



2024

ANNUAL REPORT



CONSERVATION | ADVOCACY | ENGAGEMENT

A Message from Our Leadership

Dear Friends of NYC Bird Alliance,

Our work is inspired by birds: key indicators of ecosystem health and central to the climate and biodiversity crises. This year, one alarming indicator comes from our 40-year study on nesting Harbor Herons, which reveals dramatic population declines in wading bird populations, including Black-crowned Night Heron. These declines reflect the complex challenges facing urban ecosystems.

Yet amid these challenges, NYC Bird Alliance finds hope as we cultivate a new generation of environmental stewards. In 2024, through programs like *NYCHA in Nature*, we are building community empowerment, with a goal to engage over half a million NYC Housing Authority residents in urban biodiversity. From Bronx students setting camera traps on East River islands, to Queens residents helping locate Yellow-crowned Night Heron nests, we're driving a collective conservation movement. Our name change to NYC Bird Alliance underscores our commitment to inclusivity for all New Yorkers.

The deep connection we have for birds inspires us to protect what we cherish.

Building on our 45-year legacy of conservation success, in 2025 we will craft a strategic plan that will strengthen our ability to protect urban biodiversity, enhance habitat resilience, and engage communities. Whether advocating for bird-safe buildings, empowering community scientists, or advancing green infrastructure, our plan will deliver measurable results and lasting change that benefit both birds and people.

The threats to birds—climate change, habitat loss, urban development—are immense. Yet, every new bird enthusiast and wildlife advocate nurtures something profound: love. This deep connection inspires us to protect what we cherish. Your support fuels this transformation, turning research into collective action and safeguarding the vibrant web of urban wildlife. Thank you for being part of our work.

Michael Yuan



Michael Yuan
Board President

Jessica G. Wilson



Jessica G. Wilson
Executive Director



NYCHA Hammel House residents in Queens partnered with researchers for our 2024 Harbor Herons surveys, helping us locate Yellow-crowned Night Heron nests—demonstrating the impact of community-driven urban wildlife research.

NYC BIRD ALLIANCE ACROSS THE CITY

NYC Bird Alliance champions nature in the City's five boroughs through a combination of engaging programs and innovative conservation campaigns. We protect the over 350 species of birds that depend on the City's coastlines, wetlands, forests, and grasslands.

4 Making Urban Environments Safer for Migrating Birds



12 A More Diverse and Equitable Future for Conservation



Find each section of our report at the page numbers at left—and see where we work in each program area, below.

