

# PIBO™



Red-breasted Merganser (female)

## 2024-2025 Impact Report

Two Years of Momentum: *A Legacy in Flight*



## PELEE ISLAND BIRD OBSERVATORY

EST. 2004™

### Dear Friends of Birds,

Over the past two years, the Pelee Island Bird Observatory (PIBO) has reached a transformative moment on its journey, made possible by your support.

Located on the most southerly inhabited point in Canada, where two major migratory flyways converge, PIBO has spent more than twenty years documenting the astonishing movement of birds across the continent. Their stories of resilience, fragility and interconnection guide us in our work.

In 2024 and 2025, your support helped PIBO achieve one of the most important milestones in our history: **the construction of our new Bird Centre**, set to open in 2026. This centre will be a catalyst for the next generation of conservation, research, education and community engagement on Pelee Island and beyond. It will offer space for scientists to collaborate and for visitors to learn and experience the wonder of migration up close.

At the same time, your donations ensured that **our core scientific work was sustained**. Across two years and two full migration seasons, PIBO staff and volunteers monitored over half a million birds, gathering the long-term data needed to understand how species are responding to climate change and other man-made ecosystem impacts. Our outreach work continues too, strengthening Windsor's commitment as a Bird Friendly City and inspiring people of all ages to see why birds matter, as sentinels for our shared future.

As we prepare for the Bird Centre's opening, we are filled with anticipation and gratitude. Thank you for believing in PIBO's mission and for helping to shape a legacy that will endure for generations.

**Deborah Egan**  
Board Chair

**Margaret Atwood**  
Founding Honorary Chair

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### TESTIMONIAL **Pete Davidson** Vice President of Science and Monitoring, Birds Canada

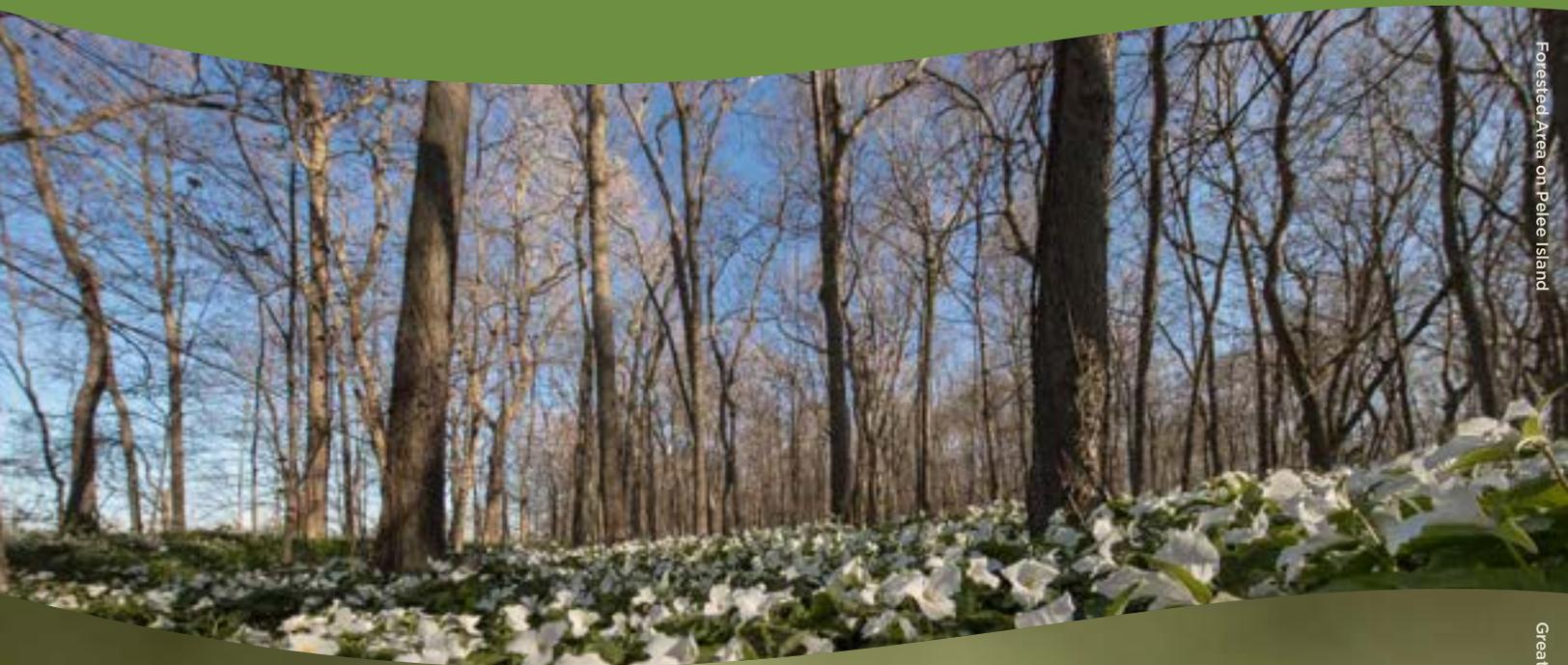
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"For more than two decades, the Pelee Island Bird Observatory (PIBO) has been an essential contributor to migration science in a significant and iconic migration corridor. PIBO's work in the unusual juxtaposition of a remote landscape so close to urban areas presents a unique opportunity to the applied research community.

