

# We Appreciate You!

July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023



Audubon | Audubon Center  
at Riverlands

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher.  
Photo: Debbie Downing

## Thankful for Friends Old and New

Having just completed another year of progress for birds and people, I want to share the good news with those most responsible for making our work possible – our longtime friends and the many new contributors who joined our growing Flock of supporters this past year!

Looking back over the last 12 months, we have many reasons to be grateful and hopeful. There are now more future conservation leaders and lifelong stewards of nature thanks to programs like Nature Education for Stewards of Tomorrow, Field Day Fridays, and the Cradles to Career Initiative (C2C) with Ferguson-Florissant Schools. There are thousands of acres of improved, restored, and protected bird habitat fueled by our ongoing collaboration with the US Army Corps. There are more bird lovers and conservation advocates resulting from thousands of people who visited Riverlands and participated in classes, programs, and events.



This is not the time to rest on our laurels, however. Birds are facing enormous challenges due to massive losses in biodiversity coupled with climate change. But each day brings fresh opportunities to do more and better for birds here in the Greater St. Louis Metropolitan Area and beyond. And, when we create conditions for birds to thrive, we create conditions for people and the planet to thrive too!

In the coming months, we will be sharing with you Audubon's new five-year strategic framework, Flight Plan. With an emphasis on a hemispheric approach to bird conservation, the Mississippi River will feature greatly in our strategic priorities. Due to our Center's location at the heart of the Mississippi Flyway in one of the largest metros on the Mississippi River combined with 10-plus years of successful programming and serving steadfastly as St. Louis's welcome center to our Great Rivers, we can play an outsized role in meeting Audubon's priorities for birds, people, and the planet.

For now, please enjoy this newest Gratitude Report. And please know we appreciate you for your care and concern for our Great Rivers, birds, and the Audubon Center at Riverlands. Thank you for being a part of our Flock! I look forward to seeing you soon at Riverlands!

Gratefully,

Ken Buchholz  
Center Director

### Cover Photo: Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

Scissor-tailed Flycatchers nested near Riverlands this summer and could be seen on the outskirts of the Sanctuary in July. Their typical breeding range is the south-central U.S. and includes the portions of southwest Missouri. Their presence in the St. Louis region, while not common, is also not unprecedented and could be a sign they are shifting or expanding their range. We optimistically await their return next spring! **Photo:** Debbie Downing

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Leading with Science and Collaboration

2023 marked the 12<sup>th</sup> year of the Bottomland Forest Avian Survey. One of the longest running science initiatives of its kind continues to inform the protection of some of the best remaining intact floodplain forests in the Midwest in collaboration with the US Army Corps of Engineers. Over 300 bird species utilize the Mississippi River during their spring and fall migrations. The surveyed bottomland forests provide vital food, shelter, and safe passage critical to helping these birds complete their annual life cycles. Discover more about the amazing migratory journeys of birds at Audubon's recently launched [Bird Migration Explorer!](#)

### Conservation Leader at Riverlands

In June, Audubon's Chief Conservation Officer Marshall Johnson spent the day with this summer's Flight Crew Interns. The Flight Crew Internship exposes high school students from North County to conservation careers through on-the-ground conservation projects, training and networking with conservation professionals, and outdoor environmental education as counselors for our Little Creek Summer Camp. Marshall shared his insights about preparing for a career in conservation and spent one-on-one time with each of the interns, who were energized and inspired by the experience! We will be hosting an event with Marshall next winter for our supporters!



Marshall Johnson with Emily Connor and the Flight Crew interns in June.

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"Marshall was so generous in sharing his experiences, knowledge, and kindness with Flight Crew. Being here on their first day set the tone for what was a very memorable summer for our interns." **Emily Connor, Education Manager**

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### Paddling Partnership Grows Stronger

An increasingly stronger collaboration between the Audubon Center at Riverlands, Mississippi River Water Trail Association, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is bringing more safe and enjoyable paddling opportunities to Riverlands. Another great response to PaddleFest this past June, and the sustained popularity of the Riverlands Wellness Series kayaking programs are just two examples of the Riverlands Paddling Partnership's success!

Kayaking, canoeing, and paddle boarding continue to be popular activities throughout the U.S. and are excellent vehicles for building understanding and appreciation of our Great Rivers. Thanks to the leadership of the MWRTA and the Corps' Rivers Project Office, a new accessible kayak launch is being installed at Riverlands soon to provide more people the opportunity to paddle in Ellis Bay!

### **Adding Dimension Through Art**

As a portal to nature, art has been an essential tool for advocacy and awareness for bird conservation since the founding of the National Audubon Society. Art has long been a tool for education at our Center as well. Thanks to a generous grant from the Ruth Foundation for the Arts (formerly RDK Foundation) and the additional generosity and leadership of Advisory Board member Penny Schmidt, we celebrated our first Artist-In-Residence effort with the installation of River Ark created by Thomas Sleet in October. A new Artist-In-Residence project to create yet another dimension for engagement with our mission is in the making. More to come!

