

44th ANNUAL

# nature forward **birdathon**

APRIL 15 - MAY 31, 2024

## CAMPAIGN REPORT



Dr. Linda Lear &  
Mr. John Nickum



Sandy Spring Bank



Scarlett

The Backyard Naturalist





"There is symbolic as well as actual beauty in the migration of the birds, the ebb and flow of the tides, the folded bud ready for the spring. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature - the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after the winter."

**Rachel Carson**

Former Board member,  
internationally recognized author, and  
founder of the modern environmental movement



## Birds are part of Nature Forward's DNA

**and the Nature Forward Birdathon is our longest and most important spring fundraising tradition**

In 1897, volunteers organized the Audubon Society of the District of Columbia "for the protection and study of birds."

In 1960, the group broadened its mission in "recognition of the whole natural environmental picture" becoming the Audubon Naturalist Society of the Central Atlantic States.

Today as Nature Forward, our members, donors, volunteers, staff, and supporters champion birds, blooms, habitats, and all facets of nature by inspiring people across the Capital Region to appreciate, understand, and protect their natural environment through outdoor experiences, education, and advocacy. Nature Forward seeks to create a larger and more diverse community of people who treasure the natural world and work to preserve it.



" was reminded how much I enjoyed being a part of the Nature Forward community: kindred spirits with boundless curiosity and a true love of nature."

**Paul D'Andrea**

Former Board member and a member of the 2024 Nature Forward Board Birdathon Team



Members of the 2024 Nature Forward Board Birdathon Team

## Connecting people and nature

### Powerful support for Nature Forward's mission work

"Igniting people's love for and protection of nature is so important," says Nature Forward Board President Nancy Voit.

Nature Forward's annual Birdathon is a celebration of nature and community. It brings together birders, nature-lovers, friends, and families to learn about and enjoy the natural world while raising funds that provide essential year-round support for Nature Forward's nature education, restoration, and advocacy work.

"The Birdathon truly is our mission in action - bringing people and nature together in the Capital region," says Board member Noel Carson.





**"Birds are so amazing!**  
So is the work that Nature Forward does and so are you for supporting us! Thank you very much!"

**Debra Prybyla and David Bleckstein**  
Veteran birders and Birdathon counters.  
They were married at Woodend Nature Sanctuary and recently celebrated their 30th anniversary.



*Solitary Sandpiper (top) and Baltimore Oriole by Gregg Petersen*

## Birding with a purpose

**An engaged community of caring nature lovers**

Nature Forward's Birdathon invites nature lovers of all ages, backgrounds, abilities, and skills to experience the outdoors and share their enthusiasm with friends, family, and others who pledge support for the birds and blooms they count.

By securing pledges (like a walk-a-thon or bike-a-thon) for the birds, wildflowers, butterflies, trees, and nature features they count, these dedicated counters raise much-needed funds for Nature Forward's environmental education, conservation, and restoration mission work.

To boost participation this year, Nature Forward naturalists led eight local and regional birding excursions and provided informative resources to encourage new and returning birders.