I'm excited to see PIBO's future unfold to help birds thrive!"

## Vision

Making Pelee Island a unique and vital part of the international effort to preserve wild and migratory birds and protect our threatened planet.



Forested Area on Pelee Island

## Mission

Uniquely situated in a globally recognized Key Biodiversity Area, PIBO: collects and collates scientific data related to migratory bird studies, delivers public outreach education programs and actively collaborates with conservation organizations along the Americas flyways as part of a joint local - international effort to preserve migratory birds.



Great Crested Flycatcher

# PELEE ISLAND BIRD OBSERVATORY

*Where Birds Tell a Vital Story*

Located at the most southerly point in Canada, Pelee Island sits directly on the path of two major migratory flyways. Each spring and fall, tens of millions of birds fly over this small island (42 km<sup>2</sup>) and many stop to rest and refuel. This stopover in Lake Erie between Ontario and Ohio is one of the most important migratory bird habitats in the country, globally recognized as a **Key Biodiversity Area**.

For over twenty years, PIBO has been listening to what birds can tell us. Through long-term, standardized monitoring, we have:

**Documented more than 57,000 birds from 266 species, adding crucial evidence to local, national and hemispheric conservation efforts**

**Welcomed over 80 visitors to the banding station in 2025, as well as students and researchers from across the region and the globe**

**Engaged communities through education, urban birding and hands-on citizen science**

**Built on partnerships along the flyways of the Americas, including Mexico**

*American Redstart*



Northern Parula (2024) >



## PIBO by the Numbers 2024-2025

### 660,000+

Birds recorded (banded and observed on census) over two migration seasons.  
2024: 396,530 | 2025: 265,649

### 200+

Species recorded annually at Fish Point.  
2024: 208 | 2025: 217

### 4,000+

Field hours accumulated of staff and volunteer monitoring.

### 20+

Volunteers engaged supporting science and outreach.

### 2,500+

Community members reached at over 40 events including bird watching walks and owling nights.

### 20

Additional backpacks added to the Birding Backpack program through outreach and engagement with the Windsor Public Library.

