

Year *in* Review

Martha's Vineyard & Nantucket

2024



Mass Audubon

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Mass Audubon

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2024

By the Numbers

Coastal Birds

30

Number of beaches (20 miles of shoreline) that the Islands Coastal Waterbird Program manages.

30|29|1,031

Piping Plover, Black Skimmer, and tern fledglings from Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket beaches.



15

Islands staff and volunteers directly involved in the program.

Islands Friends:

Some birders practice an annual tradition of noting the first bird that they see in the New Year and letting that species be their guide or inspiration for the year. This first could preview, predict, and portend what type of year you will have, or even what qualities you should value, learn, or improve upon.

Chickadees are considered cheerful, brave, and social, while cardinals symbolize grace and integrity. If a Blue Jay is your bird, good humor and intelligence might be qualities to value. Crows are especially known for this type of augury, as messengers, tricksters, and communicators.

My FOY bird was a Carolina Wren, a small but loud, energetic species that will perhaps be my guide this year. That bird might be reminding me to sing out the benefits and joys of being outdoors, wake up every day with enthusiasm for nature, and keep on going to engage others in its protection. We've got some work to do — I'm with you, little wren.

Warm Regards,

Suzan Bellincampi

Islands Director

December 2024



Carolina Wren



Waterfowl pond viewing area, part of the future all persons trail.

All Persons Trail

Nature should be enjoyed by everyone and that is why Mass Audubon is committed to creating accessible opportunities at all our sanctuaries. You may already know about Felix Neck's Accessible Initiatives, and now we are aiming even higher with a proposed almost half-mile All Persons Trail. Thousands of people flock to Felix Neck each year and the All Persons Trail will allow even more to have safe access to the outdoors and ensure that people of all abilities can experience the wonders of nature year-round.

The All Persons Trail Campaign will help us convert existing trails and grounds to accessible standards, develop universally-designed visitor materials, and provide inclusive customer service. We are thankful for a \$130,000 lead gift from Mass Trails to kick off the campaign in 2025 and inspire others to give. Fundraising efforts have launched, so please help us break ground this year!

For more information on supporting the All Persons Trail at Felix Neck and helping us meet our remaining \$399,000 goal contact: Wendy O'Keefe, Associate Director of Principal Gifts wokeefe@massaudubon.org, 508-556-7806 or Regional Director Suzan Bellincampi sbellincampi@massaudubon.org.

For more on accessibility at Mass Audubon visit: massaudubon.org/accessibility



Sesuvium Heathlands, Nantucket

Nantucket Vision

Mass Audubon's Nantucket team is part of the Islands Region, which includes Martha's Vineyard, and is supported by all departments at Mass Audubon including conservation science, education, and advocacy.

Our long-term vision on Nantucket is to leverage our wildlife sanctuaries by enhancing biodiversity, creating greater coastal resiliency, increasing public access to our properties, and empowering youth and early career individuals to steward our lands and wildlife. For more info contact Suzan Bellincampi sbellincampi@massaudubon.org.

Fern & Feather Preschool & Camp

Mass Audubon at Felix Neck's Fern & Feather Camp celebrated its 60th year of sharing nature with Island children. It was a fantastic season with over 225 campers participating in 430 camp sessions. Campers explored and learned about marine life, coastal habitats, local flora and fauna, climate change, and more, outdoors and in the Education and Camp Barn. They created friendships and memories to last a lifetime.

Fern & Feather Preschool is providing its sixth year serving the need for early education for our community. Last June, the class of 2024 graduated eight preschoolers eager and ready to move on to Island kindergartens. This school



Fern & Feather students

year kicked off with new faces and families. Preschool continues to be an integral part of our serving our community with a long waitlist for each year. Our program helps families get the care they need and students dive deep into local natural history through age-appropriate lessons, activities, and games, while exploring Mass Audubon's 200-acre sanctuary.

Meet the Nantucket Youth Environmental Stewards



Youth Environmental Steward (YES) program at work

Nantucket Sanctuaries' Youth Environmental Stewardship (YES) Program is an early career opportunity for Island high school and college students. Stewards learn about local habitats, wildlife, and build skill to help manage nearly 1,000 acres of open space on Nantucket.



My name is Emma Marshall, and I grew up on Nantucket. From a young age, my dad and I would go on walks to explore new places and enjoy the outdoors. We loved discovering different trails and immersing ourselves in nature. In school, I was always drawn to science-based classes, finding it fascinating to learn about the natural world. When I saw this job opportunity, I knew it would be a perfect fit. It allows me to be out in nature and offers hands-on experience in a field I am considering studying in college.



My name is Dylan Marks, and I am a returning Youth Steward. I am a Nantucket native and graduate of

Nantucket High School. Through my school's Environmental Club and the Youth Climate Committee (YCC) under Mass Audubon's Youth Climate Leadership Program (YCLP), I was introduced to the Youth Environmental Steward program. This opportunity allowed me to engage directly in conservation work, which I found incredibly rewarding. Over the summers, I have fallen in love with this job. Meeting and working with new people has also been a highlight. One of my consistent goals throughout my time with Mass Audubon has been to improve my bird identification skills, focusing on both coastal waterbirds and general island species.



Hi, my name is Charlotte Weinstein. I live in Connecticut but spend my summers on Nantucket. Growing up in Bermuda sparked my love for island habitats. I'm thrilled to be an Environmental Steward at Mass Audubon, where I look forward to learning more about Nantucket's plants and wildlife. I'm excited about shorebird monitoring. Currently, I'm studying political science in college with aspirations to pursue a career in Environmental Law or a related field. I believe that hands-on experience in conservation, is invaluable for learning how to protect the environment!