

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR
2020-2021



OUR MISSION

TO ADVANCE THE CONSERVATION OF BIRDS AND POSITIVELY IMPACT THEIR SUPPORTING ENVIRONMENTS.

Houston Audubon protects over 4,100 acres of wetlands, piney wood forest, coastal woodlots and prairie, and beach habitat within its system of sanctuaries located throughout the Houston Gulf Coast region. Our sanctuaries provide critical habitat for over 300 species of migratory and resident birds and other wildlife and serve as community assets where people walk, learn, meditate, socialize, explore, and commune with nature. Houston Audubon has been a nationally Accredited Land Trust since 2017. Houston Audubon is also a recognized leader in avian conservation and nature education, delivering hundreds of programs that connect people to nature and communities to conservation.



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

The need for a healthy natural world and the impact of our work were unmistakable this past year as we navigated the challenges of 2020. The test of these unprecedented times momentarily lingered on as we entered 2021 but the shape of a restored normal began to come into focus. Sanctuary closures, programming cancellations, and business disruptions marked 2020, and Winter Storm Uri in February 2021 caused additional stresses. The winter storm affected early nesters at the Smith Oaks Bird Sanctuary Rookery, plants at the Edith L. Moore Nature Sanctuary nursery, and our education ambassador birds at the Raptor Center. But the watchful care and devotion of staff and volunteers led to notable recoveries in all three situations. And through all the change and challenges, the work to deliver our mission persisted with accomplishments to show.

An additional 600 acres of vital habitat on the coast was placed under permanent conservation protection. Many acres of coastal woodlot and prairie habitat were restored, and urban and coastal sanctuaries were monitored year-round and prepped for spring visitation. Bird protection efforts were advanced through expansion of our Lights Out program, and thousands of native plants were provided to the community to improve urban habitat for birds throughout the greater Houston area. Education programming was adapted and tailored to safely engage and inspire the community, and foundational work was initiated to help foster a Houston Audubon community that is more diverse and inclusive. The report period ended with a much-needed 2021 spring season that renewed our spirits and brought back the joy, excitement, and wonder that comes with spring migration in High Island, where Houston Audubon's world-renowned sanctuaries were teeming with visitors.

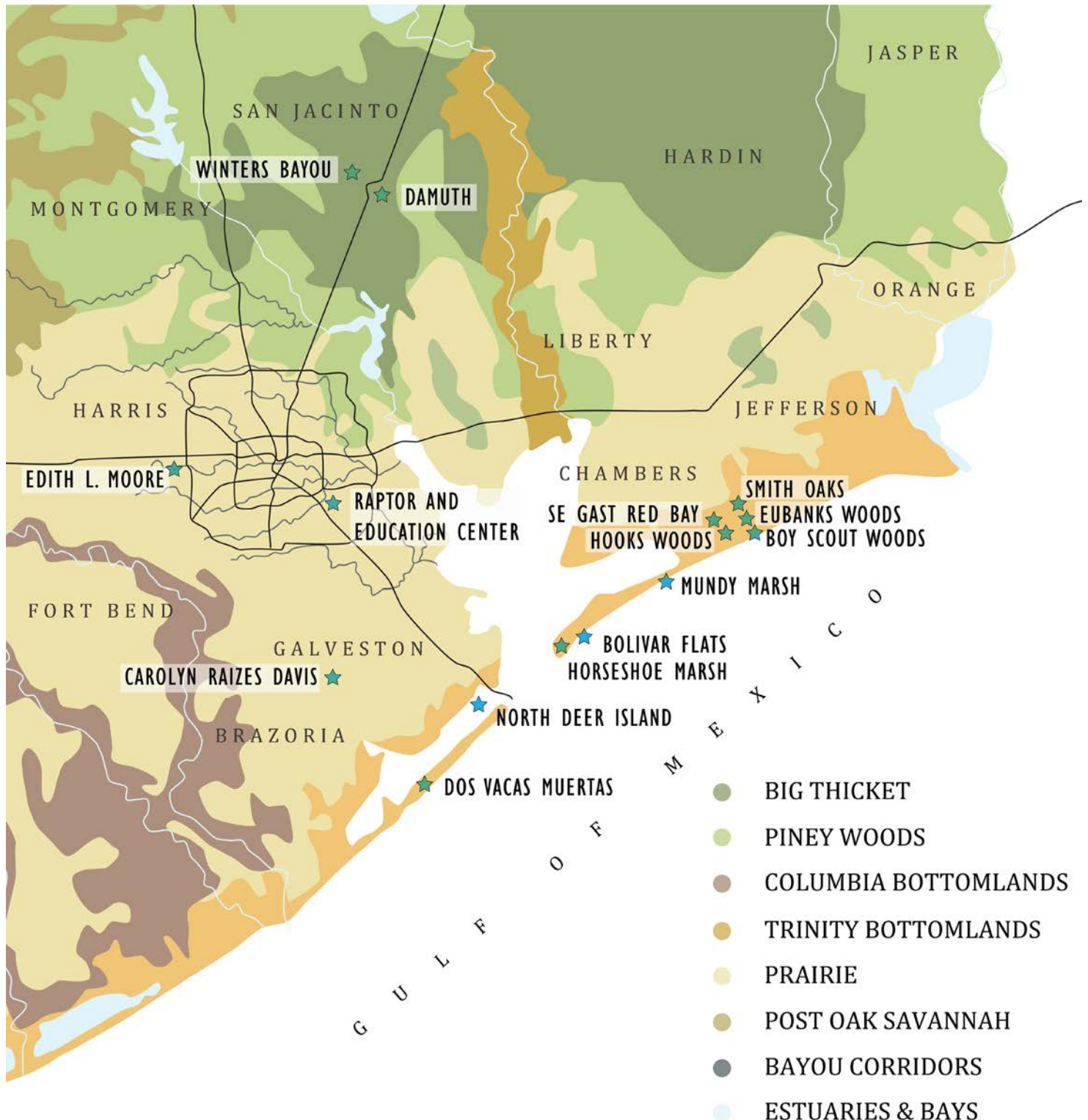
I'm thankful that our collective resilience and commitment to mission, the generosity and loyalty of our donors, and the tenacity of our staff and volunteers made all the difference that allowed us to weather the storm. Here's to an amazing community and more great work to come!