**DONATIONS RAISED**  
**\$63,000+**  
**FOR NATURE EDUCATION,  
CONSERVATION, &  
RESTORATION PROGRAMS**

**PARTICIPANTS &  
SUPPORTERS**  
**281**

**DIGITAL PIONEERS**  
**18** COUNTERS ON 5 TEAMS SECURED  
DONATIONS VIA OUR ONLINE  
PEER-TO-PEER FUNDRAISING PLATFORM

**16 BIRDATHON  
TEAMS**

**8 NATURE FORWARD-LED  
BIRDING EXPERIENCES**





*Pileated Woodpecker*  
by Gregg Petersen

# 2024 BIRD SIGHTINGS

- |                              |                          |   |                               |                         |                            |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Acadian Flycatcher           | Cedar Waxwing            | Great Egret                               | Northern Harrier              | Sandhill Crane          | Worm-eating Warbler        |
| American Black Duck          | Chestnut-sided Warbler   | Greater Yellowlegs                        | Northern Mockingbird          | Savannah Sparrow        | Yellow Crowned Night Heron |
| American Coot                | Chimney Swift            | Great-horned Owl                          | Northern Parula               | Scarlet Tanager         | Yellow-bellied Sapsucker   |
| American Crow                | Chipping Sparrow         | Green Heron                               | Northern Rough-winged Swallow | Seated Sandpiper        | Yellow-breasted Chat       |
| American Goldfinch           | Chuck-will's-Widow       | Hairy Woodpecker                          | Orchard Oriole                | Semipalmated Plover     | Yellow-rumped Warbler      |
| American Oystercatcher       | Clapper Rail             | Hermit Thrush                             | Osprey                        | Semipalmated Sandpiper  | Yellow-throated Vireo      |
| American Redstart            | Common Gallinule         | Herring Gull                              | Ovenbird                      | Snowy Egret             |                            |
| American Robin               | Common Grackle           | Hooded Merganser                          | Pileated Woodpecker           | Solitary Sandpiper      |                            |
| Anhinga                      | Common Ground-Dove       | House Finch                               | Pine Warbler                  | Song Sparrow            |                            |
| Bald Eagle                   | Common Merganser         | House Sparrow                             | Piping Plover                 | Sora                    |                            |
| Baltimore Oriole             | Common Nighthawk         | House Wren                                | Prairie Warbler               | Spotted Sandpiper       |                            |
| Barn Swallow                 | Common Raven             | Indigo Bunting                            | Prothonotary Warbler          | Swallow-tailed Kite     |                            |
| Barred Owl                   | Common Yellowthroat      | Killdeer                                  | Purple Finch                  | Swamp Sparrow           |                            |
| Belted Kingfisher            | Cooper's Hawk            | Laughing Gull                             | Purple Martin                 | Tree Swallow            |                            |
| Black and White Warbler      | Double-crested Cormorant | Least Tern                                | Red Knot                      | Tricolored Heron        |                            |
| Black Vulture                | Downy Woodpecker         | Lesser Scaup                              | Red-bellied Woodpecker        | Tufted Titmouse         |                            |
| Black-bellied Plover         | Dunlin                   | Lesser Yellowlegs                         | Reddish Egret                 | Tundra Swan             |                            |
| Black-bellied Whistling Duck | Eastern Bluebird         | Limpkin                                   | Red-eyed Vireo                | Turkey Vulture          |                            |
| Black-billed Cuckoo          | Eastern Kingbird         | Little Blue Heron                         | Red-headed Woodpecker         | Turnstone               |                            |
| Black-capped Chickadee       | Eastern Meadowlark       | Louisiana Waterthrush                     | Red-shouldered Hawk           | Vesper Sparrow          |                            |
| Black-necked Stilt           | Eastern Phoebe           | Magnolia Warbler                          | Red-tailed Hawk               | Warbling Vireo          |                            |
| Blue Jay                     | Eastern Towhee           | Mallard                                   | Red-winged Blackbird          | Whimbrel                |                            |
| Blue-gray Gnatcatcher        | Eastern Wood Pewee       | Marbled Godwit                            | Ring-billed Gull              | Whip-poor-will          |                            |
| Blue-headed Vireo            | Eurasian Collared-Dove   | Marsh Wren                                | Rock Dove                     | White Ibis              |                            |
| Boat-tailed Grackle          | European Starling        | Merlin                                    | Rock Pigeon                   | White-breasted Nuthatch |                            |
| Brown Pelican                | Field Sparrow            | Mottled Duck                              | Roseate Spoonbill             | White-eyed Vireo        |                            |
| Brown-headed Cowbird         | Fish Crow                | Mourning Dove                             | Rose-breasted Grosbeak        | White-throated Sparrow  |                            |
| Canada Goose                 | Florida Scrub-Jay        | Muscovy Duck                              | Royal Tern                    | Wild Turkey             |                            |
| Cape May Warbler             | Forster's Tern           | Nelson's/Saltmarsh (Sharp-tailed Sparrow) | Ruby-crowned Kinglet          | Willet                  |                            |
| Carolina Chickadee           | Glossy Ibis              | Northern Bobwhite                         | Ruby-throated Hummingbird     | Willow Flycatcher       |                            |
| Carolina Wren                | Gray Catbird             | Northern Cardinal                         | Ruddy Duck                    | Wilson's Plover         |                            |
| Cattle Egret                 | Great Blue Heron         | Northern Flicker                          | Ruddy Turnstone               | Wilson's Snipe          |                            |
|                              | Great Crested Flycatcher |   | Sanderling                    | Wood Stork              |                            |
|                              |                          |   |                               | Wood Thrush             |                            |