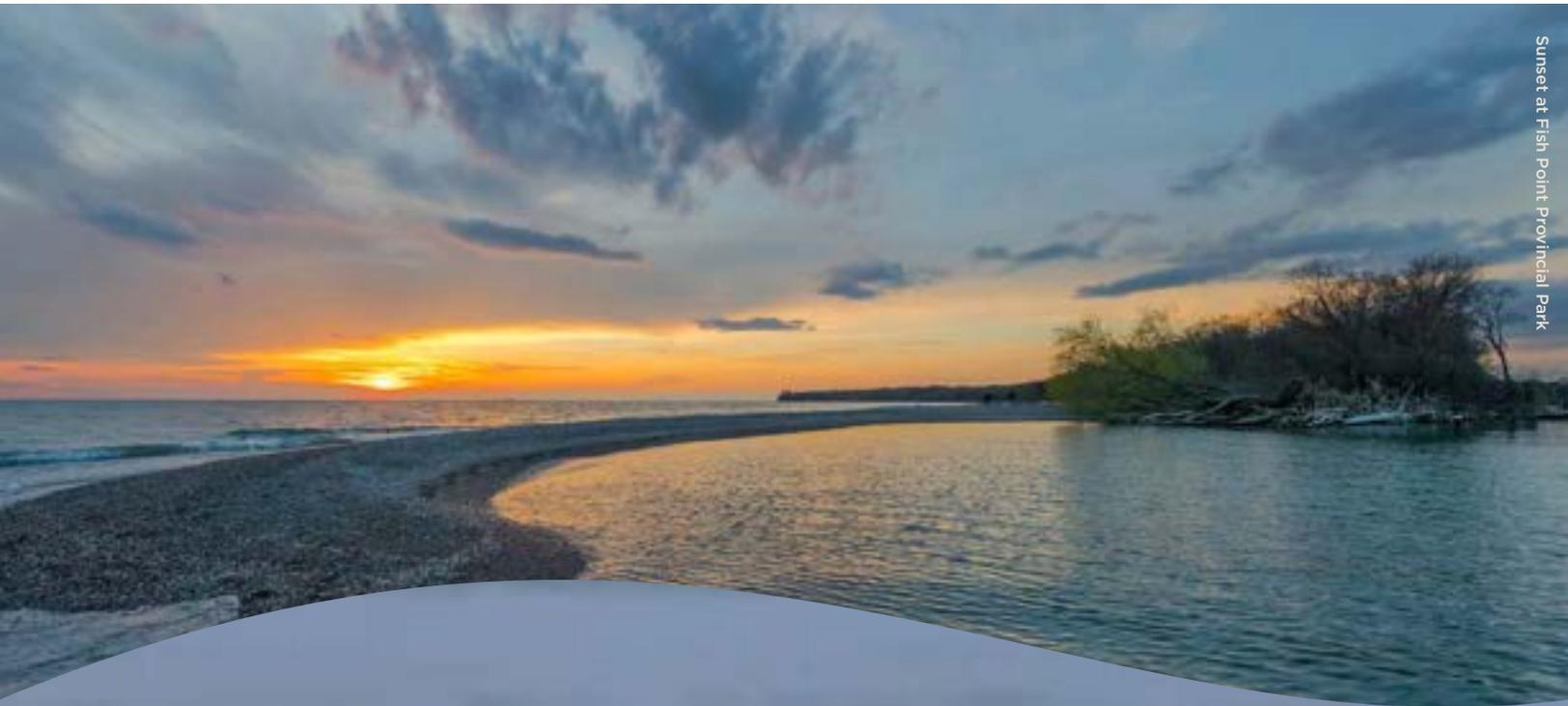
### 21

Years of impact through continuous, standardized data informing conservation decisions.



Downy Woodpecker

...and **1** short anniversary film celebrating PIBO's history < *click the link to watch*



Sunset at Fish Point Provincial Park



American White Pelicans

# A NEW HOME FOR SCIENCE AND COMMUNITY



Opening in 2026, PIBO's new Bird Centre represents a once-in-a-generation investment in conservation infrastructure on Pelee Island. As a scientific hub and a community gathering space, the Bird Centre reflects PIBO's belief that science and community, together, can protect cherished places that birds depend on.

## A Catalyst for the Next Generation

The Bird Centre will allow PIBO to:

**Expand long-term migration monitoring and species-at-risk research**

**Host scientists, students and visiting researchers**

**Offer workshops, demonstrations and interactive exhibits for the public**

**Cultivate bird- and pollinator-friendly gardens for education and enjoyment**

**Provide a dedicated meeting and learning space for island residents, businesses and visitors**

**Inspire young people growing up on the Island, the future stewards of its natural heritage**

### Building Progress (2025)

**Site preparation completed**

**Building footprint established and framed**

**Interior research and education spaces designed and built**

**Plans underway for outdoor learning environments**

**Fundraising campaign in its final stages**

**Anticipated opening in 2026, marking the beginning of PIBO's next chapter**

“When my late partner Graeme Gibson and his son, Graeme Gibson the Younger, founded PIBO, they hoped it would become a beacon for science, conservation and community. Graeme would be delighted to see how far it has come, and how the new Bird Centre will anchor this work for generations to come. His legacy lives on in every bird counted, every student inspired, and every act of care for the natural world.”

