



AUDUBON SOCIETY  
NORTHERN VIRGINIA

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FY 2022 Annual Report

# Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2022



Hooded Merganser  
Seth Honig/Alexandria, VA

ASNV's mission is to engage all Northern Virginia communities in enjoying, conserving, and restoring nature for the benefit of birds, other wildlife, and people.

**This Annual Report reviews the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia's major activities in the July 2021 through June 2022 fiscal year.**

**ASNV had a very good year, thanks to the dedication of our staff and volunteers who spent countless hours fulfilling our mission.**

**We advocated at local, state, and federal levels to conserve wildlife.**

ASNV volunteers worked in a statewide group to help protect birds from free-roaming cats, advocated for bird-friendly buildings in the Amazon development project, and urged public officials to protect natural spaces and adopt policies to encourage landscaping with native plants.

**Audubon at Home Ambassadors again certified more than 100 properties,** totaling more than 567 acres, as Wildlife Sanctuaries.

Certified properties included farms, homeowner association common areas, an elementary school, and a 190-acre county park.

**ASNV worked to protect and document wildlife and wildlife habitat in Northern Virginia.** Continuing its efforts to conserve disappearing grassland habitat, ASNV helped identify sites for kestrel nesting boxes in the large grassland area at Lorton Landfill while also opposing a luxury indoor ski resort proposed for the site. Scores of ASNV volunteers continue to monitor local wildlife and plant populations in a wide range of surveys and counts. The Occoquan Bay survey project was prominently featured in a *National Geographic* article about citizen science, and data from that project was used in a scientific research paper on butterflies.

**ASNV engaged a greater diversity of audiences in its activities.** Nextgen Birders for Conservation brought younger generations into birdwatching and nature conservation. ASNV partnered with many organizations to provide nature outings for groups we have not typically served, advocated for greenspace and tree canopies in minority neighborhoods, translated environmental education materials into Spanish, and identified trails accessible to those with handicaps and birding sites accessible by public transportation.

**ASNV's education programs enjoyed high local participation and attracted participants from a record 28 countries!** Online classes and workshops, for which almost 4,000 people registered, touched on topics as diverse as bird migration, birds and words, ethics in nature photography, plants for pollinators, moth biodiversity, and environmental career pathways for women and girls. ASNV impacted youth education by funding two local teachers to attend Audubon's Hog Island nature camp in Maine, awarding three mini-grants to schools, and generating nature-related materials for youth.

Thank you to all our donors, members, staff, and volunteers for a fantastic year!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Libby Lyons". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Libby Lyons  
President, Audubon Society of Northern Virginia

# Advocacy



ASNV's Advocacy Committee continues to work on local, state, and federal initiatives to protect and conserve natural resources.

## Protection from Human-made Hazards

**We are working to reduce losses from free-roaming cats, which kill nearly 2.5 billion birds and more than 6 billion small mammals in the U.S. each year:** ASNV participated in a workgroup formed at the request of the Virginia General Assembly with the goal of developing consensus legislation to address the impact of free-roaming cats on birds, other wildlife, natural resources, and public health. The workgroup includes public officials and advocates for both wildlife and feral cats. It is too soon to tell if the ten meetings held to date will result in consensus legislation, but we are hopeful.

**We helped make buildings safer for birds:** We successfully advocated for Amazon to adopt a bird-friendly building design for its PenPlace development that commits to bird-safe windows on the entire Helix

building and on the first 50 feet of the other three towers. In Alexandria, we helped negotiate inclusion of bird-friendly building design in the proffers for the Huntington Club Conceptual Re-Development. In Reston, we investigated ways to work with developers and managers of high-rise buildings to make them safer for birds. We were unable to insert our bird-safe design standard



into the current revision of the Uniform Statewide Building Code, but we continue to explore state-level options.

### **We advocated for bike paths that minimize harm to wildlife and the environment:**

Bike paths can help reduce motor vehicle traffic and associated pollution, but they have to be sited responsibly. We opposed routing the proposed Cinder Bed Road Bikeway between Newington Road and the Franconia-Springfield Metro, because it would harm rare and sensitive plant communities. We have urged Fairfax County, the NOVA Transportation Authority, and the participants in the annual NOVA Joint Transportation meeting to include environmental reviews of all proposed bike paths in the design and planning stages of the projects.