HELEN E. DRUMMOND

Executive Director, Houston Audubon

SANCTUARIES

Houston Audubon owns and manages nature sanctuaries spanning Greater Houston and the Upper Texas Coast, totaling over **4,100 acres** of diverse habitat critical to over **300 species of birds**. In January 2021, Houston Audubon closed on two new land acquisitions that added **643 coastal acres** to its sanctuary system.



SANCTUARIES

HIGH ISLAND & BOLIVAR FLATS

Visitors from around the country and world were welcomed with warm smiles and new, exciting improvements. It was the first opportunity that many visitors had to experience the Kathrine G. McGovern Canopy Walkway and our new facilities. It was rejuvenating to be together in nature, and live birding broadcasts were held again for those unable to visit.



RAPTOR AND EDUCATION CENTER



Two new ambassador raptors joined the team, and a new close encounter experience aviary was added for visitors. Other enhancements include new fencing and the restoration of the wetland pond, which was renamed the Honig Pond in honor of Bob and Maggie Honig. The Honigs are great on-the-ground supporters of Houston Audubon and nature-based educational programming.

EDITH L. MOORE NATURE SANCTUARY



Sanctuary maintenance continued as volunteers slowly began to return with safety and social distancing protocols employed. Trees were trimmed, invasive plants removed, trash picked up, and sheds and boardwalks repaired, thanks to our regular Trail Crew and the hundreds of students, scouts, friends, and neighbors who gave their time to keep the sanctuary beautiful.

CONSERVATION

Houston Audubon works diligently to protect and restore habitat to provide maximum ecological value. This includes planting native vegetation that provides food for birds and other wildlife, maintaining safe places for birds to eat, rest and nest, providing additional nesting capacity for species of concern, and providing quality experiences for people in nature while inspiring them to preserve habitat.

HABITAT RESTORATION

After seven years of dedicated work, the goal of getting Smith Oaks Bird Sanctuary completely restored for maximum benefit to migratory birds is within striking distance. With the steadfast determination of our coastal staff and volunteers, we removed woody exotic invasive plant material from an additional **eight acres**, bringing the total restored land in Smith Oaks to **255 acres**. With complete restoration on the horizon, we can move toward maintenance and enhancement of the High Island sanctuaries.

HABITAT PROTECTION

Two new land acquisitions in January placed an additional **643 coastal acres** under permanent protection this year. We purchased 603 acres of coastal prairie, wetlands, and beach habitat in and around High Island from BP America.