6 Rewilding NYC with Green Infrastructure



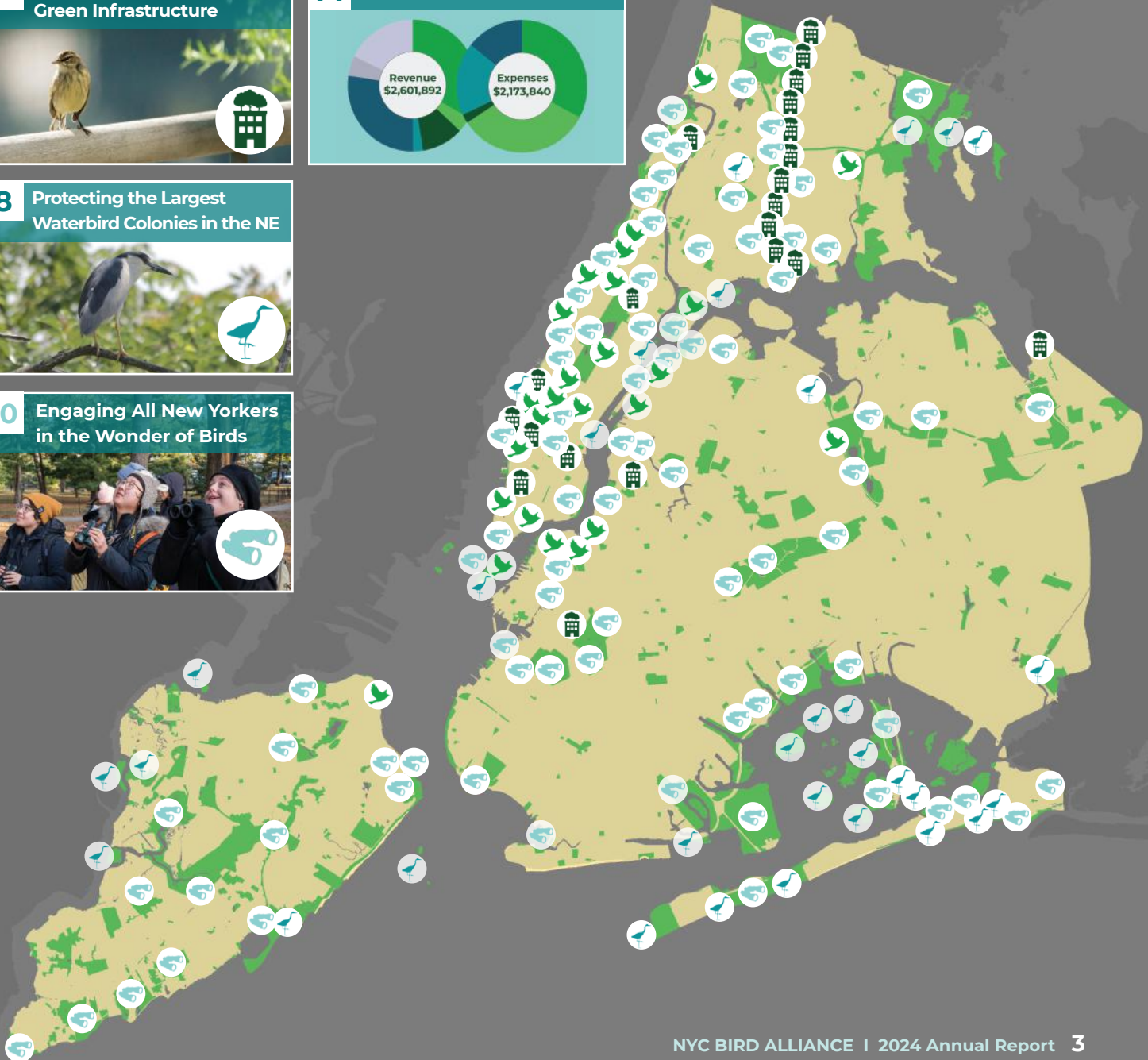
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8 Protecting the Largest Waterbird Colonies in the NE



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MAKING URBAN ENVIRONMENTS SAFER FOR MIGRATING BIRDS

WE WORK TO REDUCE BIRD COLLISIONS WITH GLASS THROUGH COMMUNITY SCIENCE AND GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY

NYC Bird Alliance fuels **bird-friendly partnerships** and legislative change by engaging volunteers to collect data on bird collisions with buildings using a standardized, scientific protocol.

Our Project Safe Flight program is the largest and one of the longest-running collision monitoring programs in the country, serving as a **national model for urban conservation**.

- We expanded monitoring to critical collision hotspots and new communities, with a record-breaking 223 volunteers monitoring 85 buildings.
- Our pioneering dBird.org platform is a leading collision monitoring tool, with 100+ partner organizations worldwide documenting bird mortalities to drive policy changes.
- We work with elected officials to champion bird-friendly legislation, mobilize activists, and collaborate with partners, including the city-wide Lights Out Coalition and National Audubon Society.

The Washington Post

Science Space Animals Health Environment

Over a billion birds die after striking U.S. buildings each year – maybe many more

The death toll is probably much higher than previously thought, U.S. researchers say. A new study shows that artificial light at night is a major factor that lures birds to buildings.

INNOVATIVE STUDIES LEAD WAY FOR COLLISION PREVENTION

NYC Bird Alliance's groundbreaking research reshaped the national dialogue on bird-building collisions. This landmark study (left) co-authored by Dustin Partridge, PhD, our director of conservation and science, underscored the need for bird-friendly retrofits and legislation.