## **Habitat Preservation**

### **We urged public officials to take steps to protect natural spaces throughout ASNV's service area:**

In Loudoun County we advocated for routing a highway bypass to avoid adverse effects on Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's newly-created JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary. Working with other groups, we succeeded in convincing Fairfax County to reverse plans to install a parking lot on a portion of Justice Park in the Culmore area, an historically underserved part of the county. In Prince William County, we urged officials to rework proposed redevelopment plans for Belmont Bay, adjacent to the Occoquan River and Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge, noting the potential for significant damage to the Refuge and the River and Bay ecosystem.

**We worked to reduce the impact of invasive plants and to encourage the use of native plants:**

ANSV participated in a statewide invasive plant workgroup established by the General Assembly to recommend measures to reduce the sale and use of invasive plants in Virginia. We supported several bills to reduce the impact of invasive non-native plants, including the only bill adopted in 2022, which requires development of a brochure for use by retail establishments on the value of native plants and the harm from invasive plants. We continue to work with other groups to prepare for future initiatives, and with local authorities on policies for using native plants in public landscaping.



Prothonotary Warbler  
Charlene Johnson/Occoquan Bay NWR

**We supported Federal legislation and regulations that protect wildlife and the environment:**

ASNV continues to support enactment of the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (H.R. 2773), which the House of Representatives passed in June, and which is pending in the Senate. The bill will provide states, territories, and tribes with \$1.39 billion annually to fund efforts to restore essential habitat and implement key conservation strategies, as described in each state’s Wildlife Action Plan. We also supported regulatory efforts to protect migratory birds and threatened and endangered species, to ensure robust environmental review of Federal projects, and to protect wetlands.



Eastern Carpenter Bee on Virginia Bluebells  
Judy Gallagher/Claude Moore Park

# Audubon at Home



Monarch Butterfly on Field Thistle  
Judy Gallagher, Occoquan Bay NWR

The Audubon at Home Program continues to expand wildlife-friendly habitat to benefit local wildlife in urbanizing Northern Virginia.

## Spreading the Word about Native Plants

**Habitat is wherever you find it or create it:** The Audubon at Home (AAH) motto is, “Let the critters decide.” If the animals show up and use a property, it is wildlife habitat—even if it’s also a stormwater pond or commercial campus, or just a townhouse backyard. As residents learn more about native plants and see and appreciate their beauty, we hope they’ll be inspired to plant natives in their own yards, creating even more habitat for birds and other wildlife.

**We provided guidance to residents through individual home visits and presentations to groups:** We helped hundreds of northern Virginia residents enhance wildlife habitat on their properties. We received 310 requests to visit properties and advise owners on native plantings and

other habitat improvements to support wildlife. We made 234 visits and certified 104 properties, totaling 567 acres, as Wildlife Sanctuaries. Audubon at Home Ambassadors gave presentations to nine garden clubs, neighborhood associations and other groups, and participated in 19 fairs, environmental expos, and tabling events across the region. Since the first certification of an Audubon at Home Wildlife Sanctuary in 2010 through June 30 of this year, we have certified 921 properties and 7,783 acres, and we're not done yet!



## Community Outreach

**We continue to reach out to the community to create valuable native habitat at a variety of properties, including larger tracts:**

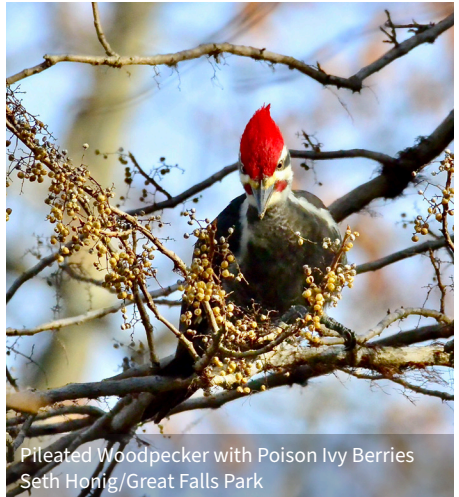
Although most properties certified as Wildlife Sanctuaries were suburban residential lots, our successes this year range from certifying a 190-acre nature preserve on the Rappahannock River that hosts several rare species and includes mature riparian forest, mesic upland forest, and native meadows, to helping an eight-story condominium in Arlington create wildlife habitat in every available nook and cranny. We certified new Wildlife Sanctuaries on farms in Loudoun, Fauquier, and Rappahannock counties, and at an elementary school, a stormwater pond at the Fairfax County Government Center, several homeowner association common areas, and the National Rural Utilities Cooperative



