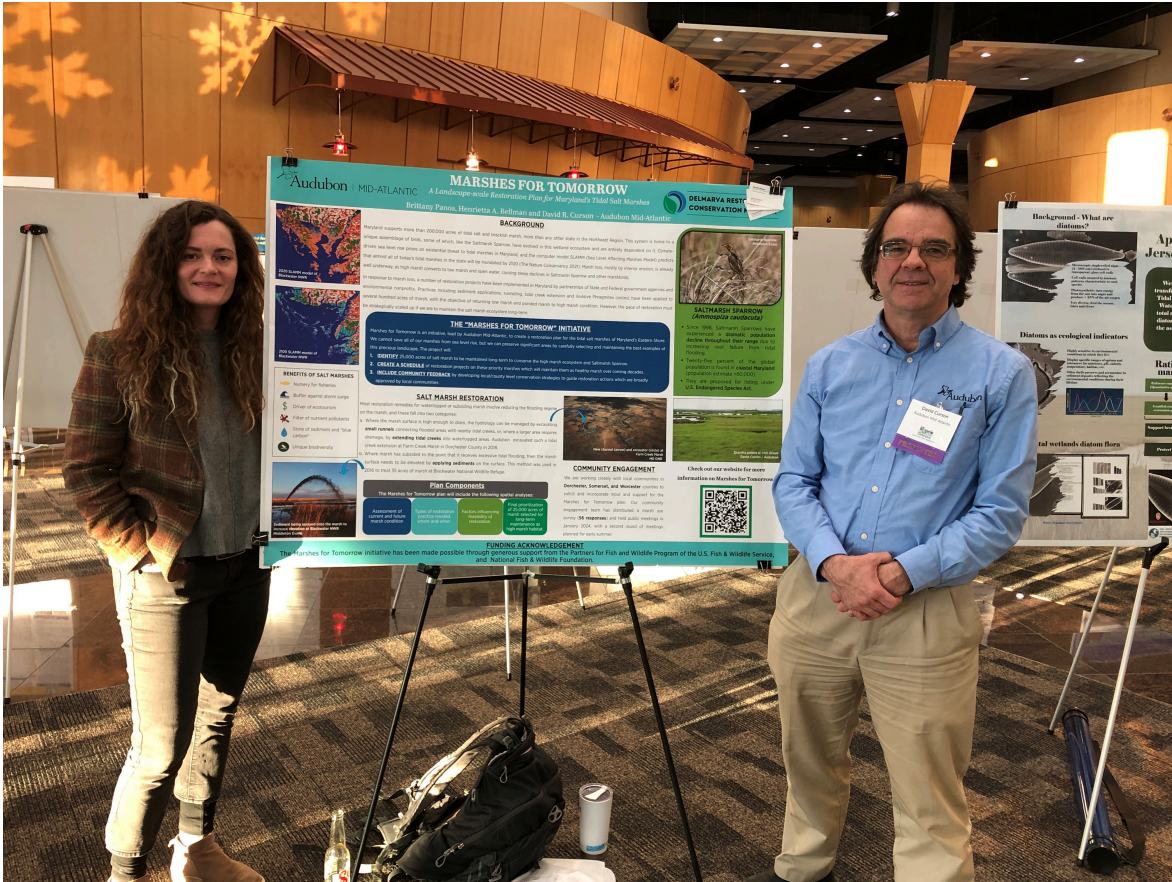
Legislative tracking in Pennsylvania and Maryland

As the legislative seasons get underway in both Pennsylvania and Maryland, Audubon Mid-Atlantic has created new on-line tools that track our legislative priorities. The Pennsylvania tracker [can be found here](#), and the Maryland tool [can be found here](#).

The tools identify Audubon's priority legislation during this legislative session and describe Audubon Mid-Atlantic's position. The tools will track the status of the identified bills and explain how the legislation would support priority birds and their habitats in our region. We hope it will help

you to keep tabs on our legislative priorities throughout the 2024 sessions. Be sure to check back frequently for updates to our priority legislation.

Black skimmer. Photo: Trudy Walden



Delaware Wetlands Conference

In early February, Audubon Director of Bird Conservation David Curson and Coastal Program Manager Hen Bellman attended the Delaware Wetlands Conference held in Wilmington, Delaware. Along with Coastal Avian Biologist Brittany Panos, David and Hen prepared a poster for the conference titled, "Marshes For Tomorrow: A Landscape-scale Restoration Plan for Maryland's Tidal Salt Marshes". The conference drew more than 400 attendees from federal and state agencies, local non-profit organizations, researcher institutions, and universities, providing an excellent opportunity to discuss Audubon's saltmarsh plan and role as a leading partner in tidal saltmarsh restoration.