Research by Katherine Chen, our senior manager for community science and collision reduction, revealed how weather patterns impact likelihood of collisions, enabling Lights Out programs across the country to optimize their strategies.

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Background photo: Artificial light at night attracts and disorients night-migrating birds, causing them to collide with buildings.



IN 2024

7 bird-safe building retrofit partnerships added, bringing the total to over 25

8,000 birds estimated saved by bird-safe glass installed in partnership with NYC Bird Alliance

18 co-sponsors signed on to City Council bill to limit artificial light at night in commercial buildings



COLLABORATING ON COLLISION PREVENTION

With nearly a quarter million birds dying annually from window collisions in New York City, targeted solutions like this glass retrofit at Riverside Park's Peter Jay Sharp Volunteer House (above) using specialized window films—completed last spring in collaboration with Riverside Park Conservancy—is one of the latest examples of how NYC Bird Alliance's strategic partnerships are protecting our city's biodiversity.

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WHAT'S NEXT?

- We're developing a framework to help organizations across the nation launch or improve collision monitoring programs.
- We'll use new technology to study artificial light at night and examine the timing of collisions in a 24-hour period across the City.
- We'll work with elected officials to introduce a tax incentive for buildings to use bird-friendly glass.

LEARN MORE at nycbirdalliance.org/project-safe-flight



REWILDING NEW YORK CITY WITH GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

IN A CITY OF CONCRETE AND ASPHALT, WE CHAMPION GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT AND HUMAN HEALTH

We **study and advocate for innovative urban green spaces** that provide habitat for birds, promote urban biodiversity, and mitigate the effects of climate change.

- We're helping buildings tell their sustainability stories through expanded biodiversity monitoring at over 50 sites, including the green spaces on Google's Manhattan office buildings, the Javits Center, Inwood's Sherman Creek, the Bronx River, and Big Rock Wetlands in Queens.
- Our green space monitoring model, using standardized survey methods, can be used to compare the biodiversity of different green spaces throughout the City.



DOCUMENTING THE VIBRANT BIODIVERSITY AT GOOGLE

The Palm Warbler, pictured above using the green space teeming with native plants atop Google's St. John's Terminal building in Manhattan, was one of over 40 bird species found by NYC Bird Alliance scientists at Google's campuses as part of our green infrastructure monitoring. With a company like Google choosing to foster green space and engage employees with their office buildings' nature, we are hopeful that other companies will follow this game-changing model.

Background photo: Dustin Partridge, PhD, director of conservation and science, conducts biodiversity monitoring at the Javits Center green roof complex.

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IN 2024

10 years of monitoring biodiversity at the Javits Center, the longest-running green roof bird survey in the world

38 million square feet of green space monitored by NYC Bird Alliance scientists

45,000 birds using green infrastructure



ADVOCATING FOR GREEN ROOFS TO BENEFIT BIRDS AND PEOPLE

In 2024, NYC Bird Alliance's strategic advocacy and data-driven research helped enhance the City's Green Roof Tax Abatement program. Green infrastructure provides many benefits, from capturing stormwater runoff and improving air quality, to providing wildlife habitat and increasing urban biodiversity. The updated abatement offers more powerful financial incentives for building owners—particularly in lower-income neighborhoods disproportionately affected by climate change—to incorporate biodiverse habitats into urban infrastructure.

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WHAT'S NEXT?

- We'll launch an innovative new project bringing together stakeholders in Manhattan's Lower Westside neighborhoods to improve biodiversity and inspire local action for global impact.
- We'll increase buildings' green spaces with improved adoption of the Green Roof Tax Abatement program.

