



New Jersey Audubon Recognizes Leaders of Black Birders Week

This award exemplifies the positive impact the recipients have on their local community and environment

Bernardsville, NJ – October 5, 2020: During New Jersey Audubon’s virtual Cape May Fall Festival, President and CEO Eric Stiles presented its highest honor of the year to the organizers of Black Birders Week, a pioneering virtual event that took place in late May of this year. Each year, NJ Audubon recognizes excellence in conservation and education through our awards program. This year we are merging two awards into one, the 2020 Richard and Patricia Kane Conservation and Education Award is to recognize the leaders of Black Birders Week.

New Jersey Audubon has always believed in conservation for all as a major cornerstone of our organization through our diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) efforts. New Jersey Audubon DEIJ initiatives work to ensure that we are making our programs accessible and welcoming to all New Jersey residents and visitors, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, or socio-economic status.

Black Birders Week was a week-long series of online events, running from May 31st, 2020 to June 5th, 2020. The event was created as a response to the Central Park birdwatching incident and police brutality against Black Americans. The week of events, organized by a group of STEM professionals and students, increased the visibility of Black birders, who face unique challenges and dangers when engaging in outdoor activities.

“Black Birders Week ignited the entire conservation community into action,” stated Eric Stiles, President and CEO, New Jersey Audubon. “It showed tremendous vision and courage to rise to this occasion and circumstance, which is all too familiar in our country’s history, and meet it head-on with a welcoming, uplifting and empowering platform for discussion using today’s modern communications and social media tools. It is unprecedented for New Jersey Audubon to combine this recognition into one award, and it is certainly appropriate in this case.”

“Thank you New Jersey Audubon! I hope this continues to inspire the birding community, the Black community, and of course, the Black birding community” stated Tykee James, government affairs coordinator for the National Audubon Society and a Black Birders Week co-founder.

Through these events and others, the movement continues to highlight research carried out by Black birders, the happiness they find in nature, the racism experienced, and the importance of inclusivity in the outdoors for all.

Stiles concluded, “Black Birders Week was a giant first step toward a larger and longer dialogue within the conservation community. And that conversation is one NJ Audubon is committed to advancing by embracing diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice throughout the fabric of our organization.”

About New Jersey Audubon

New Jersey Audubon is a privately supported, not-for profit, statewide membership organization. Founded in 1897, and one of the oldest independent Audubon societies, New Jersey Audubon fosters environmental awareness and a conservation ethic among New Jersey's citizens; protects New Jersey's birds, mammals, other animals, and plants, especially endangered and threatened species; and promotes preservation of New Jersey's valuable natural habitats. For more information, visit www.njaudubon.org.