## TOTAL BIRD COUNTS

471

## UNIQUE SPECIES COUNTED

206

## COUNT LOCATIONS

4 STATES + DC  
WASHINGTON DC  
DELAWARE  
FLORIDA  
MARYLAND  
VIRGINIA

"It's the Birds who inspire us to criss-cross states during migration and witness their phenomenal journey so we may learn to be better stewards of nature."

**Nancy, Eric and Tommy Voit & Kelly and Mike Strzelecki**

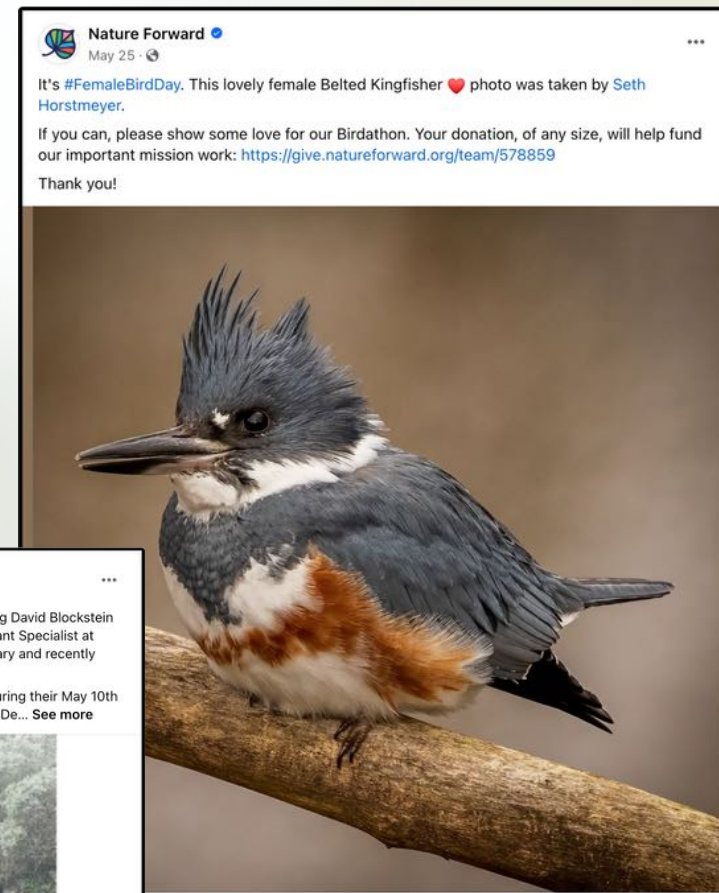
2024 Birdathon Counters



# Nature Forward Birdathon: REACH

Robust web traffic and dynamic social media engagement were highly effective in building awareness and excitement for the 2024 Nature Forward Birdathon.

Outreach included email marketing and our Nature Forward Quarterly publication, which has a readership of approximately 12,000.



**44<sup>th</sup> nature forward birdathon**  
 April 15–May 31, 2024

Join this year's Birdathon! Counting birds and collect pledges as an individual or as part of a team, or simply donate by scanning the QR code!