Finance Corporation’s property in Loudoun County. For the latter project, ASNV partner Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy provided guidance on expanding several areas of an already impressive native landscape to further decrease lawn and fertilizer use, and on managing invasive species on the 42-acre property. The cooperative has organized a nature club, and LWC’s Bluebird monitoring team will help choose an area for Bluebird nest boxes.

**Mini-grants to seven neighborhood associations converted their entrances to native plant showplaces:**

Audubon at Home partnered with Plant NOVA Natives in awarding matching mini-grants to seven homeowner and civic associations. The grants allowed the associations to redesign the landscaping for their neighborhood entrances, remove invasive plants, and replant with low-maintenance native plants that support wildlife. In addition, the grants required the associations to reach out to neighborhood residents to educate them about the value of native plants. The mini-grant program was funded by Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation’s Environmental Education and Stewardship Grants Program.



# Conservation and Citizen Science



The Conservation and Citizen Science Committees support projects to conserve native wildlife and collect and analyze important natural resource information.

## Habitat Conservation

**We continue to seek opportunities to enhance grassland habitat, which is rapidly disappearing from Northern Virginia:** We partnered with a raptor expert to advise Fairfax County's I-95 Lorton Landfill staff on the best location for two American Kestrel nest boxes to be installed in the fall of 2022. We also continue to work with the Advocacy Committee on its opposition to conversion of the closed areas of the landfill to a luxury indoor ski resort.

**Conservation Grants create or improve wildlife habitat through northern Virginia:** We distributed grants for 12 conservation-related projects in parks or elementary schools. A typical example is the grant to Nativity Catholic School in Burke, which used the funds to improve its small pollinator garden by purchasing pollinator plants and gardening

materials for the student gardening club. The photo at right documents the group of parent, student, and teacher volunteers pitching in on a spring day to plant native plants from Earth Sangha.



### **We work with land**

**managers as well as our grant recipients:** ASNV sponsored a program focused on sustainable land management and invasive removal strategies for approximately 20 land managers who work in the Lower Potomac Important Bird Area.

## **Surveys and Counts**

### **Citizen Science surveys document trends in northern Virginia natural resources.**

» **Christmas Bird Count:** The 40th Annual Manassas-Bull Run Christmas Bird Count (CBC), led by Coordinator Phil Silas, was conducted on December 21, 2021, and again followed special COVID-19 protocols. The 101 field observers and 3 feeder watchers counted nearly 34,000 birds, 11,500 greater than the previous year, largely due to more than 10,000 Common Grackles. The overall species count of 78 was close to the 30-year average for this CBC. Notable results include an all-time high number of White-throated Sparrows (1,477) and Hermit Thrushes (45), and the first double-digit count of American Kestrels (10) in this century.



- » **Winter Waterfowl Count:** The Winter Waterfowl Count, led by Larry Cartwright, again documented low numbers of ducks and geese, suggesting that the submerged aquatic vegetation on which they feed has not fully recovered from the heavy rains of 2019. The 49 volunteers on 15 teams counted a total of 33,364 individual birds of 38 species, including a large flock of Lesser Scaups (4,321) and a flock of Ring-billed Gulls (1,053).
  
- » **Northern Virginia Bird Survey:** The annual breeding bird survey, started in 1995, is conducted throughout the month of June. This year 20 volunteers surveyed 21 locations and hundreds of points across those locations, and found that the three most abundant species were the Northern Cardinal, Carolina Wren, and Tufted Titmouse.
  
