

2024

Tucson Bird Alliance Annual Report



Messages of Gratitude

Hello Dear Friends,

Another year gone by in a flash!

While I write this, nearly halfway through 2025 (how?), it is overwhelming to think back on all that was accomplished last year.

We entered the year as Tucson Audubon Society, exited as Tucson Bird Alliance, and went through a great deal of internal restructuring and cultural change in the process. Most notably, we adopted heat safety policies for our field crews, making clear that our people are our top priority and responsibility. Like a bird in molt, change is not without its challenges, but we are now lookin' sharp, fresh-feathered, and ready for flight!

In a year of transformation, our unflinching team was out there doing their business like the pros they are. The Paton Center habitat has been further developed into a bird's (and therefore birder's) paradise, we collabed on a community-centered greenspace in South Tucson, drafted an Urban Bird Treaty, and threw our largest-yet birding festival. We built momentum around Project Death Pipes and Bird-Safe Buildings, planted thousands of Saguaros, removed tens of thousands of stinknet plants and other eco-baddies, and made progress in our research of cavity-nesters like the desert Purple Martin.

Without a shred of hyperbole I can say I believe we have the best staff in bird conservation here at Tucson Bird Alliance.

Thank you for supporting our team, and believing in the importance of birds, their habitats, and our role in protecting them.

For Birds and People,

Melissa Fratello, Executive Director

Dear Supporters,

I've been a member of the Audubon/Bird Alliance for my entire adult life and involved with several chapters across the United States. I've found that the local landscape, history, and inhabitants shape each chapter's mission and purpose.

Tucson Bird Alliance is one of the largest chapters and we are fortunate to work in one of the most biodiverse landscapes in the nation. We are a birding mecca, attracting visitors from every state and countless countries each year. However, the challenges in the desert are many, including suburban development, invasive plants, depleted groundwater, and rising temperatures. All of which put pressure on birds.

I'm proud of our staff, members, volunteers and supporters for facing these challenges by:

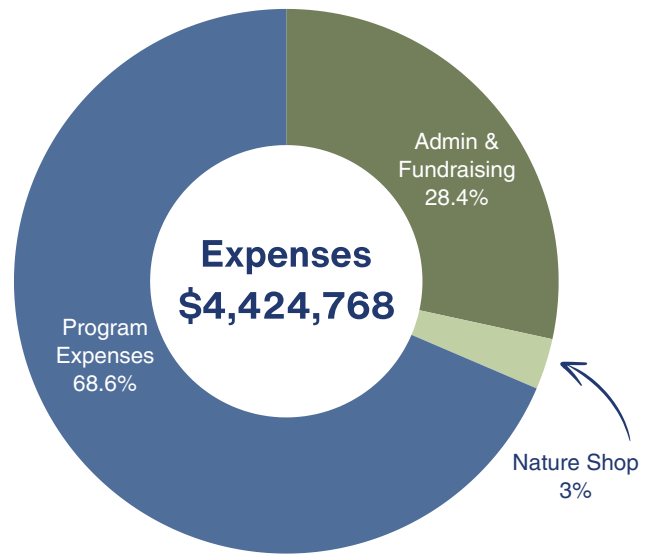
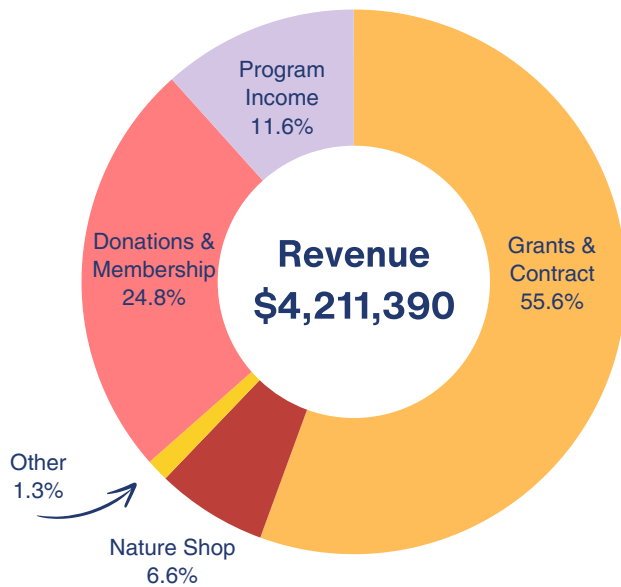
- Engaging with an increasingly diverse population on how to support birds and native habitat
- Continuing our large-scale invasive plant management and habitat restoration. More than half of our staff are engaged in habitat work, and we continue to expand volunteer opportunities.
- Studying the dynamics of bird populations with bird surveys and tracking, and developing solutions to the most pressing threats through nest box initiatives and other conservation activities.

Despite facing new funding uncertainties and challenges, we have an exciting plan for the next few years to build on these amazing accomplishments.

Karen Howe, Board President

Revenue & Expenses

A Note on Finances: We feel it prudent to share that over the course of 2024, several measures were taken to address financial deficits experienced in 2023, including some staff restructuring, occupancy cost reduction, and adjustment to our billing processes. While we did maintain a deficit in 2024, two thirds of that is represented by pending invoices that were satisfied in Q1 of 2025. Tucson Bird Alliance performs a large amount of work on a reimbursement basis, meaning there is often a lag between work performed and payment received, causing us to run a slight deficit as we await payment. Our cash reserves have been sufficient to carry us through those periods. As a long-term goal, we seek to better balance our income sources and work assignments to mitigate this challenge in future years.



