

2025

# Tucson Bird Alliance Annual Report



## Dear Friends of Tucson Bird Alliance,

2025 was a landmark year for our organization — one of transformation, growth, and renewed purpose. After decades of proud service as Tucson Audubon Society, we embarked on an exciting new chapter, emerging as Tucson Bird Alliance. This change reflects our deepening commitment to bird conservation across Southeast Arizona, and we are grateful for the enthusiastic support our community showed throughout this transition.

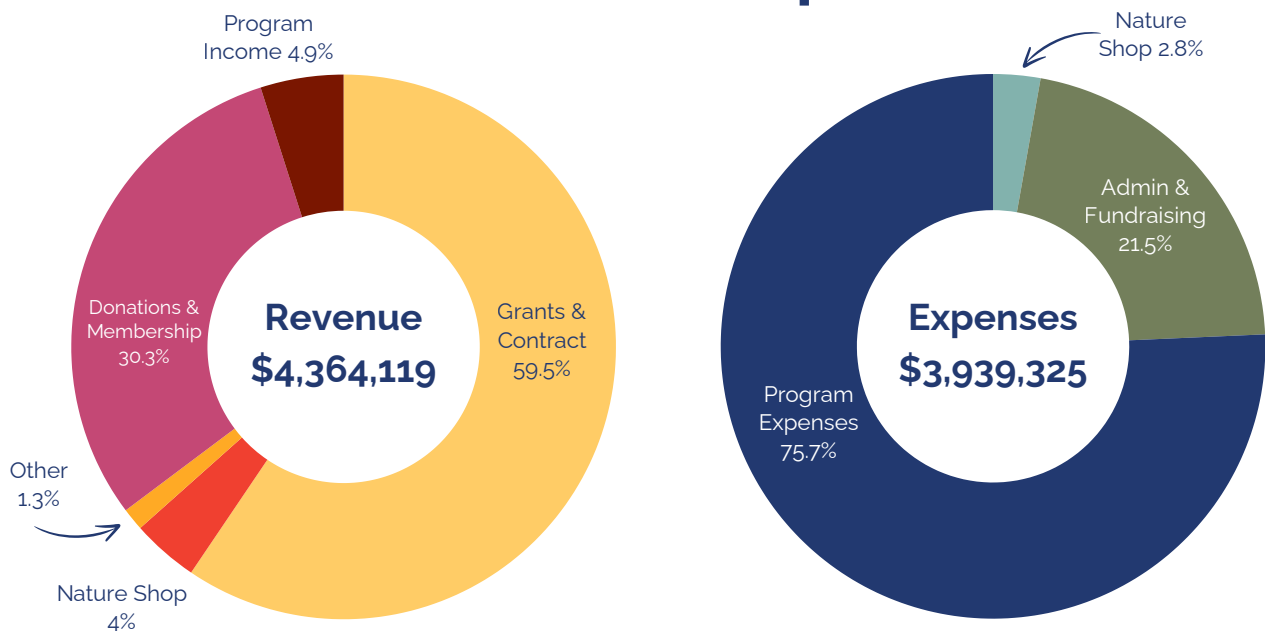
2025 brought remarkable achievements on every front. We deepened partnerships with municipal and community partners, expanded our habitat restoration and research efforts, recruited new, talented board members, and welcomed record-breaking attendance at the Southeast Arizona Birding Festival. We also completed long-awaited restroom construction and exterior renovations at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds in Patagonia — a beloved destination that will now serve visitors and wildlife even better for years to come.

Equally important, 2025 marked a healthy financial turnaround for Tucson Bird Alliance, putting us on strong footing to pursue our mission with confidence. And, we've upheld a meaningful internal commitment: to put our employees first, because the extraordinary work we do for birds and habitat is only possible through the dedication of our talented team.

None of this would have been possible without you. Thank you for your support, your passion for birds, and your trust in our work. We enter another year with immense gratitude as we work toward a better future for birds and people.

With Gratitude,  
Melissa Fratello, Executive Director  
Leslie Cohen, Board President

## Revenue & Expenses



# BIRD CONSERVATION

## Urban Bird Treaty City

Tucson Bird Alliance led a successful application effort to designate Tucson as the **32nd Urban Bird Treaty City**, joining a growing national network of communities committed to protecting migratory birds and creating healthier urban environments for both people and wildlife.

The Urban Bird Treaty Program is a designation of the US Fish & Wildlife Service established to help reverse bird population declines by fostering partnerships among cities, nonprofits, agencies, and local communities. Through education, habitat improvement, hazard reduction, community science, and conservation action, the program connects people living in urban areas to birds and the natural world.