**Top 10 Birds! in the Capital Region**

American Robin Sound: Cheerily, Cheer-up, Cheer-up!	Blue Jay Sound: Jay! Jay! Jay!
Carolina Chickadee Sound: Chickadee-dee-dee!	Carolina Wren Sound: Teo-kettle, Teo-kettle, Teo-kettle!
Crow Sound: Caw! Caw! Caw!	Downy Woodpecker Sound: Squeak! Squeak!
Mourning Dove Sound: Coo-oo, Coo-oo, Coo-oo!	Northern Cardinal Sound: Birdie, Birdie, Birdie!
Red-Bellied Woodpecker Sound: Pk! Pk-pik-pik-pik!	Tufted Titmouse Sound: Peter, Peter, Peter!

**nature forward** Connecting people and nature in the Capital Region  
 8940 Jones Mill Road, Chevy Chase, MD 20815 • natureforward.org • (301) 652-9188

Celebrating Birds (and all of nature!) with the 44th Nature Forward Birdathon

The arrival of spring is an exhilarating time for nature lovers! The flight of migratory birds painting the sky. The vibrant symphony of birdsong. The anticipation and hope of spotting rare species.

Nature Forward's 44th Birdathon celebrates all the joys of spring with an added bonus: the opportunity to give back to nature. From experienced birders to nature newbies, our Birdathon fosters curiosity and wonder while supporting our important mission work for nature and people. Similar to a walkathon, Birdathon participants count bird species for spring wildflower blooms or anything in nature! and all friends and family to donate to Nature Forward based on their counts. Last year, Birdathon counters and sponsors raised more than \$75,000 to support our mission work.

"The Birdathon is our longest-running event, and it's also just so much fun," explains Nature Forward Executive Director Corinna Fisk. "It's a great way to get outside, enjoy nature, and it's also just so much fun."

We are grateful to everyone who supported the 44th nature forward birdathon

Special thanks to sponsors:

Dr. Linda Lear & Mr. John Nickum

Sandy Spring Bank

THE BACKYARD BIRD FEEDER

ZEISS

Scarlett

Backyard Naturalist

**44th Nature Forward Birdathon Flies High!**

The 44th Nature Forward Birdathon was in its last few days when this issue of the Nature Forward Quarterly went to press, so final fundraising totals aren't yet available. However, says, "We are so grateful for our long-time Birdathon counters and supporters and our new ones!"

"During this Birdathon, we counted more than birds; we also counted more new participants than ever before!" Corinna says. "We are so grateful for our long-time Birdathon counters and supporters and our new ones!"

Current and former members of Nature Forward's Board of Directors led by example with one of their biggest and most successful Birdathon counts ever when they gathered at Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens in DC in mid-April.

"With the wonderful and collaborative help of Nature Forward Senior Naturalist Genevieve Wall, we counted 47 individual birds (and one muskrat), a 35% increase over last year's count," Board President Nancy Vot reports.

"It was a fun time to be out with former board member friends and to make new ones as we supported the Birdathon," adds Gregg Petersen, former Nature Forward Board member and current President of the Howard County Bird Club.

"Staying connected to people and a place we love is a very good feeling," says former Board member Carolyn Pezce, member Noel Carson adds.

"The Board Birdathon truly was our mission in action — bringing people and nature together in the capital region," Board member Noel Carson adds.

The enthusiasm behind this year's Birdathon was evident on social media as individuals and teams shared their sightings and drummed up pledges to support Nature Forward's mission work. We appreciate our devoted, seasoned counters and their networks and so participants. Thanks to a generous Forward members Dr. Linda Lear and Mr. John Nickum, those Birdathon matching gift challenge by Nature Forward members Dr. Linda Lear and Mr. John Nickum, those Birdathon also to corporate sponsor Sandy Spring Bank, The Backyard Bird Feeder, Zeiss, The Backyard Naturalist, and Scarlett Pet Foods.