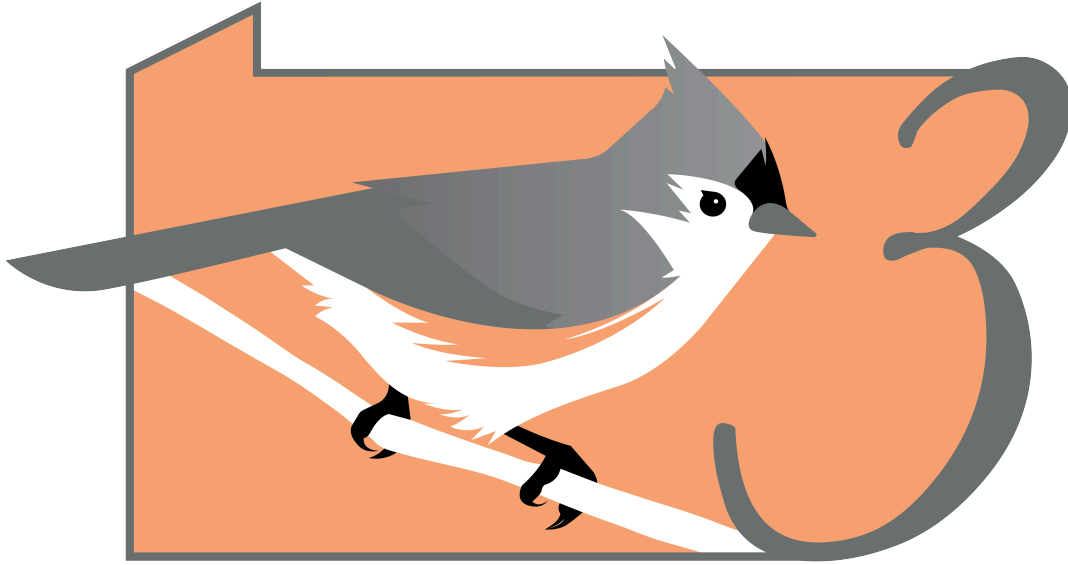
Audubon's Hen Bellman and Dave Curson with their poster.



2024 Baltimore Mayoral Candidates Forum

Thanks to the Baltimore City residents who joined Audubon Mid-Atlantic and our partners in person and online for a discussion among 11 mayoral candidates on our most pressing environmental issues. We explored topics such as environmental justice, water quality, and city parks. Together, we can hold our city leaders accountable to improving the city for birds and communities.

Baltimore mayoral candidate panel.



PA BIRD ATLAS

3rd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas

Pennsylvania's third Bird Atlas launched on January 1st, and we need your help! The Atlas, sponsored by Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and the Pennsylvania Game Commission, is a community science project that helps determine when and where the state's 190 species of nesting birds are breeding. The data collected over the next five years (2024 to 2029) will provide important updates to Pennsylvania's first two breeding bird atlases. The second atlas, which was published in 2012, incorporated 854,773 records from nearly 2000 volunteers over a five-year period (2004 to 2009). The second atlas documented dramatic declines in some bird species since the first atlas was published in the 1980s, as well as exciting range expansions in the state's avifauna.

Now this effort is being repeated under the leadership of the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and in partnership with the Pennsylvania Ornithological Society and Audubon chapters. Over the next five years, volunteers will record bird species and breeding behaviors such as territorial birds, courtship, and nest building, and submit these observations to the 'Pennsylvania Bird Atlas' portal in eBird. Data collected during this Third Bird Atlas will be used to revise Pennsylvania's list of species of conservation concern and will help identify important habitats and conservation priorities. Birders of all skill level can participate and contribute to bird conservation in Pennsylvania! [You can find more information about this effort on the Pennsylvania Bird Atlas website.](#)

3rd annual bird atlas logo.



A Voice for Birds – Solar Energy event at the John James Audubon Center

Audubon Mid-Atlantic is excited to kick off a series of Pennsylvania policy-focused events and we're starting with solar energy!

Join us tomorrow, Sunday, March 3rd, from 1:00pm until 3:30pm at the John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove. Ron Celentano and Liz Robinson from the Philadelphia Solar Energy Association will offer a deeper discussion on renewable energy and the benefits of expanding access to solar energy in communities across the state. This discussion will focus on what you can do to make energy choices that benefit our environment and provide an overview of the current state of affairs of renewable energy policies in Harrisburg this year. Finally, we'll introduce you to a new Audubon Mid-Atlantic tool to help you track progress on important legislative bills.

Throughout the year, we will dive into our state policy priorities and explore ways we all can advocate for Pennsylvania's habitats for birds and people.

Each event also will include a guided bird walk prior to hearing from experts! For a program schedule and event registration, [please click here.](#)

Check out Audubon Mid-Atlantic's Upcoming Events

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](#)



Habitat Gardening for Birds and Communities

Spring is on its way! Audubon is looking forward to longer days, flowers blooming, and migratory birds arriving. Join us for Audubon's popular Habitat Gardening webinars to explore why and how to cultivate your outdoor spaces for birds and butterflies. Audubon experts will share practical tips and scientific support for gardening with native plants, and transforming your home, school, work, or community space into a bird and butterfly paradise! Several dates to choose from for both Introductory and Advanced webinars.

For more information about the webinars, [head to our events page.](#)

Eastern bluebird on redbud tree. Photo: Glenda Simmons

CONNECT WITH US



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