- » **Other Surveys:** ASNV continued to sponsor other wildlife surveys, including the year-round Occoquan Bay and Meadowood wildlife surveys, the International Migratory Bird Day Count, and the North American Butterfly Association count. One of our two paid summer interns, a George Mason University undergraduate, worked with two board-member scientists to enter and analyze data from long-term efforts at Occoquan and Meadowood. The Occoquan Bay survey



Occoquan Bay Area Wildlife Surveys  
Judy Gallagher/Point of View, Lorton

project was featured in a *National Geographic* article on citizen science, and data from that project was combined with data from similar surveys around the country in a scientific research paper on the timing of butterfly life stages.

**Webinars and bird walks expand the pool of citizen volunteers for the surveys:** ASNV hosted webinar programs for several citizen science projects including the Great Backyard Bird Count, the North American Butterfly Association count, and International Migratory Bird Day. These programs help recruit and train new volunteers and re-acquaint returning volunteers with survey protocols. We also sponsored or co-sponsored 25 bird walks in the region, which served both to support and expand the ASNV community and as well as to enhance the identification skills of potential citizen scientists.

## Engaging the Next Generation

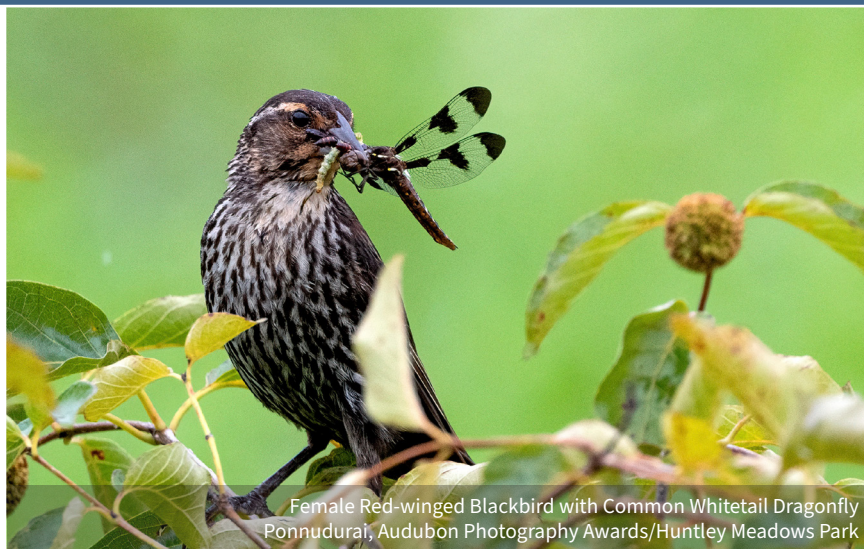
**Our new Nextgen Birders for Conservation program helps us involve more young people in our activities and programs:** We launched the Nextgen Birders for Conservation group to engage younger birders. Our goal is to cultivate the next generation of environmental stewards and increase the popularity of birding among people in their 20s and 30s.

The group launched in April via the Meetup.com platform. From an initial set of 20 participants the group has grown to 50 members. Several of the members participated in the June butterfly count and others have stepped up to assume some leadership in the group.



NextGen Birders  
Tina Dudley/Riverbend Park

# Diversity and Inclusion



Female Red-winged Blackbird with Common Whitetail Dragonfly  
Ponnudurai, Audubon Photography Awards/Huntley Meadows Park

Our Diversity and Inclusion Committee works with multiple community organizations and ASNV committees to reach underserved communities.

**Community partnerships with local organizations helped expand the reach of ASNV’s education and conservation efforts:** We continue to partner with NAACP/Arlington, Arlington Regional Master Naturalists (ARMN), and NOVA Parks with activities in Upton Hill Regional Park, including the Black and Latin/Hispanic outing series and nature outings for diverse groups of children. We plan to restart outings to the park, suspended due to COVID-19, for Asian-American seniors in HUD housing adjacent to Upton Hill. We also have hosted outings with Outdoor Afro, Black Women Hike, and Four Mile Run Conservatory/Casa Chirilagua. We also are working with the Arlington County public libraries to offer outings to some of Arlington’s underserved communities.