LEARN MORE at nycbirdalliance.org/green-infrastructure



PROTECTING THE LARGEST WATERBIRD COLONIES IN THE NORTHEAST

OUR RESEARCH SPANS FROM SECLUDED HARBOR ROOKERIES TO COLONIES ON ACTIVE BEACHES

NYC Bird Alliance **monitors and protects waterbirds**—including the beach-nesting and breeding wading birds **that serve as bioindicators of the health of New York Harbor.**



DECADES OF DATA RAISES ALARM FOR VANISHING SPECIES

Although still the most abundant nesting wading bird in the Northeast, our research shows a 54% decline in Black-crowned Night Herons in the last two decades. Our scientists and advocates are sounding the alarm, calling for immediate conservation measures to prevent these once-ubiquitous birds from disappearing from New York Harbor.

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- Our long-term Harbor Herons Nesting Survey dataset powers action to protect declining waterbird populations.
- By deploying low-impact cameras on urban beaches, we're documenting threats to vulnerable shorebirds and developing targeted conservation strategies to protect them.
- Our bird banding research tracks the migration patterns of American Oystercatchers and Herring Gulls, revealing the important role of New York City's populations for the hemisphere and informing international conservation efforts.
- We passed the Horseshoe Crab Protection Act in the New York State Legislature. Though the bill was ultimately vetoed by Governor Hochul, there is now opportunity to increase protections via NY State Department of Environmental Conservation through the regulatory process.

Background photo: Great and Snowy Egret, Glossy Ibis, Great Black-backed Gull, Double-crested Cormorant, and Black-crowned Night Heron photographed in Jamaica Bay during our 2024 Harbor Herons surveys.

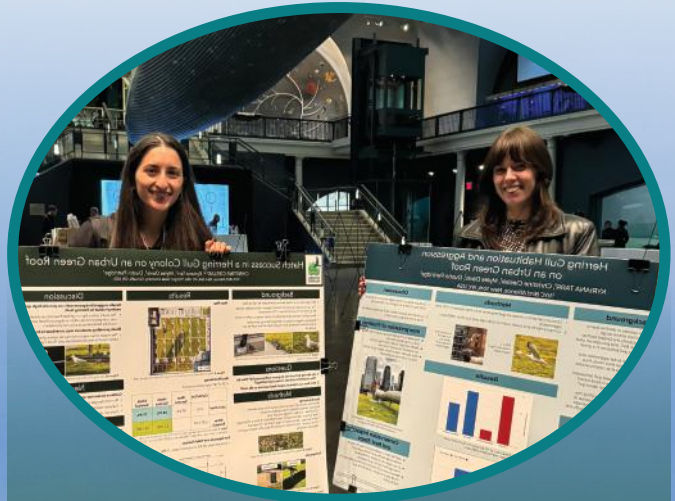


IN 2024

385,000 images analyzed from our camera trap studies, more than double the number from last year, helping us better identify threats to beach-nesting birds

39 years of Harbor Herons surveys, the longest running annual colonial wading bird survey in the Northeast

54% cumulative decline in Black-crowned Night Heron populations over past 22 years



SHARING OUR EXPERTISE WITH GLOBAL AUDIENCES

Our scientists shared their leadership expertise at over two dozen scientific talks in 2024. At American Museum of Natural History's Student Conference on Conservation Science, seasonal staff scientists Christine Cieslak (above left) and Kyriana Tarr (above right) took top honors. Christine's work showed that the Javits Center green roof provides healthy nesting habitat for NYC's largest rooftop Herring Gull colony and Kyriana's research shed light on how to minimize human disturbances to nesting rooftop birds.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- We will utilize our 12-year American Oystercatcher dataset plus the power of AI to help us identify and address the threats to beach-nesting birds in NYC.
- We will leverage our 40-year dataset on waterbirds to get the Black-crowned Night Heron included on New York State's threatened and endangered species list.
- We will partner with the National Park Service to make sure waterbird colonies in Jamaica Bay are not lost to predation.

LEARN MORE at nycbirdalliance.org/birds-of-ny-harbor



ENGAGING ALL NEW YORKERS IN THE WONDER OF BIRDS

WE WORK TO WELCOME EVERYONE TO BIRDING AND NATURE

By **sharing the beauty and wonder of birds** with New Yorkers across the five boroughs, we are growing NYC Bird Alliance's community of wildlife stewards and working to better **engage the great diversity of the City**.