## Bird Surveys

- **Over 100 volunteers** counted **31 Coppery-tailed Trogons** in the official May count & **75** in a summer follow-up survey
- Documented **228 Elf Owls** in Saguaro National Park & Tucson Mountain Park
- Tucson Bird Count completed its **25th year** of surveying

## Desert Purple Martin Project

- **1st Desert Purple Martin** with Lotek tracker reached wintering grounds in Brazil
- **250 nesting saguaros** identified
- **5 evening roost field trips** held in Sahuarita with over 100 participants

## 349 nestboxes

distributed for native birds throughout Southeast Arizona, including **34 newly designed nestboxes for Cactus Ferruginous Pygmy-Owls**

## 657 pipes

capped, saving the lives of an estimated **15,000 small animals** who would have been trapped

## 256 free kits

for window strike prevention distributed to the public



# URBAN HABITAT STEWARDSHIP

## 104 native plants

given away for free through Habitat on Wheels

## 90 basins & 3 pocket parks

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

We began implementation of the **Grow Tucson project**, a collaborative and community-based urban forestry project. The goal is to increase tree canopy and greenspace access in historically marginalized Tucson neighborhoods. We are one of six partner organizations participating. As a group, we planted a total of **745 trees**.

## 546 native plants

planted in a turf-to-habitat demonstration project at Tucson City Hall



## 4,500 cu ft of rainwater

basins created in the Sonoita Creek Watershed

## Luna y Sol Cafe

City of South Tucson

A habitat garden was unveiled to the community and the plants are thriving! The space has already been used by the community for a mural tour, Halloween party, and a rally to protect Oak Flat.



## 3,000+ lbs of trash

removed from the river by **152 participants** during a Santa Cruz River Day of Connection

## 82 wildlife ramps

installed across Southeast Arizona to prevent wildlife drownings

# INVASIVE PLANTS & RESTORATION

## 3,873 acres

treated & surveyed for invasive plants including buffelgrass, arundo, fountain grass, Siberian elm & salt cedar

**Crews worked year-round across Southeast Arizona at sites including,**

- Parks & refuges in partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife Service & National Park Service
- Sabino Canyon Recreation Area treating invasive grasses
- Catalina State Park treating buffel & fountain grass in partnership with the Friends of Catalina State Park
- Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve treating Johnson grass
- Tucson Mountain Park, Tumacacori National Historical Park, El Rio Preserve & more!

## 1,380 acres

treated & surveyed for stinknet in the Tucson Basin

## stinknet.org

is the go-to resource for education & reporting to control the spread of this invasive, toxic plant



**Before & After:** Crews started buffelgrass removal and spray treatments at Colossal Cave in 2021. The photo above is from 2022 and the photo below is from 2026.



## 300 acres

heat mapped for vegetative fuel density & **45 acres** treated to help prevent wildfires in Patagonia, AZ

## Tubac Nature Center

Crews continued to remove invasive trees and grasses along the Santa Cruz River. A monitoring well and flow meter were also installed to help finalize design plans for a wetland restoration project.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**2,017 donors & 3,536 members**

made our work possible.  
**Thank you!**

**5,325 people**  
joined us for **355 field trips**

## Nature Shop

**22,032 in-person & online shop visitors**

- Pop-up shops at Wings Over Willcox, Tubac Hawkwatch, & Southeast Arizona Birding Festival
- Second retail shop built at the Paton Center—opening date TBD



**1,788 people**

attended online & in-person engagement events such as Birds & Bingo, Tubac Hawkwatch, & *Where to Go Birding*

**356 volunteers**

amassed **10,746 hours** worth the equivalent of **\$359,878**

## Southeast Arizona Birding Festival

- **963 registrants**, a new record!
- **42 states & 8 countries** represented
- **153 field trips**

- **33 workshops & presentations**
- **111 volunteers**
- **2,068 visitors** to the Nature Expo
- **49 exhibitors**
- **231 bird species** recorded



# PATON CENTER FOR HUMMINGBIRDS



With the support and commitment of volunteers, donors, and staff, we completed many projects in 2025. These included a new trail with benches and shade structures; two ADA-accessible public restrooms; a new parking area; upgrades to electric and septic systems; a new HVAC system; new roof, doors, and windows; and the creation of a beautiful shop area.

## 21 volunteer events

held to manage invasive Johnson grass & plant native plants around the property

## 191 bird species

recorded, including rarities in Black-crowned Night Heron, American Woodcock, Flammulated Owl & Fox Sparrow!

## 44 US states & 9 countries

represented monthly, on average, in the visitors' log

## 37 Paton Birding Ambassadors

put in **4,852 hours**, showing hospitality to our guests—both human & avian!



# MAKE A DIFFERENCE, STAY CONNECTED

We published **4** *Vermilion Flycatcher* magazines:

- *Thriving Birds, Humans, & Habitats*
- *Spring into Birding*
- *Colors of the Sonoran Desert*
- *Sharing Lists & Life Birds*

**We can't do this work without your support.** Please donate today by visiting [tucsonbirds.org/donate](https://tucsonbirds.org/donate) or by scanning the QR code!



## THANK YOU!



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