

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For information contact:

Dottie Head, Atlanta Audubon Society, Director of Membership & Communications,
dottie@atlantaaudubon.org, or 678-973-2437 (office) or 404-388-8538 (cell)



ATLANTA AUDUBON AWARDED EDUCATION GRANT

(Atlanta, Ga.) August 13, 2018 – Atlanta Audubon has been awarded a \$99,980 gift from a private Atlanta family foundation to build and grow its educational programs to educate the next generation of leaders about conservation and the environment through the lens of birds.

Birds are an accessible tool by which to study our natural surroundings and the problems that threaten our ecosystems. With a focus on citizen science, project-based learning, and conservation problem-solving, Atlanta Audubon's Learning About Birds STEM-based youth programs are unique among other environmental education programs. Atlanta Audubon will use grant funds to:

- Undertake a comprehensive redesign of Atlanta Audubon's Learning About Birds bilingual curriculum to align with updates to the K-12 Georgia Standards of Excellence and to include new online resources and lesson plans that will emphasize local birds, habitat, and conservation.
- Welcome a new partner school to Atlanta Audubon's Connecting Students with STEM through Birds program. The selected school will be a federally designated Title I school in an underserved population of metro-Atlanta. This funding will complete a match to existing funding for the program provided by the grants from the Morgens West Foundation and Wells Fargo Foundation.
- Provide full scholarship support for 10 student participants in Atlanta Urban Ecologists. Scholarship selection will be based on financial need to support students in underserved communities and those who would be unable to participate in the program without support.
- Develop a second Atlanta Urban Ecologists course to allow current program graduates to broaden their foundation of knowledge and experiential learning. This extension course would follow the same model of the current Atlanta Urban Ecologists program, introducing students to new environmental partners and coursework over the span of an academic year.
- Create five additional slots for K-8 educators to participate in the Taking Wing continuing education program to expand the number of teachers using the Learning About Birds curriculum and teaching methods in their classrooms across metro-Atlanta.
- Hire an Education Program Coordinator and contract naturalists to help Atlanta Audubon increase and broaden its community engagement through regular educational programming.

“We are delighted to receive this grant to help us grow and expand Atlanta Audubon’s education curriculum and programs,” says Nikki Belmonte, Executive Director of Atlanta Audubon. “Today’s youth are tomorrow’s policy makers, planners and developers, and community leaders. When we instill a conservation ethic in students through the lens of birds, we provide insurance that habitats that sustain birds, wildlife, and people alike will receive protection. Opening the eyes of students to the vast diversity of bird life around them helps impart important skills needed to innovate the conservation solutions of tomorrow.”

Atlanta Audubon Society is building places where birds and people thrive. We create bird-friendly communities through conservation, education, and advocacy.

Media Note: Photos to accompany this article and a MS Word version of this press release are available for download at <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/y3l9s32oktcs94e/AADL4n1VHbxzzwGhN455VJ-fa?dl=0>.

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