- A diverse group of expert naturalists led over 330 guided bird outings across the City, enabling us to reach underserved groups with a particular focus on communities of color and beginning birders.
- We expanded our pioneering *NYCHA in Nature* program in partnership with Public Housing Community Fund, hosting bird outings and forging partnerships across the City with a vision to engage the half-million residents of NYCHA campuses in exploring the urban biodiversity at their doorsteps.
- We amplified the call for climate action during Climate Week NYC, rallying over 700 New Yorkers through 20 events, including bird outings, green roof tours, and even a Young Conservationist Trivia Night to ignite passion for protecting birds and habitats vulnerable to climate change.



OUTINGS FOR NEW YORKERS OF ALL ABILITIES

Innovative accessible birding tours, led by bird guide Alexandra Wang, make urban nature open to all. Multisensory enhancements like bird plushies and tailored experiences help us engage and empower New Yorkers with disabilities to forge meaningful connections with their local birds and environment, helping to cultivate wellbeing, sense of community, and passion for wildlife across the City's diverse population.

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Background photo: Sunset Eco-cruise attendees look for nesting waterbirds in New York Harbor.



COMMUNITY SCIENCE TRADITION SHATTERS PARTICIPATION RECORDS

The 125th Christmas Bird Count soared to new heights, as NYC Bird Alliance mobilized a record-breaking 700 volunteers across 30+ locations in our count circle spanning Manhattan, Roosevelt Island, Governors Island, Randall's Island, and Northern New Jersey. This annual community science tradition, which this year included an accessible Slow Count in Madison Square Park and inaugural bilingual Spanish-English count in Riverside Park, engaged New Yorkers of all ages and abilities to learn about their local environment while contributing data that helps inform conservation action across the country.



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IN 2024

10,000 people engaged with NYC Bird Alliance's public programs, including guided bird outings, classes, and lectures

15 collaborations with NYCHA public housing campuses

1,245 community science volunteers collected valuable data for NYC Bird Alliance's conservation programs

WHAT'S NEXT?

- We will host more bilingual bird outings in both Mandarin and Spanish, in new communities and in partnership with local organizations.
- We will increase the number of new participants in the NYCHA in Nature program.

LEARN MORE at nycbirdalliance.org/events-birding



A MORE DIVERSE AND EQUITABLE FUTURE FOR CONSERVATION

OUR CRITICAL WORK DEPENDS ON SUPPORT ACROSS ALL OF THE CITY'S COMMUNITIES

In 2024, our organization **changed its name to NYC Bird Alliance**, to welcome more people into our work. With threats from climate change, habitat loss, and collisions with buildings, protecting birds requires support from everyone.

Our new name is just one of the many ways **we work to ensure everyone has access to the natural world and can enjoy a healthy environment**. We embed equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in all of our work—from our conservation, engagement, and advocacy efforts, to our board governance and internal operations—in order to protect birds and engage all New Yorkers as stewards of biodiversity.

- We launched a series of bilingual bird outings in Mandarin this year, complementing our Spanish language programming.
- We championed access to green spaces in Environmental Justice communities by advocating for an improved Green Roof Tax Abatement program.
- We conducted ecological surveys of habitat restoration efforts along the Bronx River, a community long burdened by environmental injustice. The study quantifies the profound impact of equitable conservation initiatives.



COLLABORATION WITH BRONX STUDENTS DRIVES PIVOTAL HARBOR HERONS RESEARCH

NYC Bird Alliance partnered with Bronx-based youth development organization Rocking the Boat, whose high school students helped set camera traps on islands in the East River. The data will inform our understanding of nest predation and guidance for the management of wading birds in New York Harbor. Through targeted youth engagement in hands-on science like this, NYC Bird Alliance is cultivating the next generation of diverse conservation leaders.