Nature Forward is so grateful for everyone who contributed to our 44th Birdathon. We look forward to sharing the results from all of our wonderful Birdathon Teams in the fall edition of Nature Forward Quarterly!

SOCIAL POSTS

121 FACEBOOK, X (TWITTER) & INSTAGRAM

SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

24,000+

UNIQUE WEB VISITS

1,300+

EMAIL MARKETING

9 PROMOTIONAL MESSAGES



# THANK YOU, nature forward **birdathon** SPONSORS!

*We appreciate your generosity and community leadership on behalf of our 40,000 members, supporters, visitors, and program participants.*

## *Premier Sponsors*

**Dr. Linda Lear & Mr. John Nickum**

## *Community Sponsor*



Sandy Spring **Bank**

## *Supporting Sponsor*



## *Contributing Sponsors*



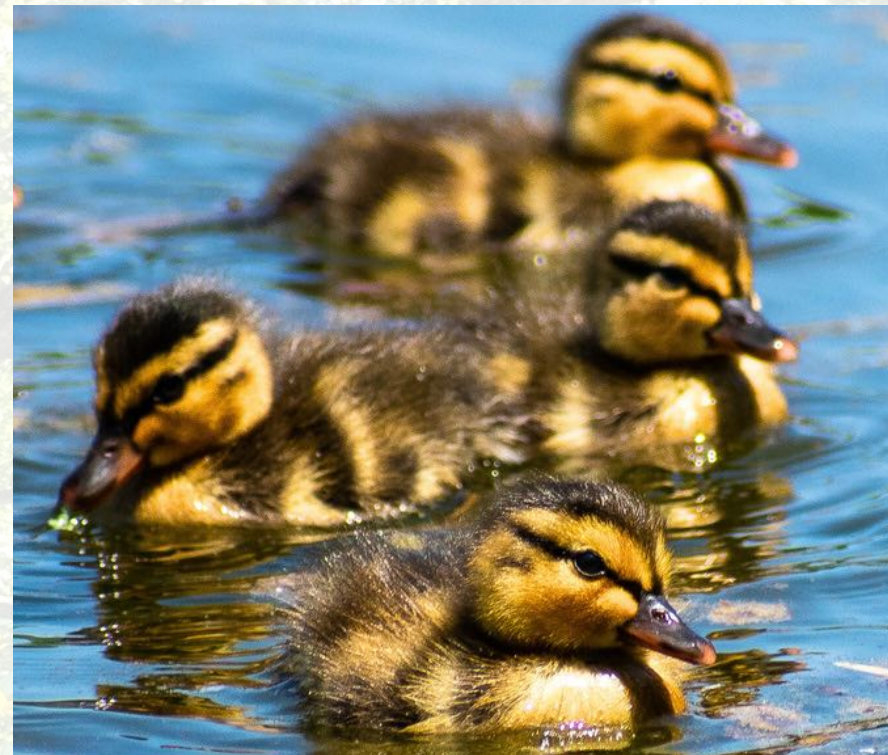
**Scarlett**



# Your support for the nature forward **birdathon** as a counter, donor, or sponsor helps Nature Forward...



Educate tens of thousands of children about the natural world and foster a lifelong love of nature



Raise awareness about climate change threats and help build climate resilience in our community



Advocate for green energy and green infrastructure policies across the DC region



Protect and restore biodiversity and habitats for wildlife and ensure access to nature for all people

## Thank You!





Photo by Jane Gamble

# We value your input and feedback!

*Your ideas and suggestions help us improve and grow in our mission*

Let's strengthen our relationship!  
If you have questions about your generous gift or sponsorship, please contact:  
**Talissa Bavaresco, Special Event & Sponsorship Manager**  
[talissa.bavaresco@natureforward.org](mailto:talissa.bavaresco@natureforward.org)

301-450-1381



*Nature Forward is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization and earns top ratings from independent non-profit evaluators for accountability, transparency, and financial best practices.*



Donations to Nature Forward are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.