**We worked with multiple ASNV committees to use their skills and contacts to assist our efforts:** We worked with the Advocacy Committee to continue and expand the relationship it formed with NAACP/Fairfax to

prevent loss of greenspace in Justice Park. At the invitation of NAACP/Fairfax we offered bird walks at a Family Fun Day at Mt. Vernon Woods Park and participated in a Latino Environmental Week festival at Justice Park. For these events we made good use of our loaner binoculars and Spanish language educational tools. We also worked with the Advocacy Committee to help support our partner, EcoAction Arlington, in its efforts to establish a Tree Canopy Equity Fund to focus resources on underserved neighborhoods with the lowest tree canopy coverage.

**Our college interns helped us develop materials to reach underserved groups:** Our

two college interns helped our outreach to underserved groups, assisting in translating some of our existing educational materials into Spanish and developing new tools in both languages. They also worked on materials for outreach to groups with autism spectrum disorder or other neurocognitive sensitivities. We then coordinated with our Citizen Science and Conservation Committees to acquire a laser pointer and telescope smartphone mount for use with groups with visual or neurocognitive sensitivities.

**ASNV staff and many volunteers helped us advertise accessible natural resource areas:** ASNV staff and volunteers have contributed more than 80 assessments to the crowd-sourced [map](#) of the Birdability program, which describes trail accessibility at birding spots around the world. ASNV also researched local public transportation networks and identified and publicized more than a dozen eBird hotspots available by [bus and/or rail](#).



Black Women Hike  
Musa Murawih/Huntley Meadows Park



ASNV Event Participant  
Tyler Grigsby/McLean Islamic Center

# Education



Both the Adult and Youth Education Committees offer programs to engage people of all ages and backgrounds in enjoying and conserving natural resources.

## Adult Education

**ASNV continues to expand our audience through online workshops and classes:** Demand for birding, wildlife, ecology and habitat programs online is steady despite life slowly returning to normal after COVID-19 lockdowns. Class registration totalled nearly 4,000, just under our record last year of 4,200. Despite the slight dip in participation, the number of countries represented by our audience grew from 17 in FY2021 to 28 in FY2022, demonstrating that ASNV programming indeed has a global reach. Our Adult Education programs are offered at nominal cost but still generate revenue to support the organization's many efforts.

**We offered programs on a variety of birding and other natural history topics, encouraging members and the wider community to learn more about wildlife and ecology in their community:**

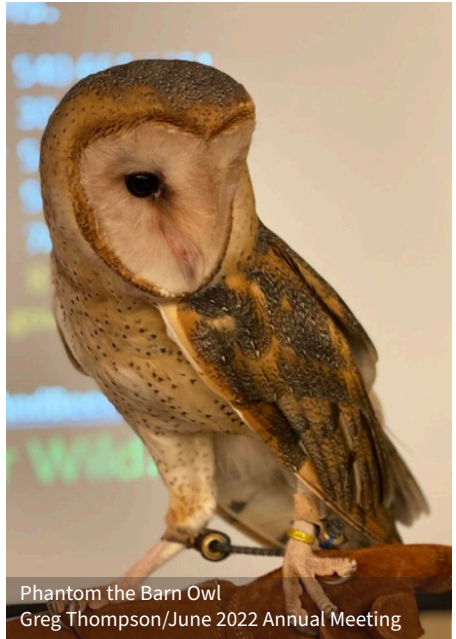


Examples of our FY2022 programs include talks on bird migration, the extent of bird-related terms in the English language, the ethics of nature photography, plants that serve as important sources of pollen or food, moth biodiversity, and environmental career pathways for women and girls. Our audience enjoyed expertise from a wide spectrum of speakers ranging from a New York Times bestselling author to prominent biologists, Board Members and top local naturalists, and well-known photographers.

**We welcomed new birders to the community:** ASNV provided two programs for beginning birders. One covered information about common local species as well as about ethical birding practices. A second well-attended program focused on birding by ear for beginners to help newer birders expand their bird identification skills.

**ASNV donors allowed us to engage with hundreds of participants during our free Audubon Afternoon programs:**

Thanks to funding from our donors, everyone could enjoy free Audubon Afternoons. And we enjoyed our first in-person Audubon Afternoon in over two years, featuring a program from Secret Garden Birds and Bees with four live owls, an event that attracted well over 100 people!