Additionally, we received a generous gift of 40 acres of North Deer Island from Brown/Trueheart, Ltd. The 120-acre colonial waterbird island in West Galveston Bay has long served as the most important nesting island on the Upper Texas Coast, playing a major role in the recovery of the endangered Brown Pelican and providing safe nesting for **19 waterbird species**.

CONSERVATION

MONITORING

Monitoring provides critical feedback that allows us to understand bird population trends, create a management plan, and take action in the protection of birds. As part of our overall management plan for High Island, we conducted **30 surveys** at the Smith Oaks Sanctuary rookery islands. This year we counted over **15,000 nests** at our rookeries. And for the first time in three years, we were surprised and delighted to discover nesting material on the Cattail Island in Smith Pond. Five species made their nests on this island that was created as part of a nesting expansion project completed with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Ducks Unlimited to help recover species affected by the Gulf Oil Spill.

.....CELEBRITY SIGHTING!.....

Monty the Piping Plover was spotted in Bolivar Flats last winter!
Monty and his mate Rose - the first Piping Plovers to nest within Chicago city limits since 1955 - made headlines for stopping a beach concert from happening near their nest site. The Great Lakes Piping Plovers are an endangered species at risk of becoming extinct, so we were very pleased to be able to host Monty at our sanctuary.



URBAN BIRD SURVEYS

Houston Audubon conducts monthly bird surveys all over the region, led by staff and volunteers. This critical community science effort gathers data that will help scientists evaluate population changes and understand which species might require special management. We conducted **99 urban bird surveys** this year, including the addition of our 16th survey location at the University of Houston Coastal Center in La Marque, Texas - a 925-acre mosaic of prairie, wetlands, and forest in the process of restoration.

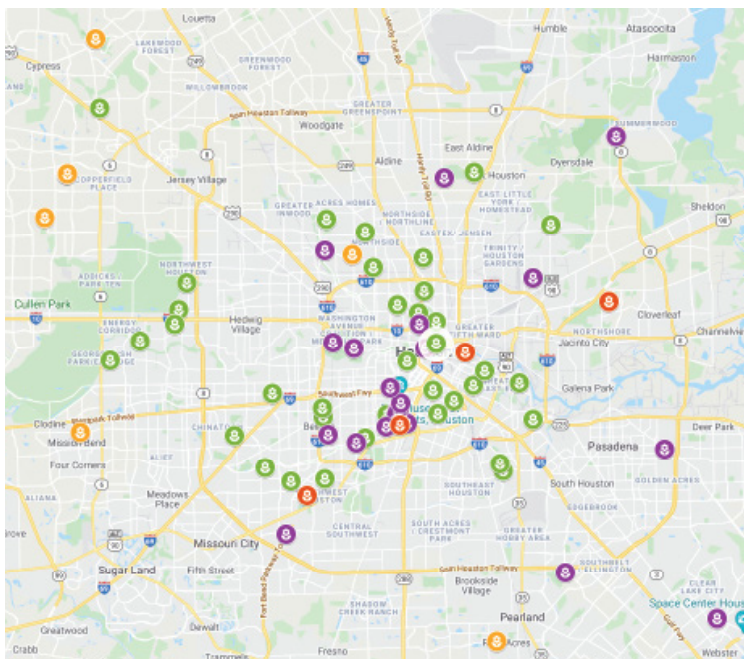


BIRD-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

NATIVE PLANTS

In the Natives Nursery at Edith L. Moore, online ordering and invoicing became the norm and proved to be an effective way to support the public's increased interest in native plants. Winter Storm Uri created minor setbacks in plant inventory and the loss of trees in the sanctuary, but both rebounded stronger than ever by the end of spring. **Over 9,000**

native plants were sold and donated to the community to support bugs and birds throughout our region. Native plants throughout our sanctuaries produced ample fruits, flowers, and foliage to sustain visiting migrant birds and prepare inhabitants for the coming winter.



School Plantings



Other Plantings



Park Plantings



Plant Consultations

We provided low-cost native plants to numerous schools, Houston Arboretum, Memorial Park Conservancy, Nature Discovery Center, Houston Parks Board, and many individuals. We worked with Ronald McDonald House to transform a struggling traditional garden into a beautiful native pollinator garden, and consulted on habitat planning for **over 457 acres** of land. The nursery is only successful because of the dedicated volunteers who provide all the labor, most of the wild-collected seed, a large number of the seedlings, and the majority of the expertise.