**Margaret Atwood**  
Founding Honorary Chair, PIBO

*The Centre is more than a building — it is a legacy in flight.  
Your support is shaping a story that will unfold over the next fifty years.*



**JUNE 2025**  
Construction begins



**DECEMBER 2025**  
Approaching the final stage of construction



An office ready for research and collaboration



Staff and volunteer accommodation  
in the research wing



A space for gathering and community building



A suite for visiting researchers

# TWO YEARS OF SCIENCE

## *What We Learned from Migration*

PIBO's dedicated staff and volunteers monitored migration at Fish Point, documenting the movement of birds across seasons and shifting conditions. Their work forms part of a national and hemispheric network that tracks bird populations and informs conservation decisions.

### 2024-2025 Highlights

**Thousands of birds counted and banded across spring and fall migrations**

**Evidence of shifting migration timing in response to weather and food availability**

**Memorable observation included King Rail, Louisiana Waterthrush (2024), American Golden Plover and Painted Bunting (2025); Worm-eating Warbler (2024) is only the seventh individual banded since 2016**

**Recaptures demonstrating remarkable bird fidelity to Pelee Island year after year**

**Two international interns, from Mexico (2024) and Colombia (2025), gaining hands-on experience in field science**

**Strengthened collaboration with Birds Canada, universities in Southwest Ontario, and international birding partners**

Migration monitoring offers a window into the health of ecosystems — and into the challenges birds face. While nearly one-third of North America's birds have disappeared since 1970, PIBO's work contributes essential evidence to guide policy, research and conservation action.



“Banding birds in another country, witnessing the fall migration firsthand, and understanding that many of the species that passed through my hands will continue their journey to Colombia—some even to spend the winter there—has been deeply moving. This experience has allowed me to strengthen my knowledge and connection with migratory birds, and I hope to share everything I’ve learned with my colleagues in Colombia, while also helping to open up new opportunities for more Colombians to experience working and learning at Pelee Island.”

**Dennys Johana Plazas Cardona**  
Intern from Colombia, summer 2025

Cape May Warbler >

Yellow-billed Cuckoo



# COMMUNITY & PARTNERSHIPS

## *Inspiring Action*

### Engaging Windsor: A Bird-Friendly City

Over the past two years, PIBO strengthened its partnerships in Windsor-Essex, supporting the City's ongoing commitment to becoming and sustaining its status as a Bird-Friendly City.

Through programs such as urban birding events, public education on window collision prevention, and collaborative outreach with municipal and community partners, PIBO helped residents see how birds connect neighbourhoods, ecosystems and cities across the flyway.

Bird window collisions are one of the leading causes of death for migratory birds. Window decals make windows visible to birds by creating patterns or reflecting ultraviolet light which break up the reflection of the sky. PIBO is a longstanding partner of the University of Windsor, which has launched a Bird-Friendly Campus initiative which includes monitoring of bird casualties and installing student-designed window decals.

The City of Windsor, another PIBO collaborator, has been designated a Bird-Friendly City and installed decals on municipal buildings.



PIBO was pleased to guide visitors from Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (*part of UNESCO*) on a bird walk along Windsor's waterfront.

### Building a Culture of Conservation

PIBO continues to engage people of all ages through:

**Hands-on learning experiences during migration**

**Owling nights and public banding demonstrations**

**Nature walks and citizen science activities**

These programs strengthen local conservation culture and help ensure that birds remain part of our shared future. Another point of engagement comes with our Birds of a Feather Membership program, with members receiving The Pinion, a members only bi-monthly newsletter with updates on the world of birds.



An annual community favourite: a Swift watch night in Ford Test Track Park.