### **MORE HIGHLIGHTS**

3,861 NEST students, their schools, and communities served through inclusive, immersive, STEAM-based environmental education.

15 American Kestrel Chicks and 67 Purple Martin Chicks hatched at Riverlands! Many Tree Swallows too!

1,346 hours contributed by volunteers, community scientists, and Advisory Board Members valued at \$43,072.

10,000 visitors and participants during Birds of Winter!

\$621,000 generated from donations, grants, and earned income for birds, people, and habitat!

Six tons of driftwood from Riverland charred and set as posts in the River Ark Sculpture by Thomas Sleet,

3 classes for NEST students with River Ark sculptor Thomas Sleet.

Countless weeds pulled and native plants planted by our awesome native plant garden volunteers means more Plants for Birds! Thank you volunteers!

233 of Bows for Bird participants and 386 Bows for Birds Social Media Posts.

15 interns prepared for further education and jobs of the future in conservation and related careers.



*American Goldfinch at Riverlands. Doug Hommert*



Thank you to the following contributors who made gifts, grants and pledges to the Audubon Center at Riverlands from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.

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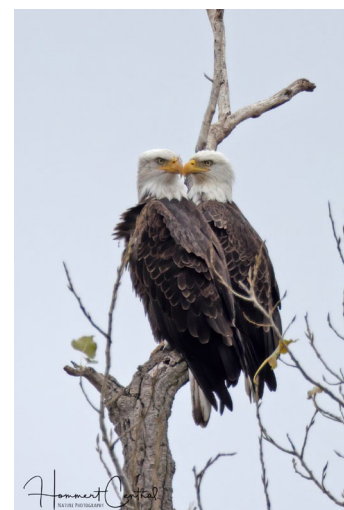
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Trumpeter Swans at Riverlands. Madi Hawn

### Bald Eagle

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Bald Eagles at Riverlands. Doug Hommert

### American White Pelican

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American White Pelican at Riverlands. Morris Finkelstein

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Great Egret at Riverlands. Paul Moffett

## FY23 GRATITUDE REPORT

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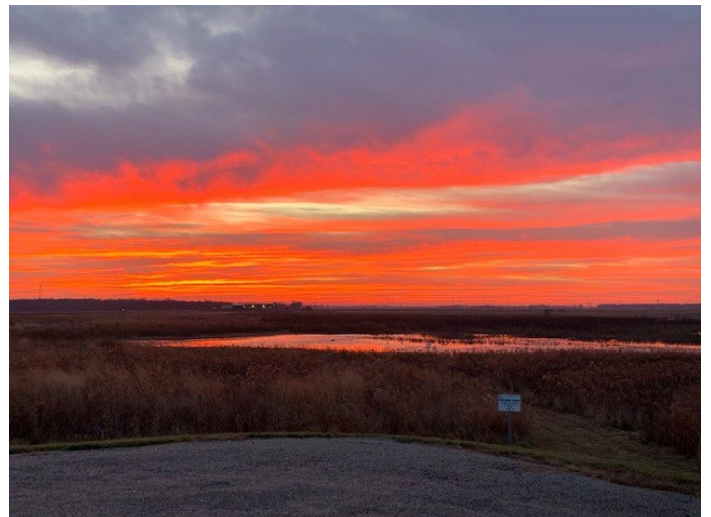
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Kayaking w/ College School on the Mississippi River.



River Ark Dance. Bishoppe Kamusinga



A Riverlands Sunset. Pat Lueders



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Riverlands Winter Illumination Walk



A Birds of Winter program with World Bird Sanctuary and Missouri Department of Conservation.



Bows for Birds "pelican strut" w/ Penny the Pelican.

## FY23 GRATITUDE REPORT

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Conservation Leadership Interns learning about native plants and botany.



Purple Martins, Riverlands Nest Box Program. Madi Hawn



## FY23 GRATITUDE REPORT

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Pond Ecology at Little Creek Summer Camp.

Thank you to our sponsors, and Give STL Day and in-kind donors!



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Audubon Center at Riverlands  
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American Kestrels.  
Riverlands Nest Box  
Program. Madi Hawn

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Corps Wildlife Biologist Insiyaa Ahmed with a future conservationist during Field Day Fridays.

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Sometimes we use kayaks and not our motorboat to get to point count sites during the Bottomland Forest Avian Survey.

### WHAT WILL YOU LEAVE BEHIND?

You don't have to be wealthy to make a significant gift to the Audubon Center at Riverlands for the conservation and education work you care about. You can stretch your giving ability by making us a beneficiary of your will or revocable trust. This one simple sentence can make a lifetime of difference for birds and people:

*I bequeath (dollar amount or percent of estate) to the National Audubon Society, Inc., a not-for-profit organization, with its principal offices located at 225 Varick Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY, 10014, for its ongoing environmental conservation and education purposes at the Audubon Center at Riverlands.*

Use this codicil in your estate planning and/or share it with your financial advisor then [let us know](#) so we can properly recognize you for your foresight and generosity.



American Pelicans along the Great River Road near Riverlands. Madi Hawn



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