BIRD-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

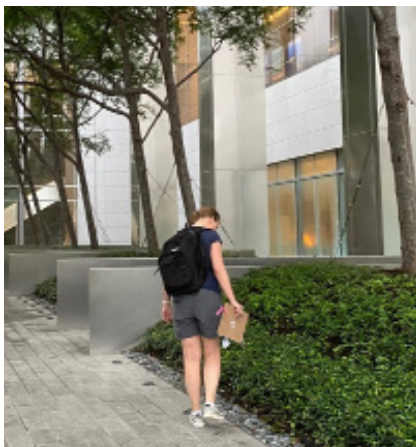
LIGHTS OUT FOR BIRDS

Houston Audubon's Lights Out for Birds program has grown considerably since its humble beginnings in 2017 following a mass bird collision event in Galveston. This initiative started as a grassroots effort to alert the community to turn their lights out for migrating birds using the BirdCast migration forecasting technology. The Lights Out Action Alerts quickly took flight in the spring of 2018 and received much engagement from community members and partners.



Although progress was being made, a 2019 publication named Houston and Dallas as the top two most dangerous cities in North America for migrating birds, prompting the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to reach out to Houston Audubon to expand the Lights Out program into a statewide initiative. Lights Out Texas was created with the collaboration of many organizations, universities, and other stakeholders, and this new coalition of partners reached significantly more individuals, organizations, and city governments. By the end of Spring 2021, nearly 40 businesses had confirmed their participation in the program, and seven cities (including Houston) made proclamations in support of these efforts.

COLLISION MONITORING



In Spring 2021, volunteers from Houston and six other cities dedicated 1,200 hours of early morning surveys to search for and collect data on birds that had suffered window collisions overnight. Houston Audubon and Lights Out Texas partners are continuing to monitor bird-window collisions, advocating for lights out during migration, and educating the public on the importance of supporting birds in our urban environments.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Houston Audubon's education programming experienced great challenges as we made efforts to continue engaging teachers and students in conservation amidst significant uncertainties in schools. However, thousands of individuals across the state were still reached through our virtual programs. Some in-person programs returned, such as member and senior field trips, allowing us to continue connecting people with nature. The Raptor and Education Center increased hours of operation as spring and summer approached.

449 EVENTS



Virtual and in-person programs were held for all ages. Families enjoyed Purple Martin Watch Parties, Owl Prowls, and guided tours of our urban sanctuaries. Flying WILD training was offered for educators interested in encouraging increased environmental stewardship among middle schoolers.

8,065 YOUTH



Educational programming for kids included summer camps, BIRD Buddies, Bayou Buddies, field trips to our sanctuaries, and more! Children staying at the Ronald McDonald House enjoyed a visit with our education raptors during a program tailored to their needs.

8,579 ADULTS



Adults learned a variety of topics about birds, conservation, and art through our Speaker Series. We offered classes related to birds and conservation issues along with birding opportunities for all! Nature photographers enjoyed virtual programs and opportunities to photograph our ambassador birds.

EDUCATION AMBASSADORS

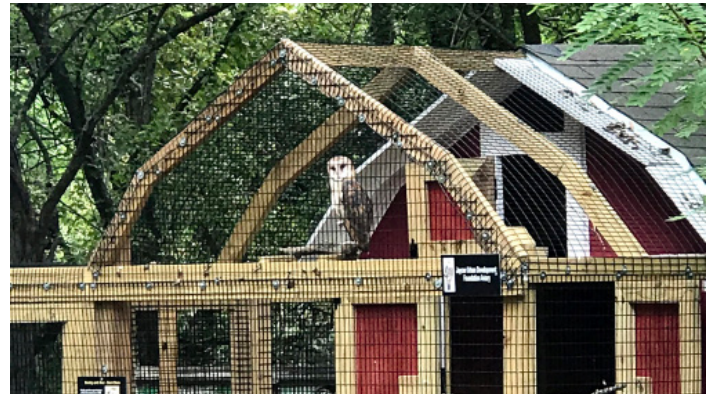
Houston Audubon houses and cares for several raptors and other animals for our education programs. The education ambassador animals can be visited at the Raptor and Education Center during open hours. Caring for animals has its own set of challenges and Winter Storm Uri in February presented new ones as we sought to keep the animals warm and safe. A small generator hooked up to a space heater was lifesaving for the more fragile animals and powered their food freezer.