1,800 native plants

planted in the Cuckoo Corridor & new parcel

50 US states & 26 countries

recorded in the visitors' log

19 volunteer events

held to manage invasive Johnsongrass & plant native plants



PATON CENTER FOR HUMMINGBIRDS

We began restoration on the Paton House, including installing a new HVAC system, windows, doors and a new roof. We built a new nature trail with benches and shade structures. We also finalized plans for two permanent, ADA-accessible bathrooms and a new parking area.

300 cottonwoods

grown & planted onsite & on the neighboring TNC Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**1,601 donors &
3,433 members**

made our work possible

487 volunteers

amassed **9,792 hours** worth
the equivalent of **\$327,929**

4,359 people

joined us for **308 field trips**

2,057 people

attended **34 engagement
events** online & in-person



Southeast Arizona Birding Festival

- 902 registrants - a record!
- 43 states & 10 countries represented
- 151 field trips & 227 bird species
- 26 workshops & presentations
- 112 volunteers
- 1,850 visitors to the Nature Expo

In partnership with Tucson Water, we hosted **61 events at Sweetwater Wetlands**, welcoming **1,656 visitors**, including people from the University of Arizona, YMCA, Girl Scouts of Southern Arizona, and Tucson Rotary.

Nature Shop

23,178 in-person & online shop visitors

Highlight: We found an eco-friendly packaging company, EcoEnclose. Packaging is recycled, recyclable, and made in the USA. We also simplified online store navigation and added more products!





URBAN HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

Santa Cruz River Day of Connection

180 participants removed **6,000 lbs of trash** from the river! In partnership with Sonoran Institute, Patrick McKenna and Barrio Hollywood, Pima County caretakers of the River Park, Chilako Tacos, ViriViriBombBomb, TWELVOTWO, The Wilderness Society, Tucson Clean and Beautiful, Universalist Unitarian Church, Ward 1 staff, and Santa Cruz River Valley National Heritage Area.

We capped off one of our most successful and longest-running (**20 years!**) restoration efforts, the **North Simpson Farm Restoration Project**, along the Santa Cruz River in Marana.

56 new members

joined our Habitat at Home program

773 native plants

sold from a collection of over **30 species** of native perennials, shrubs, & trees

90 basins & 3 pocket parks

managed for the City of Tucson to increase water harvesting & urban vegetation



Luna y Sol Cafe

City of South Tucson

- Community habitat garden created
- Co-hosted MLK days of service event and built over **50 beehives**
- Finalized plans for **8 rainwater harvesting basins & 200 native plants** for 2025



BIRD CONSERVATION

896 nestboxes

distributed for native birds
throughout Southeast Arizona

556 pipes

capped, saving the lives of an
estimated **13,000 small animals**
who would have been trapped

839 kits

for window strike prevention
distributed to the public free of
charge

The **Arizona Birding Trail**
website was completed with
the help of many partners
across the state.

arizonabirdingtrail.com



Bird Surveys

- Documented **119 Elegant Trogons**
- Documented **133 Elf Owls** in Saguaro National Park & Tucson Mountain Park
- Arizona Important Bird Area recorded **5,725 hours** from **244 volunteers**
- **13th year** of winter grassland surveys for Chestnut-collared Longspur
- Surveyed Yellow-billed Cuckoos along Sonoita Creek

Desert Purple Martin Project

Identified **212 nesting saguaros** in Southeast Arizona

Discovered a major
roosting site of
thousands of martins
in a Sahuarita pecan
grove

Attached **9**
satellite migration
trackers to **3**
purple martins in
Arizona & **6** in
Brazil





INVASIVE PLANTS & RESTORATION

Our crews managed invasive plants, year-round, across Southeast Arizona in locations such as:

- Tucson Mountain Park
- Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge
- Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument
- Tumacacori National Historical Park
- Colossal Cave Mountain Park
- Pusch Ridge Wilderness
- El Rio Preserve
- Sabino Canyon
- Sonoita Creek and more!

Awarded a Certificate of Appreciation from the US Forest Service

“For continuous dedication and valuable public service for the Coronado National Forest.”

~1,000 acres

of buffelgrass treated with a heavy focus on creating fire breaks along roadsides & drainages to stop the spread of wildfires

6 stories

produced by AZ Public Media’s “Arizona Illustrated,” about our Invasive Plant Program & five common invasive plants in Tucson



6,800 saguaros

planted, supporting a new generation of this iconic cactus

616 acres

of stinknet manually removed & chemically treated

stinknet.org

grew as a resource hub & reporting tool to control the spread of this invasive, toxic plant

MAKE A DIFFERENCE, STAY CONNECTED

1.3 million people

reached through a viral Instagram post



We stayed connected with you & our community through:

- 4 *Vermilion Flycatcher* magazine issues
 - “Prickly Partners, Cholla & Prickly Pear”
 - “Wonderful Warblers”
 - “Spark Stories”
 - “Nestboxes in the Sonoran Desert”
- 17 blog posts on Chip Notes
- 50 weekly e-blasts



Follow us @TucsonBirdAlliance

1 donation

can make all the difference
for birds & habitat we protect
across Southeast Arizona

Donate by visiting
tucsonbirds.org/donate
or by scanning
the QR code!



THANK YOU !