Background Photo: One of our seven Black Birders Week events, this outing was held at Marsha P. Johnson State Park.



A NEW NAME FOR A HISTORIC ORGANIZATION

In June 2024, after a two-year process, our members voted to change our organization's name to NYC Bird Alliance, joining over 50 Audubon chapters nationwide in adopting more inclusive names.

Throughout the year, we considered hundreds of names and solicited feedback from thousands of stakeholders including members, supporters, volunteers, and partners. Our new name, NYC Bird Alliance, highlights our role as protectors of birds and partners of committed conservation organizations and advocates.

Our decision to drop "Audubon" from our name was not one we took lightly. And while our name has changed, our work has not: we remain a committed chapter of National Audubon, protecting wild birds and their habitats across the City.

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IN 2024

80% of guided bird outings
offered free of charge

42% of our board members are
Black, Indigenous, and people from
other racially marginalized groups

118 of NYC's zip codes engaged as
participants of our bird outings

WHAT'S NEXT?

- We will incorporate a focus on physical accessibility in more bird outings.
- We will continue to increase diversity on our board, staff, and volunteers corps.
- We'll translate dBird into other languages to further increase use of this conservation tool.

LEARN MORE at nycbirdalliance.org/edia

SUPPORT FOR NYC BIRD ALLIANCE

NYC Bird Alliance's work to protect birds and engage New Yorkers as stewards of biodiversity would not be possible without the support of contributions of many individuals and organizations. In particular, we are grateful for the leadership support of the Leon Levy Foundation, The New York Community Trust, Sarah K. de Coizart Article TENTH Perpetual Charitable Trust, Hudson River Foundation, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the National Audubon Society.

The supporters listed below donated gifts received from January 1 through December 31, 2024. We also thank the thousands of members and donors for their collective gifts under \$500, as well as our many community partners and volunteers.

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a tremendous success!

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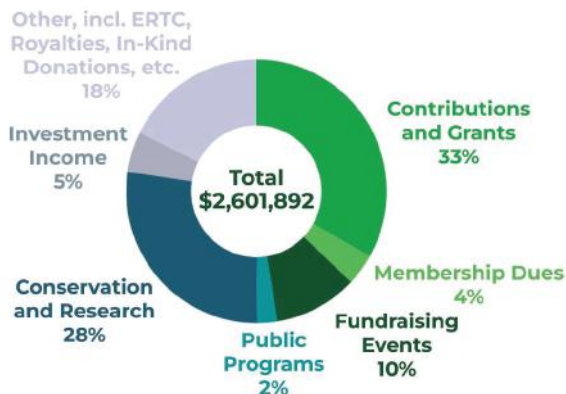
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FINANCIAL INFORMATION

For the fiscal year ended March 31, 2024

REVENUE



EXPENSES



LEARN MORE: View our complete financial statements at nycbirdalliance.org/reports-financials

Graphics: Cover - White-throated Sparrow using green roof © Michelle Talich. **Page 3** - Riverside Park Peter Jay Sharp Volunteer House retrofit © Riverside Park Conservancy; Palm Warbler © Michelle Talich; Black-crowned Night Heron © Debra Kriensky. **Pages 4-5** - background photo © Adobe Stock; Riverside Park Peter Jay Sharp Volunteer House retrofit © Riverside Park Conservancy. **Pages 6-7** - background photo © Argenis Apolinario; Palm Warbler © Michelle Talich. **Pages 8-9** - background photo © Christine Cieslak; Black-crowned Night Heron © Bill B / CC BY-NC 2.0. **Pages 10-11** - background photo © Jennifer Gonzeles; Accessible Birding at Fort Tryon Park © Sean Jamar for City Parks Foundation. All other photos © NYC Bird Alliance



NYC BIRD ALLIANCE

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NYCHA in Nature Family Day at the Redfern Houses campus in Far Rockaways, NY

NYC Bird Alliance (formerly NYC Audubon) works for the protection of wild birds and habitat in the five boroughs, improving the quality of life for all New Yorkers.