Our education raptors were joined by two new faces - Pierre, a red-morph Eastern Screech-Owl, and Brazos, a Barred Owl. Both birds have adjusted well to their new careers in education.



The Barn Owls, Alex and Geddy, moved into their own barn and are enjoying their new surroundings. Alex was unfortunately diagnosed with complete retinal degeneration in recent months and is blind, but her brother Geddy helps her navigate the barn and find food.



ADOPT-A-BIRD

Throughout the year, many individuals and families chose to adopt a bird, which helps provide for the food and care of these hard working animals. Pictured here are Eli and Ezra, two young children who worked hard at home to raise money to adopt Simon the Great Horned Owl!

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the backbone of the organization and provide invaluable gifts of time, talent, and energy. They help significantly with major initiatives in nature education programming, habitat restoration, trail maintenance, native plant nursery operations, and general administration for the organization. The High Island volunteers enthusiastically came back for spring migration to help welcome visitors, orient them to the sanctuaries, and provide tips and good birding locations. We also welcomed our first RV volunteers in December who assisted with maintenance and improvement projects in preparation for spring migration and stayed on through spring to help with visitor services. In total, **328 dedicated volunteers** worked **over 8,246 hours!**

TOTAL FINANCIAL IMPACT: \$235,340.84

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS ADVISORY COUNCIL

This enthusiastic group of young professionals supports Houston Audubon's mission with hands-on conservation, outreach, and public engagement. They also coordinate the annual **Houston Bird Week**. In 2020, Bird Week was mostly virtual with a few socially-distanced outdoor events coordinated with 16 partner organizations. We had **over 2,000 participants** and reached **over 700,000 people** virtually from **35 states** and **11 countries**!

LAURA SINGLETON AWARD

Our 2020 Laura Singleton Exceptional Volunteer Award was given to JD Carballo! JD has been an active and frequent volunteer maintenance technician at the Edith L. Moore Nature Sanctuary since 2014. He has helped with a wide range of projects, including unprecedented events like extreme weather and a pandemic, showing that he truly cares about and takes pride in our sanctuary and mission.



FUNDRAISING EVENTS

A VIRTUAL AVIAN AFFAIR 2020

Our annual fundraising dinner went virtual in 2020, and we raised over **\$245,000!** The virtual event, chaired and hosted by Sarah Flournoy and Cullen Geiselman, honored the Houston Parks and Recreation Department and highlighted Houston's significance as a Bird City.



BIRDATHON 2021

Our spring fundraiser was a resounding success, with **over \$50,000 raised!** Over **126 participants** and **16 teams** joined the birding fun! The winning team, The Nature Plovers, raised \$17,265 and identified a whopping 253 species in just 24 hours!



DONORS

Thank you to the following generous donors who supported Houston Audubon this year:

\$250,000+

Houston Endowment, Inc.

\$100,000—\$249,000

\$50,000—\$99,999

Sara and Mark Bettencourt

The Brown Foundation, Inc.

Jane Cizik

Jesse W. Couch Charitable Foundation

John P. McGovern Foundation

Kathrine G. McGovern

\$25,000—\$49,999

Frank C. Smith, Jr./The Bayou Fund

Jan Cato

CITGO Petroleum Corporation

Entergy Corporation

The Fondren Foundation

George and Mary Josephine Hamman Foundation

LouAnn and Milton Gray

Lynne and Joseph Hudson

Mary Gwen and Ben Hulse

Hunton Andrews Kurth Endowment Donor Advised Fund

Jacob and Terese Hershey Foundation

Carla Knobloch/Knobloch Family Foundation

Malcolm C. Damuth Foundation

Nancy and Clive Runnells Foundation

The Powell Foundation

Allison and Dan Ryder

Kathy Smyth Runnells

Connie and Jeff Woodman

\$10,000—\$24,999

Anonymous

Ruth and Dan Flournoy

Sarah Flournoy and Don Verser

Cullen Geiselman

Janeen Judah

Kristine M. Larson Fund

Katie and Patrick Oxford

Bill Roberts

Wilhelmina E. Robertson

Louisa S. Sarofim

Shell Oil Company Foundation Matching Gifts

Smisek-Strassmann Family Fund

Susan Vaughan Foundation, Inc.