# LOOKING AHEAD

## 2026 Priorities

The last two years have been focused on building the foundation that will enable us to grow to the next stage in our evolution. We are now well positioned, with a building nearing completion and a solid fundraising plan that will allow us to realize our ambitious vision of a Bird Centre on Pelee Island.

### 1 Opening the Bird Centre

The Bird Centre will be a living laboratory, allowing PIBO staff and volunteers to collaborate with researchers around Lake Erie and beyond to reduce the decline of birds along the flyway. There is still a lot to do behind the scenes, from furnishing the building, fitting it out with the necessary equipment, developing procedures of all kinds to ensure that it's ready for our visitors.

We hope that everyone who visits us on Pelee Island, whether they are birders, tourists or residents, will be inspired to learn more through educational displays and programming.

Watch for our official grand opening in the fall!

### 2 Science, Education and Knowledge Mobilization

In collaboration with Birds Canada, PIBO has developed a new Science Plan, Beyond Monitoring: Building a Collaborative Migration Research Hub at Pelee Island. We will build on our legacy of monitoring and tracking migratory behaviours, pathways and connectivity. And our value is advancing migration science at the heart of Lake Erie: a place where research, education, and community come together to inspire action for birds and the natural world we share.

In the short-term, it includes the implementation and use of advanced tracking technology and collaborative networks (e.g. Motus Wildlife Tracking System) to study migratory routes, stopover ecology, survival and population connectivity across the hemisphere.

For the mid-term, the plan defines our applied research priorities, including assessing impacts of human and environmental stressors on migratory

timing, stopover behaviour, foraging ecology, reproductive success and species distribution. To ensure our data and research is relevant and effects conservation change, we will expand our collaborative efforts with the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network (CMMN) and with their input, stakeholders in the Lake Erie basin.

### 3 Community Engagement and Partnerships

One of PIBO's unique qualities is its remoteness and proximity to urban centres in Windsor Essex. We will build on our strong foundation and engage stakeholders to identify their needs. From there, we will build programs and partnerships that create community impact. Our objectives include getting families out in nature, reducing bird fatalities and increasing activity in citizen science.

### 4 Organizational Maturity

The successful opening of the Bird Centre brings PIBO to a new stage in our evolution. With new infrastructure comes the need to strengthen operations and professionalize our management, fundraising and communications. With your support, we are adding capacity to the team and look forward to what we can build together.



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**VOLUNTEER PROFILE** **Rob Tymstra** Pelee Island Resident

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An experienced naturalist, Rob supports PIBO's bird census and delights in guiding visitors and enjoys taking people out on tours to see the birds. He loves sharing his love of nature with others, especially rank beginners, as he gets to vicariously experience the thrills of seeing everything new. After over 50 years as a birder and counting more than 270 species on Pelee Island, he still describes his work with birds and nature as play.



*Canada Warbler*

# THANK YOU

*It's been an extraordinary time and we couldn't have done it without you.*

Your generosity fuels science, inspires communities, and ensures that the stories birds carry across continents continue to be heard – from Pelee Island to the world.

## Founding Legacy Builders

Margaret Atwood  
The Pinchin Family

## Transformational Donors

Ontario Trillium Foundation  
Kim Samuel  
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## Leadership Donors

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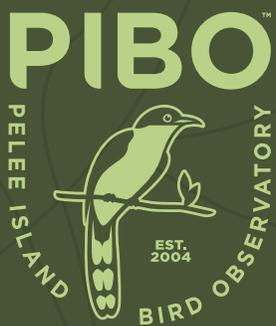
**Thanks to all of our staff and volunteers, including our dedicated Board of Directors.**



Spring 2025 – PIBO staff and volunteers  
 Alesandra Wilcox, Sumiko Onishi, Caillie Monrad, Kiah Jasper



Fall 2025 – PIBO team  
 Suzanne Friemann, Sumiko Onishi, Graeme Gibson the Younger, Sarah Bonnett, Dennys Johana Plazas Cardona



Join our Birds of a Feather membership community today!  
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[info@pibo.ca](mailto:info@pibo.ca)

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