## Youth Education

**Our Hog Island Scholarship Program provides educators experience and tools to inspire tomorrow’s conservation leaders:** ASNV funded scholarships for two northern Virginia teachers this summer at “Sharing Nature: An Educator’s Week” at Audubon’s Hog Island nature camp in Maine. The awardees are Chrissy Brownson of Providence Elementary

and Candice Centikaya of Fairfax County School Support. Both reported rewarding experiences that they can incorporate into their teaching plans.



ASNV Scholarship recipients Chrissy Brownson and Candice Centikaya at Hog Island Educator's Week  
Chrissy Brownson/Hog Island, Maine

**Our youth education mini-grants promoted natural awareness and development of bird-friendly habitat:** ASNV awarded three \$500 mini-grants for projects that included a student-run nature garden at Alexandria's Bucknell Elementary School, continued maintenance of a pollinator garden at Rockledge Elementary School in Woodbridge, and funds for Arlington Regional Master Naturalists (ARMN) to develop a birding toolkit that Master Naturalists can use for educational programs that target underserved families where they live and work.

**We continue to sponsor and provide educational materials for youth:** In late 2021 we released online the original version of Florence McBride's *Some Common Birds of Northern Virginia*, making it available without charge through ASNV for non-profit educational purposes. In FY2022 ASNV expanded the offering to include a version translated into Spanish, and McBride has released a coloring book version. Working with ASNV's

Diversity and Inclusion Committee, we also provided ARMN’s Public Education and Outreach Committee ten pairs of inexpensive children’s binoculars and a range of Spanish and English-language materials. This included a set of laminated cards of ten common Northern Virginia backyard birds with information in English and Spanish.

**We engage northern Virginia’s youth (and their families) at community events:**

ASNV staff and volunteers set up tables and displays at multiple community events across the region and featured activities to engage children. Activities included teaching about the different shapes of bird beaks, wing spans, binocular usage and other topics. While we are involving children in these family events, we find it is a good opportunity to also engage their parents!



# Membership and Finances



Tree Swallow  
Matt Felperin/Loudoun County, VA

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Our members, donors and volunteers helped make 2022 a successful year for ASNV and its initiatives.

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**The Audubon Society of Northern Virginia is the nation's largest independent chapter of the National Audubon Society.** Our membership grew over the FY2022 year by almost 6% to more than 5,300 members. Our financial outlook provided more of a challenge with a significant increase in personnel costs and a downturn in financial markets.

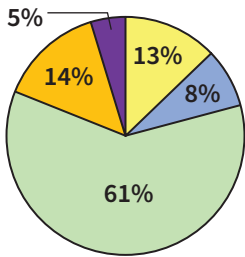
**Our generous donors are our lifeblood.** ASNV's largest source of support is from individuals. Last fiscal year we received over \$95,000 from over 500 donors, mostly during the winter Annual Appeal. This widespread grassroots support makes a huge difference in our ability to protect wildlife and wild places through advocacy, conservation, citizen science, and nature education.

**Maintaining a primarily online approach to programs allowed us to sustain a high audience and realize \$22,000 in program income.** We also received support from the National Audubon Society and budgeted \$19,800 from cash reserves to fund ASNV activities.

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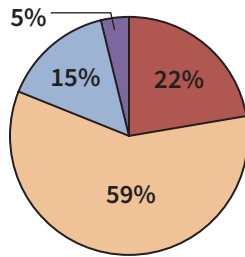
**Where did the money go?** The largest share (mostly due to staff time) went to Adult Education (\$36,000) and Administration (\$33,500). We also spent \$22,600 on communications and outreach and \$5,900 on development. These expenditures made possible our broad array of classes, bird and nature walks, Audubon Afternoons, conservation and youth education grants, Audubon at Home activities, and many additional activities for protecting and supporting birds and other wildlife.

**FY 2022 Funding**



- Funds from cash reserve
- National Audubon Society
- Donations
- Program income
- Interest and dividends

**FY 2022 Expenses**



- Programs and Advocacy
- Communications
- Administration
- Development

**We depend on volunteers!** These expenses do not include the tremendous value of the volunteer time that is generously given to make our programs possible. We send a big THANK YOU! to all our dedicated volunteers who plan and lead walks, make presentations, engage children, families and other community groups, contribute as AAH Ambassadors, serve on the Board and Committees, and perform so many other important functions.