Estate of Lorna Terhune

\$5,000—\$9,999

Mary Austill and John Flournoy

Norma Barnes

Rachel Benton

Annie Benzon

BP Energy Company

Joan Brennecke and Mark Stadtherr

Charles Jago Elder Foundation

Cherry and Nigel Curlet

Janice Sanders Green and Barrett

Eugene Green Foundation

The John M. O'Quinn Foundation

National Audubon Society

Peterson Charitable Lead Trust

Lillie Robertson

Letha Slagle and Grant Gist

Becky and Sam Smith

Caroline Staub Callery

Heather and Robert Westendarp

The Wortham Foundation

DONORS

\$2,500—\$4,999

Jonni and Skip Almoney

Amegy Bank

Audubon Foundation of Texas

Cindy and John Bartos

Nedrana Boutte

Robin and Richard Brooks

Bettie Cartwright

Patricia Cravens

Rebecque Demark

Edith and Bernard Stolbun Family
Foundation

Lisa and George Francisco

The Garden Club of Houston

Elizabeth and Stephen Gast

Tina Hollingsworth

Jessica Jubin

Wendy and Mavis P. Kelsey

Gwen Kunz

Land Sea & Sky

Susan and David Lummis

Michelle and Bill Matthews

Kay and Larry Medford

Vivian and Clinton Morse

Jane and Joseph Smith

Pam Smolen

Betsy and Jim Winn

\$1,000—\$2,499

Anonymous

Baker Hughes Incorporated

Kathy Ball

Susan and Brad Billetdeaux

Beth and Harold Boone

Jessie Case

Centerpoint Energy

Centerpoint Energy Houston

Electric, LLC

Marylène Chan and Tony Dang

Cheryl and Chris Clark

Kassie and Fred Collins II

ConocoPhillips

Scott A. Davis

Ann Duclos

Anne and Gus Elmer

ExxonMobil Foundation

Garver/Black/Hilyard Family Fund

Arlyne and Robert Gibbs

M. G. and Susanne Glasscock

Melanie Gray

Gwen Haferkamp

Kathryn Hale

Doris and John Heard

Linda and Tracy Hester

Barbara and Ed Hickl

Mary Hilliard

Houston Sports Lions Club

Ethel and Chap Hutcheson

Katina Jackson

Elizabeth and Drew Kanaly

Ann and Tom Kelsey

Janie and Richard Kobes

Cin-Ty Lee

Joyce Lindler

Lydick Family Foundation

Nan and Gibbs Macdaniel

Marathon Oil Company

Rebecca Marvil and Brian Smyth

Isabelle and Eric Mayer

Memorial Insurance Agency

Sara Morgan

Fan and Peter Morris

Lisa and Steven Murray

National Fish & Wildlife Foundation

Edie and Bill O'Brien

Alice Anne O'Donell

Tim Perkins

Vaughn Phillips

Margaret and Michael Pierce

Russ Pitman

Joanne Polansky

Susan and King Pouw

Don Quaintance

R. F. Humphreys Family Foundation

Roberta Sage

Joni Shereda and Brian McKenna

Laurie Sines

Barbara and Louis Sklar

Carol and Michael Stelling

Joan Strassmann

Nancy Thompson

Melissa Torbet

Ann Wales

Anna and Tim White

Margaret and Greg Whittaker

David Woodard

Contributions received July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

JULY 1, 2020 - JUNE 30, 2021

REVENUE

Contributions with donor restrictions	\$ 986,451
Contributions without donor restrictions	735,376
Sanctuary land contributions	383,170
Special events	274,802
Less: direct donor benefits	(17,867)
Admission and program fees	220,120
Merchandise and native plant sales	62,961
Net investment return	797,040
Total revenue	<u>3,442,053</u>

EXPENSES

Program services:	
Sanctuaries and habitat conservation	645,168
Environmental education and outreach	424,021
Total program services	<u>1,069,189</u>
Management and general	245,362
Fundraising	235,994
Total expenses	<u>1,550,545</u>

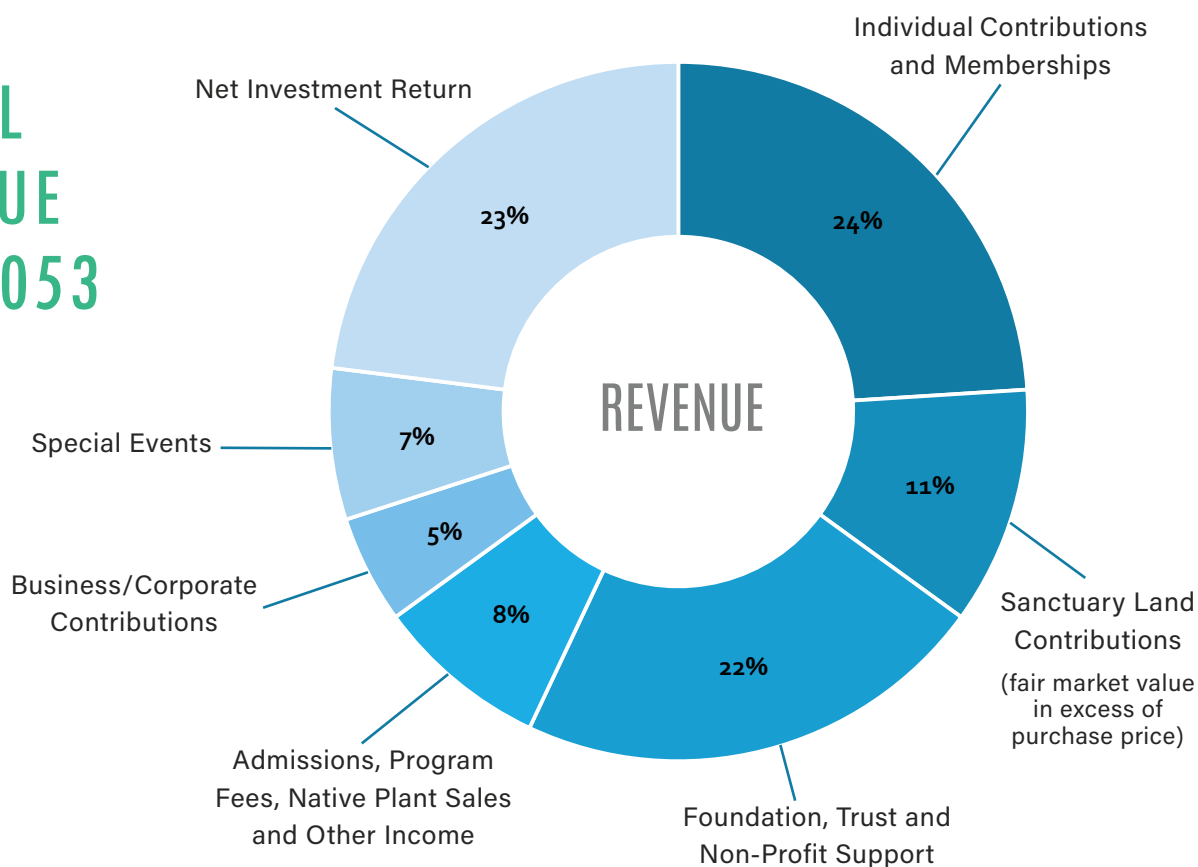
CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

	1,891,508
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>11,366,079</u>
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$ 13,257,587</u>