**We are fiscally sound.** We ended the fiscal year in the black, with \$371,200 in assets, including a \$76,000 bequest from the Marilyn G. Bernard Trust, \$7,500 in dividends, and portfolio losses in FY 2022 that were less than the rate of losses in the overall stock market during the same period.

**Our plan for FY2023.** For FY2023, we adopted a budget that balanced our increased staff costs with continued strong revenue from multiple sources. We budgeted \$135,000 in revenue plus \$23,500 from reserves, and \$158,000 in expenses.

# 2022 Donor List



Hooded Merganser  
Matt Felperin/Huntley Meadows Park

Our deepest thanks to all of our donors and volunteers over the last year. You are the ones who make it possible!

## \$2000 or more

Barbara L. Francis  
Tom Blackburn and Brenda Frank  
Joan Haffey  
Gary D. Knipling  
Elizabeth A. Martin  
Dixie Sommers  
Arthur and Ellen Williford

## \$1000-\$1999

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Hillary Clawson  
Laura Connors  
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Laurie Petronis  
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Eastern Towhee on Redbud  
Seth Honig/Mantua, VA



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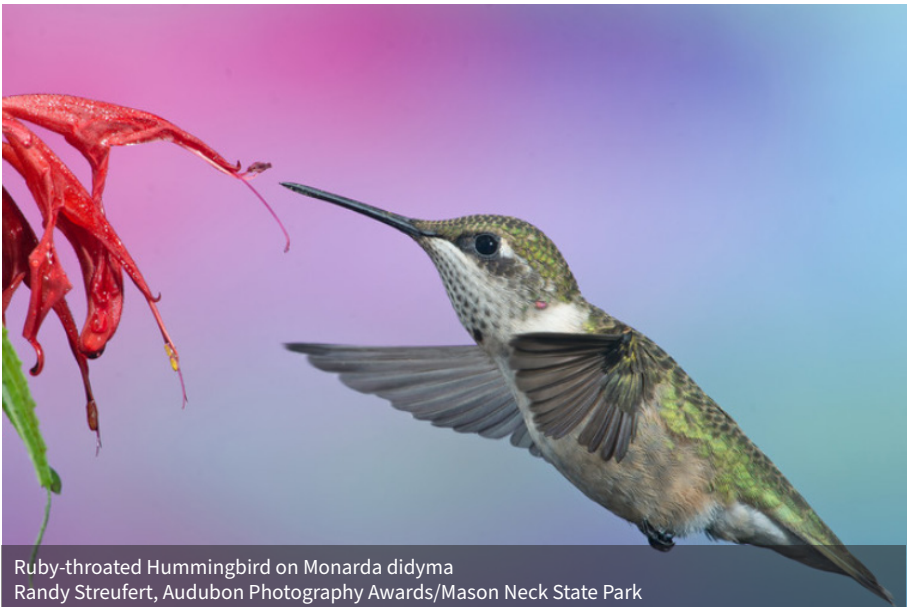
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Cathy Gnam	Joanne and Powell Hutton

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Jeannie Marshall



Ruby-throated Hummingbird on *Monarda didyma*  
Randy Streufert, Audubon Photography Awards/Mason Neck State Park

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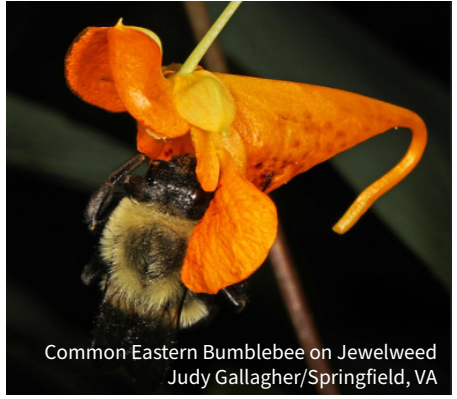
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Common Eastern Bumblebee on Jewelweed  
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Least Bittern  
Matt Felperin/Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge

A special thank you to our local photographers, especially **Matt Felperin**, **Judy Gallagher**, **Seth Honig**, and **Charlene Johnson**, who captured the images of native birds, insects, and plants right here in Northern Virginia.

Cover Photo: Belted Kingfisher, Matt Felperin/Huntley Meadows Park



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