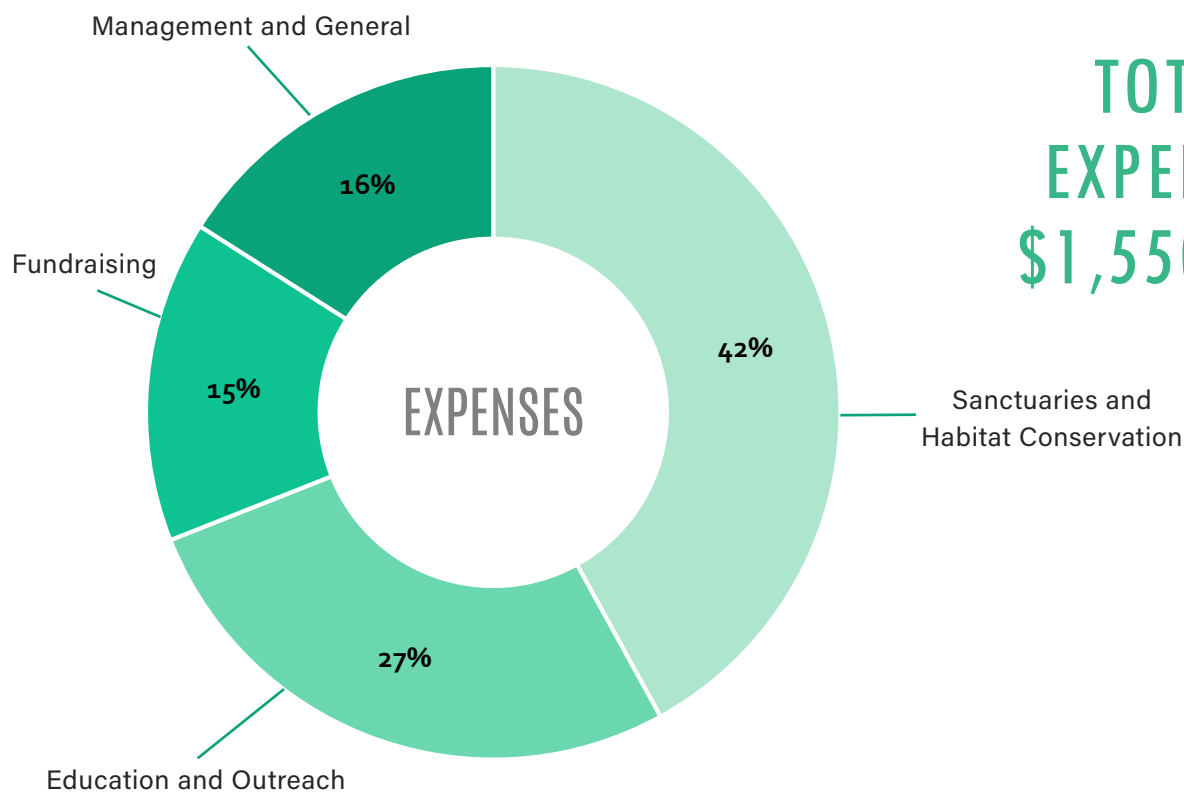
Audited financial statements available at houstonaudubon.org/financials.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

**TOTAL
REVENUE
\$3,442,053**



**TOTAL
EXPENSES
\$1,550,545**



LEADERSHIP

STAFF

Helen E. Drummond,
Executive Director

Andrew Busker,
Operations Manager

Pete Deichmann,
Coastal Sanctuaries Manager

Aimee Friend,
Development Director

Zoe Gapayao,
Education Programs Manager

Richard Gibbons,
Conservation Director

Julie Gold,
Corporate Relations Director

Susan Kennard,
Development Assistant

Karen Miles,
Accounting Assistant

Berri Moffett,
Sanctuary Manager

Trey Morris,
Sanctuary Steward

Javier Salas,
Environmental Educator

Zineera Seth,
Marketing & Events Manager

Kathy Sweezey,
BFC Program Manager

Barbara Thompson,
Controller

Melissa Torbet,
Administrative Assistant

Mary Anne Weber,
Education Director

LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Committee

Greg Whittaker, President

Janeen Judah, President Elect

Sam Smith, Past President

Bob Westendarp, Treasurer

Bill Matthews, Secretary

Members-at-Large

Skip Almoney

Lucy Barrow

Tony Dang

Rob Jones

Eric Mayer

Brad Moore

Glenn Olsen

Margaret Pierce

Letha Slagle

Pam Smolen

Timothy White

BOARD OF ADVISORS

John Bartos

Sara Bettencourt

Jim Blackburn

Peggy Boston

Judy Boyce

Winnie Burkett

Dale Bush

Caroline Callery

Claire P. Caudill

Gary W. Clark

Fred Collins II

Scott A. Davis

Victor Emanuel

Sarah Flournoy

Julia Garrett

Stephen Gast

Richard Goldfarb

Gene Graham

Doris Heard

Joy Hester

Tracy Hester

Ford Hubbard III

Ben Hulsey

Cin-Ty Lee

Kay Medford

Heidi Rockecharlie

Rob Rowland

Andy Sansom

Joe Smith

Steve Smith

Loy Sneary

Kathy Smyth Runnells

Jim Winn

ALUMNI COUNCIL

Cy Clark

Lynn Forster

Richard Goldfarb

Kay Hale

Ed Hickl

Bernice Hotman

Gwen Kunz

Gibbs Macdaniel, Jr.

Stennie Meadours

Jeff Mills

Barbara Railey

Donna Rybiski